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Official Report

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Wednesday 8 May 2019

Session 5

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Scottish Parliament

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

Deposit Return Scheme

The Deputy Presiding Officer (Linda Fabiani): The first item of business is a statement by Roseanna Cunningham on a deposit return scheme for Scotland.

Before we move on to the statement, I note that it appears that significant details of the scheme have been reported in the press before today's announcement. I refer members to the good practice guidance on announcements by the Scottish Government, in that major policy announcements should always come to the Parliament in the first instance. I urge the Government to have regard to that guidance.

The cabinet secretary will take questions at the end of her statement, so there should be no interventions or interruptions.

The Cabinet Secretary for Environment, Climate Change and Land Reform (Roseanna Cunningham): The existence of such a leak is disappointing. Not only does it rather steal my thunder; the Scottish Government would wish not to see such a thing happen, and I am absolutely unclear how it did.

The Scottish Government is proud to lead the way across the United Kingdom with our plans for a deposit return scheme for single-use drinks containers. Last summer's extensive consultation reinforced the view that an appropriately targeted deposit return scheme—or DRS—would help to improve the environment and change people's attitudes to recycling and littering. Having such a scheme is central to our ambition to build a more circular economy in which materials are kept in high-value use for as long as possible.

As members will be aware, we have embraced the recent report from the Committee on Climate Change and have acted by making amendments to the Climate Change (Emissions Reduction Targets) (Scotland) Bill. Interventions such as establishing a DRS will be central to our efforts to tackle climate change. The Scottish Government has been working closely with Zero Waste Scotland, the Scottish Environment Protection Agency and others to build on the outputs of the DRS consultation. We have engaged with a wide range of stakeholders to ensure that we learn the lessons of successful schemes. At the same time, we have been keen to avoid simply lifting and

laying a model from elsewhere. We are clear that we need a DRS that properly reflects the needs of Scotland.

I am pleased to be able to share the outputs of that activity and to outline the shape of the ambitious scheme that we will deliver. Further detail on today's proposals will be available in supporting documents that will be published after this statement.

The recent consultation signalled strong support for a DRS that would cover a wide range of materials, and so I intend to implement a system that will cover metal cans, polyethylene terephthalate—or PET, which is the most common form of plastic that is used for drinks containers—and glass.

I have looked carefully at the arguments for and against including glass. After a detailed analysis of how the costs of including glass match up to the benefits, including increased recycling rates, reductions in carbon emissions and reductions in glass litter, my conclusion is that its inclusion is justified. There is also strong public support for including it, as was shown by the Marine Conservation Society's recent poll, in which 85 per cent of participants indicated their support for it. However, I know that some producers, retailers and the glass industry have concerns about its inclusion. I want to make it clear today that I am committed to working with them to implement the scheme in a way that will address such concerns. However, if we are to include glass, it must be done from the outset. The infrastructure requirements for the material mean that it would be hugely complex and expensive to add it later.

At this stage, I have chosen not to include high-density polyethylene—or HDPE—plastic in the scope of the scheme. HDPE is used primarily for packaging fresh milk, but there are significant concerns about it—for example, about contamination of other materials and odour. Unlike glass, it would be possible to include HDPE in our DRS at a later stage if such concerns could be overcome.

Our DRS needs to be as convenient as possible for the public. People must be able to access return points easily. It would not be acceptable for certain groups of people—for example, those who live in our more rural and remote communities or who are on low incomes—to be penalised because they cannot return containers.

With that in mind, I intend to implement a return-to-retail model, whereby all businesses that sell drinks will be required to accept returns. The change will be visible to us all, including here in this Parliament, in the Scottish Government and in workplaces across the country, reinforcing the fact

that we all have a role to play in helping our environment.

We recognise that consideration must be given to the operation of DRS in smaller retail settings. Retailers will be given flexibility in how they enable returns, whether through different sizes of reverse vending machines or manual over-the-counter take-back arrangements. We will explore with retailers how the financing of reverse vending machines can be supported, and we are committed to trialling different return, storage and collection solutions in preparation for the scheme's roll-out.

I have carefully considered the calls by some to introduce automatic exemptions for retailers below a certain size. I have significant reservations about doing so. Modelling shows that even a modest level of automatic exemption would quickly hinder the scheme's accessibility. An exemption for retailers with a floor space of up to 280m², as some have proposed, would result in only 17 per cent of retailers accepting returns. I do not believe that that would be workable.

On occasion, of course, there will be numerous retailers operating very close together, and where that is the case, we should build in the flexibility to accommodate exemptions. I also believe that there should be the flexibility to supplement the role of retailers through the operation of additional return points. That could help to drive additional footfall for community initiatives and could add particular value in our more rural and remote communities, which are less well served by shops. By taking that approach, we will maximise opportunities for the public to reclaim their deposits.

I have listened carefully to the hospitality industry regarding how DRS should operate for premises such as pubs and restaurants where drinks are sold for consumption on site. I can confirm that, in such cases, the premises will pay the deposit but will have the choice of whether to pass it on to the consumer.

International evidence suggests that the value of the deposit within a DRS is key to participation. The consultation indicated strong support for a deposit of 15p or more, and our analysis suggests that a deposit at around that level would support a strong return rate. Evidence from international models also indicates that ease of consumer understanding and proofing against inflation are important factors. I am therefore proposing a deposit level of 20p.

With up to 1.7 billion containers and many millions of pounds passing through our DRS, it will be important for businesses and the public to have confidence in the scheme's operation. We have looked at examples of effective schemes

elsewhere. It is clear that privately operated systems can often deliver the right performance outcomes. In practice, that involves producers and retailers establishing a not-for profit company for the specific purpose of running the scheme. I favour such a model; as DRS is a form of producer responsibility, intuitively it makes sense for industry to shoulder the responsibility for its operation, and I believe that, with the proper regulation, that approach will work well for Scotland.

In line with other schemes, I see no reason why we cannot recycle 90 per cent or more of our drinks containers through DRS. That is far in excess of current recycling rates, and I intend to reflect that aspiration in the regulations for establishing the scheme. Clearly, it will mean fewer containers being collected through kerbside collections. We will work with local government to ensure that DRS complements their collections, which will still have a critical role to play. Those collections will in future be supported through reformed packaging producer responsibility arrangements that are currently being consulted on across the UK.

The DRS regulations will be subject to the super-affirmative procedure. There will be ample opportunity to review and comment on our proposals before the secondary legislation is laid and during its passage through Parliament. I encourage everyone to take that opportunity and to continue the high levels of engagement that have benefited us to date. It is my intention to commence the super-affirmative procedure this summer.

Clearly there is much to do to successfully translate the scheme design into a fully operational service. As the contribution of industry will be central to its success, we have set up an implementation advisory group to work with those sectors with a direct stake in the scheme's operation. Members include the British Soft Drinks Association, the Scottish Retail Consortium, the Scottish Beer and Pub Association and a number of others. The group will meet regularly to discuss implementation.

I acknowledge that our plans are ambitious. I make no apology for that, but I do not underestimate the scale of the task. I look forward to working with partners to plan next steps. My overall aim is to deliver the scheme in the current parliamentary session.

I remain open to working with the other UK Administrations, which are currently consulting on DRS. However, that must be on the basis that their ambition matches ours. Our climate change commitments mean that it is simply not an option for us to wait in the hope that others will follow the example that we are now setting. That said, I am

optimistic that the bold approach that we are taking here in Scotland will provide a blueprint for future action across the UK.

Today's announcement marks an important milestone for DRS and our wider circular economy ambitions. I look forward to working with parliamentarians across the chamber as we progress that work in the weeks and months ahead.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: We will move on to questions, for which I intend to allow around 20 minutes. We have a load of questions but, if members are succinct in their questions and answers, we can get through them all.

Maurice Golden (West Scotland) (Con): I refer members to my entry in the register of members' interests. I thank the cabinet secretary for providing advance sight of the statement.

A deposit return scheme can be a valuable tool in increasing recycling rates, but it is commonly used in advance of kerbside recycling infrastructure roll-out. Nevertheless, I recognise that the Scottish National Party Government has been working on the scheme for more than a decade and so I expect the smoothest possible roll-out.

Our expectations of the scheme are as follows: a plastic recycling plant and DRS vending machines to be built here in Scotland; local authorities to be compensated on current and future revenue streams and to receive technical support regarding any rerouting of collections; an incentive scheme to be rolled out to allow smaller businesses a mechanism to attract more customers, and exemptions for some of the smallest businesses, perhaps only with respect to glass; a procurement framework to be set up to allow businesses to buy vending machines at a competitive price; health and safety training to be provided for glass, focused on smaller businesses; and a full behaviour-change analysis of the scheme to be carried out as part of monitoring and evaluation.

The cabinet secretary may wish to reflect on those points. Will she also inform Parliament of how much extra the inclusion of glass has added to the total cost of the scheme?

Roseanna Cunningham: Maurice Golden has raised quite a lot of issues. He will be happy to learn that the document that will be available once the statement is finished—it could not be published sooner because that would have given away the scheme design—is a full 150-page stage 1 business case and is likely to have the level of detail that will have even Maurice Golden's heart beating strongly. I know that he is very keen on seeing that detail.

We have considered a number of the issues that the member raises, which are key issues, and I referred to some of them in my statement. One reason why we have the implementation advisory group is to continue to have that conversation. A stage 2 business case will be published a little later in the process. All the points that the member raises will be taken on board, including the issues to do with glass. As the member may know from listening to my statement, the case for including glass was slightly more arguable. People would have expected plastic and aluminium to be included, but we had to think a bit more about glass. On balance, we decided that it was better to include glass at this point, because we cannot retrofit it. Fundamentally, that would have been a major problem.

I hope to be able to engage with Maurice Golden on a lot of the detail, in which I know he is interested.

Claudia Beamish (South Scotland) (Lab): I thank the cabinet secretary for providing advance sight of the statement.

Scottish Labour welcomes this robust DRS model and recognises the campaign by the Marine Conservation Society and the have you got the bottle? campaign. I declare that I visited Norway with that campaign group last summer.

I agree that the ambition must not be held up by the UK Government, but compatibility with the rest of the UK will be important for businesses and the public. What contact has the cabinet secretary had with her UK counterparts to ensure the necessary synergy? When I was in Oslo, I saw a collection station. What actions can the Scottish Government take to ensure that such stations are ready to receive the range of materials? What support is being given to provide new opportunities for remanufacturing, which is important for our circular economy and climate change targets?

Roseanna Cunningham: Claudia Beamish's latter points are important and relate to some of the things to which Maurice Golden referred. One of the reasons why we want the industry to be in the driving seat in running the scheme is that, from an early stage, it will see the need for, and the advantage of, having such a scheme.

In Scotland, up until now, we have not capitalised on some of the recycling opportunities that there might have been. The scheme will provide the volume of materials that are needed to take advantage of such opportunities. We will continue to talk about those issues, and I expect that the Environment, Climate Change and Land Reform Committee will be interested in them, too.

Claudia Beamish mentioned the relationship with the rest of the UK. She can be reassured that I have been involved in two different meetings with

my counterpart south of the border, Thérèse Coffey, to discuss the issues relating to deposit return schemes. The UK Government is well aware that we are a couple of years ahead in developing such a scheme. Given the position that we have taken today, I hope that Michael Gove and Thérèse Coffey will consider whether they can use our experience and some of the work that we have done, including the business case that we will publish, to help to drive faster what the UK Government is intending to do.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: Twelve members wish to ask questions, so I reiterate that succinct questions and answers will be useful.

Gillian Martin (Aberdeenshire East) (SNP): I note the cabinet secretary's comments about the return-to-retail model. How will small retailers be supported to play their part in delivering the scheme? Specifically, how will people in rural villages be able to access the DRS machines?

Roseanna Cunningham: The intention is that the DRS will be cost neutral for retailers, who will be reimbursed through a per-container handling fee, which will make participation as easy as possible.

We intend to explore directly with retailers how the financing of reverse vending machines can be supported. That might have been one of the issues that I missed from Maurice Golden's list of points. Although some retailers will choose to operate a reverse vending machine, we recognise that that will not always be practical. Gillian Martin's question acknowledges that point. Therefore, the scheme will allow for manual over-the-counter take-back, if that suits retailers.

Our decision not to include automatic exemptions for retailers will help us to ensure maximum coverage in remote and rural communities across the country. That is important, because the vast majority of people need to have direct access to places where they can get the deposit back, otherwise the scheme will not work.

John Scott (Ayr) (Con): Will the cabinet secretary confirm that the scheme will be compatible with any scheme that is developed in the rest of the United Kingdom? Will any additional infrastructure that is required, such as a recycling plant, be built in Scotland, preferably in Ayrshire?

Roseanna Cunningham: John Scott is an old friend of mine, but he somewhat overstates my ability to see into that crystal ball.

We are pressing ahead with our plans, which contain a great deal of detail. The UK Government is seriously considering rolling out a deposit return scheme in England and Wales. I cannot say what decisions the UK Government will make, but, by the time it is in a position to make such decisions,

we will be well down the road to having a scheme up and running. I hope that the UK Government will have regard to what we will have in place, and I suspect that everybody, including producers and retailers, will put pressure on the UK Government to introduce the same system that will be in place in Scotland.

Alex Rowley (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab): I welcome the cabinet secretary's announcement. In the most modern deposit return schemes, the operator provides an app for retailers so that they can request efficient collections, and a different app for the public so that they can reclaim their money directly or donate it to charity. Will the Scottish deposit return scheme make use of technology and include such options?

Roseanna Cunningham: That is a good idea and is one of the issues that the implementation advisory group will discuss. Apps are used across the board for all sorts of things, such as paying for parking. I see no reason why we cannot use modern technology in that way, and I will ensure that the advisory group that will meet later this month adds that to the issues that they might think about.

Angus MacDonald (Falkirk East) (SNP): I, too, refer members to my entry in the register of interests. At the invitation of the have you got the bottle? campaign, I joined a cross-party visit to Oslo to see the Norwegian system in operation.

The cabinet secretary will be aware of my strong support for DRS, since first seeing it in operation in Norway in the mid-1980s, and of my keen interest in seeing it rolled out in Scotland, so I am delighted by today's announcement. However, the cabinet secretary said in her statement that she is aware of concerns from some retailers and producers—as well as the glass industry itself—about the inclusion of glass bottles in the scheme. Will she assure those with concerns—and members—that when the scheme is being implemented, Zero Waste Scotland will do everything that it can to engage with and assist retailers or producers who continue to have concerns?

Roseanna Cunningham: We are absolutely committed to continuing the engagement that we have had with retailers in the development of the scheme. We intend to work with them to test different return, storage and collection arrangements in the coming months. The critical role of retailers is also reflected in the membership of the implementation advisory group that I spoke about. That includes representatives from the Scottish Retail Consortium, the Scottish Grocers Federation, the Federation of Small Businesses and the National Federation of Retail Newsagents. It is my intention to bring forward secondary legislation later this year to establish the scheme.

That will provide another important opportunity for retailers to engage with Parliament on our plans for DRS.

Mark Ruskell (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Green): I refer members to my entry in the register of interests and to the very successful study visit that a number of us made to Oslo last year. I add, on behalf of the Scottish Greens, that we warmly welcome this wide-ranging deposit returns scheme. It really takes the lead in the UK.

Last year, in preparation for the scheme, the cabinet secretary also visited Oslo, where hotels and restaurants in the catering trade that collect empties on behalf of the system are paid the same handling fee as retailers that do the work. Will the cabinet secretary confirm that that will also be case for Scotland's hospitality trade?

Roseanna Cunningham: I understand that the hospitality trade will not be required to operate the deposit return system with its customers: it will be a customer. I undertake to get back to Mark Ruskell on whether there is a handling fee, because I am not entirely certain that that is the case, although I do not want to mislead him by saying that there is not.

Gordon MacDonald (Edinburgh Pentlands) (SNP): I also refer to the register of interests. I am the convener of the cross-party group on independent convenience stores.

The cabinet secretary will be aware that three members of the Scottish Grocers Federation, including the Oxfams Premier store in my constituency, have been trialling reverse vending machines. More than 36,000 plastic bottles and aluminium cans have been collected in two months, with 40 per cent of people donating the deposit to a local charity.

However, those machines, with their smaller footprint, cannot accommodate collection of glass. Will the cabinet secretary clarify how she expects the convenience store sector, which in most cases has limited floor space, to accommodate storage of glass?

Roseanna Cunningham: That, of course, was one of the issues that we had to think about when we were considering whether to include glass. If those smaller machines that do not take back glass were to be rolled out in a scheme, that would make it impossible to add glass in the future. The trial showed that once a retailer had been set up on that basis, collection of glass was not a possibility for the future.

Retailers will have the flexibility to accept returns through machines or manually, over the counter, if that better meets their needs. As I said, we are committed to testing different return,

storage and collection arrangements in preparation for the scheme's implementation.

Businesses that choose to use RVMs will have flexibility in respect of the type of machines that they operate, subject to some basic technical criteria being met. There will not be a mandated RVM model.

Liam McArthur (Orkney Islands) (LD): I, too, declare an interest, in that I was a member of the cross-party delegation to Oslo. As a member of a party that has since 2012 been committed to a DRS, I welcome the commitment that has been made today, and much of the content of the cabinet secretary's statement.

Can the cabinet secretary confirm that the proposals will be island proofed, so that accessibility and affordability for island residents, businesses and communities are properly taken into account?

Given the strong evidence from Norway about the environmental and economic benefits of excluding glass, thereby allowing other less environmentally impactful materials to be used, can the cabinet secretary also confirm that she has opened a further debate—

The Deputy Presiding Officer: I think that that is enough, Mr McArthur.

Liam McArthur: —about the inclusion of glass—

The Deputy Presiding Officer: You have asked two questions already. Thank you.

Roseanna Cunningham: I will catch up with Liam McArthur on some of the wider issues. I absolutely reassure him that the comments that I am making about remote and rural premises also apply to island premises. I know that the issue that he raises is a real one; it has been raised by my colleague, Michael Russell, in respect of Gigha. I want to reassure Liam McArthur that we take that point on board.

There are different ways to manage the scheme. Norway has remote and rural areas and it has islands, and there are plenty of other examples internationally of the issue being resolved. I am not concerned that that will not happen in Scotland.

I can share details with Liam McArthur, but I do not have time to do so just now.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: The questions are getting very long again, and there are five left to ask. We will not get everybody in, but I will do my best.

Dr Alasdair Allan (Na h-Eileanan an Iar) (SNP): On rural and remote and island communities, might one way around problems that

a number of members have raised involve setting up communal return points at shops and other institutions, including schools and community centres?

Roseanna Cunningham: We envisage exactly that possibility. The scheme design allows the establishment of community-led return points, which could be provided by a local authority, or even by a third sector provider, and will encourage the public to make best use of local services across the country.

Finlay Carson (Galloway and West Dumfries) (Con): I declare an interest, in that I was part of the cross-party group that visited Norway to see the DRS scheme.

The proposed flat-rate deposit of 20p does not take into consideration the cost of recovery or how sustainable each material is. Can the cabinet secretary set out how the scheme will encourage producers to switch to more recyclable and lower-carbon packaging?

Roseanna Cunningham: Finlay Carson should be aware that a number of initiatives are under way. For example, his Government at Westminster has introduced a kind of plastic tax, which approaches the issue from the direction of the producer. As well as what we are announcing today in Scotland, a number of things that deal with the issue that he raised are happening in the UK as a whole. I know that if he were to question Michael Gove on the plastic tax, he would get a fairly robust answer.

I am happy to talk more with Finlay Carson about the 20p deposit. We were thinking about the impact on the customer and the need for the deposit to be a straightforward and simple one that people will want to reclaim.

James Kelly (Glasgow) (Lab): I recently visited Family Shopper in Blantyre, which returns some of the proceeds from its reverse vending machine to the community. How can the scheme that the cabinet secretary has outlined today incentivise community involvement?

Roseanna Cunningham: There is nothing in our scheme design that would make what James Kelly described impossible. I expect that it is one of the things that people will want to consider. I think that it was Alex Rowley who talked about a similar thing happening elsewhere. Those who will administer schemes will perhaps have a view, but the decision will be entirely a matter for the customer. I anticipate that, in some cases, what the member suggests will happen, and that in others it will not.

Kenneth Gibson (Cunninghame North) (SNP): I declare that I have never been to Oslo.

Can the cabinet secretary provide an assurance that return accessibility—for example, for people without cars—will be a key consideration in relation to implementation, so that people can make returns with ease?

Roseanna Cunningham: I am now wondering whether I should have also declared that I have been to Norway to look at the system there. In defence of all those of us who went there, I note that the system is astonishing to see, and that gaining understanding of it has cleared away a lot of the concern about deposit return systems.

In response to Kenneth Gibson's question, I say that we are committed to working with retailers in the coming months to test different return, storage and collection arrangements. In addition, we will consider options for retailers to access support to acquire reverse vending machines, when they choose to operate automated returns. Those matters will be taken forward by the implementation advisory group that I mentioned.

Portfolio Question Time

14:30

Social Security and Older People

Scottish Welfare Fund

1. **John Scott (Ayr) (Con):** To ask the Scottish Government how it allocates funding from the Scottish welfare fund to local authorities. (S5O-03188)

The Cabinet Secretary for Social Security and Older People (Shirley-Anne Somerville): Scottish welfare fund funding is allocated to local authorities in accordance with a formula that is agreed by the Scottish Government and the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities. The formula is based on the income domain of the Scottish index of multiple deprivation, so that local authorities with more people on low incomes get higher allocations, ensuring that the Scottish welfare fund is focused on the most deprived areas.

John Scott: The cabinet secretary will be aware that there are different overspends and underspends of the Scottish welfare fund across local authorities. Does the Scottish Government take that into account—or does it believe that it should take that into account—when distributing the funding?

Shirley-Anne Somerville: It is up to each local authority to manage the budget in that year for its local area. It is important that the formula basis—which is based on deprived areas—is held to and stays that way. We therefore encourage local authorities to ensure that they manage their own expenditure and use up their allocation. However, we do not take underspend into account as we move into the next financial year, because it is important that we recognise the deprived communities on which the formula is based.

Kenneth Gibson (Cunninghame North) (SNP): Does the cabinet secretary agree that the Scottish Government would not have to provide any welfare support to Scottish local authorities if it was not for the savage cuts to social security that have been imposed by the United Kingdom Tory Government, which is backed by Mr Scott?

Shirley-Anne Somerville: I absolutely agree with the premise of Mr Gibson's question. The fact that we have to provide for the nearly one third of a million households in Scotland that require a Scottish welfare fund is a sad indictment of the UK Government's record on welfare cuts. We have provided money to ensure that the Scottish welfare fund is there for people who are in crisis. However, it is a sad time when we once again

have to mitigate against UK Government welfare reform.

Young Carer Grant

2. **Alison Johnstone (Lothian) (Green):** To ask the Scottish Government what its response is to the reported concerns raised by young carer groups that the current proposals for the young carer grant are unduly restrictive. (S5O-03189)

The Cabinet Secretary for Social Security and Older People (Shirley-Anne Somerville): The Scottish Government is committed to co-designing the young carer grant with young carers and stakeholder organisations to ensure that the grant meets the needs of our young carers.

The draft regulations that have been passed to the Scottish Commission on Social Security for scrutiny have been amended in line with the feedback that was received through the consultation; user research; the young carer grant working group; and the young carer panels.

Alison Johnstone: The Greens particularly welcome the decision to allow young carers to be recognised for caring for more than one person. However, the current proposals still appear to extend to only one young carer, which the Carers Trust Scotland says is unfair; when two young carers provide support, one would appear to miss out. Will the cabinet secretary take action to address the issue?

Shirley-Anne Somerville: The Government has moved on a number of issues as we have developed the regulations and as we go through the different processes. As I said in my original answer to Alison Johnstone, the regulations are with the commission. I look forward to the commission's feedback on the first set of regulations that it will consider in due course.

Mark Griffin (Central Scotland) (Lab): The cabinet secretary knows that carers want restrictions on studying to be ended, support for caring for multiple people, and changes to the poverty-inducing earnings cliff edge. Will she ensure that, when the carers strategic policy statement is launched next month, the consultation that flows from it will not be about whether the Government should introduce the long-called-for changes but about how carers want those policies to develop, ready for when the carers allowance is fully transferred?

Shirley-Anne Somerville: The announcements and the proposals that will come forward, which Mark Griffin mentioned, will not be specifically to do with social security; they will be on wider carers issues, and the development will not be led by me. However, it is important that we consider social security in the wider context of what is happening for carers in Scotland. The Government is

determined to ensure that we support carers in social security and other aspects as we move through that process. The developments that Mark Griffin referred to will be an important way to ensure that we receive feedback from carers and stakeholder organisations on what they wish to see in the longer term.

Older People (Assistance to Stay at Home)

3. Graham Simpson (Central Scotland) (Con): To ask the Scottish Government how it assists older people to stay in their homes for as long as possible. (S5O-03190)

The Minister for Older People and Equalities (Christina McKelvie): We are absolutely committed to supporting older people to live as independently as possible at home or in a homely setting. This year, we are increasing our package of investment in social care and integration to exceed £700 million. That demonstrates the Government's commitment to support older people and disabled people, and recognises the vital role of unpaid carers.

Last month, the Government published "A Fairer Scotland for Older People: A Framework for Action", which identifies actions that will be taken to maximise the contribution of older people and remove the barriers that they face, including in the areas of housing and care, while maintaining their personal independence.

Graham Simpson: I am sure that the minister will take the opportunity to acknowledge the contribution that care and repair services play in helping older people to live independently at home for as long as possible. Does she agree that denying that service to older people, as some councils have chosen to do by withdrawing funding, is unacceptable? Will she give a commitment to review the funding mechanisms that support such services, as Care and Repair Scotland and Age Scotland have called for, so that we can ensure that they are consistent across the country?

Christina McKelvie: I know that Graham Simpson is well aware of some of the innovative work that is being done in those areas, including the work with the University of Stirling and Age Scotland, and he will know that local authorities have responsibility for care and repair services. No direct issues have been raised with me on them. Those issues would be raised with my housing colleagues, and I am happy to ensure that they are aware of the concerns that Graham Simpson has raised.

Gender Recognition (Legislation)

4. Patrick Harvie (Glasgow) (Green): To ask the Scottish Government, in light of the 2016

Scottish National Party manifesto commitment, whether it will legislate in the current parliamentary session to bring gender recognition law up to international best practice. (S5O-03191)

The Cabinet Secretary for Social Security and Older People (Shirley-Anne Somerville): The Government is strongly committed to maintaining and, indeed, advancing trans rights and equality. Like all the parties in the Parliament, we want to reform the gender recognition law. Our 2018-19 programme for government reaffirmed that commitment to legislation on gender recognition.

The majority of the 15,500 responses to the Scottish Government's consultation on gender recognition supported the proposals. However, we recognise that some respondents expressed sincerely held concerns about reform. We will take account of those concerns as we reach our decisions on the next steps, and we will announce our response to the consultation in due course.

Patrick Harvie: I am glad that the cabinet secretary reminded members that all five political parties in the Parliament stood on manifesto commitments to continue to advance that legislation. In the Equality Network's hustings in advance of the 2016 election, every political party leader gave a clear personal commitment to see that legislation introduced. Does the cabinet secretary recognise that a much more coherent campaign against trans rights and equality has developed with the delay since the consultation, which has included those who seek to portray trans people as a threat in a way that is reminiscent of previous campaigns against lesbian, gay and bisexual equality? Does she recognise that there is impatience to see the legislation introduced? Can she give us a timetable?

Shirley-Anne Somerville: I appreciate that stakeholder groups and individuals across Scotland are looking to the Parliament to ensure that there is change. There is an imperative on all of us to ensure that the debate is carried out in the right manner and with respect and that different opinions are recognised, and that that is done on the foundation of trans inclusivity and ensuring that trans rights are respected along with other rights in our community.

Trans people are not a threat; they never have been, and they never will be. However, it is important that we listen to people who have concerns, to ensure that we are doing everything that we can to reassure them and work through their concerns. That is why I will ensure that I go through a due diligence process of looking at the consultation responses, to understand the concerns that are out there and work with people to find solutions. That is what I ask of everybody in

the chamber and beyond. If we are committed to ensuring that everyone in Scotland is respected and has a place in our society, we all have an obligation to come forward with solutions about how we do that in a respectful manner.

Joan McAlpine (South Scotland) (SNP): I remind Patrick Harvie that one of the groups that is most concerned about the proposals is lesbians. Nothing in the SNP 2016 manifesto said that males with male bodies, including male genitals, should be able to declare themselves female without any medical or psychological assessment or safeguarding.

Trans people are not a threat; it is men who are a threat because men commit 97 per cent of sexual crimes. What evidence does the Government have that males who self-declare as female no longer offend at male rates?

Shirley-Anne Somerville: I welcome Joan McAlpine's reaffirmation that trans people are not a threat. The important point that is picked up is that there is a perceived threat from men who will use the debate around trans rights. It is very important that we recognise that—I recognised it in a blog that I put out on the subject—and that we tackle that fear that women have of men and ensure that we deal with it. We must also ensure that we develop trans rights in a respectful manner.

The Government is absolutely determined to move forward with gender recognition laws, but it is important that we do so in the right manner. We must ensure that the process that we have at the moment changes and that we listen to people's concerns around how we are trying to change it. We must also ensure that people recognise that the Government is proposing something that would involve a solemn declaration that would be made in front of a notary public, and that there would be serious consequences if it was ever broken.

It is important that we ensure that self-declaration is made in front of a notary public and that criminal offences will be available for someone to be charged if they abuse the system. If we can work to ensure that the process that we introduce recognises concerns, but also ensure that we are delivering a system of gender recognition that is fit for purpose in view of what is going on in the international community, we can move Scotland a long way forward on an issue that it is difficult for many of us to find a solution to.

The Deputy Presiding Officer (Christine Grahame): I appreciate that that was a lengthier answer on a sensitive matter, but I would like shorter answers, please, so that everybody gets in.

Benefits Claims (Removal of Back-dating)

5. Bob Doris (Glasgow Maryhill and Springburn) (SNP): To ask the Scottish Government what its position is on the Department for Work and Pensions' removal of the protected date of claim guarantees, which previously allowed councils and Citizens Advice Scotland to back-date benefits claims of their clients to the start of the application process rather than the final submission date. (S5O-03192)

The Cabinet Secretary for Social Security and Older People (Shirley-Anne Somerville): That is yet another area in which there are great concerns over universal credit and its effect on people in Scotland.

There are many reasons why someone might not be able to make a claim from the day that they are entitled to do so—for example, they may not have digital access. Therefore, it is important that the protected dates that were available are recognised by the United Kingdom Government.

Bob Doris: The removal of the financial safeguards for some of my most vulnerable constituents is alarming and unacceptable. Glasgow City Council has estimated that each and every month 200 Glaswegians will miss out as a result.

Does the cabinet secretary agree that the flaws in the universal credit system require to be fixed, not made worse at the expense of the poorest in society, including many of my constituents? Will she join me in calling for an urgent rethink of the appalling changes and for them to be scrapped altogether?

Shirley-Anne Somerville: Once again, Bob Doris raises a very important point. I fully support the reasoning behind his question and his calls for action from the UK Government.

Social Security Scotland (Benefit Payments)

6. Fulton MacGregor (Coatbridge and Chryston) (SNP): To ask the Scottish Government how much Social Security Scotland has paid out in benefits since the Social Security (Scotland) Act 2018 was passed. (S5O-03193)

The Cabinet Secretary for Social Security and Older People (Shirley-Anne Somerville): The Social Security (Scotland) Bill received royal assent on 1 June 2018, with Social Security Scotland being established on 1 September 2018. The agency paid out £197 million between 1 September 2018 and 31 March 2019. The breakdown includes £158.5 million for carers allowance and £33.9 million for carers allowance supplement, which makes an investment in carers of more than £192 million. Payments of £4.4

million have been made for the best start grant pregnancy and baby payment.

Fulton MacGregor: The cabinet secretary mentioned the best start grant. More has been paid out for that in two months than the DWP paid out for the benefit that it replaced in a whole year. That has put money into the pockets of families with children, many of whom have been hit by the United Kingdom Government cuts. Does the cabinet secretary agree that that shows the positive difference that we are making to families throughout Scotland with our new powers over social security?

Shirley-Anne Somerville: This Government wants to ensure that our children get the best start in life, and using our new social security powers to help to make that happen is a very important part of our programme.

In the first three months, more than 9,700 families received the pregnancy and baby payment. The best start grant takes provision for the first child from £500 under the sure start maternity grant up to a total of £1,100 over three payments. Families who have subsequent children, who received nothing from the UK Government, will receive up to a total of £800. That is £1,400 more than under the UK system for a two-child family in Scotland.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: I call Michelle Ballantyne. Please be brief.

Michelle Ballantyne (South Scotland) (Con): Last week, we heard that Social Security Scotland has spent £9.1 million on temporary and contract workers. How does the Scottish Government plan to ensure that we will have enough permanent staff to deliver the remaining 98 per cent of devolved benefits?

Shirley-Anne Somerville: The use of contract staff within the programme is an important way to ensure that we have the right skills mix at the right time. There are also particular areas where it is better to use contract staff than a permanent member of Scottish Government staff because the types of skills that we require are required only for a short time in a particular part of the programme. That is why we are taking important steps to ensure that we create the right mix of permanent staff, temporary staff and contract staff, with a keen eye on the public purse.

Best Start Grant (Pregnancy and Baby Payments)

7. **Rhoda Grant (Highlands and Islands) (Lab):** To ask the Scottish Government how many families in the Highlands and Islands have been awarded a best start grant pregnancy and baby payment since December 2018, and how many have had their applications rejected. (S5O-03194)

The Cabinet Secretary for Social Security and Older People (Shirley-Anne Somerville): Social Security Scotland had made about 600 best start grant pregnancy and baby payments to families in the Highlands and Islands electoral region by the end of February 2019. In the same period, about 300 applications were denied and a small number were withdrawn.

Rhoda Grant: The cabinet secretary will know that as many as one in five children is in poverty in parts of my region, yet, as she has just told us, more than 300 families had their grant applications rejected. A recent report from Social Security Scotland on the delivery of the grant has shown that staff are unclear about the scheme and are working under intense pressure, that the guidance is long winded and that the systems are not fully tested. Can the cabinet secretary give an assurance that families in my region who are entitled to a payment have got it and that any failures in the system have not led to anyone missing out?

Shirley-Anne Somerville: I say to Rhoda Grant that I absolutely do not recognise her assessment of the Social Security Scotland agency or its workings. If she refers to the new insights research that is published by Social Security Scotland, she will see that it shows satisfaction rates of 98 per cent and 100 per cent for online and telephone inquiries. That proves that we have an agency that is based on dignity, fairness and respect.

Applications were denied, particularly around the new benefit, for many reasons. It could be, for example, that people were not on the low-income benefits that they have to be on in order to be eligible. We had a number of people applying for best start pregnancy and baby payments who did not live in Scotland, and we had a number of people applying whose child was not within the age range that the entitlement is actually for.

We will look seriously at why applications have been rejected in different parts of the country but I refute Rhoda Grant's allegations that there are flaws in the Social Security Scotland system. People who apply for the grants are getting them, and it is a shame that the Scottish Labour Party cannot recognise the success of Social Security Scotland and its staff.

Childcare Expansion (Impact on Benefit Recipients)

8. **Liz Smith (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con):** To ask the Scottish Government what the impact will be on benefit recipients of the expansion to 1,140 hours of funded childcare. (S5O-03195)

The Cabinet Secretary for Social Security and Older People (Shirley-Anne Somerville): A

key driver for the expansion to 1,140 hours is the evidence that all children, especially those experiencing the most disadvantage, benefit from access to high-quality early learning and childcare. The increase in hours, and the new approach to flexibility and choice, could make it easier for families to access work, training or study.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: Liz Smith may ask the quickest supplementary question ever.

Liz Smith: What contingency measures does the Scottish Government have in place for those who are on benefits if they are going to have to pay up-front childcare fees because neither the publicly funded nurseries nor the private nurseries have spaces available?

Shirley-Anne Somerville: It is important that I get the point over to Liz Smith that the Scottish Government, local authorities and private providers are on track to deliver on the commitment to 1,140 hours. I hope that she is therefore assured that that situation will not arise.

Finance, Economy and Fair Work

Oil and Gas (Jobs)

1. **Liam Kerr (North East Scotland) (Con):** To ask the Scottish Government how it plans to protect the jobs of people employed in the North Sea oil and gas sector as the industry changes. (S5O-03196)

The Minister for Trade, Investment and Innovation (Ivan McKee): As highlighted in our energy strategy, Scotland's oil and gas sector is a key component of our energy system and our economy. It can also play a positive role in supporting the global low-carbon transition. In taking forward the aims and ambitions of the strategy, Skills Development Scotland and stakeholders have been working across a number of sectoral groups to ensure alignment of skills planning and delivery. That work will enable pathways for future employment, reflecting the potential impact of challenging demographics while addressing demand, especially in areas such as digital technology, automation, and advanced manufacturing.

Liam Kerr: The minister will be aware that oil and gas support 280,000 United Kingdom jobs and workers in the energy sector, many of whom are based in the north-east and each of whom contributes an average of over £170,000 to the economy. However, Aberdeen City Council's general revenue grant is being cut by more than £20 million and north-east councils face funding cuts of £100,000 per day. Given that context, when can we expect a fair share for north east councils?

Ivan McKee: North-east councils, like all councils across Scotland, get their fair share of the Scottish Government's support to councils, which has increased. Councils in the north-east, as across Scotland, keep all their council tax payments and non-domestic rates receipts.

Immigration (Economic Contribution)

2. **Alex Cole-Hamilton (Edinburgh Western) (LD):** To ask the Scottish Government what assessment the finance secretary has made of the contribution that immigration makes to Scotland's economy. (S5O-03197)

The Cabinet Secretary for Finance, Economy and Fair Work (Derek Mackay): Migration is vital to Scotland's population growth and makes an essential contribution to future economic prosperity and delivery of public services. We know that people who come to live and work in Scotland and across the United Kingdom typically contribute more through tax revenues than they consume by way of public services. Research from Oxford Economics published last June found that people who arrived in the UK in 2016 are projected to make a total net positive contribution of £26.9 billion to the UK's public finances over the entirety of their stay.

Alex Cole-Hamilton: Last week, the Federation of Small Businesses revealed that one in 10 small businesses in Scotland is led by an immigrant entrepreneur, contributing more than £13 billion to the Scottish economy. During its recent inquiry, the Economy, Energy and Fair Work Committee heard from Scottish Chambers of Commerce that businesses could find themselves in the position where their route to Government support is somewhat unclear. Given the lack of—

The Deputy Presiding Officer: No, I want a question. We are getting a lot of preambles and I do not like preambles.

Alex Cole-Hamilton: What consideration has the Government given to whether that lack of transparency could deter immigrant entrepreneurs from starting or upscaling businesses in Scotland?

Derek Mackay: The Scottish Government has welcomed the FSB report, and Stuart McMillan MSP is hosting an FSB reception here this evening. Jamie Hepburn has engaged with the FSB on the report.

I agree that we should look at further ways of supporting entrepreneurship, business growth, and the scaling up the businesses of those migrant entrepreneurs who are building successful businesses in Scotland's economy and contributing to our shared prosperity.

Jackie Baillie (Dumbarton) (Lab): I want to push the cabinet secretary further on that,

because, despite immigrant-led SMEs generating £13 billion and 107,000 jobs, they struggle—growth is erratic and export activity is poor. Is sufficient support available from Scottish Enterprise and business gateway to help immigrant-led SMEs flourish, and what more can be done?

Derek Mackay: As a member of the Economy, Jobs and Fair Work Committee, Jackie Baillie is well aware that business gateway is led by local government, but, yes, we are proactively looking at that, partly as a consequence of the committee's inquiry. I believe that there is support from Scottish Enterprise, but I want to do more, and that is why we will engage further with the FSB and other business representative organisations to try to support those groups that, for whatever reason, feel that financial products and support have not been available. We want to address that and celebrate the economic and social contribution that migrants have made to this country.

Living Wage Accreditation

3. Linda Fabiani (East Kilbride) (SNP): To ask the Scottish Government how it encourages employers to commit to having living wage accreditation. (S5O-03198)

The Minister for Public Finance and Digital Economy (Kate Forbes): Scotland has more than 1,400 living wage accredited employers which, proportionately, is over five times more than the number in the rest of the United Kingdom.

To support our ambition to be a fair work nation by 2025, we have provided £380,000 to the Poverty Alliance this year to support employers through the accreditation process and to drive the commitment to lift at least 25,000 additional workers to at least the real living wage by 2021, focusing on low-pay sectors such as hospitality, to help those most affected by low income levels.

Linda Fabiani: Will the minister join me in recognising the excellent initiative of Excel Vending in East Kilbride in becoming a living wage employer to mark its 25th anniversary and thus encouraging other employers to consider that way of marking special milestones in their companies' development?

Kate Forbes: I certainly join Linda Fabiani in congratulating that company on its 25th anniversary and recognising that it has committed to fair work practices that obviously improve staff retention and productivity. I hope that the success of that business will encourage others to follow suit.

Currency Proposals (Central Bank Reserves)

4. Anas Sarwar (Glasgow) (Lab): To ask the Scottish Government what assessment it has made of the amount of reserves required for a new central bank in the event of a separate Scottish currency. (S5O-03199)

The Cabinet Secretary for Finance, Economy and Fair Work (Derek Mackay): First, our proposals are to keep the pound in the immediate term. A Scottish National Party Government will take the steps that are necessary to enable the Scottish Parliament to authorise the preparation of a Scottish currency as soon as is practicable after independence.

The sustainable growth commission, which was established by the First Minister in her capacity as SNP leader, produced a detailed report on the financial, economic and regulatory requirements necessary for the transition to an independent currency. It engaged extensively with businesses in developing its recommendations. It recommended the introduction of six tests to guide that transition, one of which is on the financial requirements of Scottish residents and businesses.

Our position is clear: until a new currency can be safely and securely established in the interests of the economy as a whole, the currency of an independent Scotland should continue to be the pound sterling.

Anas Sarwar: I thank the cabinet secretary for that response, but it does not sound as if the Government has done any assessment of what the level of foreign exchange reserves would need to be—so let me help him. Professor MacDonald of the University of Glasgow's Adam Smith business school has estimated that an independent currency would require £40 billion of foreign exchange reserves in order to run a managed system. Does the finance secretary, who sets the budgets of this Parliament, understand that that means more cuts, higher borrowing and tax rises?

Derek Mackay: No, I do not accept that at all, but I am delighted that Anas Sarwar is also scenario planning for Scottish independence. That is a very welcome revelation.

The six tests have been outlined in the growth commission's documentation. I would have thought that Anas Sarwar would welcome the fact that an economic plan on independence would be an alternative to the austerity that we have endured under the Tory Government. We have outlined the tests that we would apply as we transition to an independent country, making the right decisions for Scotland's economy. As I have said, on independence, Scotland will keep the pound.

Murdo Fraser (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con): Are we any clearer what the transaction costs will be to Scottish businesses if we have a different currency from our largest market in the rest of the United Kingdom? [*Interruption.*]

The Deputy Presiding Officer: I would like to hear the answers, please.

Derek Mackay: I encourage anybody with a genuine interest in how to grow Scotland's economy to read the growth commission's report—and the resolution that was supported at the SNP conference—which sets out how we can grow our economy and deliver a more successful society using the levers and powers of independence. The report goes through all the requirements that would have to be fulfilled to enable us to move to an independent currency if that was in the interests of the economy at the time, which we would be advised about by a Scottish central bank. That is all laid out in the growth commission documentation, which I encourage Opposition members to read.

Bruce Crawford (Stirling) (SNP): For the sake of Anas Sarwar and other members in the chamber who have obviously not read the growth commission's proposals in depth, will the cabinet secretary confirm—[*Interruption.*]

The Deputy Presiding Officer: I cannot hear the question.

Bruce Crawford: It is a very good question, Presiding Officer.

Will the cabinet secretary confirm that the tests that would guide any move to an independent currency include a sufficiency of foreign exchange and financial reserves to allow for successful currency management in a successful independent Scotland?

Derek Mackay: In the interest of brevity, because we have covered the six tests previously, I say again that they are fiscal sustainability; central bank credibility and stability of debt issuance; the financial requirements of Scottish residents and businesses; sufficiency of foreign exchange and financial reserves; a fit to trade and investment patterns; and correlation with the economic and trade cycle. Those are the tests that we would apply.

Independence would give us choice, economic powers and levers that are currently denied to us so that we could make the right decisions for Scotland's economy. Any decision on currency would be taken by an independent Scottish Parliament. That is right—the right to choose is what the SNP seeks for Scotland.

Patrick Harvie (Glasgow) (Green): Is it not amusing to hear those who argued vociferously against a currency union a few years ago and still

argue against sterlingisation—quite rightly—now say how outrageous it would be to not continue to use the pound? Does the cabinet secretary look forward as I do to seeing those parties finally have to make a decision on which currency option they will support when Scotland votes for independence?

Derek Mackay: The only currency that Labour and the Conservatives understand is austerity, which is what we have endured as a consequence of their economic policies. I know that the Opposition does not like this, but the United Kingdom Government cannot stop an independent Scotland using the pound. We do not need its permission to do that. The retention of sterling is open to the people of Scotland, as are the choices that come with independence, which is why we want the levers of independence. We looked at the most successful small advanced economies around the globe, and the only thing that they have that we do not is independence.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: I let that run because it was an important question—all of them are important, of course—but I want the rest of the questions and answers to be short and snappy.

Large Business Supplement (Central Scotland)

5. **Alison Harris (Central Scotland) (Con):** To ask the Scottish Government how much it expects to raise from the large business supplement in Central Scotland region in 2019-20. (S50-03200)

The Minister for Public Finance and Digital Economy (Kate Forbes): Local authorities administer the non-domestic rates system, and information on revenue that is raised by the large business supplement is not currently available at constituency level. In 2019-20, we forecast that the supplement will raise £8.3 million in Falkirk and North Lanarkshire, and a further £16.5 million in South Lanarkshire, which reflects the role of the council there as the designated authority that is responsible for collecting receipts from electricity generation, transmission and distribution subjects.

Alison Harris: In this financial year, businesses in Falkirk will pay £1.75 million more than they would if they were based in England. Does it remain the Scottish Government's aim to implement the Barclay recommendation to reduce the large business supplement by 2020 or earlier, if that is affordable?

Kate Forbes: Falkirk will probably reflect the national trend, under which businesses in more than 90 per cent of properties in Scotland will pay a lower poundage in 2019-20 than they would in other parts of the United Kingdom. They will also benefit from the most generous rates relief scheme in the UK, which, through the small business bonus scheme, takes more than 100,000

properties out of rates altogether. It was only a few weeks ago that a Westminster committee recommended that the UK Government should adopt the Scottish Government's unique business growth accelerator.

We accepted the Barclay review recommendations on the large business supplement. In the meantime, we are ensuring that Scotland is the best place to do business in.

Strengthening the Economy (Glasgow)

6. Annie Wells (Glasgow) (Con): To ask the Scottish Government what plans it has to further strengthen the economy of Glasgow. (S5O-03201)

The Minister for Trade, Investment and Innovation (Ivan McKee): The Scottish Government is committed to supporting and unlocking economic growth across Scotland. In Glasgow, our focus on delivering key infrastructure has helped to establish the city as a home for innovation and to secure new jobs, including jobs through inward investment.

We are also working in partnership with others. Our £500 million commitment to the Glasgow city region deal has empowered local and regional partners to develop a transformational programme of investment, which will help to drive inclusive economic growth for the city and across the region.

Annie Wells: Earlier this year, Mark Johnston, who is Glasgow airport's managing director, forecast that the airport was set to lose 1 million passengers from the levels that it had in 2016. The failure to cut air passenger duty meant that Ryanair cut many of its routes that served Glasgow. Now that the Scottish Government has performed a U-turn on its commitment to cut the duty, will it explain how that decision will do anything to support growth at Glasgow airport?

Ivan McKee: The Scottish Government is committed to supporting our airports and recognises their importance to our economy. However, Annie Wells will be aware that the air departure tax has not been introduced because of issues with the United Kingdom Government's running of the scheme over a number of years. She will also be aware of the importance of the climate change emergency that we face and the issues that we need to address as a consequence.

Economic Growth (Update)

7. Joan McAlpine (South Scotland) (SNP): To ask the Scottish Government whether it will provide an update on the most recent official statistics on Scotland's economic growth. (S5O-03202)

The Cabinet Secretary for Finance, Economy and Fair Work (Derek Mackay): The Scottish Government published the latest official statistics on Scotland's economic growth on 1 May in the gross domestic product quarterly national accounts for quarter 4 of 2018. The accounts confirmed that the Scottish economy grew by 0.3 per cent in that quarter, which was higher than the United Kingdom rate of 0.2 per cent.

In 2018, the value of Scotland's gross domestic product per person, including offshore oil and gas, increased to £32,800, which was higher than the UK average of £31,900. The first estimate of GDP growth for quarter 1 of 2019 will be published on 19 June.

Joan McAlpine: I am delighted to hear of the strength of Scotland's economy. Does the cabinet secretary agree that the biggest threat to that continued success is a Tory Brexit, particularly in rural areas such as the south of Scotland? The Government's analysis showed that that area has one of the highest proportions of its workforce in sectors that will be most exposed by a no-deal Brexit.

Derek Mackay: That assessment is accurate. In particular, a no-deal Brexit threatens to create recession, business contraction, reduced exports and soaring unemployment from the current record-low level of 3.3 per cent. Any form of Brexit will damage Scotland's economy, and a no-deal Brexit would be catastrophic.

Veterans (Skills and Economic Contribution)

8. Maurice Corry (West Scotland) (Con): To ask the Scottish Government what action it will take to capitalise on the skills of veterans returning to the labour market to benefit the Scottish economy. (S5O-03203)

The Minister for Trade, Investment and Innovation (Ivan McKee): The Scottish Government aspires for Scotland to be the destination of choice for those who are leaving the armed forces. We recognise the challenges that are faced by those who are undergoing resettlement and taking the next steps in their careers.

We work closely with partners to ensure that armed forces leavers are aware of the training, development and employment opportunities that are available and to improve the support that is available to veterans and their families. Skills Development Scotland is working with the career transition partnership's RFEA services to ensure that early leavers are referred to SDS for support after discharge if they wish to take up that offer.

Maurice Corry: Several veterans who have good technical skills are being taken on by companies such as BT Openreach. Does the

minister agree that the time is now right for a more concentrated effort to encourage more veterans to take up trades-based apprenticeships?

Ivan McKee: Yes. The Scottish Government and SDS recognise the challenges for those who are undergoing resettlement, and apprenticeships and skills are a key part of resettlement. It is important that all service leavers who plan to settle in Scotland are informed of apprenticeships and other skills initiatives, to ensure that they can access SDS services. SDS is working with partners, including the Scottish Government's strategic working group, to raise awareness of what is on offer.

Maurice Corry has a keen interest in such matters. Earlier this week, I visited the Scottish veterans residence that is in my constituency in Glasgow. I am wearing the Scottish veterans tie, and I was delighted to see the huge amount of work that staff there are undertaking to focus on employment opportunities for veterans.

Air Departure Tax

The Deputy Presiding Officer (Christine Grahame): The next item of business is a debate on motion S5M-17190, in the name of Colin Smyth, on Scotland's future: scrap the cut to the air departure tax. I invite members who wish to speak in the debate to press their request-to-speak buttons now. I call Colin Smyth to speak to and move the motion.

15:10

Colin Smyth (South Scotland) (Lab): Last week, the Scottish Government made a welcome, if overdue, commitment to strengthening our emissions reduction targets and to accepting the Committee on Climate Change's recommendation of a target of net zero emissions by 2045. Labour welcomes that decision, as a target of net zero emissions has been our position for some time and reflects the urgency of the climate emergency that we face. However, those targets are not worth the paper they are written on if they are not backed by the policies that are needed to deliver them.

That is why the Scottish National Party's proposal to cut air departure tax was not only the wrong policy when it ditched it on the eve of this debate but the wrong policy when it was proposed in the SNP's 2016 election manifesto. It has been the wrong policy every day since then, as SNP minister after SNP minister has queued up to justify the policy and attack Labour when we have questioned it. The SNP amendment says that a cut in air passenger duty is

"not now compatible with the more ambitious targets that Scotland wishes to pursue",

but it never was compatible, and Labour's long-standing calls to drop the cut have been vindicated by the SNP's U-turn on the issue.

That U-turn should have been made a long time ago, because the Scottish Government's own analysis has consistently predicted that a 50 per cent cut in air departure tax would be bad for the environment, adding more than 60,000 tonnes of CO₂ equivalent to the atmosphere each year. The strategic environmental assessment of the policy raised concerns that a cut to ADT would drive a modal shift away from rail towards short-haul flights, yet it is only now that the SNP seems to realise that pursuing policies that would actively increase emissions from transport is damaging to the environment.

John Mason (Glasgow Shettleston) (SNP): Colin Smyth is talking about policies. Would the Labour Party be prepared to support the workplace parking levy, which might help?

Colin Smyth: The answer to that question is no. Nobody believes that Derek Mackay's proposal for a workplace parking levy was anything other than a fig leaf to cover the brutal cuts to council budgets that the Scottish Government is pursuing. The problem with the regressive workplace parking levy, under which a company boss will pay—[*Interruption.*] The cabinet secretary is speaking from a sedentary position. Does he want to make an intervention?

The Deputy Presiding Officer: Everything should be through the chair, please, cabinet secretary. I like to fulfil my function.

The Cabinet Secretary for Finance, Economy and Fair Work (Derek Mackay): Colin Smyth has just said that, apparently, nobody in the Labour Party believes in the workplace parking levy. Does that include those who took the other position at the Labour Party conference?

Colin Smyth: The Labour Party put its policy to its conference; the SNP did not. Derek Mackay sneaked the policy through in the budget because he knows that it is a regressive tax under which a company boss will pay the same as a company cleaner and the chief executive of a health board will be exempt but a carer on the living wage will have to stump up. The only thing that a workplace parking levy will do is ignite a public backlash that will undermine proper changes to the environment that we need to make in the future. I presume that that is why we have still not seen the cabinet secretary's proposals for that tax.

Transport already contributes over a third of Scotland's greenhouse gas emissions. It is the single biggest sectoral contributor, with emission levels barely any lower than they were in 1990 and higher than they were in 2016. When it comes to transport and the environment, the Scottish Government has been moving in the wrong direction.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: Excuse me a minute, Mr Smyth. There is a wee debate going on between the Glasgow MSPs on the back benches. I ask them to show some respect to the member who is leading the debate. I am sorry, Mr Smyth. I will make up your time.

Colin Smyth: Thank you, Presiding Officer. I presume that they are working out how much the SNP's proposed workplace parking levy will be.

When it comes to transport and the environment, the Government is moving in the wrong direction. Airline passenger numbers are higher than ever before—at Scotland's airports, they have increased by 40 per cent since 2010—yet the level of bus use continues to plummet and active travel rates are stuck at less than 2 per cent. Domestic air travel is the least environmentally friendly of all the modes of

transport: it has higher emissions per passenger kilometre than any other. In 2016, aviation was responsible for emitting more than 2 megatonnes of CO₂, which was an increase on the previous year and 50 per cent more than the levels in 1990.

A cut in ADT would continue to drive such emissions up, which would have been bad not only for the environment but for our public services, too. A 50 per cent cut in ADT would have cost £150 million a year, and the cost of abolishing it was likely to have been more than double that, which would have meant more than £300 million of cuts to our public services that they simply could not have afforded. It would also have been a tax cut that would have benefited the most well off, with the richest 10 per cent of people being almost three times more likely to fly in any year than those on the lowest incomes. In contrast, lower-income groups are disproportionately dependent on bus services, walking and cycling. Yet, the recent Scottish budget saw spending on those modes of travel frozen while, at the same, the SNP continued to argue for a £150 million cut to ADT, which is three times the total amount of support that is available for buses through the bus service operators grant.

I recognise the economic and strategic value of aviation, but we need to support it in a way that is responsible, sustainable and—crucially—in keeping with our broader transport and environmental aims. That means, for example, supporting Glasgow airport with the establishment of a direct rail link to cut car usage on the M8. It does not mean pursuing support for airports that increase emissions and drive passengers away from greener modes of transport such as cross-border rail.

The long-overdue SNP U-turn on air departure tax is welcome, but it seems that it is not just the SNP that has changed its position. The Tory amendment calls on the SNP to

“honour the commitment made in the manifesto it stood on in 2016 and introduce a reduction in Scotland's current ADT regime”.

The problem for the Tories is that, in calling for the SNP to honour its manifesto commitment, they are dumping their own. The 2016 Scottish Conservative manifesto was very clear. On air passenger duty, it said:

“We have studied the evidence on Air Passenger Duty, alongside the final report of our Tax Commission, and have concluded that we will not support the Scottish Government's proposed 50% cut in APD.”

That Tory tax commission also stated that

“the only impact of a reduction of APD would be to boost airline and airport profits”.

So, at a time when the world is declaring a climate emergency—

Patrick Harvie (Glasgow) (Green): Will the member take an intervention?

Colin Smyth: Unfortunately, I do not think that I will be able to have extra time. Is that correct, Presiding Officer?

The Deputy Presiding Officer: I can let you have extra time if you wish.

Colin Smyth: Thank you. In that case, I will take Patrick Harvie's intervention.

Patrick Harvie: I am very grateful for that. Colin Smyth is right to point out that other parties have changed their views. Will he remind us when Labour changed its view? It voted for the SNP's motion on the issue back in 2012.

Colin Smyth: I can tell Mr Harvie that our manifesto commitment was very clear—and we have stuck to it, while it seems that the SNP and the Tories have been dropping theirs.

I welcome the SNP's change in position on ADT. However, at a time when the world is declaring a climate emergency, the Scottish Tories are declaring themselves climate change deniers. Their response to rising transport emissions is to call for them to be raised even further. While the Tories move in the direction of Donald Trump on climate change, Scotland needs to do more and move faster in the direction of lower emissions. That means ditching not just the cut in air departure tax but other damaging policies including the brutal cuts that we have seen being made to local councils by the Scottish Government.

Since 2011, council budgets have been slashed by more than £1.5 billion, and that cut continues in this year's budget, which will devastate local services. We see that picture clearly in transport. Across Scotland, bus services are being dismantled route by route—often as a direct result of funding pressures on councils, and particularly in rural communities in which subsidised services are a lifeline for many. Likewise, cuts to local authority budgets are having an impact on active travel. If we are serious about reducing emissions from cars, the way to achieve that is to put in place affordable alternatives.

If transport is the biggest emitter of greenhouse gases, agriculture is not far behind it. That sector is of huge importance to the Scottish economy, particularly in rural and remote areas, but it is also one of the hardest to treat as far as emissions are concerned. The current support system does little to encourage—much less enforce—best practice on emissions and sustainability, yet the Government is dragging its heels in redesigning agricultural support to take account of—

The Deputy Presiding Officer: Just stop for a minute, please, Mr Smyth. I am looking at the

motion, and it seems that I may have been quite lax in allowing you to continue. The motion refers only to the abolition of air departure tax, but you are now talking about cows and things. We have therefore moved off the topic a wee bit. You should be winding up anyway, so please do so.

Colin Smyth: I will refrain from arguing the link between the two, Presiding Officer.

Over the past 200 years, humans have shown that they can change the climate—unfortunately, it has been for the worse. We have a far shorter time in which to recognise the climate emergency that we face and to change our environment for the better. The Government's U-turn on air departure tax is a welcome step on that journey, but Labour also recognises that other changes can be made and that there is still a long, long way to go and a lot more change is needed.

I move,

That the Parliament calls on the Scottish Government to abandon its policy to cut, then abolish, the Air Departure Tax.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: I remind members to please keep to their amendments as set out in the *Business Bulletin* and not to drift into other areas, exciting though they might be.

15:20

The Cabinet Secretary for Finance, Economy and Fair Work (Derek Mackay): To be fair, Colin Smyth has at least shown himself to be agile enough to amend his speech in the light of circumstances.

We are in the midst of a climate emergency, and business as usual will not do. In its new report, which was published last week, the Committee on Climate Change said that Scotland should set a 2045 target for net zero emissions of all greenhouse gases. This Government has been and will continue to be a world leader on climate change. As such, we have embraced the CCC's new report in full, acting immediately to amend the Climate Change (Emissions Reduction Targets) (Scotland) Bill not only to set a net zero target for 2045 but to increase the targets for 2030 and 2040.

It will not be easy to meet those targets; it will require difficult decisions to be made—Parliament needs to be prepared for that—including on the Government's policy on air departure tax, which was deferred to ensure that it was not devolved in, as the UK Government admitted, a defective state. To protect rural communities, we must find a solution to the Highlands and Islands exemption before we can take on the tax, and the Scottish Government will continue to work with the UK Government on a solution.

It has been a long-standing policy of this Government to reduce ADT by 50 per cent and to abolish it when resources allow. However, we have always sought to balance the economic benefits that the policy can bring with the impact on the environment. The Air Departure Tax (Scotland) Bill itself placed a duty on ministers to consider the economic, environmental and social impacts before setting the rates and bands and to keep the matter under review. Following the First Minister's declaration of a climate emergency and the new emissions reduction targets for Scotland, we are committed to looking across the whole range of our responsibilities and increasing action, where necessary, and we have come to the conclusion that the economic benefits that we have sought through our ADT policy are not compatible with our new emissions reduction targets.

The Government has not taken that decision lightly, but we have recognised that it is an important first step towards meeting our tougher climate targets and rising to the climate challenge.

Murdo Fraser (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con): In the light of everything that the cabinet secretary has said, is the Scottish Government still committed to supporting the third runway at Heathrow?

Derek Mackay: As I have said, the environment secretary and other ministers will look at appropriate policy responses with regard to our overall suite of policies, but this is an important and significant first step.

I have seen much of Murdo Fraser's pontification about the air departure tax and air passenger duty, and Colin Smyth is right: the position in the Tories' manifesto was that they were not convinced about the need for a reduction in the tax. The Tories need to be careful what they wish for, because the tax cuts that they have planned now total more than three quarters of a billion pounds. If they are so concerned about APD, I should point out that the UK Government will continue those rates in the UK after failing to devolve it properly to Scotland. The evidence that we have seen has led us to conclude that such a tax cut is incompatible with our ambitious climate change targets, and it is only the Tories who are going in the opposite direction.

Patrick Harvie: Will the cabinet secretary give way?

Derek Mackay: If I have time.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: It will have to be a short intervention.

Patrick Harvie: Thank you. I recognise that the Government wants to look at its wider range of policies, but is it not clear that, if a tax measure

that boosts faster aviation growth is incompatible with climate change policies, so is any other measure that does the same? Is the Government committed to stabilising aviation levels?

Derek Mackay: Aviation emissions actually account for a relatively small amount of Scotland's overall carbon emissions. The decision on ADT alone will have little impact if it is taken in isolation, so we will have to look at the range of policies that the Government has. If we are serious about the climate emergency, all of us in Parliament need to look at our policies and take the appropriate actions to meet the ambitious climate change targets.

I agree with Colin Smyth that there is no point in having the targets if we are not putting in place the actions to get there. That is why it is significant that the Cabinet Secretary for Environment, Climate Change and Land Reform will make a statement to Parliament on the challenges involved in meeting the new targets.

Neil Findlay (Lothian) (Lab): Will the cabinet secretary take an intervention?

The Deputy Presiding Officer: The cabinet secretary does not have time.

Derek Mackay: We must take all appropriate action. On finance, we are committed to increasing the share of capital expenditure on low-carbon projects year on year to ensure that investment in infrastructure matches our ambition. As part of the budget agreement with the Greens, local authorities will be empowered to implement workplace parking levies to reduce emissions and encourage modal shift. If the Labour Party is serious in its efforts to tackle climate change and if this debate is to be more than just political commentary, the Labour Party needs to be prepared to recognise that its policies and reactions must also change and that difficult decisions are required. It should now drop its opposition to empowering councils through the workplace parking levy.

Tackling the climate emergency requires decisive action. The Government is up for that challenge, and I hope that others are, too.

I move amendment S5M-17190.1, to leave out from "abandon" to end and insert:

"review its policies and commitments in response to the global climate emergency and the Committee on Climate Change Report; believes that the Scottish Government should maintain its commitment to increasing the share of capital expenditure spent on low-carbon projects year on year; agrees that local authorities must be more empowered to tackle climate change and pursue policies and investments that are designed to encourage modal shift, such as the workplace parking levy and low emission zones, and further agrees that cutting and then abolishing Air Departure Tax is not now compatible with the more ambitious targets that Scotland wishes to pursue."

15:26

Jamie Greene (West Scotland) (Con): This very second, I am reading straight from the Scottish National Party's website, in a section that is ironically named "Scotland: open for business":

"We ... want to increase international connectivity and support our thriving tourist industry, so we'll use new powers coming to the Scottish Parliament to halve Air Passenger Duty, one of the highest taxes of its kind in the world, and ultimately abolish it."

What has changed? The much trumpeted and long-awaited reduction to the tax has been canned. It was a flagship policy that the SNP praised and defended to the hilt, but SNP members are all now frantically looking on social media to delete their tweets. Nicola Sturgeon is trying to walk a political tightrope. In one breath, she promises support for tourism, aviation, oil and gas and exports while declaring emergencies in another. She is giving hostages to fortune with policy changes that are bereft of intelligent scrutiny and the consequences of which have either been ignored or simply misunderstood.

Yesterday, Gordon Dewar of Edinburgh airport put it simply when he said:

"We've gone from personal commitments to all-out cancellation in ... two weeks, which shows just how reactionary this decision is."

He went on:

"airports and airlines have been led down a path of failed promises for three years by this Scottish government."

Those are his angry words, not mine.

Last night, the Scottish Chambers of Commerce, which is a sensible voice of business—*[Interruption.]* Some members do not think that it is sensible, which is a shame. Thank goodness they are not in government. The Scottish Chambers of Commerce said that the decision had been taken

"Despite years of consultation ... and detailed technical and economic evaluations",

and that the decision will

"do nothing to reduce emissions",

but instead will

"cut Scotland off at the knees".

What credible Government proactively does that to the business community? It is not one that those of us on the Conservative benches will sit in.

Derek Mackay: Will the member give way?

Jamie Greene: In my three years in the Parliament, never has such a U-turn resulted in such a damning indictment. That is just what it is: a U-turn.

Derek Mackay: Will the member give way?

Jamie Greene: Please sit down.

It is a monumental U-turn that is politically motivated and convenient. It is nothing more than a knee-jerk reaction to a serious and complex problem. It is a decision that flies in the face of the Government's own policy and advice and it does nothing to address the flawed logic at the heart of its rationale.

The issue has never been and nor should it ever be about whether members support the aviation industry or the environment, because we desperately need to support both. As a country, we need the business travellers who come and invest here and tourists who come and spend money here. What is wrong with giving hard-pressed families a helping hand on their well-deserved break?

Derek Mackay: Will the member take an intervention?

Jamie Greene: Yes, if it is very brief.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: It will have to be brief, because the member is in his last minute.

Derek Mackay: *[Interruption.]* My microphone is not working, Presiding Officer.

Jamie Greene: I have a fair bit to get through, Presiding Officer.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: The member has changed his mind, Mr Mackay, so please sit down. Mr Greene, you have to finish within your four minutes.

Jamie Greene: I am going to move on, because I have a lot to get through.

It is at best naive—*[Interruption.]*

The Deputy Presiding Officer: Please sit down, Mr Greene. There seems to be a wee problem here—what is it? Mr Greene, if you take the intervention, I will give you 30 seconds. It will have to be a 30-second intervention.

Derek Mackay: Out of curiosity, and based on what airlines and airports have said, does Jamie Greene think that the UK Government should reduce air passenger duty?

Jamie Greene: Derek Mackay knows that the whole point of devolution is that this Parliament should make the right decisions for Scotland, and he has made the wrong decision today.

It is, at best, naive and, at worst, disingenuous to single out any one industry in such a specific and uninformed way, with the cabinet secretary having done no consultation, no analysis and no economic forecasting.

What galls people the most is the sheer hypocrisy from the SNP. It thinks that it is right for

people in the Highlands and Islands to be exempt from the tax, that it is right to back Heathrow expansion and that it is right to send rockets to space from our peninsula. However, in one simple act of ill-thought-through policy reversal, the SNP has shown itself for what it really is: no friend of business and no friend of Scotland's tourism industry.

Today, we could have had a sensible, informed and balanced debate about the future of aviation and the future of our economy. Instead, the First Minister has turned the issue into a polarised game of political brinkmanship. The only losers of that game will be Scottish businesses, Scottish jobs and hard-working Scottish families. This is a sad U-turn that the Government will live to regret.

I move amendment S5M-17190.4, to leave out from "calls" to end and insert:

"notes the benefits of a competitive Air Departure Tax (ADT) regime; recognises that a reduction in this taxation for long-haul flights is essential for the retention and development of new intercontinental routes and economic ties across the world with a view to boost trade, tourism and inward investment into Scotland; understands that the devolution of ADT is a critical economic lever to achieve this, and calls on the Scottish Government to honour the commitment made in the manifesto it stood on in 2016 and introduce a reduction in Scotland's current ADT regime."

15:31

Patrick Harvie (Glasgow) (Green): I have had many opportunities to speak in the chamber against an aviation tax cut, before and since the devolution of such powers were, theoretically, agreed. The policy has clearly been dead for quite some time now, and I am delighted to finally have the chance to speak in a debate in celebration of its ultimate burial.

As far back as 2012, as soon as the Scottish Government proposed the policy, we made the very clear case against it. We showed that it would hurt the revenues that fund Scottish public services if the tax was reduced once the powers were devolved. We challenged the Government to say where that cost would come from, but we did not get a response. At a time when the Scottish Government was still carrying on with the delusional nonsense that the tax cut would somehow reduce emissions, it was Green questions to ministers that forced the Government to admit that such a policy would do the opposite and lead to an increase in emissions from aviation.

Through our work with the fellow travellers campaign group, we showed that the policy would demonstrably benefit the better-off. In any one year, the large majority of people in Scotland do not fly at all, so they would gain no benefit from the tax cut. Of those people who do fly, most fly once or twice a year, so the vast bulk of the tax cut

would go to the tiny number of wealthy frequent flyers, who would gain disproportionately from the policy.

I welcome the fact that there has been such movement since the debate in 2012. Back then, we were the only political party that made the coherent climate argument against the policy. There were individuals, including Malcolm Chisholm and Willie Rennie, who recognised the strength of our argument but, ultimately, only Alison Johnstone and I voted for the Green amendment on that occasion. The Labour Party voted with the Government on its unamended motion. It is important to recognise and welcome the fact that the SNP and Labour have changed their views.

I also want to welcome how far the Conservative Party has come, because it has made the most extraordinary change in the space of just one week. Last week, the Conservatives made a wee video for their social media in which they claimed that the Greens have never achieved any environmental change since the SNP has been in Government. Now, following this one policy announcement, the Conservatives say that the SNP has succumbed once again to the environmental extremists. I thank the Conservative Party for recognising the impact of the Greens.

We can see the positive effects of that Green influence in the Scottish Government's amendment today. The commitment to shift the balance of the capital budget away from high-carbon industries towards low-carbon industries is a concession to Green policy. There is a commitment to a workplace parking levy, which was introduced originally by Labour and was included in Scottish Labour local manifestos in recent years, but which is now opposed by Labour only because it is being introduced by the wrong political party.

We must make the longer-term case that aviation cannot be given a free pass. We all recognise that lifeline flights to the islands, for example, are a special case, but aircraft efficiency alone will not reduce emissions if we keep on flying more. If the whole world flew as much as we do in this country, there would be zero chance of averting climate disaster.

If ADT cuts are unacceptable as a means to boost aviation growth, so are other methods. The Scottish Government must drop its commitment to support the Heathrow third runway and other means of boosting aviation, and commit instead to public transport and to the investment in walking and cycling that would make a real difference to people getting about sustainably right across Scotland.

15:35

Liam McArthur (Orkney Islands) (LD): I thank Colin Smyth for bringing the debate to Parliament. Notwithstanding the finance secretary's last-minute U-turn yesterday, I confirm that the Scottish Liberal Democrats will support Mr Smyth's motion, not least because it reflects our party's consistently-held position on the air departure tax.

We will not, however, support either of the amendments. I am afraid that the Tory's position on ADT seems to have been crafted by the same brains trust that brought us Jeremy Corbyn's Brexit position. It therefore risks damaging the environment while also failing to satisfy the airline industry. As for the Government's amendment, I am afraid that Mr Mackay—reasonable as he ever is—cannot get away with rewriting history. He is right; cutting and abolishing ADT is certainly not compatible with the more ambitious climate change targets that we wish to set, but it was not compatible with the previous climate change targets either.

Derek Mackay: Will the member take an intervention?

Liam McArthur: No. I am sorry.

The truth is that this policy has never been compatible with our climate change ambitions, and no amount of re-setting the clock by Mr Mackay—and all the other Ministers lined up as supporters of his amendment—will persuade the chamber or the public otherwise.

The justification for giving the airline industry a £250 million tax break was always dubious. Against the backdrop of rising passenger numbers and an expanding network of routes, the SNP's decision to offer such a massive windfall looked reckless. What was the evidence for that move? Therein lies a tale.

I note that Keith Brown is not among those listed as supporters of the Government's new position. That is a shame, because it was he who, when asked in a written question back in 2013 what the evidence for the policy was, pointed my colleague Willie Rennie in the direction of the easyJet website. Helpfully, a report commissioned by British Airways, easyJet, Virgin Atlantic and Ryanair could be found there. Surprisingly, they thought that there was only an upside to a £250 million tax cut to the airline industry. Who knew? Massive economic benefits and little environmental impact was too good to be true, surely.

Clearly, even SNP Ministers thought so, as an independent expert group was then consulted. Sadly, that group comprised 15 airline and airport representatives and one, lone environmental

voice. SNP Ministers seemed determined to load the dice. By contrast, when the Government went out to public consultation on its proposals, half the respondents raised concerns or objections, principally around the environmental impact. The other main concern, of course, was the impact that the tax giveaway would have on funding available for key public services: education, health, policing and even support to help to decarbonise our transport system.

The audacious attempt by the Scottish Government to raid its own coffers cannot be laid at the feet of Westminster. The move had the SNP's fingerprints all over it. Even after yesterday's U-turn, the First Minister needs to explain how her full-throated support for a third runway at Heathrow squares with her new-found acceptance of the climate emergency.

I accept that we need an airline industry that is in good health. Given the constituency that I represent, how could I do otherwise? There is also a strong case for reducing taxes and costs on certain types of air service that provide a lifeline—usually a pretty expensive one—for remote rural and island communities. However, there is a world of difference between that sort of targeted intervention and the sort of windfall that was previously being offered up by the SNP—and is still being backed by the Tories. I welcome the Government's decision to abandon that reckless policy, however belatedly, and reiterate my support for the motion in Colin Smyth's name.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: We move to the open debate. Speeches should be of four minutes, please. We have no time in hand.

15:39

Claudia Beamish (South Scotland) (Lab): Last week was a truly significant time for the Parliament and the country, as the Scottish Government agreed to up its ambition and shift its long-term emissions reduction targets in line with the advice from the UK Committee on Climate Change. The target of net zero emissions by 2045 is, indeed, world leading, feasible, cost-effective and necessary. Scottish Labour has, with others, led the way on the matter.

I am delighted that pressure from Scottish Labour has led to the Scottish Government changing its mind about cutting air departure tax, which is a money saver for the wealthy that would have been, in carbon terms, the equivalent of 30,000 new cars on the road. It was always a regressive policy, so it is welcome that the cabinet secretary has come to recognise its social and environmental implications.

Of course, the necessity for swift climate action has been stark since publication of the

Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change's special report entitled "Global Warming of 1.5°C". The damage that would be done by a rise of 2°C would be far reaching—it would turn dangerous extremes into normality and bring disaster to many. The target of an increase of no more than 1.5°C is an imperative for the global population's health, livelihoods, peace and safety, and for the continuation of the natural world that we know, love and rely on.

Those issues are intersectional with class, race, gender and many other characteristics. I will focus briefly on race, having chaired a conference on climate justice at UN House at which representatives of the black lives matter movement spoke. Communities in the global south are adapting to climate change now, and seven out of 10 of the countries that are most vulnerable to its effects are in sub-Saharan Africa. However, those issues impact here at home, too. Black British Africans are 28 per cent more likely than their white counterparts to be exposed to air pollution. The black lives matter protest at London City airport highlighted the climate injustice in the existence of an airport for the elite polluting a low-income London community and exacerbating climate change in the global south.

Alterations to ADT would have included cuts for short-haul flights for which there are rail alternatives, including to the continent via the Eurostar. That would likely have had a significant impact on the rail sector. For example, greater choice in short-haul flights at lower prices could displace rail movements, which is the opposite of the modal shift that the Scottish Government needs to encourage in order to deliver a sustainable transport system.

Scottish Labour can suggest a number of other ways to deliver that modal shift. We would stop the cuts to councils that are devastating public transport links and active travel schemes. We need more on-road segregated cycle schemes. We would introduce a young person's bus pass to encourage a long-term modal shift, we would strengthen legislation on low-emission zones, and we would promote public ownership of the transport system, so that profits could be spent on improving services, lowering fares and delivering greener vehicles.

The UK CCC report emphasised that good policy design is vital to our ability to reach net zero emissions. We parliamentarians must now apply stricter tests to all policies, with due regard being given to their environmental and social externalities. Such considerations will elevate Scotland to the progressive place that we want it to occupy.

This is a challenging and exciting time, and lately the Government has made two welcome

shifts in its original policies. All parties must scrutinise their policies as we go forward towards net zero emissions. That mentality should be rolled out across all sectors to give stable long-term direction.

The Deputy Presiding Officer (Linda Fabiani): You must close.

Claudia Beamish: I look forward to the Government's review of all policies in its new climate change plan, and to contributing to it. We are, indeed, experiencing a climate emergency, so we must act together.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: We are already over time. Speeches will be cut if members insist on speaking over their time limits.

15:44

Gillian Martin (Aberdeenshire East) (SNP): Labour's motion is interesting, and I will talk about each part of it in turn. However, before I do, I want to acknowledge the fact that my committee colleague, Claudia Beamish, has been a robust challenger of policy and a robust influencer in her party, as—I think—is evident.

The first line of the motion asks the Scottish Government to review its policies in response to the global climate emergency. At First Minister's question time last week, Nicola Sturgeon said that she would review all policy areas in respect of our increased ambition to tackle climate change. Just over an hour ago, the First Minister responded positively, saying directly to me that all cabinet secretaries will take ownership of the Government's commitment on action to reach the net zero emissions target.

Of course, that comes off the back of the Government's acceptance of the main recommendations of the Environment, Climate Change and Land Reform Committee's report on the Climate Change (Emissions Reduction Targets) (Scotland) Bill, which include accepting the advice of the UK Committee on Climate Change and producing a new climate change plan within 6 months of royal assent.

It is interesting to note that, in the middle of the motion, Labour calls for local authorities to be more empowered to tackle climate change. We have a recent example of the Government doing just that, when it gave local authorities the power to introduce a car parking levy, although only local authorities in cities with good public transport infrastructure will, I think, see fit to use that power. Rural councils including Aberdeenshire Council have opted not to use it—Aberdeenshire does not yet have a public transport infrastructure that would mean that people could completely ditch their cars. I agree with that decision, which shows

exactly why such decisions must be made at local level.

However, here is the weird thing: after the Government decided to give local authorities that discretionary power, James Kelly was out and about campaigning against it, quite against the views of his colleagues. Councillor Cammy Day, who heads the Labour group on the City of Edinburgh Council, disagrees with him. He has said:

“We have argued councils need powers like the tourist tax and the workplace parking levy ... It’s not about taxing cars, it’s about creating a new environment for people to work, live and enjoy the city.”

Finally, let us consider the motion’s main title, “Scotland’s Future”. As we wait—and wait and wait—for the UK Government’s response to the advice on targets from the UK Committee on Climate Change, we are met with a wall of silence about the policies that the Tory Government will pursue in order to meet its advised targets. I am therefore yet more convinced that Scotland’s future must be as an independent country that has all the levers available to it to make agile and meaningful decisions, such as the one that it has just made on ADT and—

The Deputy Presiding Officer: Excuse me, Ms Martin.

Could members please ensure that they use their time to address the motion and amendments that are under discussion? This is not the first contribution in which that has not happened.

Gillian Martin: I am just coming to the air departure tax. The decision on ADT was taken in the first Cabinet meeting after the CCC’s advice was received. I also note today’s announcement on a deposit return scheme. With the powers that it already has at its disposal, Scotland has a reputation for being a world leader on tackling climate change. This week’s decision is proof of that agile working.

I also asked the First Minister about the importance of the UK Government committing to the targets that the CCC has advised that it should set. She pointed out three areas that the UK Government has been asked specifically to address: decarbonisation of the gas network; commitment to investing in carbon capture and storage technology; and an earlier date for electrification of cars, potentially in line with the Scottish Government’s date of 2032.

The motion suggests that Labour is fully on board with supporting areas of devolved and local authority powers that it previously did not support, and I look forward—

The Deputy Presiding Officer: You must close now, Ms Martin.

15:48

John Scott (Ayr) (Con): I note my interest as a co-convenor of the cross-party group on aviation, and I express my surprise at being here today to debate the SNP Government’s U-turn on yet another of its flagship policies. Not only am I concerned about the SNP Government again going back on its word—which was freely given—but it is no exaggeration to say that business leaders from across Scotland are queuing up to condemn this anti-business, anti-tourism and anti-people SNP Government.

People in Ayr will not understand why the Scottish Government—which owns Prestwick airport—just made it even more difficult to fly aeroplanes to and from that remarkable strategically-placed airport. My constituents will not forgive this SNP Government for breaking the promise that it made to do all that it could to help Prestwick airport to grow and succeed, because air departure tax affects regional airports such as Prestwick, Aberdeen and Dundee most adversely.

Instead, the 300 or so trusted and valued employees at Prestwick airport will today be wondering for how long they will have a job at all, given Ryanair’s anger at the broken promise, which affects all their flights to and from Scotland, and not just those to and from Prestwick.

I was in Dublin on the day in April 2014 on which Michael O’Leary announced that he had persuaded the Irish Government to abolish air passenger duty. He said that he would increase the Irish Government’s tax take from tourism through increased VAT receipts if it abolished APD. Michael O’Leary did just that; tourists visiting Ireland increased by 3.3 million in the first year after APD was abolished.

At the time, the then Minister for Transport and Islands, Derek Mackay, was so impressed that he told the *Daily Record* that

“more investment would be possible if APD ... was to be scrapped”

in Scotland. I ask the cabinet secretary whether there is consistency there.

We are witnessing the SNP again dividing Scotland into those who are for Scotland’s business development and the SNP—which is, it appears, supported by the Labour Party and now the Liberals, as well, who are against business development.

The cabinet secretary should not take my word for it.

Tom Arthur (Renfrewshire South) (SNP): Will the member give way?

John Scott: No, I will not.

The cabinet secretary should listen to Scottish Chambers of Commerce, which has roundly condemned the SNP Government for going back on its word. Listen to Gordon Dewar of Edinburgh Airport, which runs Scotland's most successful airport. He said that the decision

“does not show leadership and means airports and airlines have been led down a path of failed promises for three years by this Scottish government.”

The SNP Government has shown again that it does not keep its promises; instead, it makes promises in order to win elections and then goes back on them.

My constituents in Ayrshire and others in Aberdeenshire and Dundee will be outraged by yet another failure to deliver by the Scottish Government, as their business connections and holiday destination choices have just got harder and more expensive because of their Government's actions.

Of course we all know that the threat of climate change needs to be addressed, but the Scottish Government's virtue signalling is not the way to go about it. *[Interruption.]*

The Deputy Presiding Officer: Will members stop shouting at Mr Scott, please?

John Scott: The aviation industry is already cleaning up its act on greenhouse gas emissions more quickly than almost any other industry.

The Government is allowing itself to be driven by the Green Party agenda, as it was similarly with the proposed imposition of a workplace car parking charging scheme. The SNP and the Greens will pay the price at the ballot box as they displace jobs and tourism from Scotland at the same time as they reduce the choice of easily accessible tourist destinations from Scotland.

15:52

John Mason (Glasgow Shettleston) (SNP): There has always been a fairly fine balance between seeking to boost our tourism sector with lower air departure tax, which would, we hope, encourage visitors to come to Scotland, and wanting to tackle climate change and protect the environment, which makes us lean towards discouraging flying as a means of travel by keeping or even raising taxes such as ADT.

Liam Kerr (North East Scotland) (Con): Will the member take an intervention?

John Mason: Let me go on a little longer.

There is also the factor that, if we want better public services in a time of very tight finances, we need to raise tax, and certainly not cut it. Cutting tax means further restrictions on spending, as the Conservative Party well knows.

The reality is that we should all be taking climate change more seriously than we may have done in the past. We cannot stick rigidly to policies that seemed right in the past. It is the sign of a mature Parliament and a mature Government that we can learn and adapt to circumstances.

Other parties also need to consider their positions. The aim of the workplace parking levy—and maybe a levy on parking in other places, too—is to discourage the use of cars and get more people to use public transport. Again, there is a balance to be struck. People want to use their cars, and we have a democracy, so we can restrict car use only to the extent that the public will accept it.

Liam Kerr: Will the member take an intervention on the motion?

John Mason: Not from Mr Kerr, if he is going to be cheeky.

That is not to say there should be no change from how things have been done in the past. We in the SNP seem to find ourselves in the middle ground on a number of issues. The Greens, whom I admire for their idealism, want to go much further than the public are prepared for. On the other hand, Labour and the Tories oppose the likes of a workplace parking levy—I presume that that is because it came from the SNP and the Greens.

Patrick Harvie: Does Mr Mason think that the new wave of direct action and activism, from the school strikers to extinction rebellion, demonstrates that the public are ready for us to go further than many politicians have previously thought possible?

John Mason: Yes, I think that that is correct and that the public mood is changing, but the public are not ready to have cars abolished tomorrow night, as some of Patrick Harvie's colleagues might want.

There has been some fairly extreme comment on the decision not to cut ADT, not least from Scottish Chambers of Commerce. It said that we need balance and we need to reach a balanced judgment. However, it also said that the decision will

“cut Scotland off at the knees”.

That is clearly nonsense, and I would have expected better from Scottish Chambers of Commerce. Both our tourism sector and the number of flight destinations from Scotland, which has increased, are doing well, perhaps better than we had expected when the policy to cut ADT was introduced. Many factors other than the tax affect the number of flights and passengers. For example, Manchester airport draws on a larger population base than Scottish airports do.

I have some sympathy for the Green amendment, which was not chosen for debate today. Expansion at Heathrow airport might provide more onward flights for travellers from Scotland, but it could undermine the aim to get more direct flights to Scotland and, on top of that, is likely to have a negative effect on the environment. If recent developments mean that we are re-examining previous decisions, perhaps expansion at Heathrow is another policy to be re-examined.

As has been mentioned, the Conservative amendment refers to manifesto commitments. I think that the Conservatives' 2016 manifesto said that they would not support an APD cut. One of the strengths of the Parliament is that no party has a majority and every party needs to compromise and find common ground. As an SNP MSP, I find that disappointing at times but, as a democrat and a parliamentarian, I find it extremely good. An ability to adapt, compromise and negotiate is a good thing. We do not see that with Theresa May at Westminster, but I hope that it is something that we see at Holyrood.

15:56

Alex Rowley (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab): The estimated value that was placed on air departure tax being cut by 50 per cent was £150 million. If we take the cut to the conclusion that the Conservatives would like, the value would be £300 million. Where would that money have come from? Where would the cuts in public services have taken place? The fact that the Conservatives come here to shout about that, when we know that their budgets cuts would have taken another £500 million or £600 million out of public services in Scotland, surely leaves them with no credibility whatsoever.

Whatever reasons have brought about the U-turn in Government policy, they must be welcomed. We have got to recognise that, as we address the climate crisis in this country, we must do so in a fair and equitable way. Indeed, a transition to a zero-carbon economy must surely be part of a broader programme to redistribute wealth and power in Scotland.

Rebecca Long-Bailey, Labour's shadow UK business secretary, pointed out that

"Britain is already one of the most unequal and regionally divided countries in Europe. Poorly implemented, economic transitions threaten to further impoverish the poorest parts of the country that are already suffering the worst effects of de-industrialisation and austerity. If climate policy does not fundamentally address these problems it not only risks accentuating them, but will also never receive mass support from Britain's working people."

Surely one of the key objectives of every political party in the Parliament should be to build mass

support across the country for tackling the climate crisis. That is why I say to the SNP that of course we should be working together to tackle the climate crisis, but we will not line up to support a half-baked policy that has not been thought through. The proposed workplace parking levy is such a policy. It will attack working people and threaten their jobs. For example, workers at Babcock International in Rosyth travel there from all over Fife, where there is not a good public transport system in place.

Jamie Greene: On a point of order, Presiding Officer. Mr Rowley's speech has got nothing to do with the motion. There has not been a single mention of APD—[*Interruption.*]

The Deputy Presiding Officer: Excuse me, can I have some silence, please? Mr Greene, that is for me, not you, to decide.

Alex Rowley: If the member reads the SNP amendment, he will see that my comments have got absolutely everything to do with the motion and the SNP amendment.

Workers at Diageo who travel from all over Fife—and, indeed, from much further afield than Mid Scotland and Fife—would end up having to pay a workplace parking levy.

Patrick Harvie: Will the member take an intervention?

The Deputy Presiding Officer: Mr Rowley is in his last half minute.

Alex Rowley: The policy has not been thought through properly and it would hurt workers.

I have looked at Nottingham, where a workplace parking levy has been brought in. Emissions in Nottingham city centre have not been drastically cut as a result of the policy.

I welcome the Government's decision to back down on this—

The Deputy Presiding Officer: You must close, please.

Alex Rowley: Let us work together, but let us ensure that we work together to come up with the right policies for Scotland.

16:00

Jamie Halcro Johnston (Highlands and Islands) (Con): Planned reductions to air departure tax have been in the pipeline for several years now. They were the subject of long-standing commitments by the Scottish Government and were a flagship transport policy that gave Scotland's business community some reassurance that the SNP had an interest in and an understanding of our country's economy and the need to create a more global Scotland.

As a member for the Highlands and Islands and an Orcadian, I have seen at first hand the benefits of the APD exemption and the wider positive impact on the region. It has been crucial to the growth of services in and around my region, where flights, especially those that serve the islands, can be prohibitively expensive.

However, although the Highlands and Islands exemption is crucial, it is not enough in itself. As my fellow Highland MSP Kate Forbes observed as the ADT bill was progressing, national reduction of ADT promised to have a

“direct and positive impact on families in the Highlands.”—*[Official Report, 25 April 2017; c 87.]*

Does Kate Forbes as a minister believe that that is no longer true? If we accept the importance of our regional exemption, why would we assume that those same benefits would not accrue significantly from a national reduction?

The Minister for Public Finance and Digital Economy (Kate Forbes): Will the member take an intervention?

Jamie Halcro Johnston: I am going to move on.

It is frankly ridiculous that the Scottish Government is now ignoring the benefits of effective, affordable connectivity after so many years of making the case for it. However, what is of greater concern is this: if the SNP is now targeting air travel to meet climate goals, how long will the Highlands and Islands exemption remain?

Derek Mackay: Will the member take an intervention on that point? I am happy to answer that.

Jamie Halcro Johnston: As with reductions in ADT, the SNP has long promised a settled reduction in ferry fares on the northern isles routes, but that has still not been delivered either. *[Interruption.]*

The Deputy Presiding Officer: Mr Mackay, please sit down.

Jamie Halcro Johnston: I ask for an assurance from the Scottish Government in its summing up that the Highlands and Islands exemption is not under threat and that it is still committed to reducing ferry fares on the northern isles routes. However, as we have heard, the aviation sector was given assurances only a couple of weeks ago but yesterday learned that those assurances meant nothing.

Yesterday, looking like a man who had been sent out to deliver news that he did not really agree with, the finance secretary, Derek Mackay, desperately tried to shift blame for his Government's failure on to the UK Government. However, would he really have us believe that,

had the reductions been delivered two years ago, he would yesterday have reintroduced full ADT?

Derek Mackay: Will the member take an intervention?

Jamie Halcro Johnston: I will if the cabinet secretary will answer that question.

Derek Mackay: The reason why we have not taken on devolution of APD is to protect the Highlands and Islands exemption, so the Highlands and Islands exemption is absolutely here to stay.

Specifically in relation to what has changed, should we not all reflect on the advice from the Committee on Climate Change, which has now said that—unlike previously, when it said that cutting ADT was manageable in terms of emissions—not cutting ADT makes our job of meeting the ambitious climate change targets easier? Should we not respond in the light of that information?

The Deputy Presiding Officer: I will take your time to four and a half minutes, Mr Halcro Johnston.

Jamie Halcro Johnston: I thought that the reason was climate change, as the cabinet secretary has repeatedly stated, but okay.

A policy has been fully reversed in just two weeks. Is this a genuine climate change-focused move by the SNP? Is the Nicolacopter permanently grounded? Are its days of ferrying the First Minister between party engagements finally over? Probably not, because this is not about climate change. It is all about political gamesmanship. It is headline-grabbing hypocrisy from a Government that still rightly backs our oil and gas sector and still rightly—well, probably—backs expansion of Heathrow airport.

I have another question that I ask the Government to address in its summing up. Given that the U-turn will seriously impact on businesses across Scotland, most notably in the aviation sector, and given that the Scottish Government owns a number of airports, can the cabinet secretary or minister confirm that the correct procedures for releasing commercially sensitive information have been followed and that neither Highlands and Islands Airports Ltd nor Prestwick Airport was given any advance notice of the decision?

ADT is not an effective tax against climate change. It is a tax on Scotland's links to the world. The finance secretary once spoke about an ADT reduction

“boosting trade, investment, influence and networks”

for Scotland. The Scottish Government spent many years as evangelists for Scotland's

connectivity. Now the “strategic assets” of air travel in Scotland have suddenly become regrettable polluters in SNP eyes. Where does that leave its transport policies? What is the price for Scotland’s connectivity and its economy?

16:05

James Dornan (Glasgow Cathcart) (SNP): There can be no doubt that Scotland is a world leader in tackling climate change. The Government has ensured that fracking and underground coal gasification will have no place in Scotland’s energy mix. We have already halved greenhouse gas emissions while growing the economy.

As shown by yesterday’s announcement, we have listened to the evidence and decided not to proceed with plans to cut air departure tax. That will have been a difficult decision for the Government, but it shows that the SNP is taking the climate emergency far more seriously than other parties.

Global climate change is one of the defining issues of our time, and we are now at a defining moment. I sincerely hope that all parties are prepared to rise to the challenge that has been brilliantly laid down by our younger generations, drop the knee-jerk opposition that might suit short-term politics, and unite behind doing what is right for the future of our planet. So far, however, the Tories, Labour and Liberal Democrats have shown little inclination to meet that challenge.

We have discussed the workplace parking levy a few times today. Under a Tory Government, councils in England already have the powers to introduce such a levy, which would support the Scottish Government’s ambition to reduce emissions. However, the Scottish Tories are steadfast in their opposition.

Labour introduced the policy in England, and it was implemented by the Labour council in Nottingham. It was supported by Glasgow and Edinburgh council candidates in 2017, and reportedly backed by Claudia Beamish, Labour’s spokesperson for environment, climate change and land reform. However, Scottish Labour is steadfast in its opposition.

When the provisions for a workplace parking levy were introduced by the Labour Party in the UK’s Transport Act 2000, the measures were supported by Liberal Democrat members of the UK Parliament. However, the Scottish Liberal Democrats are steadfast in their opposition.

Despite what Alex Rowley says, according to Nottingham City Council’s portfolio holder for transport, the policy has helped to improve air quality and has contributed to falling nitrogen

dioxide emissions largely due to the council’s investment in sustainable public transport, which was made possible with levy funding. Opposition parties really must stop playing political games on this issue, and must listen to the evidence

We also have Labour, Liberal Democrat and Tory support for the UK’s nuclear weapon programme. We all know that the Tories are unashamedly obsessed—

The Deputy Presiding Officer: Excuse me, Mr Dornan, but could you return to addressing the motion?

James Dornan: Surely the motion is about climate change as well as ADT.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: I am sorry, Mr Dornan?

James Dornan: Surely the motion is about climate change and the impact of ADT on it along—

The Deputy Presiding Officer: Mr Dornan, I am not asking you to argue with me. I am just asking you to address the motion.

James Dornan: I just want to know how far I can go.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: You have a minute and a half left.

James Dornan: It appears that some other parties are quite happy to endanger the climate in some ways, but making a fuss about air passenger duty is okay. Meeting our climate change targets will mean that we have to raise our ambitions across the whole range of Government responsibilities. Yesterday’s decision showed that the SNP Government has listened and already taken decisive action. It is now time for the other parties to show that they also are willing to listen to the evidence and act. Opposition parties must refrain from simply opposing everything tough or challenging, such as the workplace parking levy, and step up to the plate. All members have to accept that positions might need to change in light of the climate emergency; it cannot simply be left to the Scottish Government. Every single one of us now needs to take more action—individuals, businesses, schools, communities, organisations, the Scottish Government and the UK Government—so let us work together and make that change.

There is still time to stop climate change, so let us put aside the party politics for once to ensure that we can save the planet for our future generations to enjoy. It does not look like I am going to get much support for that among the Opposition.

16:09

Murdo Fraser (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con):

This has been a significant debate because of what it tells us about the cack-handed policy making within the SNP Government. These are the people who told us for years about the priority of cutting air departure tax. In 2016, the SNP said that it would halve the level of air passenger duty to support growth and improve connections across the globe. Every time we have a debate on tourism, connectivity or exporting, the SNP tells us how important that policy is. Now, it has ditched it.

I remember doing a hustings before the most recent Scottish election with Fergus Ewing, who promised the tourism sector that this important policy would be delivered. Only two weeks ago, apparently, the Minister for Public Finance and Digital Economy, Kate Forbes, was at Edinburgh airport giving Gordon Dewar a personal commitment that the policy would be maintained, but now it has all been abandoned, and all these people have been hung out to dry.

John Mason: Will the member give way?

Murdo Fraser: Not just now.

We have seen the reaction from the business community, which John Scott quoted. The Scottish Chambers of Commerce said that the change in policy will

“cut Scotland off at the knees”

in relation to connectivity and a competitive playing field.

The position shows the contrast between the SNP under Nicola Sturgeon and the SNP under her predecessor, Alex Salmond, because at least Mr Salmond understood business in Scotland and at least he stood up for cuts to corporation tax and to ADT. The whole pro-business legacy of the SNP has been trashed under Nicola Sturgeon and Derek Mackay. It is no wonder that business is turning away from the SNP and towards the Conservatives.

Neil Findlay: Will the member take an intervention?

Murdo Fraser: No, thank you.

We understand that the issue is important for connectivity, as Jamie Greene said. The SNP keeps telling us that it wants more powers to grow the economy, yet when it gets those powers, it either hands them back or does not use them at all, as in this case.

A number of speakers in the debate have quite properly raised the issue of climate change. It is precisely because of the concerns that we had around climate change that our policy on ADT reduction was different from the Scottish

Government's policy. We did not support a cut in ADT for domestic or short-haul flights precisely because we were concerned that that would lead to surface travel being less competitive than air travel. That is why the ADT cut that we propose would apply only to long-haul routes where there is no surface alternative or where at present people have to make extra journeys with connecting flights, rather than one journey straight into Scotland. Cutting ADT on long haul would open up Scotland to the world, bringing in the opportunity of new routes to north and central America and Asia, which can only be to our economic benefit.

It is that economic benefit that will deliver increases in additional tax revenues elsewhere.

Tom Arthur: Will the member give way?

Murdo Fraser: No, thank you.

Increased taxation will come from income tax, through growing employment, and additional VAT will come from spending. Indeed, John Scott pointed out that the experience in Ireland shows that countries can grow their tax revenues by cutting ADT. Alex Rowley should look at that experience.

The position of the Labour Party causes me some concern. The Labour Party seems to be saying that air travel should once again become the preserve of the rich and should not be available to ordinary working people. It is only in comparatively recent times—over the past three decades—that air travel has become affordable for ordinary families. The first time that I was on a plane was when I was 21, which was not unusual for people of my generation. Many Scottish families did not have overseas holidays until well into the 1980s or 1990s.

Keith Brown (Clackmannanshire and Dunblane) (SNP): Will the member give way?

Murdo Fraser: No, thank you.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: Mr Fraser is just closing.

Murdo Fraser: Now the Labour Party in Scotland—the supposed party of the working class—seems to be saying that ordinary working families across Scotland should no longer have that opportunity. It seems to be saying that only the rich should be able to afford to fly and have overseas holidays.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: You must close now, Mr Fraser.

Murdo Fraser: What a strange place for a supposed party of the workers to find itself in.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: You must close, please.

Murdo Fraser: Shame on Labour and shame on the SNP for tearing up its policy.

16:13

The Cabinet Secretary for Environment, Climate Change and Land Reform (Roseanna Cunningham): There is a climate emergency, and the Scottish Government is acting accordingly. Our first step was to immediately lodge amendments to our Climate Change (Emissions Reduction Targets) (Scotland) Bill to set a net zero emissions target for 2045 in response to last week's report from the Committee on Climate Change. Our next step is to look at the concrete actions that need to be taken as a result.

Unlike the Tories, we know that difficult decisions are required, and we are taking this seriously. Yesterday's announcement on air departure tax makes that clear. Scotland has already shown leadership on this issue as the first country in the world to include a fair share of emissions from international aviation in our climate targets.

Our whole economy approach is working, with emissions almost halved since 1990. Aviation currently represents less than 5 per cent of Scotland's total annual emissions, but that figure is growing, and even relatively small levels of emissions can be important when targets are very ambitious, as they are now.

Scotland's current climate targets are already world leading, but we know that greater action is required. We are listening, and it is in that context that the Scottish Government has decided that reducing air departure tax is no longer compatible with having more ambitious climate targets.

In answer to some of the questions raised, members should be aware that, in 2017, the CCC advised that a 50 per cent reduction in ADT was likely to be manageable in terms of its emissions impact. This year, the chief executive said that a change in policy on ADT would help immensely with the emissions challenge. To be clear: we are still fully committed to taking on ADT once a solution to the Highlands and Islands exemption issue has been found, but we no longer plan to reduce the tax in support of our climate change targets.

I emphasise that aviation is only one part of the emissions picture. Meeting Scotland's climate targets will require many difficult decisions across all areas of the economy and society, and Parliament needs to be prepared for that. The UK Committee on Climate Change has been stark in saying that its proposed new targets will require extensive changes across the economy. Our announcement yesterday, along with our commitment to increase the share of capital

expenditure for low-carbon projects year on year, demonstrates that we are prepared to lead the way on those difficult decisions.

The time for action is now. It is not the time for short-term political point scoring, and I hope that proposals that will help us to reach our climate change goals, such as the workplace parking levy and low-emission zones, will be supported.

The Scottish Government has committed to updating the climate change plan within six months of the bill receiving royal assent. That means that we will look across our whole range of responsibilities and policies to ensure that we continue with the policies that are working and increase action where necessary. I hope that all parties in the chamber will approach it in the same way.

The next step will be in the summer. We will engage the public, communities, businesses, industries and the public sector in a discussion about what more can be done to address climate change.

We also need to discuss where further UK Government action is needed. The Committee on Climate Change has been clear that the delivery of net zero emissions in Scotland depends on increased UK Government action across policy areas that remain reserved.

The Scottish Government is committed to doing what is needed to limit global temperature rises, as we promised in our manifesto. We will not shy away from those difficult decisions.

16:17

James Kelly (Glasgow) (Lab): It has been an interesting couple of days, watching the political gymnastics of SNP ministers. For three years, we have watched SNP front-bench members doggedly defend this policy of passing tax cuts to airlines while imposing cuts on public services. I am glad that, by lodging the motion for this debate, Scottish Labour has precipitated a change in the policy. It is the right move.

As Colin Smyth pointed out, having in place a policy to reduce ADT by 50 per cent would result in 60,000 tonnes of CO₂ emissions a year, which is contrary to an ambition to achieve climate change targets and tackle an objective of net zero emissions.

It was an unfair policy. It sought to pass tax cuts to airports, frequent flyers and those who are better off. In response to Murdo Fraser, I point out that nearly half of the Scottish public cannot afford to travel by air. They do not get anywhere near an airport. Some of them cannot even afford a holiday, so why should we design a policy to give tax cuts to frequent flyers?

Alex Rowley made an effective point about the effect of the policy on the Scottish budget, because a 50 per cent reduction in ADT would lead to a reduction in that budget of £150 million, and a full reduction in ADT would reduce the budget by £300 million.

As Liam McArthur said, the evidence base for the policy was lacking, and some of the evidence was written by the airlines themselves.

Jamie Greene: Will James Kelly take an intervention?

James Kelly: No, I do not want to take an intervention.

If we took £150 million out of the Scottish budget, that could be £150 million more out of council budgets, which have already been constrained and cut. That would affect people across the country, local communities and economies.

Derek Mackay: Will the member take an intervention?

James Kelly: I will take the intervention.

Derek Mackay: I will ask James Kelly a direct question. The information that we have received and the climate change targets—that we have all signed up to—give the Government cause to look at our policies. Is the Labour Party looking at its own policies in relation to climate change? Yes or no?

James Kelly: Of course, we are examining all our policies. As Claudia Beamish said, we need a sustainable transport policy that looks across all areas. That should start with rail. We need an operator that will give confidence to rail passengers that trains will turn up on time. We could also use £1 million of the £150 million that was proposed to be cut to save the jobs at the Caley rail depot and keep the jobs in Scotland.

We also need to look at the Transport (Scotland) Bill, which, as it is currently drafted, is a missed opportunity. There is too much power in the hands of the bus operators, which strip away routes from local communities. Over the past five years, we have seen bus fares increase by 11 per cent in real terms, whereas, since 2009, wages in this country have reduced by 1.5 per cent in real terms.

Alex Rowley made a relevant point on the workplace parking levy. We will not support regressive policies that mean that low-paid workers pay more tax.

Patrick Harvie: Will the member give way?

James Kelly: No.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: Mr Kelly is closing his speech.

James Kelly: In Scotland, 480,000 workers are not being paid the real living wage and we will not support a policy that means that they will have to pay more out of their paltry wage packets, making it more difficult for them to sustain and support their families.

This is a welcome U-turn from the Government but, to lower emissions, we must also look at other areas of transport policy. We need a proper rail service and we need a transport bill that gives more power to communities and takes power away from bus operators.

Support for Midwives

The Deputy Presiding Officer (Linda Fabiani): The next item of business is a debate on motion S5M-17191, in the name of Monica Lennon, on urgent support for Scotland's midwives. This is a tight debate, so please keep your speeches to time.

16:23

Monica Lennon (Central Scotland) (Lab): Sunday was international day of the midwife, and I enjoyed seeing my social media feeds filled with cute baby photos and lovely sentiments about the special work that midwives do to support women and their babies.

The baby theme has continued, with the Earl and Countess of Dumbarton announcing the safe arrival of their little one on Monday. I am sure that the Parliament wishes Meghan and Harry all the best.

All babies are special, and Scottish Labour shares the ambition of the Scottish Government to give all children in Scotland the best start in life. That is why we have called this debate, to seek urgent support for Scotland's midwives, because we believe that they need extra help to keep delivering excellent care for women and babies.

I pay tribute to the Royal College of Midwives and thank its members for their input. I also thank Unison and many of my constituents, who have shared their experiences of midwifery and neonatal care and their ideas for innovation and improvement.

This morning, I had the pleasure of visiting University hospital Wishaw with Richard Leonard, where we listened to midwives telling us with great pride and passion about their work. We heard about the highs and the lows, and I was particularly struck by the care that has gone into developing dedicated bereavement and baby-loss support.

We met midwives who wake up in the morning wanting to make a difference and that is exactly what they are doing. I thank NHS Lanarkshire for allowing us to visit and for creating a supportive environment in which midwives are valued. That includes Lorna Lennox, who has developed the beautiful ribbon that I am holding. I know that members cannot read it, but it is a very helpful guide for mums who might be unsure about baby movements and so on, and it promotes the triage service. Those are the lovely little touches and innovations that we see when staff are truly supported.

The work of a midwife, however, is clearly demanding, and their jobs are made more

challenging than they should be because of workforce pressures. Last year, there were 127 whole-time equivalent vacancies in Scotland and 45.5 of those posts were left unfilled for longer than three months. Overall, the vacancy rate has increased from 1.3 per cent in 2013 to 5 per cent in 2018. Those vacancies put additional pressure on the rest of the workforce.

Our midwifery workforce is highly experienced, which is a good thing, but more than 40 per cent of midwives are aged over 50. Their knowledge and experience are invaluable, but the ageing workforce gives rise to concern about succession planning as midwives start to retire. We picked up on that issue during our visit to Lanarkshire today and have done so more widely in conversations with the Royal College of Midwives.

Despite falling birth rates, midwives' workloads are not diminishing, and we need a robust pipeline of midwives for the future. There are between 50,000 and 60,000 births in Scotland each year. There has been an increase in complex births due to a higher number of inductions of labour and a rise in the number of older women and women with a high body mass index becoming pregnant and giving birth.

That brings me to resources. I was worried to read a letter signed by community midwives at NHS Lothian, who described not having enough equipment, computers or pool cars. I expect that Lothian colleagues including Miles Briggs, Alison Johnstone and Alex Cole-Hamilton will share that concern and I hope that the minister will, today, commit the Scottish Government to carrying out an investigation. Nineteen Lothian midwives signed the letter and they say that the understaffed and stretched service relies on midwives' goodwill to meet the growing case loads and ever-broadening remits.

Midwives, like all our national health service staff, deserve to be treated with respect and care, but weaknesses in workforce planning are contributing to reports of burnout and stress. It is our job, here in Parliament, to have an honest conversation about how to fix that. If colleagues support the Scottish Labour motion today, we will all agree that low morale, bullying and work-related stress must be urgently addressed.

Scottish Labour broadly welcomes the Scottish Government's best start strategy. The continuity of carer throughout the maternity journey is valued by women and, if adequately resourced, it can improve outcomes in maternity and neonatal care. We pay tribute to NHS staff and service users, and organisations including Bliss and the National Childbirth Trust, which influenced the final strategy.

We are pleased that the Scottish Government's amendment emphasises that the £12 million allocated to best start is an initial investment, but we hear the concerns of midwives who are anxious to see further resourcing follow quickly. That is why we are calling for an additional £10 million to be released towards the best start roll-out. Best start reforms, if they are adequately funded, could be transformative and lead to successful outcomes for women, babies and their families. Midwives do such an important and special job and they must feel valued. Pregnancy is a treasured time, but it can be challenging and it is imperative that all women receive the care that is right for them.

We will happily support Miles Briggs's amendment, which recognises the positive work of the Royal College of Midwives. I am grateful that the Scottish Government's amendment would not delete my points around workforce pressures and the need for an urgent investigation into the resourcing concerns in Lothian.

I note that the Scottish Government's amendment would remove Labour's call for an additional £10 million, which makes it difficult for me to support it, but when the minister gets to her feet I will look forward to hearing her clarification on the funding that it will make available. Scottish Labour welcomes the reforms that the Scottish Government is implementing, but believes that certainty of funding is essential.

I move,

That the Parliament acknowledges that the International Day of the Midwife took place on 5 May 2019 and commends the commitment and skills of Scotland's midwives and their crucial role in caring for women and babies; recognises that a continuity of carer throughout the maternity journey is valued by women and that, if adequately resourced, can improve outcomes in maternity and neonatal care; is concerned that many midwives are experiencing significant workforce pressures; believes that action must be taken to address low morale, bullying and work-related stress; further believes that the concerns raised by midwives in NHS Lothian in an open letter, which claims that they do not have enough computers, equipment and pool cars, needs urgent investigation; understands that only £12 million has been allocated towards the implementation of the Best Start recommendations and believes that this funding falls short of what is needed to safely deliver the new transformative models of care that are required by the Scottish Government, and urges the Scottish Government to ensure that all midwives have adequate time, training and resources and to provide an additional £10 million towards the implementation of the Best Start recommendations.

16:30

The Minister for Mental Health (Clare Haughey): I thank Monica Lennon for highlighting the international day of the midwife.

In Scotland, we are very fortunate to have highly educated, skilled and compassionate midwives who lead and deliver the high-quality care that is so valued by women and their families during their pregnancies, as they prepare for birth and their first few precious days and weeks with their babies. Our midwives support a woman's whole family. That matters, because all the evidence tells us that children's experience in their early years can make a real difference to their health and wellbeing later in life, and that support for new parents needs to start pre-birth. Therefore, let me repeat the thanks that Jeane Freeman recorded on Sunday, on the international day of the midwife, to every midwife in Scotland and every young midwife in training for their commitment, compassion and dedication to their role.

It is two years since "The Best Start: A Five-Year Forward Plan for Maternity and Neonatal Care in Scotland" was published. It describes a new model of maternity and neonatal care that is family centred and focuses on compassion and the best care, with the whole family being involved in the experience. One of the central pillars of the best start plan is the introduction of the continuity of midwifery carer. Under that model, women receive most of their care from a primary midwife and a small team throughout pregnancy, labour, birth and afterwards. That is what women told the best start review that they wanted, and midwives told us that that is how they want to work. The model is also supported by compelling international evidence of its positive impact, including improved satisfaction with care, fewer medical interventions during birth, improved breastfeeding rates, and reductions in pre-term birth and baby loss.

Last year, five early adopter boards were identified and given the task of leading the way across Scotland in implementing the new model of continuity of carer and local delivery of care. The first teams are now delivering continuity of care to local women. Capturing and sharing learning from those early adopters is helping the remaining boards to plan for change in their own areas, which will be tailored to local needs. The underlying principle of delivering individualised care, which is built around a woman and her family, and their circumstances and needs, will be at the centre of every midwife's practice. Built into the model is the recognition that some women with complex needs will need extra care, and so midwives' caseloads are reduced to give them the time to provide such care.

We know that the roll-out of the continuity of carer model and the delivery of the range of recommendations in the best start review will need investment in order that they can be delivered. That is why Jeane Freeman announced a funding package of £12 million over two years for

implementation across the best start programme. That has allowed boards to invest in infrastructure, training and equipment for staff to be able to make the best start programme a reality. In recognition that the roll-out will take several years, the Government is also looking at future funding.

No one is in any doubt that the model will mean substantial change to ways of working, particularly for midwives, which is why our early implementer boards have invested time and energy in communications and change management, supported by our best start programme board and delivery groups. We expect all boards to roll out the new model in a planned and managed way, with safety at the forefront, and our maternity teams are working hard to deliver that. In addition, boards have been supported by national groups that have developed a range of guidance frameworks and training for staff to support implementation.

To support the roll-out, the best start programme executive team and the RCM are engaging with the early adopter boards and listening to their experience of the continuity of carer model to identify learning so as to improve implementation at national and local levels across Scotland. In March, a best start event was attended by more than 200 maternity staff, who were mainly midwives, from across Scotland; many more watched via a live stream. The event focused on sharing learning and experience of the roll-out of the best start programme, including the continuity of carer model, and giving staff the opportunity to ask questions.

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

Monica Lennon: Will the minister take an intervention?

Clare Haughey: Do I have time, Presiding Officer?

The Deputy Presiding Officer: If you wish to do so, minister.

Clare Haughey: Yes, I will take an intervention.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: I call Kezia Dugdale.

Kezia Dugdale: Does the minister recognise the role of midwives in providing postnatal contraception for women, particularly those in poorer communities? If so, how will she ensure that the money goes to deprived communities so that midwives there can do that crucial work?

The Deputy Presiding Officer: I am sorry, minister—I believe that I called Kezia Dugdale instead of Monica Lennon. Would you like to deal with both interventions?

Clare Haughey: Do I have time?

The Deputy Presiding Officer: I will give you time.

Monica Lennon: I appreciate the minister's explanation of future funding, but I was struck by the use of the word "if" in the amendment with regard to the plans being successful

"if fully and appropriately resourced".

I have not heard from the Government an absolute commitment that they will be "fully and appropriately resourced". In our motion, we referred to the figure of £10 million, because stakeholders told us that that would give them some confidence. Can the minister give me and the chamber further assurance on that point?

Clare Haughey: I thank Kezia Dugdale and Monica Lennon for their interventions, which I will take in turn.

I would certainly support and echo what Ms Dugdale said. It is very important that we ensure that women are able to plan their pregnancies in a safe and manageable way. Indeed, that is why we have free contraception in this country and why we think it important that midwives also play a role in educating women about their fertility, particularly in the postnatal period.

As for Ms Lennon's intervention, the £12 million is an initial investment in the four early adopter sites, and we expect additional moneys to come to the other boards. However, we must recognise that that is not an addition to current midwifery care—it is transformational funding that will turn this into the new normal for the delivery of maternity care.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: Please wind up now, minister.

Clare Haughey: I know that the vast majority of midwives, maternity professionals and key stakeholders such as the Royal College of Midwives, the National Childbirth Trust and Bliss support the introduction of continuity of carer, and introducing that model will be important for the satisfaction of women and staff and from the perspective of improved outcomes. However, change on this scale will, as always, be difficult and challenging, and it is important that we listen to staff on the ground, learn from what is working well and work with boards to help them manage the change programme in the best way.

If I could also add—

The Deputy Presiding Officer: No, minister.

Clare Haughey: In that case, I move amendment S5M-17191.2, to leave out from "understands that only" to end and insert:

"agrees that the contribution of 600 NHS staff, 600 maternity and neonatal service users, the NHS, the Royal College of Midwives, the National Childbirth Trust and

Bliss, along with others, was instrumental in shaping the five-year plan for maternity and neonatal care; recognises that this expert input led to the plan taking a phased approach; further recognises that the initial budget of £12 million is only intended to support the initial phase, including implementation of the new model of continuity of carer at five early implementer sites across Scotland, and believes that the plan is the right way forward and, if fully and appropriately resourced, will result in mothers and babies being offered a truly family-centred, safe and compassionate approach to their care, with real continuity of care and carer.”

The Deputy Presiding Officer: We are running out of time. Again, I apologise to all for the error that I made.

16:37

Miles Briggs (Lothian) (Con): I very much welcome this debate on Scotland’s midwives and maternity services, and I thank the Labour Party for bringing it forward.

I want to start by echoing Monica Lennon’s comments on the dedication, expertise and skills of our fantastic midwives, who offer world-class levels of care to mothers, babies and families across our country. Their contribution to our health service is massive, and we owe them a great deal of gratitude for the work that they do every day. I also pay tribute to the excellent work of the Royal College of Midwives, and I hope that members will support my amendment, which recognises their work and their campaigns.

I share the concerns that have already been voiced about the significant midwifery workforce challenges that are affecting so many of our hospitals and communities. According to the latest statistics, there are 114 midwifery vacancies across Scotland and the vacancy rate for midwives has doubled in the past five years. There are fewer midwives in post than there were five years ago, and less than 30 per cent of nursing and midwifery staff feel that there are enough staff. It is therefore little wonder that the RCM accused the First Minister, when she was health secretary, of making

“a spectacular error of judgment”

in cutting the number of nurse training places.

All of that is an indictment of the SNP’s running of our health services and its failure to put in place adequate national workforce planning in the 12 years that it has been in office. The midwifery shortage is another key example of just how damaging Nicola Sturgeon’s decision—

Clare Haughey: The member should be aware that we have more qualified nurses and midwives working in our NHS, with the figure up 7.9 per cent to more than 44,000 full-time equivalents—a new record high. Moreover, our nursing and midwifery

student intake is up 7.6 per cent, which is the seventh successive rise. During this Parliament—

The Deputy Presiding Officer: Minister, we are very limited for time. Mr Briggs, you still have only four minutes.

Miles Briggs: The key statistic that the minister needs to understand is the 114 midwives that we are short of and the pressure that that is putting on staff across our country.

In its attempt to rewrite history in its amendment, the Government does not recognise that the NHS workforce challenges that are being faced are its responsibility. Given our ageing midwifery workforce and the fact that a large proportion of Scotland’s current midwives are now over 50, extra midwifery student places should have been provided. Instead, the damaging cuts to training places that were made by Nicola Sturgeon have only exacerbated the current staffing crisis.

As an MSP for Edinburgh and Lothian, I agree with Monica Lennon that the open letter that midwives from across NHS Lothian have written is deeply concerning, and it should concern ministers as well. The letter refers to the shortage of key equipment, which should be urgently addressed by NHS Lothian. I hope that the minister will take forward those concerns, too.

The best start recommendations were widely welcomed by stakeholders and experts. The Scottish Conservatives back the focus on a patient and family-centred approach, and we agree that there needs to be continuity of care for mothers throughout and beyond pregnancy. It is up to Scottish National Party ministers to ensure that all required funding is delivered to implement the best start recommendations.

With regard to support for new mothers in my Lothian region, I have recently highlighted cuts to walk-in specialist breastfeeding services. Those cuts took place in 2017 and, since then, I have regularly been contacted by new mothers who do not know where to turn when they have problems breastfeeding. I welcome the recruitment of more health visitors by NHS Lothian. However, when a new mother is having trouble breastfeeding, they benefit from support straight away, which is why I propose the introduction of a dedicated telephone line for new mothers who are having issues with breastfeeding. That would allow new mothers to get instant support when such difficulties arise.

I again welcome this debate on maternity services and midwives. I am pleased to support Monica Lennon’s motion.

I move amendment S5M-17191.1, to insert after “work-related stress”:

“and applauds the work undertaken by the Royal College of Midwives to help midwives deal with these issues,

address bullying in the workplace and encourage a more supportive workplace culture”.

16:41

Alison Johnstone (Lothian) (Green): I welcome the debate and thank Monica Lennon for bringing the issue to Parliament. I, too, thank Scotland’s midwives for the incredible work that they do.

The motion and the Government amendment agree on the importance of the continuity of carer. The 2016 Cochrane review found that the midwifery continuity of carer model made women more likely to have a normal birth. The best start recommendations recognise that all women should have continuity of midwifery carer from a primary midwife. That gives midwives a real chance to get to know mothers and families and to take individual circumstances into account. That is key.

The relationship provides an opportunity to ensure that every growing family in Scotland that requires expert advice on or help with financial or other matters gets the help that they are entitled to. Midwives are ideally placed to identify, at the earliest stage, families where children are at risk of falling into child poverty, but of course those midwives require sufficient capacity, resources and time to do that. It must be acknowledged that serious concerns have been expressed about whether the best start recommendations can be implemented with current staffing levels. In December last year, there were more than 114 vacant midwifery posts in Scotland, and there has been a year-on-year increase in the number since 2015. Those serious concerns are described clearly in the open letter from midwives in Lothian to which the motion refers.

I recognise that the Government is taking steps to address capacity issues. It has increased the number of training places and has increased the student bursary, which I welcome, and I am optimistic that the Health and Care (Staffing) (Scotland) Bill will help to ensure appropriate staffing levels. However, those measures alone will not solve the problem. As we have heard, there are concerns about retention, as more than a third of midwives are over 50. Consistently, a significant proportion of the midwifery workforce is aged over 55 and could therefore retire at any time. That is a lot of invaluable experience that will be lost, and it means that new midwives are dealing with complex cases without essential back-up and support.

The birth rate in Scotland is falling but the demand for midwives is growing. As we have heard, that is due to a rise in older women and women with a high BMI accessing maternity services and requiring more complex care.

According to the Royal College of Midwives, more than half of women accessing maternity services are now obese or overweight. We know that there is a well-established link between deprivation and obesity. Healthier mothers reduce midwife workload.

Maximising pregnant women’s income is one way that we can tackle the strain on midwifery services. In 2017, the Greens secured a commitment from the Scottish Government to roll out the healthier, wealthier children scheme across Scotland. I am keen that we do not lose momentum on that and I will continue to monitor progress on the roll-out. Midwives and other antenatal service staff as well as health visitors and others have played a huge part in the scheme thus far, so I offer my thanks for their hard work.

Miles Briggs was right to highlight the impact of community-based projects such as the Pregnancy and Parents Centre in my region. Such projects help parents to have the healthiest pregnancy possible and provide invaluable support to pregnant women and mothers, which can in turn ease the strain on midwives. However, cuts to services are undermining that.

In Lothian, as we have heard, vital face-to-face help for breastfeeding mothers has been slashed by 60 per cent. Five weekly, half-day specialist breastfeeding clinics in community centres were shut in December 2017. It would be very helpful if the minister could respond to those concerns when she closes the debate, because we should imagine what it would be like for someone to wait for a week, worrying that they will be unable to feed their baby.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: You must close, please.

Alison Johnstone: It is imperative that we do all that we can to properly fund and resource midwifery services.

16:45

Alex Cole-Hamilton (Edinburgh Western) (LD): I am grateful to the Labour Party for bringing the debate to Parliament, and I assure it of our support. The debate comes hot on the heels of the international day of the midwife.

I cannot think of another healthcare professional, other than general practitioners, with whom every member of the chamber will have had some association. It is usually on the first day of our lives, but many people have subsequent interaction with midwives during the births of their children.

At 6 pm on Palm Sunday five years ago, my wife went into labour with our third child. The first two labours—those of our boys—had been

protracted over a number of days, so we thought that we had quite a lot of time. I took a leisurely trip to Dalkeith to drop off the boys with their granny. When I was on the bypass, I discovered to my horror that Gill was timing her contractions at two minutes apart, so we realised that things were moving at pace. I got her into the car and got back on to the bypass, at which point she went into transition, which is quite terrifying when you are driving at 70mph.

My wife insisted that I phone the midwives at the Royal infirmary, and I said that we were coming in hot and that I would not be able to park the car. I said that I would need to dump the car at the door, because the baby was coming now. They said that that was fine and that I should pull up outside the door. When we pulled up, three midwives were ready and waiting for us at the door. It turns out that I had gone to school with one of the midwives. She told me that as I got out of the car, but she said, "That's not important right now, because your wife is about to have a baby."

There was 11 minutes between the doorway and the delivery of Darcy, our third child, who was happy, healthy and well cared for. During those 11 minutes, we were carried in very confident hands. We had an excellent experience, and I know that such experiences are replicated in hospitals around the country every day. The profession has our great thanks.

It is easy to think of midwives as working only in a hospital setting, but they do so much in our communities, too. My party makes a great deal about the need for more adequate perinatal mental health support services. We forget that midwives pick up the first signs of postnatal depression or other mental health difficulties that are associated with childbirth. We need to address that key issue, which affects the early days when we are trying to give our children the best start in life.

Given subsequent policy developments, we have asked midwives to do more with less. For example, a midwife will be the first named person that a child will get in their first days of life, before that role is handed over to a health visitor. As was the case with the best start grant, midwives were not involved in the creation of that policy initiative, which was a serious misstep.

We are asking midwives to do more with less. By "less", I refer to the calamitous decision that was taken by the then health secretary and now First Minister, Nicola Sturgeon, in cutting the number of training places by a fifth, which has resulted in 300 places being lost to the profession. That point has been made several times during the debate. There is no doubt about the causal relationship between the myopic decision to cut

the number of training places and the subsequent increase in the vacancy rate to 5 per cent.

I thank the Labour Party for securing the debate. We will support Labour's motion, we will reject the Government's amendment because it glosses over some of the problems that the Labour Party has rightly raised, and we are happy to support the Conservatives' amendment.

It is important that we have more such debates, because we often forget about midwives. They are more than just healthcare professionals; they offer counsel, succour and crucial advice, on which we all rely in those first sleep-deprived days of early parenthood. We often forget how much of a good start they give not only to our children but to us, as new parents.

16:49

David Stewart (Highlands and Islands) (Lab):

The International Confederation of Midwives created the concept of the international day of the midwife, to which previous speakers have referred. Across the world, this year's theme is:

"Midwives: Defenders of Women's Rights".

The organisation has a strong international message that is also applicable to Scotland here and now:

"Midwives uphold and protect the rights of women every day",

"Midwives need safe and enabling environments to work in"

and

"Women have the right to make choices about their care during childbirth".

It is worth repeating the truism that maternity and neonatal care are crucial to the health and wellbeing of Scotland's people. As the Scottish Government's report on the best start plan said last year:

"Services have largely developed over time, rather than being designed around the needs of women and families, leading to different approaches and care across Scotland."

As previous speakers have said, we all know that the birth rate in Scotland has been falling, but work for midwives is not dropping proportionately, because of increased levels of birth complexities, more inductions and a rise in the numbers of older women and women with very high BMIs becoming pregnant, as we have heard from Alison Johnstone and others. That means that there are changing needs in the population and that services need to change and develop, because some are no longer fit for purpose. My colleague Rhoda Grant will shortly provide a case study based in the area around Caithness.

I know from my experience as convener of the cross-party group on diabetes that long-term conditions, such as obesity and mental health problems, need a strong pro-active response from health services. Other members around the chamber know that too.

I have referred to the concept of health inequalities many times in the chamber, and in the Health and Sport Committee. We all know that women from disadvantaged communities face particular challenges during pregnancy and birth. To address those problems, the best start plan has a number of key principles, such as the continuity of the carer, a particular focus on rural areas and the enhancement of telehealth and telemedicine, as well as wider targets like a single maternity network

“along with a single Neonatal Managed Clinical Network for Scotland.”

Is it working? One midwife working in Glasgow who gave me feedback about the best start plan said today:

“I just can’t see how it will work safely for both women and midwives. We are being failed as it is, completely rewriting the system won’t fix that. Honestly, this is the hot topic at work and people are so scared of this.”

We all know that midwives are on the frontline of the NHS. They bring new life into the world in a job that is heartbreaking, hard and beautiful. The fact that some feel that they have no choice but to leave the job that they love tells us that something must be done.

As we have heard from my colleague Monica Lennon, on this side of the chamber we believe that transformational change to midwifery is needed, but it is crucial that that is not done on the cheap. The existing midwifery workforce is already under significant pressure with a high level of vacancies and increasingly complex cases to manage. In addition, the “State of Maternity Services Report 2018 – Scotland” from the Royal College of Midwives found that the number of midwife vacancies had quadrupled over the previous five years.

I echo earlier speakers who called for an urgent investigation into the concerns raised by the midwives from NHS Lothian who believe that they do not have the resources needed to deliver the new models of care. The skills and commitment of Scotland’s midwives need to be recognised and celebrated today. Let us ensure that all midwives have the time, training and resources to do their job properly.

16:53

Emma Harper (South Scotland) (SNP): I chose to speak in the debate because I am concerned by the Labour party’s motion.

I, too, acknowledge that 5 May was the international day of the midwife, and I thank all our incredibly skilled midwives across Scotland.

I was an active clinical educator and participated in education sessions for midwives learning to deal with the complex case issues that were highlighted by Alison Johnstone. Obese patients can have no peripheral venous access, so I had to support midwives to work with central venous access, which is completely unfamiliar to them.

NHS Dumfries and Galloway in my South Scotland region, as with other areas across Scotland, has its challenges with midwifery services, and I have been in communication with local midwives and the NHS Dumfries and Galloway board about that.

Finlay Carson (Galloway and West Dumfries) (Con): Will the member take an intervention?

Emma Harper: Of course I will take an intervention from my colleague Finlay Carson.

Finlay Carson: First, I declare an interest: in the next 12 days, I will become a father again.

Does the member agree that, despite the incredible hard work of the midwives in Wigtownshire, people in the area are being badly let down by previous decisions of this Government, as there are only two midwives covering the whole of Wigtownshire, and there is the impending closure of the birthing unit in Stranraer—due not to improvements in the service but to concerns about safe and resilient staffing levels—which will require women in Stranraer to travel 70 miles to Dumfries?

Emma Harper: I absolutely agree that there are real challenges in Dumfries and Galloway. A midwife charge nurse died and one retired, and there are major recruitment challenges. I am coming to the issue of the 75 miles of potholes that women who are in labour have to experience when they are going to Dumfries. I am not in disagreement with the member. I agree that there are challenges.

I have referred to recent casework that I have been involved with. When I read the motion, I reflected on the fact that, at the end of 2018, I wrote to NHS Dumfries and Galloway to communicate the concerns that have been expressed to me by midwives who are my constituents. I asked the head of midwifery about the challenges that were perceived by the midwives, because the issue is not just about recruitment and training; morale issues have been highlighted, too. I raised the issues of the Clenoch birthing suite, which I have just talked about, and Galloway community hospital. I was pleased to read in the response to my letter that the head of midwifery has met a representative sample of

midwives across the area, from Stranraer to Dumfries, to speak to them about morale, the challenges that they face and how they feel overall. Those meetings were based on modules of communication from the good conversation programme, and midwives were able to rate their feelings about a number of areas of their experience, including morale. Most of the midwives rated service delivery at seven out of 10, which meets a satisfactory standard. It is worth noting, however, that no midwife who was asked said that staff morale was an issue. That conflicts a little bit with what has been conveyed to me.

The Nursing and Midwifery Council has declared that there has been a 13 per cent reduction in nursing and midwifery registration on the part of midwives from our European neighbour countries, and Brexit has been cited as a cause of that.

I want to quickly highlight that the Scottish Government is keeping the bursary and is supporting free tuition, which has been taken away south of the border. The Scottish Government is investing in the area, and I commend that. I would like to hear any further information from the Scottish Government about how we can support our midwives in Scotland.

16:57

Annie Wells (Glasgow) (Con): Midwives play an essential role in the NHS, and many women who have given birth will remember the names, if not the faces, of the midwives who took care of them on one of the most important days of their lives. I certainly remember all the help and support that I got as a 21-year-old first-time mum, when I was hundreds of miles away from my family. The support that I received before, during and after giving birth was greatly appreciated, particularly the emotional support, which we cannot put a price on. It is important that we give midwives our full support, so that they can work in an environment that helps them to do the vital work that they do.

The annual international day of the midwife was first celebrated in 1991 and, as we have heard, this year it took place last Sunday. It acts as an opportunity to celebrate and advocate for the many ways that midwives support women. Over the past two decades, midwives have rolled with changes in technology and society. More women than ever are getting pregnant via in vitro fertilisation, and more women are having children later in life.

Patient satisfaction with maternity services is high, with 74 per cent saying that their care in labour was excellent, and 61 per cent saying the same for antenatal care. That is not to say,

however, that we are doing right by midwives, who are facing pressures on a daily basis.

As we have heard from my colleague Miles Briggs, statistics show that there is a shortage of midwives, with 114 vacancies across Scotland and fewer in post than there were five years ago. In a Scottish Government staff experience report, only 27 per cent of nursing and midwifery staff said that they felt that there were enough staff to allow them to do their job. We know that that is a long-term issue across the NHS workforce. In 2016, Audit Scotland highlighted a lack of workforce forward planning in health boards.

As well as recruitment, retention is a huge problem. Two years ago, the former head of the Royal College of Midwives put on record her concerns about an ageing workforce. The proportion of midwives who are aged 50 or older jumped from 34 per cent in March 2013 to 40 per cent in March 2018. She also stated that workforce behaviours were deterring trained midwives from staying in the profession. As we have heard, there have been reports of low morale, bullying and work-related stress. A Royal College of Midwives survey found that more than half of RCM members had experienced harassment, bullying or abuse from service users or their families in the past 12 months, and one third reported having been on the receiving end of that from a manager.

Although midwife unions have supported best start, they have expressed concerns about how it will be implemented. There are widespread concerns about the demands of being on call and the potential impact that it will have on work-life balance. That is why we lodged an amendment that highlights the work that the RCM has undertaken to improve workplace culture. Given that a study last year found that there were strong links in Scotland between the quality of maternity care and women's health after childbirth, it is all the more important that we get the necessary support in place.

I again thank the midwives across Scotland who do such a cracking job. They are one of the most visible and valued professions in our hospitals and communities, and they deserve our full support. We must improve workplace culture and create an environment that supports the vital work that midwives do.

17:01

Joan McAlpine (South Scotland) (SNP): I am delighted to speak in the debate, which highlights the vital work of midwives. I pay tribute to one very special midwife—my children's grandmother, May Kane, who died a few weeks ago in her late 80s.

May was an old-school midwife who, between the 1950s and the 1990s, delivered thousands of babies across Coatbridge and Lanarkshire, including one of our own parliamentarians, Elaine Smith. Many of those babies, as adults, of course, were among the mourners who came to say goodbye to May in Coatbridge a few weeks ago, demonstrating the esteem in which she was held in her community, and indeed the high regard in which midwives are held. The priest said that some of the younger people who were there had not met her, but that they knew that her hands had brought them into the world, which is why they wanted to be there.

It is fitting to put her name on the Scottish parliamentary record. She often spoke of the importance of one-to-one care and the close relationship between mothers and midwives. Of course, that is exactly how she operated back in the 1950s and 1960s, when she set off on foot whenever she was needed, to what were often very poor homes. She would follow up with a lot of aftercare and she would have been the first to welcome the fresh focus on the continuity of care that the minister outlined. I pay tribute to her, and to all the nurses and midwives whose contribution is of critical importance to the NHS and should be valued and celebrated.

I am proud that, since the SNP came into office, there are now more qualified nurses and midwives working in the NHS in Scotland, with staffing levels at a record high; the number of qualified nurses and midwives is up by 7.9 per cent. I welcome the fact that, over this parliamentary session, the Scottish Government will continue to invest in education and training support, with £40 million of investment having been allocated to create up to 2,600 additional nursing and midwifery training places.

In addition to increasing places for students who are new to the profession, the Scottish Government also introduced the return to practice programme, which provides funding to encourage former nurses and midwives back into the profession. I understand that almost 460 former nurses and midwives have retrained through the programme since 2015. The Scottish Government is also funding the Open University to deliver a pre-registration programme, which currently supports around 116 nursing students.

As well as increasing places for new students, the Scottish Government will invest £11 million to expand the financial support that is available to nursing and midwifery students. It is particularly important that all eligible students who are on nursing and midwifery courses across Scotland will benefit from an increased bursary in 2019-20, which will rise to £10,000 a year in 2020-21. The core nursing and midwifery student bursary has

been set at £6,578 a year since 2009-10, and it is increasing to £8,100 in 2019-20. Those bursaries are the best in the United Kingdom, and they are not means tested or repayable.

The First Minister's announcement in October has been welcomed by experts and key organisations, such as Glasgow Caledonian University, which is among the largest providers of nursing education in Scotland. An additional discretionary fund of at least £1 million was launched in 2016 to provide a safety net for nursing and midwifery students in financial difficulty. That is, of course, in sharp contrast to the UK Government's position in England, where the bursary and free nursing and midwifery tuition have been scrapped.

The measures that the SNP Government has taken to improve and safeguard the integrity of the NHS in Scotland demonstrate very clearly that it will deliver the best possible framework for continued support for nurses and midwives who are employed in the health service as well as students, who will be the next generation to provide world-class care and support for millions of new Scots.

17:06

Rhoda Grant (Highlands and Islands) (Lab):

We have heard that the relationship between a family and their midwife is incredibly important. "The Best Start: A Five-Year Forward Plan for Maternity and Neonatal Care in Scotland" lays out best practice and what we should expect from maternity services. Our motion highlights that provision is underfunded. As we read the report, it becomes more and more obvious that that is the case.

The report talks about multidisciplinary teams in communities following the mother and family through the stages of pregnancy, birth and beyond. However, only 10 per cent of Caithness births take place in the county; the rest take place in Inverness, which is more than 100 miles south, over treacherous roads.

A similar situation arose with Dr Gray's hospital in Elgin. The situation there has slightly improved because of interim paediatric cover, but that cover cannot be guaranteed and the situation remains precarious, with about 60 per cent of births still taking place in Aberdeen.

In Caithness, there was no attempt to provide paediatric cover. Previously, there was obstetric cover, but there was no paediatrician. Tragically, a baby died. Had paediatric cover been available, that might have been prevented. Rather than the lack of paediatric cover being addressed, obstetric cover was also removed. The argument was that having obstetric cover gave a false sense of

security, and that mothers were not transferred to Raigmore hospital quickly enough.

The arguments were also made that midwives were being deskilled and that birth was being overmedicalised. However, with only 10 per cent of Caithness births now taking place in Caithness, it is difficult to see how midwives can hone their skills under the new system. The truth is that the distances are so great that clinical staff will transfer the mum if there is any concern about the birth. I do not blame them for that, because they do not have local back-up.

Many mums will, if it is thought that there might be complications or risks during the pregnancy, opt for an elective caesarean section. That is the only way that they can plan for when they will be away from home, organise childcare for older children and organise for their families. Sadly, that involves even greater medicalisation of birth and, as with all major surgery, risks are attached. That flies in the face of what the best start approach states—an approach that also says nothing about giving birth in the back of an ambulance.

I have already raised in Parliament the case of a mum who gave birth to one of her twins en route to Inverness. The twins were born 50 miles apart, in different counties. That is distressing and unsafe. If it is unsafe to give birth to a child in Caithness maternity unit, surely it is much more unsafe to do so at Golspie community hospital, which does not have a maternity unit or facilities. The first twin travelled to Inverness, separate from its mother, who travelled in another ambulance and gave birth to the second twin in Inverness. NHS Highland has not risk assessed that journey, and I fear that a tragedy will occur before it does. If the Scottish Government is committed to best start, it needs to address that.

Another point of concern is the journey home with a newborn baby. The journey is a long three-hour one by bus, four and a half hours by train, or at least two and a half hours by car. Caithness health action team discovered that it is dangerous for a newborn baby to travel such long distances in a car seat. For a journey of that length home to Caithness, specialist baby cots should be used to allow the child to lie down during the journey. That surely would have been picked up, had NHS Highland carried out a risk assessment of the new pathway. The community had to raise funds to purchase appropriate travel cots, and Tesco stepped in and offered to store cots for families when the NHS refused to do so.

The truth is that current practice does not reflect what is proposed in the best start plan. That is unacceptable for the parent and the midwife. I ask that a risk assessment of the current practice at Caithness maternity unit be urgently carried out, whether in relation to the physical journey to

hospital and back home, or the large increase in elective caesarean sections. The whole patient journey needs to be safe.

17:10

Edward Mountain (Highlands and Islands) (Con): It is always a pleasure to follow Rhoda Grant, who has said most of what I wanted to say in my speech, and it is good that we agree.

I am delighted that we are having a debate to acknowledge the international day of the midwife and to champion the hard work and devotion of all midwives across Scotland.

I begin by celebrating the passion and dedication of our Highland midwives, who were brought to national attention in a BBC television series. I was also pleased to see the first cohort of midwifery students enrol at the University of the Highlands and Islands this January. It is a groundbreaking course that will equip new recruits with the skills to provide care in remote and rural Scotland.

Where progress is being made, we should definitely celebrate it. However, we should not forget that under the Scottish Government all is not well with our health service. Our midwives are being let down by poor long-term planning that is resulting in serious staffing shortages; we have fewer full-time midwives in post than we did five years ago. Our health service is experiencing the devastating effects of the First Minister's decision to cut drastically the number of training places for nurses and midwives between 2009 and 2012.

Also, the SNP's efforts to repair the damage that it has caused is not inspiring the confidence of the health professionals. The Royal College of Nursing has criticised the SNP's plan for its lack of detail, and for omitting to say how much money will be invested in growing the nursing workforce. Frankly, I say that that is not good enough. I believe that it shows a lack of seriousness about resolving a workforce problem that the SNP itself has created. We need the SNP Government finally and fully to support our hard-working midwives.

We do not need more of the ill-judged approach to saving money by downgrading local maternity services.

Emma Harper: Will the member take an intervention?

Edward Mountain: I will make a little headway, first.

When I attended NHS Highland's annual review, it was clear that the centralisation of services to Raigmore hospital and maternity provision in Caithness remain very big concerns across the whole region.

Emma Harper: Does the member agree that the number of births might indicate why it is difficult to keep a small birthing unit open? Last year, the birthing centre in Stranraer had fewer than 20 births, so it is a challenge to maintain a midwife's level of competence to provide the safest care.

Edward Mountain: Indeed. I am just coming on to that.

For too long, senior leaders at NHS Highland have held the belief that centralisation is the solution to all the problems. However, downgrading services such as the Caithness maternity unit—and the one in Stranraer that Emma Harper mentioned—is simply not the answer.

We talk about the lack of births at Caithness general hospital. It is a fact that last year there were 219 births to Caithness mothers, 18 of which took place at Caithness general hospital. Such numbers are of huge concern to families in Caithness who want to have children, many of whom would prefer to give birth locally and avoid the long stressful journey south to Inverness that Rhoda Grant mentioned. Women certainly do not expect to make that journey while they are in labour.

Centralisation is not working for new families. It puts intolerable pressures on staff—pressures that are made even worse by the alleged bullying in NHS Highland and the bullying that is now being talked about in other areas.

Our midwives deserve better than what the Scottish Government is currently giving them. Whether on cuts to training places, staff shortages or the deep problems with workplace culture, we need to do more for the midwives who are so critical to the future of Scotland.

17:14

Sandra White (Glasgow Kelvin) (SNP): I join members in thanking our midwives for the work that they do and for the care that they give before and after birth, which is very precious to us all. It was not yesterday when I had my three kids, and I know that things change constantly. I think that things have improved immensely with regard to midwifery.

I have heard a number of members quote figures on midwives and older midwives. I accept that we need more people; more midwives and nurses are being trained. However, we should get together and congratulate the midwives who are 50, 55 or 60; they might have to work until they are 66 under what is being done at Westminster. As Monica Lennon said in her opening speech, many midwives have huge amounts of experience, so

we should congratulate them on being there, regardless of their age.

I want to concentrate on “The Best Start: A Five-Year Forward Plan for Maternity and Neonatal Care in Scotland”, which has been mentioned by Monica Lennon, the minister and numerous other members. If we are honest with one another, it is an ambitious and honest plan. The minister went through the whole thing, so I will not do that. I have only four minutes, anyway. The plan mentions what has taken place, covering the review, the engagement and the key recommendations. The process included engagement not just with professionals but with communities on what they want.

As I said, I will not go through the whole plan, but I will mention some of the recommendations and who actually took part in the review. The workforce took part in it. There were 14 NHS territorial board visits—a huge undertaking—and 600 staff were engaged. As I said, the plan is ambitious and honest, and I think that the fact that 600 staff took part says something about the engagement. There were 504 responses to the neonatal experience survey, and 2,000 women shared their experience of care in the Scottish maternity care experience survey in 2015. That shows that the Government is working. We might have a lot of work to do, and there are some very honest recommendations. However, the fact that 2,000 women could share their experiences which were put in a report is something that points the way forward.

Monica Lennon: I agree that engagement has been really important, but does Sandra White agree that we are now looking for certainty on funding of the next phase, and that the word “if” in the Government's amendment is cause for concern?

Sandra White: I suppose that it depends on how we read the amendment. Given what the minister said, I do not think that the “if” causes as much concern as is perhaps being read into it. As I said, I am being honest, and the report is honest. We need more money to be made available for services, but that will depend on how things pan out. Maybe that is where the “if” comes from. That is how I am reading it, anyway. It might not be how Monica Lennon reads it.

When we look at the review and see how many people took part in it, we can see that have got honest answers from staff, from women, from the professionals and from the health boards. It might not make great reading for the Government, but it is honest, and we are replying to that in an honest way.

On the “if” that Monica Lennon mentioned, I do not know, but perhaps the minister will address

that when she sums up. However, I am confident that although the plan is ambitious, we will get there in the end.

17:19

Brian Whittle (South Scotland) (Con): First, I refer members to my entry in the register of interests, as my daughter is an NHS midwife.

I thank the Labour Party for bringing the debate to the chamber, although I add my disappointment at the short time that we have for it, as there is so much that I would like to say.

Very early on in my time in this place, I started working with a constituent of mine, Fraser Morton. Mr Morton and his partner, June, had gone through the unimaginable tragedy of losing their son, Lucas, in childbirth. The circumstances leading up to the death of their son had troubled Mr Morton and his response was to investigate. He is a lecturer in health and safety. To add to the trauma, it transpired that Lucas's death was avoidable.

Mr Morton asked me to go with them to meetings with the health board, Health Improvement Scotland and the investigation team. I was shocked at the way in which Mr Morton and his family were treated. Mr Morton was insistent that there was a systemic problem, but there was a consistent wall of denial. At one point, it was suggested that one of the midwives would carry the can, but Mr Morton resisted that.

In the end, I organised a meeting with the health secretary at the time, Shona Robison. Mr Morton is a very knowledgeable and well-informed individual, as I am sure Shona Robison would have agreed, as would the Health and Sport Committee, to which he gave evidence. The result was a reluctant—and, in our opinion, less than satisfactory—investigation by HIS. That investigation resulted in an extra 24 neonatal staff being recruited into the department, which must mean that the department had been 24 staff short. Not only does that speak to patient safety and the high baby mortality rate at that time, it must also speak to the pressure that the department was under because it was so chronically understaffed.

Shona Robison made a commitment in the meeting with Mr Morton and in the chamber to make cardiocography scan training compulsory twice a year for all neonatal staff. Given that the misreading of CTG scans is cited in a high proportion of childbirth mortality cases, that was a welcome step. Mr Morton managed to achieve more than all the members in here combined during that time. The problem is that that requirement is not being universally adhered to. Perhaps, in her summing up, the minister could tell parents and the chamber how the policy is being

implemented and how its implementation is being measured.

Edward Mountain has been leading in addressing the bullying culture in his local health board. We now have another health board being accused of systemic bullying by almost 100 radiographers, who claim that staff have suffered years of bullying, harassment and victimisation in the very same hospital where the same issues were raised by Mr Morton three years ago. What has changed?

Bullying is a lack of respect and means that the work that is being done is undervalued. Creating an environment in which healthcare professionals want to work must be the primary priority. A bullying and blame culture has developed into an aversion to risk that is shutting down experiential learning. How can we learn the lessons if the evidence is swept under the carpet? Claim after claim is being made that the system is driven towards finding individual blame rather than looking at the flaws in the system. Until that issue is addressed, the chronic staff shortages in midwifery and many other healthcare professional disciplines cannot be solved. So many midwives are taking early retirement because they have seen their value and status eroded.

We are talking about the retention of staff. There is a hole in the bucket, and no matter how hard we try to fill the bucket, it will never be full. We need to fix the hole and look after the health and wellbeing of our professionals if we want to retain our staff.

Midwifery is a vocation. Twelve-hour shifts are common. To add the pressures of understaffing by creating a culture of blame and staff bullying will not encourage our midwives to stay for the longer term. We should look after their wellbeing first. It is time that the Government understood that.

17:23

Clare Haughey: I thank Monica Lennon for lodging the motion highlighting the international day of the midwife and for the comments from other members. I also repeat my thanks for the incredible support that midwives give to women and families, and I assure them that we are listening to their concerns and taking them seriously.

As I close, I want to highlight some of the positive work that is being done in maternity services in Scotland. Maternal mental ill health is a key priority for me. It affects as many as one in five pregnant women. We know that it is underdiagnosed and that, without the right treatment, there can be serious, long-term effects on women and families. Our investment of £350 million shows that we are determined to improve the recognition and treatment of perinatal mental ill

health in this country, including by improving community support, by offering better access to psychological assessment and treatment, and by having more specialist services for those who have the most severe illness.

I would like to respond to some of the points that have been raised in the debate. Some contributors have referred to the open letter from the NHS Lothian midwives. NHS Lothian has its first pilot team as part of its phased approach to implementation, with safety at its core. The board reports positive feedback on the new model and has confirmed that all midwives in the pilot team have their own equipment, including laptops. I know that senior staff at NHS Lothian met midwives who contributed to the letter to listen to their concerns and further meetings, events and workshops have been arranged with staff to explain the plans and listen to concerns. NHS Lothian has also established a staff group to feed into its best start programme board to allow staff to engage with and influence the best start agenda locally.

I turn to some of the points that have been raised about midwife numbers. I have heard the concerns that some members have expressed about the sustainability of the midwifery workforce. We will continue to work closely with the RCM and other stakeholders to address that. The Scottish Government has supported a range of actions that are under way to do that, including a return to practice programme in which 59 former midwives to date have undertaken training, a shortened midwifery course for nurses in the north of Scotland and a new programme for up to 100 retired nurses and midwives to train as professional practice advisers, sharing their knowledge, skills and experience with new recruits.

There has been a 99.2 per cent increase in midwifery support staff since 2007. Under the SNP, through the record high funding in our NHS, 1,000 more nurses and midwives are trained each year than were under the previous Administration. We are seeking to increase our midwifery student intake in 2019-20 from 226 to 257 to meet the projected future requirements.

NHS boards are also exploring a range of innovative approaches, such as bringing retired midwives back on reduced hours contracts. One example of that is in NHS Lanarkshire, which is bringing back 80 per cent of its retiring midwives on 15-hour contracts.

Finally, I underline the ethos of collaboration driving “The Best Start”. Recommendations were developed following the extensive consultation with more than 600 staff and 600 women who fed their views into the process. Key stakeholders such as the RCM, the National Childbirth Trust

and Bliss have been involved throughout. Providing continuity of care is the right thing to do for women, families and midwives. I understand that many midwives in Scotland have never worked that way and that change is daunting. That is why it is so important that boards work in partnership with their local maternity staff to ensure that they feel safe and supported during the transition.

Reforming services is not easy, but we should not shy away from moving forward when we know that it is the right thing to do. That is why we have five early adopter boards leading the way and testing what the new model might look like for Scotland.

Both the best start team and the RCM are well into a series of listening visits to understand how continuity of carer is being rolled out and to hear any concerns. We will use learning from those visits to inform the way forward for Scotland.

This Government is committed to the aspirations that are outlined in “The Best Start” and, most importantly, to improving outcomes for women and their babies.

17:28

Monica Lennon: The motion is simple. It is about an urgent review of the very serious issues that have been raised by not just one midwife but the 19 midwives in Lothian who put their names to the letter. I appreciate the update that the minister has given us, but the concerns that they raised go far deeper than the best start reforms, so we need an urgent review.

We have asked for £10 million of funding to be brought forward, on top of the £12 million that has been committed already. The word “if” in the Government amendment causes us concern. I know that Sandra White is feeling optimistic, but many of us are concerned.

I share Brian Whittle’s frustration that the debate was short, but members packed a lot in. We have heard considered speeches, constructive challenge and personal reflections from across the chamber that reminded us all how much we owe Scotland’s midwives.

Consensus around the importance of midwives and the skill, dedication and love that they bring certainly exists, but we have also heard about the challenges. Emma Harper, Finlay Carson, Edward Mountain, David Stewart and Rhoda Grant touched on the rural challenges. We heard about the importance of the road network—we heard that potholes are a real difficulty for women in labour.

Dave Stewart told me that his daughter, Kirsty, was the first baby to be born in Raigmore hospital

one year. There have been lots of anecdotes today.

I believe that the royal baby now has a name—I congratulate baby Archie. I am sure that my colleague Jackie Baillie will invite the Duke—or the Earl; please keep me right, as I am not big on royal title convention—and Countess of Dumbarton to her constituency.

Annie Wells said that people remember their midwives. When Richard Leonard and I went to University hospital Wishaw today and met fabulous midwives, I had the lovely surprise of being reunited with Ella Sinton, who delivered my baby, Isabella, in 2006. She is one of those midwives who is still on the job and doing fantastic work after 38 years, although she will retire in the next few years. It is important that we capture such midwives' knowledge and experience. We need to grow the pipeline of new midwives coming in, and we do not want midwives feeling stressed, burnt out or affected by low morale, because that will put people off. It is important that we do all that we can to ensure that midwifery is attractive.

I share the concerns of Tam Waterson, who is the chairperson of the Scottish health committee at Unison. He said:

“any changes to the provision of midwifery services should not be at the cost of hard-working, dedicated midwives paying with the erosion of their terms and conditions.”

I agree with Alison Johnstone that the continuity of carer model is the right approach, but that has to be backed up by the right investment. *[Interruption.]* I know that it is an exciting topic for members, Presiding Officer—perhaps they are looking at pictures of the royal baby.

As I said, Richard Leonard and I spent time in Wishaw with midwives this morning. They deal with some of the happiest occasions, but also some of the saddest. I cannot think of anything sadder than the loss of a baby.

We have not had the chance to mention some of the charities that support families and midwives. There are so many, including SiMBA, Bliss and Sands, that do very important work. In Wishaw today, I heard that the hospital is looking at ways to fund additional soundproofing—that might come in handy here in Parliament—so that mothers who experience stillbirth and baby loss have the right conditions. I would like to think that we will not rely on charitable donations for such work.

Aside from the reforms of the best start plan, there is a lot more that we can do. There was wide consensus today on support for Scotland's midwives, mums and babies. I am pleased that we have had this good debate, and I hope that members support the Scottish Labour motion in my name.

Business Motion

17:32

The Presiding Officer (Ken Macintosh): The next item of business is consideration of business motion S5M-17207, in the name of Graeme Dey, on behalf of the Parliamentary Bureau, setting out a business programme.

Motion moved,

That the Parliament agrees—

(a) the following programme of business—

Tuesday 14 May 2019

2.00 pm Time for Reflection

followed by Parliamentary Bureau Motions

followed by Topical Questions (if selected)

followed by Ministerial Statement: The Global Climate Emergency: Scotland's Response

followed by Ministerial Statement: Supporting Sheep Farming in Scotland

followed by Scottish Government Debate: Place Principle

followed by Committee Announcements

followed by Business Motions

followed by Parliamentary Bureau Motions

5.00 pm Decision Time

followed by Members' Business

Wednesday 15 May 2019

2.00 pm Parliamentary Bureau Motions

2.00 pm Portfolio Questions: Rural Economy; Transport, Infrastructure and Connectivity

followed by Scottish Liberal Democrat Party Business

followed by Business Motions

followed by Parliamentary Bureau Motions

5.00 pm Decision Time

followed by Members' Business

Thursday 16 May 2019

11.40 am Parliamentary Bureau Motions

11.40 am General Questions

12.00 pm First Minister's Questions

followed by Members' Business

2.30 pm Parliamentary Bureau Motions

2.30 pm Portfolio Questions: Justice and the Law Officers

followed by Scottish Government Debate: Impact of Brexit on Scotland's Food and Drink

followed by Parliamentary Bureau Motions

5.00 pm Decision Time

Tuesday 21 May 2019

2.00 pm Time for Reflection

followed by Parliamentary Bureau Motions

followed by Topical Questions (if selected)

followed by Portfolio Questions:
Government Business and
Constitutional Relations;
Culture, Tourism and External Affairs;
Education and Skills

followed by Scottish Government Business

followed by Committee Announcements

followed by Business Motions

followed by Parliamentary Bureau Motions

5.00 pm Decision Time

followed by Members' Business

Wednesday 22 May 2019

1.30 pm Parliamentary Bureau Motions

1.30 pm Economy, Energy and Fair Work
Committee Debate: Business Support
Inquiry

followed by General Questions

followed by First Minister's Questions

followed by Business Motions

followed by Parliamentary Bureau Motions

5.00 pm Decision Time

followed by Members' Business

(b) that, in relation to any debate on a business motion setting out a business programme taken on Wednesday 15 May 2019, the second sentence of rule 8.11.3 is suspended and replaced with "Any Member may speak on the motion at the discretion of the Presiding Officer";

(c) that, in relation to First Minister's Questions on Thursday 16 May 2019, in rule 13.6.2, insert at end "and may provide an opportunity for Party Leaders or their representatives to question the First Minister"; and

(d) that, for the purposes of Portfolio Questions in the week beginning 13 May 2019, in rule 13.7.3, after the word "except" the words "to the extent to which the Presiding Officer considers that the questions are on the same or similar subject matter or" are inserted.—[*Graeme Dey*]

Motion agreed to.

Parliamentary Bureau Motion

17:33

The Presiding Officer (Ken Macintosh): The next item of business is consideration of Parliamentary Bureau motion S5M-17208, on approval of a Scottish statutory instrument.

Motion moved,

That the Parliament agrees that the Companies Act 2006 (Scottish public sector companies to be audited by the Auditor General for Scotland) Order 2019 [draft] be approved.—[*Graeme Dey*]

Decision Time

17:33

The Presiding Officer (Ken Macintosh): The first question is, that amendment S5M-17190.1, in the name of Derek Mackay, which seeks to amend motion S5M-17190, in the name of Colin Smyth, on Scotland's future: scrap the cut to the air departure tax, be agreed to. Are we agreed?

Members: No.

The Presiding Officer: There will be a division.

For

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)
 Campbell, Aileen (Clydesdale) (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)
 Finnie, John (Highlands and Islands) (Green)
 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)
 Grahame, Christine (Midlothian South, Tweeddale and Lauderdale) (SNP)
 Harper, Emma (South Scotland) (SNP)
 Harvie, Patrick (Glasgow) (Green)
 Hyslop, Fiona (Linlithgow) (SNP)
 Johnstone, Alison (Lothian) (Green)
 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)
 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)
 Ruskell, Mark (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Green)
 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)
 White, Sandra (Glasgow Kelvin) (SNP)
 Wightman, Andy (Lothian) (Green)

Against

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)
 Findlay, Neil (Lothian) (Lab)
 Fraser, Murdo (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 Golden, Maurice (West Scotland) (Con)
 Grant, Rhoda (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)
 Gray, Iain (East Lothian) (Lab)
 Greene, Jamie (West Scotland) (Con)
 Griffin, Mark (Central Scotland) (Lab)
 Halcro Johnston, Jamie (Highlands and Islands) (Con)
 Hamilton, Rachael (Ettrick, Roxburgh and Berwickshire) (Con)
 Harris, Alison (Central Scotland) (Con)
 Haughey, Clare (Rutherglen) (SNP)
 Johnson, Daniel (Edinburgh Southern) (Lab)
 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)
 McDonald, Mark (Aberdeen Donside) (Ind)
 McNeill, Pauline (Glasgow) (Lab)
 Mitchell, Margaret (Central Scotland) (Con)
 Mountain, Edward (Highlands and Islands) (Con)
 Mundell, Oliver (Dumfriesshire) (Con)
 Rowley, Alex (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab)
 Rumbles, Mike (North East Scotland) (LD)
 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)

The Presiding Officer: The result of the division is: For 64, Against 59, Abstentions 0.

Amendment agreed to.

The Presiding Officer: The next question is, that amendment S5M-17190.4, in the name of Jamie Greene, which seeks to amend motion S5M-17190, in the name of Colin Smyth, on the air departure tax, be agreed to. Are we agreed?

Members: No.

The Presiding Officer: There will be a division.

For

Balfour, Jeremy (Lothian) (Con)
 Ballantyne, Michelle (South Scotland) (Con)
 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)
 Corry, Maurice (West Scotland) (Con)
 Davidson, Ruth (Edinburgh Central) (Con)
 Fraser, Murdo (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 Golden, Maurice (West Scotland) (Con)
 Greene, Jamie (West Scotland) (Con)
 Halcro Johnston, Jamie (Highlands and Islands) (Con)
 Hamilton, Rachael (Ettrick, Roxburgh and Berwickshire) (Con)
 Harris, Alison (Central Scotland) (Con)
 Kerr, Liam (North East Scotland) (Con)
 Lindhurst, Gordon (Lothian) (Con)
 Lockhart, Dean (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 Mason, Tom (North East Scotland) (Con)
 McDonald, Mark (Aberdeen Donside) (Ind)
 Mitchell, Margaret (Central Scotland) (Con)
 Mountain, Edward (Highlands and Islands) (Con)
 Mundell, Oliver (Dumfriesshire) (Con)
 Scott, John (Ayr) (Con)
 Simpson, Graham (Central Scotland) (Con)
 Smith, Liz (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 Stewart, Alexander (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 Tomkins, Adam (Glasgow) (Con)
 Wells, Annie (Glasgow) (Con)
 Whittle, Brian (South Scotland) (Con)

Against

Adam, George (Paisley) (SNP)
 Adamson, Clare (Motherwell and Wishaw) (SNP)
 Allan, Alasdair (Na h-Eileanan an Iar) (SNP)
 Arthur, Tom (Renfrewshire South) (SNP)
 Baillie, Jackie (Dumbarton) (Lab)
 Baker, Claire (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab)
 Beamish, Claudia (South Scotland) (Lab)
 Beattie, Colin (Midlothian North and Musselburgh) (SNP)
 Bibby, Neil (West Scotland) (Lab)
 Brown, Keith (Clackmannanshire and Dunblane) (SNP)
 Campbell, Aileen (Clydesdale) (SNP)
 Coffey, Willie (Kilmarnock and Irvine Valley) (SNP)
 Cole-Hamilton, Alex (Edinburgh Western) (LD)
 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)
 Dugdale, Kezia (Lothian) (Lab)
 Ewing, Annabelle (Cowdenbeath) (SNP)
 Ewing, Fergus (Inverness and Nairn) (SNP)
 Fabiani, Linda (East Kilbride) (SNP)
 Findlay, Neil (Lothian) (Lab)
 Finnie, John (Highlands and Islands) (Green)
 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)
 Grahame, Christine (Midlothian South, Tweeddale and Lauderdale) (SNP)
 Grant, Rhoda (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)
 Gray, Iain (East Lothian) (Lab)
 Griffin, Mark (Central Scotland) (Lab)
 Harper, Emma (South Scotland) (SNP)
 Harvie, Patrick (Glasgow) (Green)
 Haughey, Clare (Rutherglen) (SNP)
 Hyslop, Fiona (Linlithgow) (SNP)
 Johnson, Daniel (Edinburgh Southern) (Lab)
 Johnstone, Alison (Lothian) (Green)
 Kelly, James (Glasgow) (Lab)
 Kidd, Bill (Glasgow Anniesland) (SNP)
 Lamont, Johann (Glasgow) (Lab)
 Lennon, Monica (Central Scotland) (Lab)
 Leonard, Richard (Central Scotland) (Lab)
 Lochhead, Richard (Moray) (SNP)
 Lyle, Richard (Uddingston and Bellshill) (SNP)
 MacDonald, Angus (Falkirk East) (SNP)
 MacDonald, Gordon (Edinburgh Pentlands) (SNP)
 Macdonald, Lewis (North East Scotland) (Lab)
 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)
 Marra, Jenny (North East Scotland) (Lab)
 Martin, Gillian (Aberdeenshire East) (SNP)
 Mason, John (Glasgow Shettleston) (SNP)
 Matheson, Michael (Falkirk West) (SNP)
 McAlpine, Joan (South Scotland) (SNP)
 McArthur, Liam (Orkney Islands) (LD)
 McKee, Ivan (Glasgow Provan) (SNP)
 McKelvie, Christina (Hamilton, Larkhall and Stonehouse) (SNP)
 McMillan, Stuart (Greenock and Inverclyde) (SNP)
 McNeill, Pauline (Glasgow) (Lab)
 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)
 Rowley, Alex (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab)
 Rumbles, Mike (North East Scotland) (LD)
 Ruskell, Mark (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Green)
 Russell, Michael (Argyll and Bute) (SNP)
 Sarwar, Anas (Glasgow) (Lab)
 Scott, Tavish (Shetland Islands) (LD)
 Smith, Elaine (Central Scotland) (Lab)
 Smyth, Colin (South Scotland) (Lab)
 Somerville, Shirley-Anne (Dunfermline) (SNP)
 Stevenson, Stewart (Banffshire and Buchan Coast) (SNP)
 Stewart, David (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)
 Stewart, Kevin (Aberdeen Central) (SNP)

Sturgeon, Nicola (Glasgow Southside) (SNP)
 Swinney, John (Perthshire North) (SNP)
 Todd, Maree (Highlands and Islands) (SNP)
 Torrance, David (Kirkcaldy) (SNP)
 Watt, Maureen (Aberdeen South and North Kincardine) (SNP)
 Wheelhouse, Paul (South Scotland) (SNP)
 White, Sandra (Glasgow Kelvin) (SNP)
 Wightman, Andy (Lothian) (Green)

The Presiding Officer: The result of the division is: For 32, Against 91, Abstentions 0.

Amendment disagreed to.

The Presiding Officer: The next question is, that motion S5M-17190, in the name of Colin Smyth, on Scotland's future: scrap the cut to the air departure tax, as amended, be agreed to. Are we agreed?

Members: No.

The Presiding Officer: There will be a division.

For

Adam, George (Paisley) (SNP)
 Adamson, Clare (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)
 Campbell, Aileen (Clydesdale) (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)
 Finnie, John (Highlands and Islands) (Green)
 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)
 Grahame, Christine (Midlothian South, Tweeddale and Lauderdale) (SNP)
 Harper, Emma (South Scotland) (SNP)
 Harvie, Patrick (Glasgow) (Green)
 Haughey, Clare (Rutherglen) (SNP)
 Hyslop, Fiona (Linlithgow) (SNP)
 Johnstone, Alison (Lothian) (Green)
 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)
 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)
 Ruskell, Mark (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Green)
 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)
 White, Sandra (Glasgow Kelvin) (SNP)
 Wightman, Andy (Lothian) (Green)

Against

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)
 Findlay, Neil (Lothian) (Lab)
 Fraser, Murdo (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 Golden, Maurice (West Scotland) (Con)
 Grant, Rhoda (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)
 Gray, Iain (East Lothian) (Lab)
 Greene, Jamie (West Scotland) (Con)
 Griffin, Mark (Central Scotland) (Lab)
 Halcro Johnston, Jamie (Highlands and Islands) (Con)
 Hamilton, Rachael (Ettrick, Roxburgh and Berwickshire) (Con)
 Harris, Alison (Central Scotland) (Con)
 Johnson, Daniel (Edinburgh Southern) (Lab)
 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)
 McDonald, Mark (Aberdeen Donside) (Ind)
 McNeill, Pauline (Glasgow) (Lab)
 Mitchell, Margaret (Central Scotland) (Con)
 Mountain, Edward (Highlands and Islands) (Con)
 Mundell, Oliver (Dumfriesshire) (Con)
 Rowley, Alex (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab)

Rumbles, Mike (North East Scotland) (LD)
 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)

The Presiding Officer: The result of the division is: For 65, Against 58, Abstentions 0.

Motion, as amended, agreed to,

That the Parliament calls on the Scottish Government to review its policies and commitments in response to the global climate emergency and the Committee on Climate Change Report; believes that the Scottish Government should maintain its commitment to increasing the share of capital expenditure spent on low-carbon projects year on year; agrees that local authorities must be more empowered to tackle climate change and pursue policies and investments that are designed to encourage modal shift, such as the workplace parking levy and low emission zones, and further agrees that cutting and then abolishing Air Departure Tax is not now compatible with the more ambitious targets that Scotland wishes to pursue.

The Presiding Officer: The next question is, that amendment S5M-17191.2, in the name of Clare Haughey, which seeks to amend motion S5M-17191, in the name of Monica Lennon, on urgent support for Scotland's midwives, be agreed to. Are we agreed?

Members: No.

The Presiding Officer: There will be a division.

For

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)
 Campbell, Aileen (Clydesdale) (SNP)
 Coffey, Willie (Kilmarnock and Irvine Valley) (SNP)
 Constance, Angela (Almond Valley) (SNP)
 Corry, Maurice (West Scotland) (Con)
 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)
 Grahame, Christine (Midlothian South, Tweeddale and

Lauderdale) (SNP)
 Harper, Emma (South Scotland) (SNP)
 Haughey, Clare (Rutherglen) (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)
 White, Sandra (Glasgow Kelvin) (SNP)

Against

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)
 Davidson, Ruth (Edinburgh Central) (Con)
 Dugdale, Kezia (Lothian) (Lab)
 Findlay, Neil (Lothian) (Lab)
 Finnie, John (Highlands and Islands) (Green)
 Fraser, Murdo (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 Golden, Maurice (West Scotland) (Con)
 Grant, Rhoda (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)
 Gray, Iain (East Lothian) (Lab)
 Greene, Jamie (West Scotland) (Con)
 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)
 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)

The Presiding Officer: The result of the division is: For 62, Against 61, Abstentions 0.

Amendment agreed to.

The Presiding Officer: The next question is, that amendment S5M-17191.1, in the name of Miles Briggs, which seeks to amend motion S5M-17191, in the name of Monica Lennon, be agreed to. Are we agreed?

Members: Yes. [*Interruption.*]

The Presiding Officer: Are we agreed?

Members: Yes.

The Presiding Officer: I was not doubting you, Mr Briggs.

Amendment agreed to.

The Presiding Officer: The next question is, that motion S5M-17191, in the name of Monica Lennon, on urgent support for Scotland's midwives, as amended, be agreed to. Are we agreed?

Members: No.

The Presiding Officer: There will be a division.

For

Adam, George (Paisley) (SNP)
 Adamson, Clare (Motherwell and Wishaw) (SNP)
 Allan, Alasdair (Na h-Eileanan an Iar) (SNP)
 Arthur, Tom (Renfrewshire South) (SNP)
 Balfour, Jeremy (Lothian) (Con)
 Ballantyne, Michelle (South Scotland) (Con)
 Beattie, Colin (Midlothian North and Musselburgh) (SNP)
 Bowman, Bill (North East Scotland) (Con)

Briggs, Miles (Lothian) (Con)
 Brown, Keith (Clackmannanshire and Dunblane) (SNP)
 Burnett, Alexander (Aberdeenshire West) (Con)
 Cameron, Donald (Highlands and Islands) (Con)
 Campbell, Aileen (Clydesdale) (SNP)
 Carlaw, Jackson (Eastwood) (Con)
 Carson, Finlay (Galloway and West Dumfries) (Con)
 Chapman, Peter (North East Scotland) (Con)
 Coffey, Willie (Kilmarnock and Irvine Valley) (SNP)
 Constance, Angela (Almond Valley) (SNP)
 Corry, Maurice (West Scotland) (Con)
 Crawford, Bruce (Stirling) (SNP)
 Cunningham, Roseanna (Perthshire South and Kinross-shire) (SNP)
 Davidson, Ruth (Edinburgh Central) (Con)
 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)
 Fraser, Murdo (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 Freeman, Jeane (Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley) (SNP)
 Gibson, Kenneth (Cunninghame North) (SNP)
 Gilruth, Jenny (Mid Fife and Glenrothes) (SNP)
 Golden, Maurice (West Scotland) (Con)
 Gougeon, Mairi (Angus North and Mearns) (SNP)
 Grahame, Christine (Midlothian South, Tweeddale and Lauderdale) (SNP)
 Greene, Jamie (West Scotland) (Con)
 Halcro Johnston, Jamie (Highlands and Islands) (Con)
 Hamilton, Rachael (Ettrick, Roxburgh and Berwickshire) (Con)
 Harper, Emma (South Scotland) (SNP)
 Harris, Alison (Central Scotland) (Con)
 Haughey, Clare (Rutherglen) (SNP)
 Hyslop, Fiona (Linlithgow) (SNP)
 Kerr, Liam (North East Scotland) (Con)
 Kidd, Bill (Glasgow Anniesland) (SNP)
 Lindhurst, Gordon (Lothian) (Con)
 Lochhead, Richard (Moray) (SNP)
 Lockhart, Dean (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 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)
 Mason, Tom (North East Scotland) (Con)
 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)
 Mitchell, Margaret (Central Scotland) (Con)
 Mountain, Edward (Highlands and Islands) (Con)
 Mundell, Oliver (Dumfriesshire) (Con)
 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)

Scott, John (Ayr) (Con)
 Simpson, Graham (Central Scotland) (Con)
 Smith, Liz (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 Somerville, Shirley-Anne (Dunfermline) (SNP)
 Stevenson, Stewart (Banffshire and Buchan Coast) (SNP)
 Stewart, Alexander (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 Stewart, Kevin (Aberdeen Central) (SNP)
 Sturgeon, Nicola (Glasgow Southside) (SNP)
 Swinney, John (Perthshire North) (SNP)
 Todd, Maree (Highlands and Islands) (SNP)
 Tomkins, Adam (Glasgow) (Con)
 Torrance, David (Kirkcaldy) (SNP)
 Watt, Maureen (Aberdeen South and North Kincardine) (SNP)
 Wells, Annie (Glasgow) (Con)
 Wheelhouse, Paul (South Scotland) (SNP)
 White, Sandra (Glasgow Kelvin) (SNP)
 Whittle, Brian (South Scotland) (Con)

Against

Baillie, Jackie (Dumbarton) (Lab)
 Baker, Claire (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab)
 Beamish, Claudia (South Scotland) (Lab)
 Bibby, Neil (West Scotland) (Lab)
 Cole-Hamilton, Alex (Edinburgh Western) (LD)
 Dugdale, Kezia (Lothian) (Lab)
 Findlay, Neil (Lothian) (Lab)
 Grant, Rhoda (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)
 Gray, Iain (East Lothian) (Lab)
 Griffin, Mark (Central Scotland) (Lab)
 Johnson, Daniel (Edinburgh Southern) (Lab)
 Kelly, James (Glasgow) (Lab)
 Lamont, Johann (Glasgow) (Lab)
 Lennon, Monica (Central Scotland) (Lab)
 Leonard, Richard (Central Scotland) (Lab)
 Macdonald, Lewis (North East Scotland) (Lab)
 Marra, Jenny (North East Scotland) (Lab)
 McArthur, Liam (Orkney Islands) (LD)
 McNeill, Pauline (Glasgow) (Lab)
 Rowley, Alex (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab)
 Rumbles, Mike (North East Scotland) (LD)
 Sarwar, Anas (Glasgow) (Lab)
 Scott, Tavish (Shetland Islands) (LD)
 Smith, Elaine (Central Scotland) (Lab)
 Smyth, Colin (South Scotland) (Lab)
 Stewart, David (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)

Abstentions

Finnie, John (Highlands and Islands) (Green)
 Harvie, Patrick (Glasgow) (Green)
 Johnstone, Alison (Lothian) (Green)
 Ruskell, Mark (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Green)
 Wightman, Andy (Lothian) (Green)

The Presiding Officer: The result of the division is: For 92, Against 26, Abstentions 5.

Motion, as amended, agreed to,

That the Parliament acknowledges that the International Day of the Midwife took place on 5 May 2019 and commends the commitment and skills of Scotland's midwives and their crucial role in caring for women and babies; recognises that a continuity of carer throughout the maternity journey is valued by women and that, if adequately resourced, can improve outcomes in maternity and neonatal care; is concerned that many midwives are experiencing significant workforce pressures; believes that action must be taken to address low morale, bullying and work-related stress and applauds the work undertaken by the Royal College of Midwives to help midwives deal with these issues, address bullying in the workplace and encourage a more supportive workplace culture; further

believes that the concerns raised by midwives in NHS Lothian in an open letter, which claims that they do not have enough computers, equipment and pool cars, needs urgent investigation; agrees that the contribution of 600 NHS staff, 600 maternity and neonatal service users, the NHS, the Royal College of Midwives, the National Childbirth Trust and Bliss, along with others, was instrumental in shaping the five-year plan for maternity and neonatal care; recognises that this expert input led to the plan taking a phased approach; further recognises that the initial budget of £12 million is only intended to support the initial phase, including implementation of the new model of continuity of carer at five early implementer sites across Scotland, and believes that the plan is the right way forward and, if fully and appropriately resourced, will result in mothers and babies being offered a truly family-centred, safe and compassionate approach to their care, with real continuity of care and carer.

The Presiding Officer: The final question is, that motion S5M-17208, in the name of Graeme Dey, on the approval of a Scottish statutory instrument, be agreed to.

Motion agreed to,

That the Parliament agrees that the Companies Act 2006 (Scottish public sector companies to be audited by the Auditor General for Scotland) Order 2019 [draft] be approved.

Nation of Life-savers (Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation)

The Deputy Presiding Officer (Linda Fabiani): The final item of business is a members' business debate on motion S5M-16822, in the name of Miles Briggs, on Scotland, a nation of life-savers. The debate will be concluded without any question being put.

Motion debated,

That the Parliament welcomes reports that every local authority in Scotland has now committed to training all secondary school pupils in CPR skills; believes that this will see the country sit alongside international CPR leaders, including Denmark and Norway, where cardiac arrest survival rates greatly increased after they took similar decisions to train young people; understands that the councils' commitment is in response to poor cardiac arrest survival rates, with only one in 12 people surviving a heart attack out of hospital; believes that the use of effective CPR is critical and can potentially double the likelihood of survival, and applauds each of Scotland's local authorities, including those in the Lothian region, on this plan to create a nation of lifesavers among the country's young people, which it believes will help more people survive out-of-hospital cardiac arrests.

17:41

Miles Briggs (Lothian) (Con): Every day, there are, on average, 10 out-of-hospital cardiac arrests in Scotland. That represents 3,500 of our fellow Scots every year, whose hearts stop working and who need rapid resuscitation to be attempted in the community to help to save their lives.

Many of us will have been in a situation in which we were presented with such an emergency and we needed to step up to respond. I recently faced such a situation at a bus stop on London Road, when a lady called me across to help her husband who had collapsed. I am pleased to say that the Scottish Ambulance Service arrived within seconds, but, having attended a training session, I felt confident enough to attempt cardiopulmonary resuscitation.

Research shows that, when somebody is having a cardiac arrest, every minute of delay to resuscitation or defibrillation reduces their chance of survival by 10 per cent. Today, as things stand, for every 12 cardiac arrests that occur in Scotland, only one person will survive. That statistic compares unfavourably both with the rest of the United Kingdom and internationally. I therefore pay tribute to the whole team at the British Heart Foundation Scotland for initiating its campaign in response to Scotland's poor out-of-hospital cardiac arrest survival rates, and I welcome them to the public gallery.

The nation of life-savers campaign aims to ensure that every pupil is trained in vital CPR skills

before they leave secondary school and it has been praised by international experts and medical professionals. It is welcome news that, after the positive and well-received campaign by the British Heart Foundation Scotland, every local authority across Scotland has agreed to sign up to be part of the nation of life-savers campaign. The campaign will now see all secondary pupils trained in CPR before they leave school, resulting in 50,000 young people learning that life-saving skill every year.

I have seen at first hand just how passionate young Scots are to learn CPR and to equip themselves with life-saving skills. The Parliament's Public Petitions Committee recently heard evidence from two of my constituents, eight-year-old Millie Robinson and Ellie Meek, who are pupils at Parkhead primary school in West Calder. Millie and Ellie highlighted the campaign by St John Ambulance to teach first aid in schools and I take this opportunity to commend them for their enthusiastic campaigning.

I know that MSPs from across the chamber and those on the committee were hugely impressed by Millie and Ellie's passion and saw that first aid and life-saving skills are something that all young people want to learn. It shows the passion that our young people have for the opportunity to learn those life-saving skills when they go to such extreme lengths as to bandage Brian Whittle's smelly feet.

Members: Oh!

Miles Briggs: I digress.

An aspect of out-of-hospital cardiac arrests in Scotland that is perhaps not widely known—although I know that the minister has raised it—is inequality in the statistics on attempted resuscitation. Cardiac arrests are therefore also a social justice issue, and they contribute to Scotland's health inequalities. Someone who lives in one of our country's areas of high deprivation is twice as likely to experience an out-of-hospital cardiac arrest, will experience it seven years earlier, and will be 43 per cent less likely to survive it and be able to leave hospital, in comparison with the corresponding figures for people who are from more affluent areas. That has to change.

I also believe that the nation of life-savers campaign can present wider opportunities and a real challenge for all of us—regardless of age—to learn CPR, and for companies and employers to consider the potential benefits of providing CPR training opportunities. For example, back in 2014, Asda was the first large retailer to commit to having publicly accessible defibrillators and CPR-trained colleagues in all its stores, and I congratulate it on making that positive move. Since Asda has introduced defibs and rolled out

staff training through its partnership with the British Heart Foundation, several lives have been saved in its stores. Only last month, a customer collapsed with a heart attack in its store in Elgin. A member of staff who was a first aider used CPR and a defib while an ambulance was called, and thankfully they managed to save that individual's life.

The debate is also an opportunity to congratulate the British Heart Foundation Scotland on its successful campaign, which has recently been shortlisted as a finalist in the 2019 Scottish charity awards. It is thanks to the commitment from all 32 local authorities in Scotland that thousands of young people across our country will now be empowered to step in and perform potentially life-saving CPR, with the knowledge and skills to keep themselves and other people safe.

The Scottish Government has committed to training 500,000 people in CPR by 2020, through its out-of-hospital cardiac arrest strategy, and I welcome the progress that has been made in trying to realise that aim. The opportunity to create a nation of life-savers is now within our grasp. We should all be rightly proud that Scotland can—and will—become such a nation. I hope that we will soon see Scotland achieving the distinction of being the country with the highest number of citizens who are equipped with that life-saving skill.

Finally, I congratulate the Government on its work on the issue, and I thank the British Heart Foundation Scotland for all that it has done.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: I see that our visitors in the public gallery are very well behaved. I have not had to tell them not to make a noise.

We move to the open debate. Speeches should be of four minutes or less, please.

17:47

Bill Kidd (Glasgow Anniesland) (SNP): I thank Miles Briggs for securing the debate, which provides us with the opportunity to raise awareness of the importance of CPR training. One or two of the statistics that I will quote have already been mentioned by him but, as he well knows, if I say again what he has said already, he is doing well.

Miles Briggs: That is a first.

Bill Kidd: I liked that one myself.

The debate allows us to highlight how the commitment to provide CPR training in schools across Scotland will save many lives, as I am certain that it will. I thank the British Heart Foundation Scotland for establishing its nation of

life-savers campaign, around which the motion is centred. Due to its determination, we can celebrate the fact that all children in Scotland who attend local authority secondary schools will receive CPR training with the use of free kits that it has offered them.

I am proud that Glasgow City Council was the first local authority to commit to training all secondary school pupils in CPR, but I am even more pleased that that commitment has now been adopted by all local authority areas the length and breadth of Scotland. Our next generation will truly become a nation of life-savers, and I thank the British Heart Foundation Scotland for its on-going accomplishment.

The campaign complements the work of St Andrew's First Aid, which, over the past four years, has trained 45,000 people in Scotland in CPR skills. Together, organisations such as the British Heart Foundation Scotland and St Andrew's First Aid are active participants in the Scottish Government's out-of-hospital cardiac arrest strategy. Through working proactively in line with the Scottish Government's strategy, they have helped to improve cardiac arrest survival rates in Scotland from one in 20 to one in 12. However, we know that those rates can be further improved.

The roll-out of training will encourage a community-oriented outlook in the next generation, with people quicker to intervene and perform emergency first aid. CPR training not only prepares us technically but challenges us to act when we see someone in need, as was the case with Miles Briggs and the situation that he referred to in his speech.

According to the British Heart Foundation, many members of the public feel afraid to help, which can lead to delays in people who are suffering from cardiac arrest receiving the necessary CPR or defibrillation. Every year, 3,500 people in Scotland experience an out-of-hospital cardiac arrest and are subject to a resuscitation attempt in the community. I encourage us all to use the nation of life-savers campaign to consider how we can become not only technically but mentally prepared to perform CPR, so that we can jump into action should the need ever arise. After all, for every minute without CPR following a cardiac arrest, a person's chance of survival decreases by 10 per cent.

I believe that that mental preparedness will come hand in hand with the roll-out of in-school CPR training. However, I also want adults to be inspired to take up any available opportunity to refresh their own first aid training. Many workplaces offer such training—indeed, it is offered in the Scottish Parliament—and I ask people not to pass up such opportunities. After all,

we never know when our preparedness could save a life. Collectively, we have a duty to look out for our fellow neighbours in our communities and to help where we can, so we must equip ourselves to save lives.

17:51

Annie Wells (Glasgow) (Con): I am extremely chuffed to be speaking in this debate, as I was one of the first MSPs to back the campaign when the *Glasgow Evening Times* ran with it last year. I want to say a big thank you to the British Heart Foundation for organising the campaign and all those who are involved in making it happen.

CPR, which stands for cardiopulmonary resuscitation, is a life-saving medical procedure that is given to someone who is suffering a cardiac arrest, and it helps to move the blood around their body when their heart cannot do so. As we have heard, there are more than 3,000 out-of-hospital cardiac arrests in Scotland each year, but when the *Evening Times* learned that Glasgow had the highest number of cardiac arrests in Scotland it launched its Glasgow's got heart campaign. After pressure was put on the council to take action, Glasgow became the first city in Scotland to roll out CPR training to all secondary schools. I was delighted to support that particular campaign. It has since evolved into the BHF's nation of life-savers drive, and all 32 local authorities have now committed to it, which is indeed a massive achievement.

Why is the campaign so important? Because it puts into the hands of children and young people the power to save a life, be it the life of a family member, a neighbour or a stranger in the street. Currently, fewer than one in 12 people in Scotland survive a cardiac arrest, and for every minute without CPR, the chances of survival drop by 10 per cent. Those who live in the city of Glasgow are less likely to survive a cardiac arrest, because, as research shows, CPR training levels are lowest in those cities that have a high quota of deprivation. That statistic could be easily improved. In countries such as Denmark and Norway where CPR is universally taught, survival rates are much higher—indeed, as high as 25 per cent—because bystanders are far more likely to take action.

By teaching pupils and young people these skills—which will stay with them their entire lives—we are giving them the confidence to perform CPR, as well as giving everyone in Scotland a greater chance of survival. I know from personal experience that CPR training lasts a lifetime. I had the training as a teenager, but I never thought that I would have to use it; however, 30 years later, I had to. Instinct kicked in, and I knew what to do.

The British Heart Foundation has pledged to supply every secondary school in Glasgow with a £1,300 training kit, which includes a DVD and reusable inflatable mannequins. The training lasts only 30 minutes and no staff training is required to deliver it, but it is fully comprehensive and will give pupils the confidence to put their new skills into practice when needed. Individual schools have begun offering training, but full council roll-out is not expected to start until August this year and January 2020.

On where Scotland goes next to improve cardiac arrest survival rates, I was pleased to hear from the British Heart Foundation that its next campaign will focus on defibrillators. Although a person's chances of survival increase by up to 70 per cent when a defibrillator is used properly, currently defibrillators are used in only 2 per cent of CPR cases. The BHF wants to look at the barriers to their usage and to promote where defibrillators are, what they are and how to use them properly. That will be a great campaign that I will once again be happy to support.

I thank my colleague Miles Briggs for bringing the topic to the Parliament and I thank the *Evening Times* and the British Heart Foundation for their tireless campaigning. Although the campaign is in its early stages, I have no doubt that it will be a life-saving one.

17:55

Emma Harper (South Scotland) (SNP): I thank Miles Briggs for bringing the debate to the chamber and for highlighting the figures and statistics on out-of-hospital cardiac arrest, which I will not repeat. I also thank the British Heart Foundation for its tremendous work in lobbying Scottish local authorities to teach CPR to all secondary school pupils, which is an action that will undoubtedly save lives, as has been mentioned. I congratulate all local authorities, including Dumfries and Galloway Council and South Ayrshire Council in my South Scotland region, on signing up to that important commitment.

Last year, when my friend and colleague Stuart McMillan brought a similar debate to the chamber to highlight the Jayden Orr show some heart campaign, I spoke about the work of Dr Richard Cummins from Seattle, which is worth highlighting again. Almost 30 years ago, Dr Cummins discovered that, if a series of events take place in a set sequence, a patient who is suffering a heart attack stands a greater chance of survival. Those events are now known as the chain of survival. That chain is: early recognition and call for help; early cardiopulmonary resuscitation, or CPR; early defibrillation; and early advanced care. The chain has led to more successful survival rates among

people who have cardiac events in hospital and, since the advent of community defibrillators, it has also led to better out-of-hospital survival rates.

Following that debate last year, I contacted Dumfries and Galloway Council to ask whether CPR was taught in the secondary schools in the area, and I was pleased to hear that all but one of the schools were already participating. Schools across Dumfries and Galloway and South Ayrshire have committed to taking part in the heartstart scheme since its inception by the British Heart Foundation in the early 2000s. The scheme's main aim is to increase cardiac arrest survival rates by creating a nation of life-savers.

The call push rescue training kit, which is available to any school or community group, provides all the specialist equipment needed to teach CPR and is used to teach trainees how to recognise cardiac arrest and carry out CPR on adults and children. The kit uses a film tutorial to demonstrate CPR skills—participants watch the film and practise the skills on portable mannequins. The training also shows how public access defibrillators work and their essential role in the life-saving process so that trainees are aware of their importance and are more confident in their use, if needed.

Last year, I was pleased to attend one of the heartstart CPR education sessions at Dalbeattie high school. All the young people were fab and enjoyed the process. I used to teach CPR and resuscitation skills when I worked in the theatre department in Los Angeles, so it was great to see the young folk at the school so engaged.

I have been active in my efforts to support community defibs across the Dumfries and Galloway area and have been lobbying the Scottish Government to relax the planning rules around their installation. At present, publicly accessible defibrillators are not covered by permitted development rights, which means that the installation of a PAD may require planning permission, depending on the circumstances, location and type of building. If permitted development rights were extended to include PADs, they would be more accessible and readily available. It is important to protect the built environment, but we want to ensure that we have defibrillators in the right place. I am pleased that the Government is taking the issue into consideration in the Planning (Scotland) Bill. I have asked for it to be made simpler and easier for communities to install PAD devices.

I support the motion. I again thank Miles Briggs and the British Heart Foundation along with all the schools and young people across Scotland who will take part in the heartstart CPR scheme. I support the aim of making the next generation of Scots a nation of life-savers.

18:00

Colin Smyth (South Scotland) (Lab): It is a privilege to speak in this debate, which gives me the opportunity to celebrate the success of the British Heart Foundation's fantastic campaign to bring CPR training to all of Scotland's secondary schools and to discuss what more can be done to improve cardiac arrest survival rates. I thank Miles Briggs for lodging his very welcome motion.

As a number of members have highlighted, of the 3,500 people in Scotland who have a cardiac arrest outside of hospital each year, just one in 12 survives. That is simply not good enough. Plenty of international evidence shows that, with the right measures, we can drastically improve that survival rate. The evidence highlights the strong correlation between the introduction of CPR training in all our secondary schools and improved survival rates. When such training was introduced in Denmark, the country's out-of-hospital cardiac arrest survival rate tripled, with one in four people now surviving.

Every minute that a person goes without CPR and defibrillation after a cardiac arrest, the chance of survival reduces by up to 10 per cent. Too often, people do not have the skills or confidence to intervene, or, as Bill Kidd highlighted, they might be afraid to intervene when someone has a cardiac arrest. In such cases, the chance of survival can often be lost.

Ensuring that more people are trained in CPR will have a transformative impact on cardiac arrest survival rates, and teaching it in schools is the most effective way to ensure that there is better society-wide awareness and that young people have the skills at the earliest possible age. The British Heart Foundation has therefore done fantastic life-saving work, in campaigning for CPR training to be taught in every secondary school in Scotland. School is all about teaching life skills, and there is no better skill than saving lives.

My only disappointment is that the BHF needed to approach every individual local authority to get them to sign up to the campaign, instead of the Scottish Government ensuring that CPR training is mandatory in every secondary school. The Government took that approach, at a national level, when it rightly signed up to the time for inclusive education campaign. Therefore, when he winds up the debate, I hope that the minister will make a commitment to underpin the support of individual local authorities by stating that the Government will ensure that CPR training becomes mandatory in our schools, which will make the training more sustainable in the long term.

Such training needs to be accompanied by broader improvements to the system of care for those who have a cardiac arrest, in order to

ensure a chain of survival that offers early recognition, early defibrillation and good post-resuscitation care, not just early CPR. That means improving public awareness of the symptoms of cardiac arrest and the steps that should be taken.

Crucially, we need to ensure that defibrillators can be quickly and easily accessed. That will require an overall increase in the number of publicly available defibrillators and better awareness of where defibrillators are and how they can be accessed. They must be visible and well publicised, and we need to consider how information about their location is better shared. For example, ensuring that any public defibrillator can be searched for on Google maps would help people to identify their nearest defibrillator in an emergency.

The location of defibrillators is also important. We need to ensure that rural areas and deprived communities are not ignored, particularly given the strong link between deprivation and the risk of cardiac arrest. As Miles Briggs rightly highlighted, people in the most deprived areas are twice as likely to have a cardiac arrest—and more likely to die as a result—than those in the least deprived areas. That is a clear example of the unacceptable health inequalities that sadly continue to plague Scotland.

Despite the progress that has been made in recent years, heart and circulatory diseases remain the biggest killers in Scotland, causing almost a third of all deaths. That means that almost 50 people die from such diseases each day. The rate of coronary heart disease deaths is 80 per cent higher in the most deprived areas. Constructive, evidence-led solutions and interventions, such as the teaching of CPR in all secondary schools, will play a key role in reducing the number of such deaths.

I warmly applaud the efforts of the British Heart Foundation in securing a commitment from each local authority to provide the resources to introduce CPR training in our secondary schools. I congratulate Scotland's local councils on embracing the initiative. It is now our job to show that same level of commitment. That means that the Government should enshrine the commitment nationally and build on the initiative by taking more action to improve the prevention of cardiac arrest and the care of those who suffer one. By doing so, just like Scotland's young people, we will play our part in ensuring that more lives are saved in the future.

18:04

The Minister for Public Health, Sport and Wellbeing (Joe FitzPatrick): I am delighted to contribute and to respond on behalf of the

Government to this important debate. I add my congratulations to Miles Briggs on securing the debate. I also thank all our partners, who are working hard to equip many people—particularly our young people—with CPR skills.

Like other members, I was delighted last week when save a life for Scotland announced that more than 430,000 people across Scotland had learned CPR since our out-of-hospital cardiac arrest strategy was launched in 2015. We know that prompt intervention by a bystander can increase the likelihood of survival after cardiac arrest by two or three times. The greatest gains in survival will be achieved by calling 999, starting CPR and using an available defibrillator in the minutes immediately following a cardiac arrest. As members have said, CPR is a life-saving skill that practically everyone can learn. That is why we launched save a life for Scotland.

As many members know, save a life for Scotland is a partnership of public and third sector organisations such as the British Heart Foundation, St Andrew's First Aid, the British Red Cross, the Royal Life Saving Society and Lucky2BHere. Partners are working together to encourage and equip people with CPR skills and to raise awareness and willingness to intervene at a cardiac arrest.

The save a life for Scotland partnership is a unique model that builds on a strong foundation of existing work by services, communities and individuals across Scotland. Equipping children and young people—

Maureen Watt (Aberdeen South and North Kincardine) (SNP): Will the minister also thank the firemen and women in all our fire stations, who did a great deal of initial work to help people to become confident in CPR skills when the cardiac arrest strategy was launched?

Joe FitzPatrick: Absolutely. I thank the member for making that important point, which I was going to miss.

The British Heart Foundation's successful campaign—as we have heard, it has secured the commitment of all 32 Scottish local authorities to teach CPR in their secondary schools—is also to be commended. That is an excellent example of the work that is being done.

At this point, it is appropriate to recognise the lead that has been shown by Glasgow and the Glasgow newspapers; that was highlighted by Annie Wells and Bill Kidd. Glasgow City Council has shown the lead to other councils across Scotland. It is fantastic that we have got buy-in across Scotland.

I hear the point that Colin Smyth made about making training in CPR in schools law, but I think

that we should all commend, respect and encourage the leadership that has been shown by our local elected members across Scotland.

Colin Smyth: Will the minister take an intervention?

Joe FitzPatrick: I want to make some progress.

Under the curriculum for excellence, health and wellbeing is one of three key curriculum areas—along with literacy and numeracy—that are the responsibility of all staff in school. One of the many benefits under curriculum for excellence is that schools have the flexibility to provide first aid training. It is up to individual schools and local authorities to decide whether and how best to deliver such training.

As Emma Harper said, many primary and secondary schools across Scotland have embedded CPR awareness and skills development. Save a life for Scotland has worked with Education Scotland to develop a resource for schools, which is delivering our aim of making CPR learning easy, accessible and free. The learning does not stop at the end of class. Children are asked to go home and teach the recovery position and CPR, using their teddy or a pillow, to whoever is at home with them. Feedback tells us that they do exactly that.

In 2015, we launched the out-of-hospital cardiac arrest strategy with the commitment to improve survival rates and outcomes for out-of-hospital cardiac arrest. The improvement of OHCA outcomes requires improvements to all six elements in the chain of survival that Emma Harper mentioned:

“Readiness; Early Recognition and Call for Help; CPR; Early Defibrillation Pre-hospital resuscitation; Post Resuscitation Care and Aftercare.”

One of the strategy’s aims is to equip an additional 500,000 people in Scotland with CPR skills by 2020. I am delighted that we are so far along the road to achieving those aims.

As a number of members have mentioned, since 2015, save a life for Scotland partners have worked with schools, community and sports groups, in workplaces, public places and at major events, to equip more than 430,000 people with CPR skills. That is a fantastic achievement, and I want to acknowledge the hard work of all the partners involved.

Miles Briggs: As much as I love consensual debate, I cannot let the minister’s speech pass without noting that the strategy comes to an end in 2020. When it comes to taking forward the plans and establishing a broader consensus and future vision, what work will the Government do with charities such as the British Heart Foundation, which has led a lot of that positive work?

Joe FitzPatrick: All of our work in this area is being taken forward in partnership. The member is perhaps trying to get us not to be consensual, but this is an area in which we all want to continue to be consensual. The progress that has been made has been made because there has been buy-in, across not only the Parliament but society, to the idea that we want to do this and that it is important.

The strategy—I think that it was supported unanimously in 2015—has enabled more people to go home to family and friends. Data shows that, since the start of the OHCA strategy, more people than ever are being given bystander CPR—56 per cent of OHCA patients were given bystander CPR in 2017-18, which is an increase of 15 per cent. Importantly, more patients had a pulse on arrival at hospital than in previous years, with the number of those in the “return of spontaneous circulation” category up to 23.3 per cent in 2017-18. Further, one in 12 survives to leave hospital compared with one in 20 before the strategy was implemented.

The strategy is really making a difference, but I absolutely accept Miles Briggs’s point: we need to continue to think about how we can do more in order to reach the point at which as many people in Scotland can survive one of these events as is the case in other parts of Europe.

It is important to remember that we can all learn from each other, and I strongly encourage anyone who learns these life-saving skills to pass on that knowledge and teach their family, friends and colleagues. It is helpful that Miles Briggs talked about his recent experiences in the chamber today. It is through such discussion that we can overcome the fear of helping, which was mentioned by Bill Kidd and Colin Smyth.

Finally, I want to touch on public access defibrillators. Members will recall our debate in April last year on the Jayden Orr campaign, show some heart, which highlighted the importance of defibrillators. Our strategy recognises the importance of defibrillators and aims to make the most effective use of those that are available. As part of the strategy, the Scottish Ambulance Service has committed to mapping public access defibrillator locations and has launched its registration to resuscitation campaign, which will ensure that people can find out where defibrillators are when they need them. I believe that Colin Smyth raised a point about that. The campaign maps public access defibrillators on to a call-handling system so that bystanders can be directed to a nearby defibrillator if required. Through that system, we can improve their use. I urge everyone who is responsible for a public access defibrillator to register it with the Scottish Ambulance Service.

I am grateful to everyone who has spoken in the debate, and to all the communities, voluntary organisations, individuals and businesses who have fundraised to purchase defibrillators and make them publicly accessible across Scotland. Last year, we published a guide to public access defibrillators, which provides practical advice for people who want to install a defibrillator for their local community. I think that we can all acknowledge that the strategy is making excellent progress in impacting on out-of-hospital cardiac arrest outcomes in Scotland.

I close the debate by again thanking members and all those who are involved in improving outcomes from out-of-hospital cardiac arrest. I am delighted that Scotland is well on its way to creating a nation of current and future life-savers.

Meeting closed at 18:14.

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