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Scottish Parliament

Thursday 16 May 2019

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

General Question Time

Fife Ethylene Plant (Reports)

1. Alex Rowley (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab):

To ask the Scottish Government what information it has on when the reports on the operation of the Fife ethylene plant at Mossmorran by the Scottish Environment Protection Agency and the Health and Safety Executive will be published. (S50-03246)

The Cabinet Secretary for Environment, Climate Change and Land Reform (Roseanna Cunningham): On 25 April, SEPA announced a formal investigation at the site. The timetable for that investigation will be decided by SEPA, which provides updates through its dedicated Mossmorran and Braefoot Bay hub.

HSE carries out regular inspections at the site under various regulations. At present, HSE is not expecting to publish any reports in relation to the Mossmorran complex.

Alex Rowley: When the Mossmorran complex erupted last year, causing widespread fear and plumes of black smoke everywhere, SEPA issued a final written warning. However, the same thing happened again this year. Does the cabinet secretary accept that people in the surrounding communities are fearful with regard to the safety aspects of the plant, and does she agree that HSE should be called on to give assurances, given the age of the plant and the amount of times that it breaks down and has to flare for safety reasons?

Roseanna Cunningham: I absolutely understand the concerns of members of the community in respect of what is happening and the impact that it is having on those local residents.

The plant is regulated by SEPA, which has a range of regulatory and enforcement powers that it exercises independently of Government. I am aware that HSE has a joint role in respect of the plant. However, the member must be aware that HSE is, effectively, a reserved organisation, and I am not sure whether I have the ability to direct it in any way.

From what I understand, HSE has completed its investigation and has confirmed that actions have been completed to its satisfaction. However, I also

understand that it does not routinely publish reports.

Annabelle Ewing (Cowdenbeath) (SNP): I note what the cabinet secretary has said, and it would be helpful if we could obtain some clarity from SEPA about what impact the latest unplanned flaring incident will have on its intention to proceed with a review of best available techniques recently submitted by the operators, and what the upshot will be for the report on that. It would be interesting to have some clarity on that.

The cabinet secretary will be aware that I have written to her supporting the calls of my constituents for the Scottish Government to commission an independent investigation. I am seeking a meeting with her in that regard, and I hope that she will look favourably on that request.

Roseanna Cunningham: I believe that my office has already been in touch with Annabelle Ewing's office about a meeting.

As I indicated to Alex Rowley, we understand the huge impact that unplanned flaring is having on local residents. I am aware of the work that SEPA has been doing on best available techniques. That is, obviously, a key step in identifying the way forward and improving performance on the site. SEPA is currently reviewing those technical assessments with a view to providing a summary update imminently.

Mark Ruskell (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Green): Following last year's investigation, permit variations were served on the operators requiring them to introduce best available technology to tackle noise and vibration. However, a letter that I received last week from SEPA's chief executive says:

"Previous reviews had concluded that BAT"—

that is, best available technology—

"was being used at the installation".

In that case, what was the purpose of those permit variations?

Roseanna Cunningham: I do not have very much to add to the answer that I gave to Annabelle Ewing. SEPA is reviewing the technical assessments with a view to providing a summary update imminently. I anticipate that members who have a particular interest in the matter will await the publication of the summary update with interest.

Alexander Stewart (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con): Some members are calling for the plant's closure, but I am certainly not one of them, because the plant is vital as a major employer in the area. A robust maintenance plan needs to be implemented so that we can give reassurance to

the community. What is the Scottish Government doing to facilitate that?

Roseanna Cunningham: I remind Alexander Stewart that SEPA is the independent regulatory authority in this case. I do not want to do or say anything that would cause a problem for the investigation that SEPA announced on 25 April. I appreciate that people in the local communities who are under pressure and members who are looking for early answers might find that difficult. However, if I caused difficulties for the investigation, that would create problems down the line greater than those that we currently experience.

The Presiding Officer (Ken Macintosh): Question 2 has been withdrawn.

Adult Mental Health Services (Tayside)

3. Bill Bowman (North East Scotland) (Con): To ask the Scottish Government what progress has been made in addressing the areas for improvement identified in the Healthcare Improvement Scotland report, "Review of Adult Mental Health Services in Tayside". (S5O-03248)

The Cabinet Secretary for Health and Sport (Jeane Freeman): Scottish Government officials are in contact with the board to discuss progress, and the Minister for Mental Health met NHS Tayside's senior management team on 12 March to seek further assurance. Healthcare Improvement Scotland has also followed up on its report and provided the board with further feedback on improvement priorities.

Given the gravity of the concerns that have been raised about provision in Tayside, the independent inquiry into mental health services was established in May last year, and it will provide an overarching review of mental health services in Tayside.

Bill Bowman: In recognition of mental health awareness week, I met volunteers in Dundee to discuss adult mental health facilities. They wanted me to ask the cabinet secretary whether she knows that there is still no out-of-hours mental health crisis service in Dundee. Does she know that? Is it time that the cabinet secretary delivered on the Scottish National Party's commitment to provide 24-hour mental health crisis care in Dundee?

Jeane Freeman: That issue has not been raised with me or with the Minister for Mental Health. If Bill Bowman wishes to provide details, we will certainly look at the matter. The provision of a seven-day service for the people of Angus is being pursued, with new provision coming on stream. We are happy to consider any issues that people in Dundee face and to resolve them, as we are doing elsewhere.

Social Work Services (Funding)

4. Jackie Baillie (Dumbarton) (Lab): To ask the Scottish Government what funding is provided for social work services, and how it ensures that these services are adequately staffed and have the appropriate facilities and resources to help children and families. (S5O-03249)

The Minister for Children and Young People (Maree Todd): The Scottish Government is delivering a funding package of £11.2 billion for local authorities this year. Compared with 2018-19, that is a real-terms increase of £310 million—or 2.9 per cent—for essential public services, including social work. However, it is the responsibility of individual local authorities to manage their own budgets and to ensure adequate staffing, facilities and resourcing for social work services for children and families.

Jackie Baillie: The minister might be aware that social workers, social work assistants and support staff in West Dunbartonshire Council's children and families services are balloting for strike action in June. Their concerns centre on the lack of staffing. The council has failed to secure a sufficient number of agency staff to provide cover, and the facilities are inappropriate for conducting difficult, and often sensitive, interviews with families. I understand that there is now a backlog of more than 200 cases. What direct assistance can the Scottish Government provide the council to resolve the problem? Will the minister meet Unison to discuss staffing issues more generally?

Maree Todd: I am aware that balloting for industrial action is planned. Any industrial action that would affect services would be really regrettable, and I hope that it can be avoided. I encourage all parties to work together to seek a resolution to the dispute.

My officials are in close contact with West Dunbartonshire Council, and the health and social care partnership and the Care Inspectorate are monitoring the situation. I understand that the council is making progress on the issues that are of concern to Unison and its members and that it has invited Unison to contribute to that work. We are liaising with the Care Inspectorate to support West Dunbartonshire Council and the health and social care partnership in their work to ensure the delivery of services and the continued protection of people who are at risk.

This Government is committed to supporting strong trade unions in Scotland, for the benefit of workers in our economy, and we will be more than happy to meet Unison in the future.

Planning (Local Decision Making)

5. Elaine Smith (Central Scotland) (Lab): To ask the Scottish Government what value it places

on local decision making in planning matters. (S5O-03250)

The Minister for Local Government, Housing and Planning (Kevin Stewart): Ministers recognise the importance of local decision making, and we use our call-in powers very sparingly.

Elaine Smith: In relation to a recent application by Ineos, there is evidence, from a freedom of information request, that the minister disregarded not only the initial decision of the local authority and the advice of independent reporters, but the recommendation of civil servants, which was to refuse Ineos planning permission to close Bo'ness Road in Grangemouth.

Why did the minister decide to grant that permission and to put the interests of a large corporation before the interests of the local community? Will he reconsider that controversial and unpopular decision, which undermines local democracy?

Kevin Stewart: First, I point out that the application was appealed on the ground of non-determination—that is, the local authority having failed to determine an application within the statutory period.

Ministers carefully considered all the evidence relating to the planning application. There were strong economic and security grounds for granting the appeal. Ministers set out their reasons in full in the decision letter, which is available publicly.

Angus MacDonald (Falkirk East) (SNP): I acknowledge the reasons that the minister gave about his decision on Bo'ness Road in Grangemouth being based on the economic benefits and on the security issues that have arisen in recent years. I also acknowledge his comment about non-determination; the appeal resulted from the previous Labour administration at Falkirk Council failing to make a decision on the application within the timescale that is set for major planning applications.

Does the minister agree that the principle of local accountability works both ways, and that if Falkirk Council grants a stopping-up order it must include mitigation measures, the cost of which is currently estimated to be £22 million, which Ineos must pay? The petrochemical plant has returned to significant profitability, and mitigation costs must not be borne by taxpayers locally or nationally.

Kevin Stewart: We much prefer it if local decision making takes place, as I said. The reason for the appeal was non-determination by the local authority: it should have determined the application.

The stopping-up order is a matter for Falkirk Council to determine. It is a live application that might come before ministers, so it is not

appropriate for me to comment on the specifics, because to do so might be prejudicial to the decision-making process.

Liam McArthur (Orkney Islands) (LD): The minister might be aware that, earlier this month, the reporter overturned a decision by locally elected members of Orkney Islands Council to refuse applications by Hoolan Energy for two wind farm developments.

Constituents have been in touch with me to question why such a sensitive decision, which has significant local public interest, was left to an official rather than the minister. Why was that decision not called in by ministers?

Kevin Stewart: I believe that I have written in some depth to Mr McArthur on that issue.

I am always wary of the special place in the ministerial code for the planning minister when it comes to talking about particular applications. If Mr McArthur has other queries on the application, further to what was in the letter that I sent to him, I will be happy to respond to him.

First-tier Tribunal for Scotland Housing and Property Chamber

6. Graham Simpson (Central Scotland) (Con): To ask the Scottish Government what analysis the Minister for Local Government, Housing and Planning has undertaken of whether complaints against property factors and letting agents are being effectively resolved through the First-tier Tribunal for Scotland housing and property chamber. (S5O-03251)

The Minister for Local Government, Housing and Planning (Kevin Stewart): The First-tier Tribunal for Scotland is an independent judicial body, so we are unable to comment on, or to intervene in, its decisions. In accordance with the Tribunals (Scotland) Act 2014,

“The Lord President is responsible for making and maintaining appropriate arrangements for securing the efficient disposal of business in the Scottish Tribunals”

and

“The President of Tribunals is to prepare an annual report about the operation and business of the Scottish Tribunals”

and how they

“have exercised their functions”

at the end of each financial year.

The report will be provided to the Lord President, who must publish it.

Graham Simpson: I thank the minister for his answer and for his letter of Tuesday, which spelled out the legal position around letting agent enforcement orders.

I have been contacted by numerous constituents about problems that have been caused by a letting agent or a property factor. I have done some analysis of enforcement orders that have been issued by the tribunal and have found that, despite having received orders, some companies, which are governed by a code of conduct, continually ignore them and are getting away with doing so scot free.

The First-tier Tribunal for Scotland lacks transparency in disclosure of details of those who continue to break the law and to ignore enforcement orders. Staff there told me that it has issued 26 enforcement orders, half of which have not been complied with and 10 of which have been reported to police, but the tribunal point blank refuses to say which ones. I have not yet been able to establish whether the police are doing anything about them. That is unacceptable.

Does the minister agree that for the system to work properly, it needs to be seen to do so and to show greater transparency? Action is required to deal with the few unscrupulous operators.

Kevin Stewart: I apologise to Mr Simpson if I do not cover all aspects of his question—I had difficulty hearing everything that he said.

Failure to comply with a letting agent enforcement order or a property factor enforcement order are offences, and so are matters for Police Scotland to investigate. When ministers are notified by the tribunal of a failure to comply with an enforcement order by a registered letting agent or factor, Scottish ministers will, when appropriate, contact the business to highlight its legal requirements and the consequences of non-compliance, including the risk that it might be removed from the register, which would make it unlawful for the business to continue.

I am grateful to Mr Simpson and other members for pointing out difficulties that their constituents have faced, and I will always do all that I can to ensure that there is openness and transparency, and that everyone who is involved in the process is doing all that they can, including Police Scotland.

If Mr Simpson wishes to share any other information with me, I am more than happy to talk to him again.

The Presiding Officer: Question 7 has been withdrawn, so we move on to question 8.

Sauchiehall Street (Glasgow School of Art Fire)

8. Pauline McNeill (Glasgow) (Lab): To ask the Scottish Government whether it is satisfied that everything possible is being done to aid the recovery of Sauchiehall Street following the Glasgow School of Art fire. (S50-03253)

The Cabinet Secretary for Finance, Economy and Fair Work (Derek Mackay): The primary responsibility for the on-going recovery of Sauchiehall Street is with Glasgow City Council. That said, we have been supportive of restoring Sauchiehall Street to its position as a significant business, retail and cultural location.

Following the exceptional circumstances of the fires, the Scottish Government has assisted Glasgow City Council to support businesses through what have been difficult trading conditions. In July 2018, I announced a recovery fund of £5 million for businesses that have been affected by the fires. The fund has provided more than £3 million of grant support to more than 200 eligible businesses.

Following engagement with the business community, I allocated the remaining £1.85 million to the council in December, to support business recovery further. In addition, we continue to fund discretionary rates hardship relief for affected non-domestic properties.

Pauline McNeill: I put on the record my thanks to the cabinet secretary for extending business rates assistance to Sauchiehall Street businesses. I hope that it is acknowledged that residents and businesses are still struggling.

The O2 ABC Academy was widely seen as Glasgow's most iconic and popular music venue. I recently met the owners, who are keen to have the O2 rebuilt. Does the cabinet secretary agree that it is vital to Glasgow's status as a UNESCO city of music, and to Sauchiehall Street's long-term survival, that the O2 ABC Academy be rebuilt?

Derek Mackay: Of course I will continue to work with the council, businesses and local MSPs, who have been very constructive and consensual in progressing the recovery of Sauchiehall Street. I would not want to overstep my role as Cabinet Secretary for Finance, Economy and Fair Work or to try to act as a determiner on future planning, but I think that there is a very strong case for that performance venue to continue to be able to flourish to support Sauchiehall Street, the wider economy and Scottish performance. I am sympathetic to Pauline McNeill's case.

The Presiding Officer: I call Sandra White. Please be brief.

Sandra White (Glasgow Kelvin) (SNP): I thank Pauline McNeill for raising the issue, and I thank the cabinet secretary for his on-going work with regard to the O2 and Glasgow School of Art.

Does the cabinet secretary agree that if extra money comes to Glasgow School of Art, it might be persuaded to use some of it to help the local people and businesses of Sauchiehall Street?

Derek Mackay: As I have said, I am more than happy to continue to engage with business support and retail support, and with the vision of the avenues project. As I said just moments ago, there has been a good cross-party approach to the matter: I hope that that will continue so that Sauchiehall Street and the economy of Glasgow can flourish.

The Presiding Officer: Before we move on to First Minister's question time, I invite members to join me in welcoming to our gallery the honourable Colin Brooks MP, who is the speaker of the Legislative Assembly of Victoria. [*Applause.*]

First Minister's Question Time

12:01

Numeracy Attainment

1. Ruth Davidson (Edinburgh Central) (Con): Marking national numeracy day yesterday, the Deputy First Minister declared that all of us need to have a good grasp of numeracy. I agree. Can the First Minister tell us how much numeracy attainment has improved or declined in our schools since she took office?

The First Minister (Nicola Sturgeon): I pay tribute to national numeracy initiatives. I think that the Deputy First Minister managed to spell numeracy correctly when he promoted it this week; the United Kingdom skills minister managed to refer to "national numberacy week".

That aside, we see improving attainment across our schools. For example, we see an increasing intake in STEM subjects—science, technology, engineering and mathematics—generally. I am more than happy to provide the specific numbers on maths for Ruth Davidson later, but I do not have them to hand right now. Across the range of subjects in our schools, we are seeing attainment rising, and we are, of course, also seeing the attainment gap closing. We want to continue that progress in the months ahead.

Ruth Davidson: I thank the First Minister for that answer, but she will not be able to send me the specific numbers later, because she cannot give specific numbers. That is because the Deputy First Minister cancelled the only national survey on numeracy standards that we had, which previously allowed us to see how things were going. That means that, as this Parliament's Education and Skills Committee declared,

"no meaningful conclusions on upward or downward trends can be reached, at a time of reform within Scottish education."

The Deputy First Minister told us this week that it is important to have a good grasp of numeracy standards, yet, under this SNP Government, we have no grasp of how those standards are faring. Does that strike the First Minister as acceptable?

The First Minister: If that were true, it would not be acceptable, but it is not true. Under the achievement of curriculum for excellence levels data, which replaced the Scottish survey of literacy and numeracy, we provide more data at all levels of the system than we have ever provided before—crucially, to underpin improvement.

The problem with the Scottish survey of literacy and numeracy was that it did not provide data at school or local authority level. Ruth Davidson does

not have to take my word for that. In its review of education in Scotland in 2015, this is what the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development said about that sample approach:

“The light sampling of literacy and numeracy at the national level has not provided sufficient evidence for ... use in ... evaluative activities or for national agencies to identify ... areas of strength.”

That survey was not providing the information that we needed, which is why we have replaced it with the achievement of CFE levels data, which provides that information not just at a national level but at school and local authority levels. I would have thought that that is exactly the kind of progress and improvement that Ruth Davidson might welcome.

Ruth Davidson: The OECD said to improve SSLN; it did not say to cancel it.

It is clear from the First Minister’s answers that she has not actually read what the Education and Skills Committee had to say. The problem is that the new assessments, which we support at primary 4, primary 7 and secondary 3, are not comparable—[*Interruption.*] SNP members should listen. They are not comparable, they cannot show a trend, there is no baseline and they will take time to bed in. In the meantime, we have no idea whether standards in literacy and numeracy are rising or falling.

The committee was explicit about the fact that there is a five-year gap in our knowledge because of the actions of this SNP Government, and it is worried that we are losing the data that we need for Parliament and wider society to hold

“the Government to account for its performance on education”.

I share the committee’s concerns. Does the First Minister not share them, too?

The First Minister: We always pay attention to what committees of this Parliament say, and we will continue to do that.

I will pick up on something that Ruth Davidson said about assessments in primary schools. She said, very carefully, that the Tories support them at P4 and P7—of course, omitting to say that, in their manifesto for the 2016 election, they supported them at P1 as well. That is just another example of Ruth Davidson’s now legendary flip-flopping on every conceivable issue. There are no policies in the Tories, and there is not an iota of principle under Ruth Davidson either.

CFE levels data, of course, provides a trend. The information is published at school and local authority level each and every year, allowing people to look at the trend data, at improvements when they are being made and at whether there are any issues that require to be addressed. That

is important progress. Ruth Davidson says that the OECD said that it wanted improvement, and we have provided that improvement to deal with the deficiencies in the survey of literacy and numeracy. There is now more data about pupil performance in our schools than ever before.

Later this year, we will also get the latest iteration of the programme for international student assessment—PISA—study. There is more information about schools’ performance than ever before, all of which—crucially—shows that we are making progress in raising attainment and closing the attainment gap, which is maybe what Ruth Davidson is a bit disappointed about.

Ruth Davidson: What the First Minister does not get is that the mum of a seven-year-old now will not know whether this country is getting any better at teaching maths until her child is a teenager. [*Interruption.*] It is true. The reason for that is that the old national survey—[*Interruption.*] Members might want to listen to this. The old national survey showed that standards were declining, for which this SNP Government got the blame, and then it cancelled the survey. That is what happened, and it has left parents without any idea as to whether standards are going up or down.

Here are the figures that we do know about Scottish schools and numeracy. We have lost more than 400 maths teachers since the SNP took office, the number of vacancies has gone up in the past two years and, the last time that we measured numeracy in our schools, we found that Scottish education had gone backwards under this Government.

I think that parents deserve to know what is happening in our schools. Why has the First Minister left them in the dark?

The First Minister: I, too, think that parents deserve to know what is happening in their children’s schools, which is why we now publish the data at school level. Maybe Ruth Davidson should look into this just a little bit more closely. The reality is that, under the survey of literacy and numeracy, a parent had no idea what was happening in their child’s school, because that survey did not produce any data at school level. A parent therefore had no idea whether their child’s school was doing well or badly. The difference in the data that we publish now is that it provides data not just at national and local authority level, but at individual school level. Parents now have much more of an idea of how their child’s school is doing than they have ever had before.

Ruth Davidson: Is it going up or down?

The First Minister: Ruth Davidson asks whether it is going up or down. Attainment in our schools is improving and the attainment gap is

closing. Those are the facts, which Ruth Davidson does not like.

There are more teachers in our schools now than there have been at any time since 2010. There are more primary school teachers in our schools now than there have been at any time since I was at primary school. That is the reality of the progress in our education system. It is no wonder that Ruth Davidson is so furious about it.

Mental Health Services

2. Richard Leonard (Central Scotland) (Lab):

This week is mental health awareness week. As a society, we are increasingly open about, and understanding of, mental health. However, we must also recognise that we need to do much more to get our mental health services right, especially at the point of crisis.

A year ago, the Government announced that an independent inquiry would look at end-to-end mental health services in Angus, Dundee and Perth and Kinross. When the then Cabinet Secretary for Health and Sport announced the inquiry, she said:

"It is my aspiration that the independent inquiry will be seen as a force for good ... The inquiry needs to be seen as a positive thing."—[*Official Report*, 9 May 2018; c 58.]

Does the First Minister think that that aspiration is being met?

The First Minister: The independent inquiry has not reported yet. It is an independent inquiry by definition, so the Scottish Government is not in control of the timing of the publication of the report. When the report is published, we will look at it closely—as will, I am sure, Parliament as a whole—implement any recommendations from it, and encourage national health service boards to do likewise.

Richard Leonard is right to raise the issue of mental health. This is, of course, mental health awareness week, and it is important that we continue to tackle the stigma of mental health and invest more in preventative mental health services, as the Government is doing. It is also important that we continue to ensure that we are investing in specialist care for when people need it.

One of the issues—this is just an example, but I will cite it, as Richard Leonard has raised the issue with me previously—is rejected referrals in child and adolescent mental health services. Because of the action that we are taking, rejected referrals are now on a downward trajectory. That is progress, but there is more progress to make, and we are determined to make it.

Richard Leonard: I hear what the First Minister is saying, but I ask her to listen to these words, which I heard just this morning:

"Nothing seems to have happened. We're not kept involved. It's definitely not transparent."

That is the view of Gillian Murray, whose uncle David's suicide in October 2016 was one of the tragedies that led to the inquiry.

It is clear that, for the families involved, the cabinet secretary's founding aspirations are not being met. Will the First Minister reflect on that? Will she tell us what she will do to restore the confidence of families that have lost loved ones because of failures in the system of mental health support in Tayside?

The First Minister: Of course we want to learn lessons from experiences of the kind that Richard Leonard has narrated. My sympathies are with any family that has had such experiences.

I say to Richard Leonard—I hope that he takes this point seriously—that we established an independent inquiry into mental health services across Tayside as a result of some of the cases that he brought to the chamber. That independent inquiry has not reported yet, but I hope that it will report soon. When it does, I am sure that it will be fully scrutinised by members across the chamber. The Scottish Government and the health service more generally will ensure that we reflect carefully on that report and learn any lessons that it says require to be learned.

It would be wrong to pre-empt the outcome of the inquiry, particularly as—as I understand it—it is due to report imminently. I look forward to the publication of the report and, as I have said, I give an assurance that the Scottish Government will take forward any recommendations that it makes.

Richard Leonard: The terms of reference that were set for the inquiry state that it must

"Consider the perspective and give voice to families, patients, carers and others who have experience of suicide or involvement with mental health services within Tayside."

That means the voices of people such as Mandy McLaren, the mother of Dale Thomson, who tragically completed suicide in January 2015. This morning, Mandy asked me to ask the First Minister directly whether she will ensure that the families receive an advance copy of the interim report, which is due in the next few weeks. Will the First Minister listen to the voices of those families, and will she do what she can do to help to restore their confidence in the inquiry?

The First Minister: I know that Richard Leonard is aware that the inquiry is being led by David Strang, and that it is an independent inquiry. If the Government interfered in the conduct of the inquiry, I am sure that Richard Leonard would raise that in the chamber.

As I understand it, although David Strang is taking forward the inquiry independently, he has

met family members. That would have been expected of him. It would be my full expectation in any inquiry of this nature that an advance copy of the report would go to those directly affected. I will pass that specific point back to David Strang.

I stress again that it is an independent inquiry, and it is right that the Government allows it to be conducted entirely independently of Government. As I said, although I am not in control of the timing, I expect the report to be published imminently. At that point, it will be for all MSPs and the Scottish Government to look carefully at it.

Vale of Leven Hospital (Out-of-hours Service)

Jackie Baillie (Dumbarton) (Lab): The First Minister might be aware that the provision of out-of-hours services in NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde continues to be a significant problem. Last year, the out-of-hours service at the Vale of Leven hospital was closed 88 times. In the first four months of this year, it has been closed 44 times, and it was closed this weekend. Hundreds of patients had to make the long journey to the Royal Alexandra hospital in Paisley for what should be the most basic local provision. Will the First Minister ensure that out-of-hours services are improved and retained at the Vale of Leven hospital?

The First Minister (Nicola Sturgeon): Since I was Cabinet Secretary for Health, Wellbeing and Cities Strategy, it has always been our intention to ensure that as many services as possible—out-of-hours and others—are retained at the Vale of Leven hospital. The Cabinet Secretary for Health and Sport has advised me that she is due to visit the Vale of Leven hospital next month, and I am sure that she will have those discussions with staff there.

I expect Greater Glasgow and Clyde health board, as I expect all health boards, to take every measure possible to ensure safe and sustainable out-of-hours services. I know that there have been some issues recently at the Vale of Leven, but I expect the board to work hard to rectify them so that the services are there, locally, for the people who need them.

Mohammad Zahir Zazai (Visa)

Sandra White (Glasgow Kelvin) (SNP): The First Minister will be aware of the issue regarding Sabir Zazai, chief executive of the Scottish Refugee Council. The University of Glasgow, which is in my constituency, is awarding Sabir an honorary doctorate, yet the Home Office is refusing his father a visa to enter the United Kingdom to attend the ceremony. That is absolutely disgraceful. Can the Scottish Government take any steps to apply pressure on the UK Government to ensure that Sabir's father

can enter the country and attend this significant ceremony?

The First Minister (Nicola Sturgeon): Those who know Sabir Zazai are aware that, over 20 years in the UK, he has made a significant contribution in supporting refugees in communities. I thank him for the contribution that he makes to this country, and I am delighted that the University of Glasgow has chosen to recognise that. All of us understand that it is entirely natural that he wants to share that outstanding achievement with his father. It is hard for any of us to comprehend the disappointment that he must feel that his father's visa application has been refused. That is shameful and inexplicable. I call on the UK Government to reflect carefully on its decision. The Cabinet Secretary for Communities and Local Government has written to the UK Minister of State for Immigration to ask her to look into the case. Today, I reiterate that request very strongly indeed.

Highlands and Islands Airports Ltd

Edward Mountain (Highlands and Islands) (Con): Given the fact that Highlands and Islands Airports Ltd air traffic controllers propose to take strike action on Thursday of next week, can the First Minister update Parliament on the Scottish Government's contingency plans to minimise disruption to businesses, families and patients in the Highlands and Islands?

The First Minister (Nicola Sturgeon): It is disappointing that the industrial action is taking place. I appeal both to the employer and to the employees to continue to discuss how it can be resolved in order that there is no disruption to the travelling public. Of course, it is for HIAL to ensure that it has contingency plans in place, and it is working to do that. I am sure that HIAL will be glad to engage directly with any interested member of the Scottish Parliament.

Child Poverty Levels

James Kelly (Glasgow) (Lab): This week, data from the University of Loughborough was published that revealed that child poverty levels in Glasgow are running at 37 per cent. In the First Minister's Glasgow Southside constituency, levels are at 46 per cent, the highest of any constituency in Scotland. At a time when we celebrate the 20th anniversary of the founding of the Scottish Parliament, the fact that children are growing up in poverty in Nicola Sturgeon's constituency is a damning criticism of this Government.

All over Glasgow, children are growing up hungry and in overcrowded houses. The time for soft words and platitudes is over. What will the First Minister do with the powers at her disposal to

give those kids some hope and lift them out of poverty?

The First Minister (Nicola Sturgeon): As I have said previously, child poverty in Scotland is too high, but child poverty is lower in Scotland than it is in any other part of the United Kingdom. However, it is still too high. That is why we are taking action to mitigate the impact of welfare cuts; providing more support to low-income families through, for example, the best start grant; tackling the root causes of poverty; and investing record sums in affordable housing across the country. It is also why we will bring forward plans for an income supplement.

James Kelly is right to raise the issue, but I note that he wants to characterise it as all somehow being the fault of the Scottish National Party Government. Interestingly, the End Child Poverty report that was published yesterday found that Wales was the only part of the UK where there has been an overall increase in the percentage of children in poverty in the past year, and the Welsh Government said that that was entirely down to UK Government welfare cuts and, in particular, universal credit.

Why is it that James Kelly's colleagues in Wales can see what the root causes of poverty in this country are, but the Scottish Labour Party cannot? It would fit the Scottish Labour Party better if it supported the work that this Government is doing and joined us in asking for all welfare policies to be devolved to the Scottish Parliament.

Climate Challenge Fund (Cut)

3. **Patrick Harvie (Glasgow) (Green):** More than a decade ago, the first budget concession that the Greens ever won from the Scottish National Party was the climate challenge fund. Since then, it has funded more than 1,000 communities across Scotland, helping them to waste less, switch to greener transport, grow food locally and much more.

We have been hearing of communities losing their grants and, this morning, *The Ferret* reports the true scale of what is happening: total funding is at its lowest-ever level; funding for new projects has been slashed in half; and scores of projects that were recommended for grants have been turned down, including South Seeds in the First Minister's constituency, where three members of staff have been made redundant and tens of thousands of households and residents will not get the services that they need.

Now that the First Minister has declared a climate emergency, why is the Government sacking our first responders?

The First Minister (Nicola Sturgeon): The climate challenge fund is the only fund of its kind

in the United Kingdom—that is important. There are always a large number of applications for the fund; I know how competitive it is from the example of South Seeds in my constituency. Twenty-two new projects were funded this year, but it is important to point out that that is in addition to the 65 projects that were funded last year, which now have a second year of funding. The total spend this year will be £8 million, and the total spend across 2019-21 will be more than £9 million. Of course, the climate challenge fund is part of the overall sustainable action fund, which has seen an increase in funding this year.

That said, as I have stated in the chamber in recent weeks, all our policies require to be reviewed in the light of the report of the Committee on Climate Change, which has led us to increase our emissions reduction targets. That will include looking at the role of the climate challenge fund in supporting communities to play their full part in tackling climate change.

Patrick Harvie: The Government has started a review of the fund but has pulled the rug from under people before that review has finished. The budget that was presented to Parliament included funds for the climate challenge scheme; we would certainly not have approved it if it had set out the cut in question.

Last year, the fund helped 65 new projects across Scotland, whereas this year the figure is just 22. Forty-three projects that were recommended for approval by the independent grants panel have been turned down. Those are not just numbers—we are talking about people who are committed to taking climate action and being leaders in their communities. Projects are being abandoned and jobs are being lost. When the Greens criticise the Government for handing cash to the fossil fuel industry or the arms trade, the response is, "Jobs, jobs, jobs." Well, these jobs matter too.

This is a serious mistake. Will the First Minister step in and replace the lost funding for communities that have been affected by the cut?

The First Minister: These are important issues. I reiterate a point that I think was lost a moment ago: the 65 projects that were funded last year also have funding this year. There are 22 new projects over and above that and this year's total funding is £8 million.

Yes, we have to look at all these things in light of recent developments on climate change. I give an undertaking to the chamber today that we will look carefully not only at the climate challenge fund or the wider sustainable action fund in which it sits, which has had a budget increase this year, but at all those things, so that we can be satisfied that we are living up to our responsibilities.

Mental Health Services (Waiting Times)

4. Willie Rennie (North East Fife) (LD): This week, a general practitioner told me that he had stopped referring patients to mental health services because the waiting times are so long and there is no prospect of people ever getting treated. The First Minister promised patients that they would get mental health treatment when they need it. They feel let down. Are they wrong to do so?

The First Minister (Nicola Sturgeon): Any patient who waits longer for treatment than we want them to wait or than the targets say they should wait is entitled to feel very aggrieved. I apologise to any patient in those circumstances.

On waiting times generally, as Jeane Freeman has set out to the chamber, we are investing £850 million to meet waiting times targets. We are investing significantly in mental health services to improve not just specialist services but preventative and community services, and child and adolescent mental health services are particularly important, with the average waiting time now falling and rejected referrals down.

There is work still to do, but we are investing in and pursuing policies that are about getting in place the right treatment for people when they need it.

Willie Rennie: If warm words could treat people faster, the First Minister would not have thousands of people waiting for mental health services. One in five people are waiting more than 18 weeks; some are waiting as long as two years; and some never get any help.

The First Minister says that she takes the issue seriously, but her Government's mental health strategy was 15 months late, its suicide prevention strategy was 20 months late and it is 700 staff short of its own recruitment plan. GPs, accident and emergency departments and police officers have to pick up the pieces, because patients have nowhere else to go. In mental health awareness week, I ask again—years after I first asked her—why are people still waiting so long?

The First Minister: If warm words were all that people were being offered, Willie Rennie might have a point, but budgets for mental health are increasing. The budget for mental health is now more than £1 billion and we are committed to investing in increased staffing not just in mental health and our health service more generally, but in other settings across the country.

Willie Rennie mentioned the mental health and the suicide prevention strategies. I think that it was at his request that we took time to do further consultation on those strategies, to make sure that

we were taking the views of all stakeholders properly into account.

We are determined to continue our work to ensure that people get access to specialist services when they need them but that fewer people need to be referred to specialist services, because we have the community and preventative services in place. That is what we are focused on, and we will continue to work on the progress that we are making.

Brexit

Keith Brown (Clackmannanshire and Dunblane) (SNP): The Prime Minister's Brexit deal has been dead now for some months and the United Kingdom Government is wasting the Brexit extension, with no meaningful talks having taken place. Any backroom deal struck with the Labour Party would leave Scotland outside the single market, which would cost £2,300 a person, yet the Prime Minister has the audacity to proclaim that MPs have a duty to support her. Does the First Minister think that Scottish National Party MPs have a duty to vote to make Scotland poorer?

The First Minister (Nicola Sturgeon): I do not think that any MPs should be voting to make Scotland or the UK poorer. SNP MPs will vote against the withdrawal agreement bill, because it would take Scotland out of the European Union and the single market against our will.

The fact is that the Prime Minister is introducing the withdrawal agreement bill only to buy herself more time. It is about preserving her own party—although I am not sure that those attempts will be successful—and not about acting in the best interests of the country. The Tories' actions and behaviour on Brexit are utterly shameful. In an electoral sense, they will probably get what they deserve in Scotland next week, at the European elections. People will quite rightly be expressing the degree of anger that they have at this whole Westminster Brexit fiasco.

College Lecturers (Pay Dispute)

Iain Gray (East Lothian) (Lab): Scotland's college lecturers are on strike again today. Indeed, they are demonstrating outside Parliament as we speak. All they want is a fair cost-of-living pay increase in line with public pay policy, something that they have been denied for three years now. Their employers remain intransigent and determined to conflate this claim with the quite separate introduction of national pay scales. Will the First Minister intervene now and get the colleges to agree a fair settlement? If not, will she come out with me after First Minister's questions and explain why not to the lecturers' faces?

The First Minister (Nicola Sturgeon): It always amazes me the number of times that Labour members—proud trade unionists—get up in this chamber and ask me to intervene in national bargaining between employers and trade unions. I want to see the dispute resolved. It is deeply disappointing that talks have not managed to build on the positive progress that has been made over the past few weeks, and I appeal to both sides to get round and stay round the table in order to resolve the issue.

The Scottish Government is, of course, funding in full the additional costs of harmonising pay terms and conditions, which is around £100 million over three years, and we are also investing heavily in Scotland's colleges. I say to the employers as well as the trade unions—but let me focus on the employers here—that we all want to see this resolved, and I hope that it is resolved sooner rather than later. However, it is the responsibility of those involved in national bargaining to reach that resolution.

Brexit (Travel Companies)

Gillian Martin (Aberdeenshire East) (SNP): Brexit still has not happened, but the damage is already being done. Today, there are doubts whether Thomas Cook, a travel company with 180 years of history, can continue as a going concern. Does that not demonstrate the impact of Brexit on ordinary families—in this case, families who are looking forward to their well-earned holidays—and why it is so important for Scotland to say no to Brexit next Thursday?

The First Minister (Nicola Sturgeon): Brexit is having an impact on individuals and businesses the length and breadth of the country. In fact, on a visit to Glasgow university yesterday, I heard about its impact on European Union nationals who are working or studying there. I think that the impact that it is having is disgraceful.

I think that the vast majority of people want to see an end to Brexit and this Westminster chaos and they can exercise that view next Thursday by—and it will not surprise anyone to hear me say this—voting for the Scottish National Party to say quite clearly that Scotland wants to stay in Europe and wants an end to Brexit.

The Presiding Officer (Ken Macintosh): First Minister, I would rather that you did not say that. I hope that you will not directly encourage people to vote and will not campaign in this chamber—and that extends to every member in the chamber. No blatant electioneering, please.

Mental Health Awareness Week

5. James Dornan (Glasgow Cathcart) (SNP): To ask the First Minister how the Scottish

Government is marking mental health awareness week. (S5F-03339)

The First Minister (Nicola Sturgeon): The theme of this year's awareness week is body image, which is an important factor in mental wellbeing. The mental health minister launched the week at Glasgow Central station, where she and the Mental Health Foundation spoke to members of the public to raise awareness of the issue. She also visited Girlguiding Scotland to hear at first hand from girl guides how body image affects them.

Ahead of awareness week, we announced a new advisory group that will examine how body image impacts on young people's mental wellbeing. It will identify steps to improve support for young people and advice for relevant professionals, building on our package of measures to improve young people's mental health.

James Dornan: Last week, we heard the sad news that Dr Dame Denise Coia has had to step down from the child and adolescent mental health services task force due to ill health. Does the First Minister agree that Denise Coia should be thanked for taking forward this important work, and can she outline how the task force's work will be taken forward to implementation?

The First Minister: I am very sorry indeed that, due to illness, Dr Dame Denise Coia has had to stand down as chair of the children and young people's mental health task force. As chair, Dr Coia has shown exemplary dedication in helping to improve the mental health of children and young people. I thank her and send her my very best wishes, and I am sure that I do so on behalf of the chamber.

We established the task force jointly with the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities in June 2018 to provide a blueprint for delivering a new approach. Dr Coia's work has brought the task force to an advanced stage, and the next step is to work towards implementation. As it happens, the task force will meet today to shape how it will take this important work forward.

Annie Wells (Glasgow) (Con): I stress my support for mental health awareness week. It is absolutely right that mental health is now near the top of the political agenda. However, although we hear good talk from the Scottish National Party, the reality for those who need support is far different.

The SNP pledged to hire an extra 800 mental health workers but the latest statistics show that only 106 have been hired in the past two years. Can the First Minister outline what specific action her Government will take to ensure that the target

is met by the end of 2021-22 rather than being missed spectacularly?

The First Minister: We are on track to deliver on that target. It is, as Annie Wells has acknowledged, a multiyear target. In addition, we have commitments to increase the number of school counsellors; £60 million has been invested to support an additional 350 counsellors in education. The first tranche of counsellors will be in place from the start of the 2019-20 school year. That commitment is on track to be delivered by the start of the 2020-21 school year.

We have also committed to putting an additional 250 school nurses in place by 2022 and the first tranche of 50 additional school nurses will be recruited in the current academic year. Across all these areas, there is a real focus—as I commented earlier—on not just ensuring that specialist services are there when people need them, but investing in the preventative services that we hope will stop people needing those specialist services in the first place.

David Stewart (Highlands and Islands) (Lab): The First Minister will be well aware that people with diabetes are twice as likely to experience depression. Three quarters of people living with diabetes who wanted specialist mental health support could not get it. What is the Scottish Government doing to improve support for people living with diabetes, through emotional, psychological and mental health care?

The First Minister: As David Stewart is aware, because I know that he takes a close interest in this issue, the Scottish Government is carrying out a range of work to help those who have diabetes. I will ask the mental health minister to write to the member on how we support people with diabetes specifically in relation to mental health challenges because, as he rightly says, that is a significant aspect of what diabetes patients deal with. I will ask the mental health minister to provide that information as soon as possible.

Specialist Heart Failure Nurse Services

6. **Miles Briggs (Lothian) (Con):** To ask the First Minister what the Scottish Government's response is to the Scottish Heart Failure Nurse Forum's warning of a "potential crisis in care delivery". (S5F-03331)

The First Minister (Nicola Sturgeon): We are committed to improving prevention, treatment and care for patients with heart disease and we are taking a range of actions to achieve that through the heart disease improvement plan. The decrease in mortality rates and in the number of new cases of coronary heart disease over the past decade show that we are having success with that strategy.

I welcome the Scottish Heart Failure Nurse Forum's report, which makes six recommendations for improvements. We will consider those recommendations carefully with national health service boards.

Since 2015, we have invested over £2.4 million a year to support NHS boards to provide enhanced access to specialist nursing services, including cardiac nurses, and I expect NHS boards to ensure that people with heart failure have access to a range of health professionals so that there is appropriate management of their condition.

Miles Briggs: I thank the First Minister for that answer, but the report notes that there has been little investment in specialist heart failure services over the past six years and there are now fewer heart failure nurses than there were 10 years ago. Nearly 46,000 people across Scotland are living with the devastating impacts of heart failure, so can the First Minister confirm today how much the Scottish Government will commit to investing in the delivery of heart failure nurse teams?

Given the progress that is being made in NHS England and NHS Wales on contributing to the national cardiac audit, supporting data-led redesign of service and provision, will the Scottish Government commit to addressing the lack of national data support to help design better services for patients?

The First Minister: As I said in my original answer, since 2015, we have invested over £2.4 million in enhanced access to specialist nursing services. That includes cardiac nurses. I will ask the Cabinet Secretary for Health and Sport to write to Miles Briggs with the projected spend over the next few years. Of course, that sits within a picture of an overall rise in the number of nurses in Scotland. We will continue to invest and indeed to work with different organisations that have expertise to make sure that we are providing the right support and services for patients.

It is important to note that, although there is still a lot of work to do and the recommendations that are made in the Scottish Heart Failure Nurse Forum's report will be looked at carefully, between 2008 and 2017, the mortality rate for coronary heart disease for all ages decreased by 36 per cent and for the under-75s, the rate decreased by 33 per cent. Things are going in the right direction, which suggests that we are having success with the actions that we are taking; we will continue to make sure that we take those actions.

Monica Lennon (Central Scotland) (Lab): Recently, cardiologist Professor Colin Berry came to Parliament to present his research on women's heart health to the cross-party group on women's health. His research found that women are less

likely than men to be properly diagnosed with a heart attack and twice as likely to die in hospital. Is the First Minister aware that a valuable test that diagnoses small vessel heart disease—a condition that particularly affects women—is not routinely available? What is the Government doing to improve women's heart health more generally?

The First Minister: We are aware of that issue. The Chief Medical Officer is looking at the issue that Monica Lennon raises. She is a real champion for improvements in women's health. Often, the symptoms of heart attacks in women are different from those that are experienced by men. Many health professionals will be more aware of those symptoms that are traditionally experienced by men.

"Invisible Women: Exposing Data Bias in a World Designed for Men", a recently published book that I would recommend to everybody in the chamber, looks at some of the issues that systemise discrimination against women in our society. Those are important issues, and I assure Monica Lennon that they are being looked at actively by the Scottish Government.

The Presiding Officer: That concludes First Minister's question time. We will have a short suspension to allow the gallery to clear and members and ministers to change seats before the next item of business.

12:41

Meeting suspended.

12:43

On resuming—

Community Pharmacy Scotland

The Deputy Presiding Officer (Christine Grahame): The next item of business is a members' business debate on motion S5M 16544, in the name of Alexander Stewart, on Community Pharmacy Scotland. The debate will be concluded without any question being put.

Motion debated,

That the Parliament welcomes the work of Community Pharmacy Scotland (CPS) in representing independent community pharmacy owners in Mid Scotland and Fife and across the country; acknowledges that it provides information and advice to over 1,200 pharmacies, engages with MSPs, NHS boards and other relevant national bodies and negotiates its members' terms and conditions of service; considers that, because of their skills and professional expertise, community pharmacists are increasingly important front line healthcare providers, working as educators, primary care campaigners and experts in the most effective use of medicines; understands that CPS is keen to build its presence among the public by promoting the role of modern pharmacy care at a time of major change; believes that it is doing this by taking a proactive, open-door approach to better reflect the changing and developing role of its members, whom it considers are at the heart of every community, and acknowledges CPS's work in the drive to ensure that its members can provide the services that communities need and deserve.

12:43

Alexander Stewart (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con): I am delighted and grateful to have the privilege of opening my members' business debate in recognition of the work of Community Pharmacy Scotland. I extend a warm welcome to guests from CPS who have joined us in the public gallery: Matt Barclay, the director of operations, and Caroline Rooks, the public affairs officer.

The debate is highly significant, as CPS is the organisation that represents community pharmacy contractor owners in every aspect of their lives. CPS is the voice of those healthcare professionals, as they deliver pharmaceutical care to people and their communities across Scotland. CPS is empowered to represent the owners of Scotland's 1,257 community pharmacies and to negotiate on their behalf with the Scottish Government. That negotiation would normally cover all matters to do with their terms of service and the national health service activities that they provide.

CPS works on the development of new pharmaceutical care services and ensures that the framework exists to allow the owners of Scotland's community pharmacies to deliver those services. Their contracts put the care of the individual right

at its centre, with its focus on pharmaceutical care and improving clinical outcomes for everyone.

Community pharmacy contractors and their employee pharmacists play an integral and increasingly important role in maximising therapeutic outcomes and achieving improvements in medical safety and care. Community pharmacy is at the heart of every community; it works at the front line of healthcare in cities, towns and villages across Scotland to dispense medicines and offer patients advice and practical help with health and wellbeing. Community pharmacy plays an important part in the drive across the country to ensure that health professionals provide the service that meets patients' treatment and care requirements.

By kind invitation and because of my support for community pharmacies, I recently had the opportunity to visit Bannerman's pharmacy in Dunblane, in my region. I experienced at first hand the truly excellent service that it provides and saw what the variety of well-structured private contractors that operate in such facilities can achieve.

Services include the pharmacy first initiative, which was rolled out in 2017 to enable patients to access treatment in pharmacies. Pharmacists have been taking on more medical and clinical roles, which is vital. They already monitor asthma and diabetes and review other medical conditions, which is a step forward.

The scheme aims to improve patient access to GP appointments by encouraging those with certain minor ailments to use pharmacies for treatment rather than make an appointment at their surgery or attend accident and emergency. Community pharmacists carry out consultations with patients and provide advice and treatment under locally agreed patient group directions, which stipulate the medicines that can be prescribed to patients and in which circumstances. I am pleased that NHS Forth Valley, which covers part of my region, piloted that excellent service; it also operates a more advanced version of the nationwide service.

Community pharmacies also face challenging times. Unfortunately, there is a shortage of qualified technicians and pharmacists across Scotland. The new GP contract enabled pharmacists to be employed in GP clinics directly, and regional health boards can make such arrangements, which is to be welcomed, because that spreads the load and gives individuals the opportunity to participate.

The new approach could provide a great deal of benefit to the day-to-day running of GP clinics and give GPs time. There is the opportunity for a huge number of new posts to be created, but that

creates issues, because we have a finite number of trained individuals. In my opinion and that of CPS, the issues have arisen because the new services were implemented without the impact on other healthcare professionals being taken into account. Much more consultation is required. To that end, NHS Education for Scotland has undertaken a comprehensive workforce survey, which will be published shortly. That will quantify the extent of this rather concerning development.

Pharmacists may not administer flu vaccinations for the NHS, although they are highly qualified and able to do so. CPS's view is that that means that Scotland's hard-working GP services are coming under even greater pressure in their battle to balance demands. Pharmacists maintain that allowing them to administer flu jabs would help significantly in getting closer to the target levels for vulnerable populations—we know that the elderly, pregnant women and people with specific conditions require the vaccination.

Last year, the number of people who suffered flu doubled from the previous year's figure. Scotland's vaccination rates fall well short of the World Health Organization's targets, and we have never managed to vaccinate more than 61 per cent of at-risk adults who are under 65. As I said, we have 1,257 pharmacies, which are open six days a week and could do much more to support and assist us. We need to look at legislation; south of the border, pharmacists gave out 1.17 million flu vaccinations between September and January.

Community pharmacies provide a truly excellent range of patient care from privately owned and run businesses, and I commend and congratulate them on all the work that they do. They offer much more and could offer even more to our communities if they were given the opportunity, which would save costs for the NHS. We all want to see the NHS providing services, but we want to see it doing so collaboratively with the support of others. If CPS did not have its hands tied, it would be able to do so much more to support us.

I wish CPS continued success, and I look forward to seeing the organisation go from strength to strength because that is exactly what we should be seeing in our communities.

12:50

Joan McAlpine (South Scotland) (SNP): I congratulate Alexander Stewart on securing the debate. I am delighted to speak on the importance of Scottish community pharmacies.

I welcome the opportunity to praise the work that pharmacists around Scotland do to support not only the people who live and work in their areas but GPs and other healthcare providers. Indeed, Scotland's hard-working community

pharmacists, who are independent contractors, and who supply pharmaceutical services to NHS Scotland, play a vital role in helping to alleviate pressures on local doctors' practices and in supporting members of the community to access advice and guidance on health problems and medications before a doctor's appointment is necessary.

The Scottish Government has a vision of providing more care closer to people's homes. With 1,257 pharmacies all over Scotland, community pharmacies are the most accessible primary care provider. They play a vital role in helping the Scottish Government to meet that ambition, particularly through innovative programmes such as the minor ailments service, which is an NHS service that allows people to be assessed by a pharmacist and given advice, treatment or an onward referral as appropriate. That service, which is presently available to children, students aged under 19, and people aged 65-plus, has been very well received.

NHS Dumfries and Galloway in my South Scotland region serves a population of over 148,000 in a large geographical area of over 2,400 square miles. Dumfries and Galloway stretches from Langholm in the east to Drummole in the west, and from Kirkconnel and Carsphairn in the north down to Sandyhills on the Solway coast, as well as to Gretna at the border. The health board employs around 4,500 staff, excluding GPs and dentists. With one main hospital servicing such a large area, the pressure on local GP surgeries is high, and pharmacists play an integral part in alleviating that strain.

Community Pharmacy Scotland, the recognised body that represents Scotland's community pharmacists, published research highlighting the success of the minor ailment service that shows that 60 per cent of those who used the service said that it saved them from making an appointment to see the GP. CPS is also working with the Scottish Government on an extension of the minor ailment service, which it aims to launch in April 2020. That expanded service will be free to all people who are registered with a Scottish GP. The existing pharmacy first programme will be merged with the minor ailment service, in line with the recommendations set out by CPS, to increase the breadth of conditions that pharmacists can prescribe for.

Currently, the pharmacy first programme allows pharmacists to prescribe for uncomplicated urinary tract infections and impetigo, as well as localised skin infections, conjunctivitis and vaginal thrush, and to provide antibiotics in a rescue pack for patients with chronic obstructive pulmonary disease .

On top of the minor ailments scheme and the present pharmacy first programme, community pharmacies play a role in helping members of their communities to battle debilitating addictions and substance abuse problems. The Boots pharmacy in Dumfries, for example, offers nicotine replacement therapy and supervised methadone supply, as well as emergency contraception.

NHS Dumfries and Galloway stretches over a large geographical area. I want to pay particular tribute to one scheme that has been pioneered there: an initiative to train pharmacy staff across the region, which was recognised in the Scottish pharmacy awards last year. The scheme was launched in Wigtownshire three years ago with finance from the health and social care integration fund. After receiving the award, locality prescribing adviser Amy Robinson, who originated the idea, said:

"It's well known that we have a need to recruit people to work within the primary care pharmacy team ... As a result, we joined forces with Whithorn Pharmacy, which is an independent community pharmacy, and pharmacist Fiona McElrea."

Together, Amy Robinson and Fiona McElrea worked to ensure that participants could train for 15 hours a week in a community pharmacy to meet the necessary regulations, with the remaining time spent with the team in general practice. They received funding initially to train one pharmacy technician, Eilish Bell, who has now qualified. The initiative will be built on to provide more trainees with more qualifications. The award was well deserved, and the initiative shows the innovation in this area and the vital work that community pharmacists do.

12:55

Miles Briggs (Lothian) (Con): I thank my colleague Alexander Stewart for bringing this important debate on community pharmacies to the chamber. He is rapidly becoming known within our group as the MSP for members' business debates.

I pay tribute to the people who work in community pharmacy across Scotland for the vital work that they do in assisting patients and advising them on health needs. I also acknowledge Scotland's pharmaceutical sector and industry, which is important to our economy.

The Scottish Conservatives launched our pharmacy plan last summer, to look towards enhancing the capabilities of community pharmacy in Scotland. Community pharmacists across Scotland already play a vital role in supporting local patients, but we believe that they can do even more in the future, and we want to empower them to achieve that. By expanding the services that are offered by pharmacists, we can remove pressures from general practice.

In my region of Lothian and, as we have heard, in other regions across Scotland, there are growing demands on our GPs and other primary care services. Many GP practices are operating closed or restricted lists, and people often face a wait of weeks for routine appointments with a doctor. Demand for A and E services continues to grow, with people not being able to access information, and out-of-hours services are also being reduced.

Pharmacists are well placed to help reduce the ever-increasing demands on primary care. As has been mentioned, there are 1,257 pharmacies all over Scotland, which means that community pharmacies represent the most accessible primary care provider, and there is a higher concentration of pharmacies in deprived and more highly populated areas.

Pharmacists are highly trained healthcare professionals, and maximising their knowledge and expertise will increase their capacity to deliver effective primary care to all our communities. Before she became a minister—when, perhaps, she lost her ability to speak out—Maree Todd, who was here at the beginning of the debate, often highlighted in the Health and Sport Committee just where she thought community pharmacy could go in the future. That is important, and I am sure that her views on that are being heard in the Government.

The Scottish Conservatives want community pharmacies to become health hubs that will provide a wide range of services to people in the community. We therefore believe that community pharmacists should have appropriate access to patient records. I know that the Scottish Government is working on that proposal and that the Health and Sport Committee has been updated on it. In addition, we want all community pharmacists to have the opportunity to become trained prescribers, to allow more common ailments to be treated in a pharmacy setting. Our community pharmacies have the potential to assist more patients in more ways, such as by taking a lead in travel health services. For example, the Barton pharmacy in Edinburgh has an in-built travel clinic, which is a one-stop shop for all travel-related healthcare needs.

As Alexander Stewart said, pharmacies could also play a much greater role in flu prevention. Providing more community-based opportunities for pharmacists to administer flu vaccinations would take pressure off GPs and significantly improve the rates of people being vaccinated. Taking someone's blood pressure is a service that some pharmacies already provide, but expanding that service and improving knowledge of its availability could make a real difference to heart health in Scotland.

Our pharmacists have huge untapped expertise, and their knowledge is a critically important part of our wider Scottish NHS. By giving them the ability to assist more patients in more ways, we can improve patient care and alleviate the ever-growing pressures on our overstretched GP services. I hope that the Scottish Government will take that work forward on a cross-party basis.

12:59

David Stewart (Highlands and Islands) (Lab): I, too, congratulate Alexander Stewart on securing this important debate and on giving a comprehensive and well-researched speech.

As we have heard, community pharmacies are a vital cog in Scotland's NHS and increasingly act as the first point of access to the NHS for many patients with ailments that can be big, small, long-term, short-term, one-off or chronic. I will flag up two initiatives that are not as well known as they should be: the 3 before GP campaign and the minor ailment scheme, which we have heard about from Joan McAlpine. Both are excellent.

Pharmacists are best known for dispensing medicines and offering patient advice, but they are now taking on more clinical roles including managing and monitoring long-term conditions such as asthma and diabetes and conducting medicine reviews. They also help people to give up smoking, provide drug misuse services and advise on sexual health matters. Like other members, I express my thanks and gratitude to community pharmacists for all their tireless hard work.

I, too, have recently visited community pharmacies. A couple of Fridays ago, I visited the Locharil pharmacy in Inverness, and, a couple of months ago, I went to KJ Macdonald's excellent pharmacy on Cromwell Street in Stornoway—it was a beautiful day, Presiding Officer.

From the excellent briefing that I received from Community Pharmacy Scotland, I learned that community pharmacies are the most accessible primary care providers. As we have heard from the Conservative front bench, there are 1,257 pharmacies all over Scotland and there is a higher concentration of pharmacies in disadvantaged and highly populated areas.

As in all areas of the NHS, staffing is an issue at the moment—pharmacies are no different, given the challenges of recruitment and retention. Another pressure that pharmacists face relates to the lack of sharing of patient records. Not only do pharmacists not have access to patient records from GPs, but records that are held by pharmacists are not shared with other pharmacies or GPs. Where is the joined-up thinking? Perhaps the minister could concentrate on that issue in his

winding-up speech. Working in silos could put patients at risk and prevent pharmacists from making informed decisions.

NHS Highland, which is one of the health boards in my region, has been developing innovative pharmacy services to deliver high-quality pharmaceutical care in more rural settings. From reviewing patient medicines in care homes via telehealth link to providing medication reviews in dispensing practices, pharmacists play a vital role in the NHS Highland team. Making medical services more accessible, alleviating the pressure on hard-pressed GPs and A and E departments, and offering advice and medication are all things that our community pharmacies can help with if we give them the support that they need.

In closing—unusually, I have kept to time—I will quote, for the second day in a row, from the founder of the NHS, Nye Bevan, who said:

“No society can legitimately call itself civilised if a sick person is denied medical aid because of lack of means.”

The Deputy Presiding Officer: I do not know whether Mr Stewart is looking for brownie points for that, but we will think about it.

13:03

Alison Johnstone (Lothian) (Green): I welcome this debate on Community Pharmacy Scotland, and I thank Alexander Stewart for bringing it to the Parliament.

Pharmacists play a vital role in delivering healthcare to Scotland’s people, and I express my appreciation for the work that they do. I thank the organisations that provided a briefing for today’s debate, and I thank all those in the Carrick Knowe pharmacy with whom I spent an informative afternoon. The busy staff team helped me to learn more about the important work that they do.

As the Royal Pharmaceutical Society notes in its briefing, it is no surprise that community pharmacies are increasingly becoming the first point of access to the NHS for many patients. Community pharmacists are taking on more clinical roles and are offering smoking cessation and drug misuse services as well as providing sexual health advice. There is also the minor ailment service, which Community Pharmacy Scotland says saved 60 per cent of those who were treated from needing to see their GP.

As members are aware, I recently led a debate on GP recruitment and retention, during which my colleague Mark Ruskell and I spoke about the importance of developing the multidisciplinary team that would have the potential to reduce GPs’ unsustainable workloads. I welcome the expansion of community pharmacists’ role, but we must ensure that a sufficient workforce is in place.

Community Pharmacy Scotland says that the new GP contract has resulted in hundreds of pharmacists being recruited to work in GP surgeries, which has created recruitment and retention challenges in the profession, because there has not been a corresponding increase in the pharmacy workforce.

The Royal Pharmaceutical Society is asking for direct investment in education and training to ensure that there are enough qualified pharmacists and for effective workforce planning to ensure the profession’s long-term sustainability. The Scottish Government must heed those calls. It is essential that we do not overburden other health professionals in an effort to assist Scotland’s struggling general practices.

Community Pharmacy Scotland has called for improved communication between healthcare providers. Currently, pharmacists cannot access patient care records, which hinders their ability to prescribe medication and places extra pressure on GPs, who are often asked to verify a patient’s history. Information sharing across the health service must be improved urgently if the multidisciplinary team is to operate effectively.

There is room for more collaborative working between professions—for example, in the promotion of pharmacists as clinical experts in medicine and prescribing. In December 2017, the Royal College of General Practitioners ran its 3 before GP campaign—David Stewart referred to that—which set out three steps that patients should consider before booking an appointment with their GP, one of which is:

“Seek advice from a pharmacist”.

I urge the Scottish Government to consider running or supporting similar campaigns in the future, as patients might simply not think to seek medical advice from their pharmacists. A culture change is required, which we can facilitate.

Pharmacists are also crucial to the integration of health and social care. In a recent report, the Royal Pharmaceutical Society highlighted the need for more pharmaceutical care in care homes and recommended that dedicated time with pharmacists and their teams be embedded in care home services. Scotland’s people are living longer and, as a consequence, we have an increasing number of frail elderly patients with complex conditions in care homes. Community pharmacists are well placed to support care homes in administering medical care to their residents, and it is essential that there is more collaboration between pharmaceutical and care services in the future.

The role of the community pharmacist is expanding, which will be of prodigious benefit to our health service and to patient care. It is vital

that a sufficient workforce and appropriate funding are in place to facilitate that development.

13:07

Sandra White (Glasgow Kelvin) (SNP): I congratulate Alexander Stewart on securing the debate.

I have supported community pharmacy throughout my term as an MSP—I am wearing my “20 years” badge today—and over that time I have seen some fantastic changes. I thank everyone who works in a community pharmacy—not just in my constituency, but throughout Scotland. I have visited numerous pharmacies, and their work is fantastic.

I agree with everything that members have said about community pharmacies’ role in treating minor ailments and so on.

I want to reiterate the point about access to patient records that Dave Stewart and Alison Johnstone, in particular, made. I know that information sharing is difficult, particularly in the context of the general data protection regulation, but it would be helpful to have some joined-up thinking on the matter, even if we are talking just about the emergency care summary.

Aside from the medical aspect of their work, community pharmacies are community hubs, with people of all ages using them.

Pharmacies also make bubble packs for home delivery. A couple of weeks ago, I visited the community pharmacy in Argyle Street in my constituency, where the staff were talking about having to cap the number of bubble packs that they provide because of the cost. Bubble packs are of great benefit to elderly and infirm people, and their use creates employment. That is another thing that needs to be looked at.

Pharmacists are very involved in their communities, to the extent that if someone does not turn up to pick up a prescription, or if staff have not been able to get into a house to deliver a prescription, the pharmacist knows that something is wrong. Community pharmacy is not just about medical care; it is also about looking after elderly and infirm people in the community. Community pharmacists have lots of knowledge about the people who come to their premises, and they do a fantastic job.

Alison Johnstone talked about pharmacists in care homes. Only two weeks ago I hosted an event on that and, as a member of the Health and Sport Committee, I have also raised the issue in a committee meeting. I am thankful that the committee will be carrying out an inquiry into care homes and is considering the report by the Royal Pharmaceutical Society Scotland entitled “Putting

residents at the centre of pharmacy care home services”.

Community pharmacies are not just about medicine, they are about caring for communities and much more. I hope that they will be able to access people’s records from doctors.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: Thank you for all the interesting contributions. I call Joe FitzPatrick to close for the Scottish Government.

13:10

The Minister for Public Health, Sport and Wellbeing (Joe FitzPatrick): I add my congratulations to Alexander Stewart on having secured the debate, and I thank members from across the chamber for their contributions.

I welcome the motion not only because Community Pharmacy Scotland is an important stakeholder in our healthcare system, but because of the pivotal contribution that its members make to the multidisciplinary team that is at the heart of primary care, as a number of members mentioned. With more than 1,250 members, Community Pharmacy Scotland represents a diverse range of community pharmacies, from small independently owned pharmacies to large retail chains.

On a visit to Aviemore during the peak winter period earlier this year, I saw at first hand the vital role that a community pharmacy plays. The pharmacist, Gary Buchanan, and his team provide a range of NHS pharmaceutical care and advice services to the resident population and, because Aviemore is an all-year-round tourist destination, they provide pharmacy care and advice to United Kingdom and international visitors to the area.

David Stewart: I am very grateful for the minister’s visit to my region. I hope that he enjoyed his visit to that pharmacy. Did the pharmacist mention the problem about data? Many members have asked why patient data cannot be available to pharmacists.

Joe FitzPatrick: David Stewart will not be surprised to hear that the pharmacist raised that issue and its being a barrier to the pharmacy’s being able to do more, as he would like it to do. Although data was mentioned, I was—from speaking to the team—impressed by the range of services that they already provide.

I was going to cover the data later, but I will talk about it now, given that David Stewart and other members have raised it. As Miles Briggs mentioned, work is progressing on providing access to the appropriate information from patient records that is needed to support community pharmacists in caring for their patient population. The Scottish Government is working with the Scottish general practitioners committee of the

British Medical Association to put in place a framework for safe access to, and sharing of, electronic health information. It is an important matter, and clearly one that members are hearing about across Scotland, given that it has been raised by David Stewart, Alison Johnstone, Sandra White and Miles Briggs.

Our network of community pharmacies plays a vital role in providing advice to communities about medicines and self-limiting illnesses. Through the acute medication service, community pharmacies dispense more than 100 million prescription items annually, with 98 per cent of prescription messages being electronically transferred between general practices and community pharmacies. That is all done alongside delivery of key person-centred services, including supporting more than 750,000 people who have stable long-term conditions through the chronic medication service; public health services for smoking cessation, which Joan McAlpine mentioned; provision of emergency contraception; and provision of advice and intervention.

Crucially, for many people their community pharmacy is the first port of call for advice and treatment for common and minor conditions, through the minor ailment and pharmacy first services, which were highlighted by Joan McAlpine, Alexander Stewart, David Stewart and Alison Johnstone. Those services help to reduce the burden on our busy general practices and open up access to primary care.

The chief pharmaceutical officer's strategy, "Achieving Excellence in Pharmaceutical Care: A Strategy for Scotland", underlines the Government's recognition of the important role that community pharmacy already plays in provision of NHS pharmaceutical care by providing highly accessible services for people both in and out of hours.

We want more people to use their community pharmacy, not only for treatment of self-limiting illnesses and for medicine-related matters, but for on-going support for self-management of long-term conditions.

"Achieving Excellence in Pharmaceutical Care: A Strategy for Scotland" also makes a commitment to supporting engagement between general practices and community pharmacies. Data sharing is probably important, going forward, as part of that. There is an important role for practice-based pharmacists to work closely with community pharmacists to ensure seamless care and to reduce potential medication-related problems and errors.

Miles Briggs: Alison Johnstone touched on workforce planning and the fact that the GP contract will see pharmacists going into the GP

setting. What future proofing is there to ensure that that will not be robbing Peter to pay Paul, and that we have a proper pharmacy strategy in the workforce plan?

Joe FitzPatrick: The Scottish Government has provided specific funding of £416,000 to support community pharmacists to understand that work. In recognition of the need for us to have robust baseline data on the number of pharmacists and pharmacy technicians working across the network, last year, in partnership with CPS, NHS Education for Scotland undertook the first national community pharmacy workforce study in order to gain a better understanding of the numbers and the skills mix across Scotland. I hope that that will ensure that we have the right set of skills, going forward.

I will pick up on a number of the points that have been raised. The Cabinet Secretary for Health and Sport and I are keen that our positive partnership with CPS continues. We will continue in close collaboration to work towards delivering our programme for government commitments. The programme for government includes two specific commitments relating to community pharmacy—redesign of the minor ailments and common conditions service, which members mentioned, and a refresh of the chronic medication service. Work has started on the chronic medication service: we will strengthen, refresh and relaunch it this year as the medicines care and review service. That will improve how pharmacies provide personalised care for people with long-term conditions who are on medication long-term.

Preparatory work is under way to introduce a redesigned minor ailments and common conditions service, which will be available from April 2020 to all patients who are registered with a GP. It will bring together the existing minor ailments and pharmacy first services, which members have mentioned, and it will gradually extend the range of conditions that can be treated by community pharmacists, including some common conditions that would normally require a GP prescription. That will further reduce the burden on our GP practices.

Alexander Stewart mentioned vaccination, so I will say a little about our vaccination transformation programme. There is no doubt that community pharmacy will contribute to delivery of the vaccination programme. The programme supports NHS boards, and health and social care partnerships, to design solutions for delivering vaccinations in a way that best suits their needs. NHS boards are to be encouraged to consider the potential of different parts of the multidisciplinary team to ensure that patients receive the right care in the right place at the right time, which is why vaccination solutions must not focus only on

community pharmacies. Ensuring that our pharmacy teams are delivering high-quality core pharmaceutical care services is the focus of our priorities, and we continue to discuss those with Community Pharmacy Scotland.

Alison Johnstone and Sandra White both mentioned care homes—Alison Johnstone mentioned particularly the recent contribution of the Royal Pharmaceutical Society on the support that community pharmacists provide to patients in care homes. Our “Achieving Excellence in Pharmaceutical Care” strategy document contains a commitment to improve pharmaceutical care of residents in care homes, as well as of people who are cared for in their own homes. Work must obviously continue on that, and we will work with the integration joint boards to identify how the approach will move forward. It is a very important matter.

I recognise and welcome the contribution that Community Pharmacy Scotland and its members make to pharmacy services in Scotland and the wider healthcare system, and I am very pleased to support the motion.

13:19

Meeting suspended.

14:30

On resuming—

Portfolio Question Time

Justice and the Law Officers

The Presiding Officer (Ken Macintosh): I remind members that questions 4, 6 and 8 will be regrouped together. Question 1 has been withdrawn, so we begin with question 2.

Temporary Release

2. Liam Kerr (North East Scotland) (Con): To ask the Scottish Government whether it will provide an update on when it will bring forward measures to improve the input that victims and their families have into the temporary release process. (S5O-03239)

The Minister for Community Safety (Ash Denham): As outlined in a written answer to Liam Kerr,

“The Scottish Government is committed to improving the information and support available to victims and families when prisoners are released.—[*Written Answers*, 1 March 2019; S5W-21586.]

The Scottish Government has established a victims task force, which is considering how victims can receive more timely information and have a stronger voice in decisions that affect them. That includes work by the Scottish Prison Service and Victim Support Scotland, which, as of 1 May, enables victims of life-sentence offenders to make representations in person to a member of the SPS on the first occasion that the prisoner is considered for temporary release. Prior to that date, representations could be made only in writing.

Liam Kerr: It has now been more than eight months—36 weeks to the day, in fact—since the justice secretary promised “concrete action” on temporary release during my members’ business debate on Michelle’s law. In that time, there has been zero action. Indeed, I have a copy of the letter that the Stewart family has written to the justice secretary in which they say that, despite his promises, they have had no updates and are still encountering confusion and miscommunication.

Information and support are not enough, so I ask the minister this: when will the cabinet secretary honour his promise to Michelle Stewart’s family and deliver a specific requirement for the Prison Service to take victim welfare into account, publish reasons for release decisions, enable representations in person for victims and families and make more use of exclusion zones?

Ash Denham: I thank Liam Kerr for raising the issue. I believe that the letter that he refers to

came this week—I think that it was dated 15 May. Obviously, the cabinet secretary will respond to that letter in a timely fashion when he returns from his paternity leave.

On the asks that were set out in the Michelle's law campaign, the Government is undertaking a range of actions to improve support for victims, including a number of the things that Liam Kerr mentioned.

Specifically on the welfare of victims, the parole consultation that we published on 19 December 2018 focused on proposals to improve the openness and transparency of the parole process and how to strengthen victims' voices in that process. That is in line with a commitment that we made in our programme for government.

On exclusion zones, as Liam Kerr will no doubt be aware, the Management of Offenders (Scotland) Bill, which has just concluded stage 2, will improve the electronic monitoring capabilities that are available in Scotland. The introduction of GPS tagging will mean that exclusion zones that apply to people who are being monitored under particular licence conditions and orders can be monitored in new ways.

The Scottish Government has made clear its intention to work closely with a number of justice partners, including the third sector and victims groups, both in developing those technology pilots and in improving the process around things such as exclusion zones and the welfare of victims, which is relevant to the case that Liam Kerr raised.

Dr Alasdair Allan (Na h-Eileanan an Iar) (SNP): What is the Scottish Government doing to support victims of crime over the longer term in situations such as the one that has been outlined?

Ash Denham: The Government has a positive record on strengthening the rights of victims and witnesses and the support that is available to them. In 2019-20, we are providing £18 million to support victims of crime, including to third sector organisations that provide practical and emotional support to victims and their families. That includes £4.6 million for Victim Support Scotland, as part of a three-year funding package totalling £13.8 million over 2018 to 2021.

Victim Support Scotland's community-based victim services help people affected by crime to access information, practical help, emotional support and guidance as they go through the criminal justice system. They also provide support to enable victims and witnesses to cope better in the aftermath of a crime and find the strength to move on with their lives.

Community Payback Orders

3. Finlay Carson (Galloway and West Dumfries) (Con): To ask the Scottish Government how it ensures that community payback orders are fully completed. (S5O-03240)

The Minister for Community Safety (Ash Denham): Delivering community payback orders and ensuring completion of those orders are the responsibility of the relevant local authority. Some 70 per cent of orders are successfully completed, as reported in the criminal justice social work statistics for 2017-18, and individuals will have cases reviewed in court if progress is not satisfactory. Around seven million hours of unpaid work have been carried out since community payback orders were introduced, delivering real benefits for communities.

Updated CPO practice guidance was published in January. The guidance supports effective practice and reiterates the importance of successful completion. The Scottish Government is working with national and local partners, including Community Justice Scotland, to help ensure that orders are implemented as effectively as possible.

Funding of more than £100 million for criminal justice social work supports effective delivery of community sentences, which have helped achieve a 19-year low in reconviction rates.

Finlay Carson: The latest facts show that a shocking three in 10 community payback orders go ignored. Those are real offenders who have committed serious crimes going unpunished on the SNP's watch. How can the SNP Government justify its plans to put thousands more criminals on to those orders when it is currently failing to deliver?

Ash Denham: Community payback orders are not just abandoned—70 per cent of orders are successfully completed, and individuals will have their cases reviewed in court if progress is not satisfactory. The court will determine the most appropriate next action, including a custodial disposal or another order. We expect local authorities, which are responsible for compliance, to prioritise the completion of CPOs. CPOs are a robust option that is focused on paying back to communities. We know that they work—individuals who are released from a custodial sentence of 12 months or less are reconvicted almost twice as often as those who are given a CPO.

We know that at least the Conservatives in England are looking to Scotland's smart justice model. Short-term sentences are not effective and community payback orders are a smart justice, evidence-led alternative to custody. *[Interruption.]*

The Presiding Officer: I ask members not to have conversations while other members are asking questions or while the minister is responding.

Keith Brown (Clackmannanshire and Dunblane) (SNP): The Scottish Tories claim that the Scottish Government's prison reforms have meant that 10,000 serious criminals are back on the street. I do not know whether that came from the Tory minister for numberacy or somebody else. Not only is it a ludicrously false statement, as the figure is greater than the entire prison population of Scotland, but it is at odds with the position of their colleagues in Westminster. Does the minister think that it is important to point out that the justice secretary David Gauke is on record as supporting our smart justice approach of extending the presumption against ineffective short sentences?

Ash Denham: I do.

"I want a smarter justice system that reduces repeat crime by providing robust community alternatives to ineffective short prison sentences—supporting offenders to turn away from crime for good."

Those are not my words; they are the words of the Conservative Justice Secretary David Gauke in today's *Guardian*.

Extending the presumption against short sentences in Scotland will help to ensure that prison is used only where the judiciary decide that it is necessary, having considered the alternatives available to them. The presumption that we discussed earlier is not a ban; it is part of a broader preventative approach to reducing victimisation that has contributed to a 19-year low in reconviction rates.

The Presiding Officer: I remind members that questions 4, 6 and 8 will be grouped.

Divisional Police Officers

4. Maurice Corry (West Scotland) (Con): To ask the Scottish Government how many divisional police officers there are. (S5O-03241)

The Minister for Community Safety (Ash Denham): The Scottish Government does not publish statistics on the number of divisional police officers in Scotland. The latest figures published by Police Scotland show that there were 1,495 officers providing national support, 3,157 officers deployed across the three policing regions and 12,599 officers in our local divisions. Those resources ensure that Police Scotland has a core complement of officers who are always dedicated locally to community and response policing. In addition, Police Scotland can draw on specialist expertise and resources to support local policing.

That provides the right people in the right place and at the right time to keep people safe and meet our communities' needs. The latest police officer quarterly strength statistics were published on 7 May and show that there were 17,251 police officers in Scotland on 31 March this year.

Maurice Corry: The latest figures show that Nicola Sturgeon's Government continues to dismantle front-line local policing. The number of divisional officers, who patrol our streets and respond to our calls, has dropped by more than 400 since the Scottish National Party created Police Scotland. Is it not time to restore local policing, rather than having more SNP centralisation?

Ash Denham: The operational deployment of police officers is a matter for the chief constable. Deputy Chief Constable Will Kerr, who leads on local policing, reported to the Scottish Police Authority on 6 May that the 360 police officers in the Brexit national reserve—I believe that they are the officers Maurice Corry refers to—would return to their normal duties, including local policing, by 10 May, so that should have occurred. DCC Kerr highlighted that, in addition to policing Brexit-related events, national reserve officers had shown significant personal flexibility in assisting with a range of events across our communities, including missing persons cases, high-profile football matches and murder inquiries.

On the wider point, it is unbelievable that a Conservative member should try to score points on police numbers when police numbers have since 2007 fallen by almost 20,000 in England and Wales, where the Conservatives are in power. If police numbers in Scotland had been cut at the same rate as the Conservatives have applied down south, we would have just 14,000 police officers, which would mean 3,000 fewer police officers on our streets and in our communities. I hope that that reassures Maurice Corry that the SNP Government is investing in police numbers nationally and locally.

Police Officers

6. Bruce Crawford (Stirling) (SNP): To ask the Scottish Government by how much police officer numbers have risen over the last year. (S5O-03243)

The Minister for Community Safety (Ash Denham): The quarterly strength statistics that were published on 7 May show that there were 17,251 police officers in Scotland on 31 March, which is an increase of 81 police officers in the past year.

The Presiding Officer: I call the minister—I am sorry; I mean Bruce Crawford.

Bruce Crawford: I used to be a minister.

Given the substantial Tory cuts to Holyrood's budget, it is a remarkable achievement that police numbers are up and crime levels are at a record low. In contrast, in England the Tories have slashed police numbers. Does the minister join me in calling on the United Kingdom Government to fund fully any policing costs that are associated with its Brexit omnishambles, particularly following reports that up to 400 police officers could be deployed to help to handle the aftermath of crashing out of the European Union without a deal?

Ash Denham: I do. The Scottish Government has been clear that costs relating to EU exit should not have a detrimental impact on Scotland's public finances. We have written to the chancellor to outline that any additional costs relating to policing Brexit should fall to the UK Government. We have committed to ensuring that additional policing costs that are incurred wholly as a result of EU-exit-related preparations are met. In parallel, we will continue to pursue payment of the costs of EU exit from the UK Government.

The Presiding Officer: If I take any supplementary questions, I will do so after all three questions that are grouped.

Police Officers (Ayrshire)

8. **Kenneth Gibson (Cunninghame North) (SNP):** To ask the Scottish Government how many police officers are currently deployed in Ayrshire, and how this compares with May 2007. (S5O-03245)

The Minister for Community Safety (Ash Denham): The Scottish Government does not publish statistics on the number of police officers who are deployed in Ayrshire, but the latest figures to be published by Police Scotland show that there were 826 officers in the Ayrshire division, supported by 1,512 officers who are deployed across the west region and by 1,495 officers who provide support nationally.

Those resources ensure that Police Scotland has a core complement of officers who are always dedicated locally to community and response policing. In addition, Police Scotland can draw on specialist expertise and resources to support local policing. That provides the right people in the right place and at the right time to keep people safe and meet our communities' needs.

The latest police officer quarterly strength statistics, which were published on 7 May, show that there are 17,251 police officers in Scotland.

Kenneth Gibson: It is clear that Ayrshire has benefited from the additional police numbers provided by the Government, as opposed to the situation in England, which has thousands fewer

police officers. What has been the impact of those additional officers on crime levels in Ayrshire?

Ash Denham: Between 2008-09 and 2017-18, the volume of crimes recorded by the police in Ayrshire fell by 39 per cent, from 25,641 to 15,696 crimes, compared with an equivalent fall of 35 per cent across Scotland as a whole over the same period.

Liam Kerr (North East Scotland) (Con): If we focus on Scotland—as we are supposed to do—we see that local front-line divisional officers are down by over 400 since last year. Those are Police Scotland's figures. Does the minister accept that fact—yes or no?

Ash Denham: As I explained in a previous answer to one of the member's colleagues, there are 360—or were when the information was provided—police officers who had been taken from local policing and moved into a national reserve for Brexit, which Scotland did not vote for, and which the Conservative UK Government is imposing on Scotland against our will. That happened in order for us to be prepared. We are not imminently facing a no-deal scenario, so now that Brexit preparedness has been stepped down a level, those police officers will move back to their normal rotation, which takes a number of weeks to follow through. Overall, police numbers in Scotland are up by 81 officers over the last year and are now higher than at any time during the previous Administration, even prior to 2007.

Family Courts (Children's Interests)

5. **Richard Lyle (Uddingston and Bellshill) (SNP):** To ask the Scottish Government what plans it has to review how children's interests are best served by family courts. (S5O-03242)

The Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills (John Swinney): The Scottish Government consulted last year on a review of the Children (Scotland) Act 1995, which is the key legislation in relation to parental responsibilities and rights and contact and residence.

The programme for government announced that there will be a family law bill, an aim of which will be to ensure that the child's best interests are at the centre of family court cases.

Richard Lyle: I welcome the cabinet secretary's comments. Having to go to family court can be stressful for everyone. Family courts should try to look at the bigger picture and ensure that children's needs are met. Too often cases involve lawyer against lawyer, with the family in the middle, one party blaming the other and mounting legal bills. How can we improve the system to ensure that it is less stressful and—most of all—that family contact centres are regulated?

John Swinney: I acknowledge the seriousness of the issues that Mr Lyle raises and the importance of putting the child at the centre of all decision making as we respond to these matters. That fits with the wider agenda of putting the child at the centre of all our decision making whether around education, the justice system or the health and wellbeing of children and young people.

I am very aware of the research that demonstrates that court action in relation to contact and residence can be a stressful experience for children and families. As part of the family justice modernisation strategy, the Minister for Community Safety will look specifically to improve the guidance for parties attending court. One of the key aims of the forthcoming family law bill is to ensure that legislation always puts the best interests of the child at the centre.

We sought views on the regulation of child contact centres as part of the consultation on the review of the Children (Scotland) Act 1995. The responses were strongly in favour of regulation, and we will take those views on board when we consider the areas to be included in the forthcoming family law bill.

Victim Support Service

7. Willie Coffey (Kilmarnock and Irvine Valley) (SNP): To ask the Scottish Government how its new victim support service will help the families of victims of crime and the families of people involved in fatal accidents and sudden deaths. (S5O-03244)

The Minister for Community Safety (Ash Denham): Victim Support Scotland's new service is providing dedicated and continuous support for families who are bereaved by murder or culpable homicide. We recognise that other victims might benefit from that type of support, and we will work with partners to ensure that the lessons learned in developing the new service inform any future changes to its scope.

In 2019-20, we are providing £18 million to help victims. Some of that will go to third sector organisations that provide practical, emotional and financial assistance. The victims task force is also considering ways to improve end-to-end support throughout the criminal justice process and beyond.

Willie Coffey: Over the years, I have dealt with many local cases in which families who have lost a loved one have said that the level of support that was provided to them was limited or non-existent. Will the minister assure me that immediate family members who have lost a loved one know exactly what help is available locally and can access that support for as long as they might need it, so that they can be helped on their journey to recovery?

Ash Denham: We are taking a range of actions to ensure that victims are at the centre of our justice system. Through our investment, Victim Support Scotland provided free and confidential support to more than 50,000 victims of crime in 2017-18. The new service for families who are bereaved by murder and culpable homicide builds on that support to provide a designated key worker to help families with a range of issues such as understanding the prosecution process and attending court.

If the member would like to follow up any specific cases, either I or the Cabinet Secretary for Justice would be happy to meet him to discuss them.

Brexit (Impact on Food and Drink)

The Deputy Presiding Officer (Linda Fabiani): The next item of business is a debate on motion S5M-17304, in the name of Fergus Ewing, on the impact of Brexit on Scotland's food and drink.

14:53

The Cabinet Secretary for the Rural Economy (Fergus Ewing): I am pleased that the Parliament has set aside time today to discuss the implications for Scotland's food and drink industry of the United Kingdom leaving the European Union—specifically, the catastrophic impact if we were to leave without a deal. That is important because the food and drink industry is one of sectors that will be most adversely affected by Brexit, which will threaten the economic growth of the industry and—even worse—undermine its ambition to double its value to £30 billion by 2030.

Our food and drink industry is economically and culturally vital to Scotland. It is one of our largest employers, sustaining jobs in some of our most fragile and rural communities, and it is underpinned by our farming and fishing industries, providing markets for the raw material that primary producers harvest, cultivate and catch. It is also increasingly becoming the bedrock of our tourism offer and is one of the reasons why people enjoy marvellous holidays in our countryside—which, as we see today, is constantly sunny. Further, it continues to be the star on the international stage, with our whisky and seafood being exported to more than 100 markets across the world.

The statistics speak for themselves. Exports are at record levels and are now worth £6.3 billion, which is up 78 per cent since 2007. Sales of Scottish brands across the UK market have risen by 37 per cent since 2007. Investment by Scottish businesses is up 72 per cent since 2007, and the birth rate of new businesses has risen by 86 per cent in the past eight years.

Today, I can share the news that the latest turnover statistics measuring the overall value of the industry in monetary terms have been published and show that turnover in Scotland's food and drink sector is now at record levels. Turnover for 2017 was valued at £14.8 billion, which was an increase of £836 million on the previous year—what a tremendous tribute to all those who work in the sector.

The success has been helped by the continued and substantial support from the Scottish Government. Since the EU referendum result of June 2016, the Scottish Government has provided

£90 million of grants to the industry through the European maritime and fisheries fund and the food processing, marketing and co-operation programme, which have supported more than 600 projects the length and breadth of the country. That support has given businesses the confidence—even in the face of uncertainty—to invest and to grow their ambition, workforce, product range, productivity and reputation.

Scotland's reputation, which is founded on provenance, quality and heritage, makes Scotland stand out from the crowd. However, success in those markets has been hard earned. It did not come easily or overnight; it required substantial effort to build a customer base and even more effort to maintain it in the face of fierce competition. For some sectors, such as seafood, the supply chains have been finely honed to ensure maximum speed and efficiency, which is facilitated through trading arrangements that have been built up over a number of years.

Last month, however, we came perilously close to jeopardising all that success. As members know, the European Council has extended the United Kingdom's membership of the European Union until 31 October. That extension rescued us from the nightmare scenario. Had it not happened, the impact on the food and drink sector would have been catastrophic. There would have been severe disruption to our supply chains, the imposition of punitive tariffs, the loss of markets and the introduction of complex and costly non-tariff barriers, including the requirement for export health certificates. Thankfully, we were spared that.

However, as things stand, if an agreed way forward is not found soon, the risk of a no-deal Brexit will rise again, with the potential for more money, time and effort to be wasted. Of course, the UK Government could remove that risk by making it clear that, if the only alternative is a no-deal Brexit, it will revoke article 50 instead. That is in its gift. Until that happens, the Scottish Government will continue to do all that it can to support the industry in its preparations. Over the past six months, we have worked extensively with stakeholders from across the industry to minimise the damage that would be caused if we crashed out. Today, I will update members on that work.

I have spoken about the success of the industry, and I contend that our trading relationship with the EU is at the heart of that success. Last year, more than two thirds of our food exports went to the EU, and seven out of 10 of our top export markets are in the EU. The EU is the largest market for Scotch whisky, and 64 per cent of our seafood exports go to the EU, the majority of which rely on just-in-time supply chains across the channel. France alone accounts for a quarter of our red meat exports. In

addition, our seafood industry is heavily reliant on EU nationals, many of whom have made a life in Scotland. Indeed, in Grampian, more than 70 per cent of the workforce are from elsewhere in the EU.

The implications of leaving the EU are so severe because the food and drink industry is significantly more important to Scotland's economy than it is to the rest of the UK's economy, particularly that of England. Food and drink exports are four times more important to our economy than they are to England's economy. Seafood exports account for 58 per cent of our overall food exports, whereas seafood exports from England account for only 6 per cent of its food exports. The seed potato industry, which exports more than 30,000 tonnes annually to the EU, is unique to Scotland. Therefore, the cumulative impact of leaving the EU without a deal is estimated to be a £2,000 million loss of sales for Scotland's industry. Those figures were calculated by the industry, using the UK Government's economic projections.

I have conveyed that information to the UK Government. Indeed, I wrote to Mr Gove on 19 February, setting out 10 clear and practical asks. Those include guaranteed continued protection in the EU for our iconic products that hold protected geographical indication status, which is absolutely essential for high-quality Scottish produce; negotiated market access to the EU and third-country markets; the facilitation of frictionless supply chains by allocating space on the Government-funded ferries for seafood and other time-sensitive products; a derogation from the EU being sought to avoid the need for export health certificates, which it is estimated would cost the industry up to an extra £15 million per annum; and financial support for livestock producers, particularly sheep farmers, who are likely to be completely shut out of export markets because of the impact of tariffs.

Despite those and other compelling arguments, which I also conveyed in person, Mr Gove's response was, sadly, non-committal.

Edward Mountain (Highlands and Islands) (Con): Michael Gove gave evidence to the Rural Economy and Connectivity Committee yesterday, and, when he was asked about the problems that face the sheep industry, he said words to the effect of, "I am waiting for the cabinet secretary, Fergus Ewing, to come to me, and we will listen to all his proposals." Has the cabinet secretary gone to Michael Gove with specific proposals? Will he lay those proposals out for us, so that we can understand them?

Fergus Ewing: Not only have we gone to him to discuss an appropriate compensation scheme, but we have had several discussions about the matter face to face, around the table, including about a

scheme based on headage that would provide an element of compensation to hill farmers in Scotland.

I am pleased to say that there is apparent agreement; however, there are no specific proposals from the UK Government. Indeed, the minutes of the devolved Administrations and UK Government meeting at which Brexit costs were discussed will record that Mr Gove undertook, on behalf of the UK Government, that the UK Government will meet all the Brexit costs. That was confirmed in the minutes, which were not challenged at the subsequent meeting, which I also attended—Ms Gougeon was with me at the time. However, when we came to discuss who would pay for the compensation scheme for our sheep sector and how that would be done, which is absolutely essential to know, the paper that the UK Government submitted said—wait for it—that each devolved Administration must pay its own costs.

Members: Oh!

Fergus Ewing: Yes. I thank Mr Mountain for the opportunity to put that on the record. Obviously, I do not wish to make any comment that could be construed as partisan or party political, but I feel that, when I am challenged, I should respond in order to set the record straight. I am delighted to have been given that opportunity by Mr Mountain.

While we receive warm words but no action from the UK Government, we continue to work with and support the industry through our food sector resilience group, which we convened back in December. Represented on the group are organisations from across the industry and the wider supply chain, including retailers, grocers, wholesalers, hauliers and the public sector. We have undertaken a range of work to minimise the impact. It is important to say that this is hard, hard work that is being carried out over thousands of hours by civil servants who could have spent those hours on many, many other things to take our rural economy forward but have been diverted because of the need to plan for no deal and to prepare for the worst while hoping for the best.

That work includes developing sector plans to identify and pursue a range of actions for each sector; working with industry to develop a tailored, risk-based approach to meet the EU requirements for export health certificates; scoping out options for alternative supply chains, including the feasibility of air freight; undertaking a detailed assessment of infrastructure around export capability; identifying alternative market opportunities in international markets through our excellent network of 14 in-market specialists; extensive engagement with retailers to scope out the potential for increasing their Scottish sourcing in the event that export markets are disrupted; the

development of a new online advisory service, prepare for Brexit; and many other things. I have sought to give a lead on all those matters. I have done much of that work myself, with our hard-working officials, and I will continue to do such work, including on Monday next week. Despite all those efforts, we know that many businesses are not as prepared as they might be.

Taking the intervention took up some of my time, so I will conclude. Our view is that the best way to break the deadlock is for the UK to put the issue back to the people, with an option to remain in the EU. I believe that Mr Rumbles may expand on that theme further, and we stand shoulder to shoulder with Mr Rumbles and his colleagues on the matter. In the interim, we are doing much to support this exciting sector in Scotland. We are doing the day job, and the future is positive—the figures show that. If we do not jeopardise it through the political agenda of the UK Government in London, the food and drink sector will continue to thrive and prosper as it richly deserves to do.

I move,

That the Parliament acknowledges the significant contribution that food and drink makes to Scotland's economy, society and reputation; notes analysis and warnings, including from the food and drink sector, of the disastrous impact of a no deal Brexit that would result in the loss of freedom of movement and trade, harming food and drink businesses and exports of quality meat and seafood; recognises the importance of growing markets for Scottish produce internationally, across the UK and here in Scotland, and considers that this can best be achieved through continued membership of the EU.

Edward Mountain: On a point of order, Presiding Officer. In my haste to get the cabinet secretary to correct a statement that he made, which he was unable to do, I failed to declare that I have an interest in a farming partnership. I know that members are aware of that, but I want to put it on the record, so that I have not misled anyone.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: It is on the record, Mr Mountain.

15:06

Donald Cameron (Highlands and Islands) (Con): I refer members to my entry in the register of members' interests, which mentions my farming and fish farming interests and the fact that I am a non-executive director of Murray Income Trust, which is a publicly listed company with food and drink investments.

I welcome the opportunity to talk about Scotland's food and drink industry. I pay tribute to the sector, which is one of the bastions of the Scottish economy and is highly significant. In that sense, I agree with the cabinet secretary's warm words in support of the sector and the people who

work in it. As a Highlands and Islands MSP, I know only too well the importance and value of the products that we produce, both locally and nationally, and the important jobs that come from the industry, which support many people in the region and beyond.

Food and drink are Scotland's largest international export industry, with the manufacture of food and beverages accounting for exports that are worth around £6 billion, according to the latest figures. As we know, the industry's overall value is around £15 billion, and we have long supported the Scottish Government's ambition to double that value to £30 billion by 2030. That ambition is right, proper and achievable.

Unlike the Scottish National Party Government, we see Brexit as an opportunity to aid that ambition. Undoubtedly, the Brexit process is proving to be challenging. We want to see a deal pass that respects the referendum result and allows us to trade with other countries, boosting our own goods in the process while maintaining trade and positive co-operation with our friends in the European Union. The existing withdrawal agreement would allow us to do that, and it is clear from the wide support that it commands across Scottish industry that it is the most preferable outcome, which respects the vote. It is an outcome that would allow us to grow our burgeoning food and drink sector.

Let me remind the cabinet secretary what the sector said of that deal. The Scotch Whisky Association, which talks on behalf an industry with an export value to Scotland of £4.7 billion, said:

"On balance, the draft Withdrawal Agreement and accompanying Political Declaration ... stand up well against the Scotch Whisky industry's Brexit priorities."

NFU Scotland said that the deal,

"while not perfect, will ensure that there are no hard barriers on the day we leave the European Union, and will allow trade in agricultural goods and UK food & drink to continue throughout the transition period largely as before. This opportunity needs to be taken."

Perhaps the cabinet secretary thinks that they are wrong.

Of course, we agree that a no-deal Brexit should be avoided, and we agree with the industry that it presents a risk. However, we are not the proponents of that outcome. We want a deal and we support the deal that is on the table, which the EU has said is the only deal on the table. The reality is that it is other parties, such as the SNP, that have wanted Brexit to fail from day 1 and are risking a no-deal Brexit becoming a reality.

Stewart Stevenson (Banffshire and Buchan Coast) (SNP): Will the member take an intervention?

Donald Cameron: I do not have time, I am afraid.

What grates for members on the Conservative benches is that one of the greatest threats to the growth of the food and drink sector is the SNP's recent announcements relating to a second independence referendum. That is the reality. Independence threatens the UK's single market, which accounts for around 60 per cent of Scottish exports. Not only that, the UK market is three times more important to Scotland than the EU market.

The SNP's plans for an independent Scotland to quickly ditch the pound in favour of a new Scottish currency would put our food and drink businesses at significant economic risk. We are shortly going to waste valuable parliamentary time on legislation for such a referendum, which just one in five Scots wants to see in the next two years. That time could be spent debating food and drink policy, a good food nation bill and a Scottish agriculture bill. It ill befits the SNP to come here and preach about the dangers of Brexit when the policy of independence would wreak havoc on Scotland's food and drink sector.

Dr Alasdair Allan (Na h-Eileanan an Iar) (SNP): The member feels that the agenda of this Parliament is being overtaken by constitutional matters. Is he aware just how little time the United Kingdom Parliament has been able to devote to any subject other than Brexit in the past few months?

Donald Cameron: Of course Mr Allan would prefer to divert attention from the lack of ambition that his party and his Government show in this Parliament. That lack of ambition is clear today. A pattern has emerged when it comes to a Brexit debate—it is simply a smokescreen to hide the failure of the SNP Government to come up with anything novel or radical when it comes to policy.

NFU Scotland's director of policy said recently of the Scottish Government's agriculture approach:

"There is no vision ... We have not got a clue at the moment."

That is a pretty damning indictment.

If we are to succeed in delivering an even more successful food and drink industry, we need to drive policy in the industry from farm to fork, ensuring that each stage of the process is properly supported by Government, where appropriate, and tailored to specific needs.

Alex Rowley (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab): Will the member take an intervention?

Donald Cameron: I will take the intervention if I can, but I am not sure how many minutes I have left, Presiding Officer.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: Not many.

Alex Rowley: I thank Mr Cameron for giving way—he can have one of my minutes.

Last summer, the farming industry, and fruit farmers in particular, found it very difficult to recruit workers. Given the botched visa scheme that the Government at Westminster has proposed, what needs to happen to ensure that there are workers this year and we do not have fruit rotting in the fields?

The Deputy Presiding Officer: I can give you up to eight minutes, Mr Cameron.

Donald Cameron: I am very grateful, Presiding Officer.

My answer to Mr Rowley is that I hope that the UK and Scottish Governments can work together on a system that will help seasonal workers. There is a pilot at present, which is a step towards that. I hope that it succeeds and that it will expand.

We want to succeed in delivering a more successful food and drink industry, and we have a great opportunity to grow the sector and tailor policy to benefit Scottish producers and businesses. However, we and others in this Parliament are still waiting for a good food nation bill. We are sympathetic to what both the Labour and Green amendments say in that regard. WWF Scotland has said that such a bill

"would help Scotland navigate this period of change and tackle the multiple environmental, social and economic challenges of the Scottish food system and harness the opportunities."

On the subject of our excellent, unique produce, it is important to recognise the work that is going on to protect some of our most iconic brands. In addition, the Scottish Fishermen's Federation said in March:

"leaving the Common Fisheries Policy will enable us to elevate the UK onto the world stage as a sustainable seafood harvesting and marketing nation."

Those are all important steps to give the many people who are involved in our food and drink sector confidence going forward.

There are many opportunities for our food and drink sector, and the Scottish Conservatives believe that, if we get Brexit right, it can be a critical part of plans to grow the sector. However, we are deeply concerned that it could be a missed opportunity if the SNP Government continues in its attempts to prevent a Brexit deal. We believe in our food and drink sector and we know that it can thrive even more with the right support and if we grasp the opportunities that are ahead.

I move amendment S5M-17304.1, to leave out from “notes analysis” to end and insert:

“recognises the importance of new international markets for Scottish produce, as well as continued access to the UK market; supports leaving the EU with a deal; notes the challenges to society, the environment and the food and drink sector from other related issues, including climate change and food insecurity, and recognises the need for change, regardless of the outcomes of Brexit, in order to create a resilient food and drink industry that is sustainable in Scotland both today and in the future.”

15:14

Rhoda Grant (Highlands and Islands) (Lab):

Like others, I want to highlight the economic benefit of the food and drink industry to Scotland. There is no doubt that Brexit looms large over the industry. A no-deal Brexit would be a disaster, and that prospect is causing uncertainty and concern.

Import tariffs would lead to higher prices in the supermarkets and shops, and delays at the border. Depending on the level of tariffs, they could lead to a shortage of certain kinds of food and—as the cabinet secretary said—put exports at even greater risk. We must do everything that we can to avoid a no-deal Brexit, and I ask the Scottish Government to do everything in its power to ensure that it does not happen. The Scottish Government needs to set aside its constitutional wrangles, stop using Brexit as a lever for independence and work for the best interests of the Scottish people.

I read in the papers recently that indyref2 is the First Minister’s top priority. How sad that, when engulfed by the chaos of leaving a political and economic union, she looks to add to that chaos by leaving another. If Brexit is bad, independence would be four times worse. We already see the difficulty that the Scottish Government has in putting in place systems to deliver devolved tax and benefits—those powers are being handed back to Westminster. How much more difficult would it be to unravel the whole of the United Kingdom?

Annabelle Ewing (Cowdenbeath) (SNP): I thought that the title of today’s debate was the “Impact of Brexit on Scotland’s Food and Drink”. I also thought that the member would have been able to support the many important businesses and workers in that sector in her constituency, who will be crying out for their voice to be heard in this important debate.

Rhoda Grant: Indeed. Stopping the break-up of the United Kingdom assists the food and drink producers in my constituency. [*Interruption.*]

The Deputy Presiding Officer: Excuse me, Ms Grant. I will not have shouting across the benches—it is not acceptable.

Rhoda Grant: I simply ask the Scottish Government—come what may—to use its devolved powers to put us in a better place. It is simply wrong that, in a rich country, we have people who are going hungry and children who are suffering from diseases and malnutrition that our parents’ generation thought they would never see again.

The Scottish Government has the power to legislate for the right to food. It is a human right, so let us legislate to enshrine it in our laws. That would enable us to ensure that no one goes hungry and to hold ourselves and the Scottish Government accountable if they do. The scourge of malnutrition and obesity could be dealt with and, with that, the unnecessary chronic health problems and pressures that they would otherwise store up for the national health service in the future.

We also need to face up to climate change. I think that we are agreed that this is a climate emergency. Although we hear that agriculture is the biggest contributor to climate change, we seldom hear about what it sequesters. There is no credit for the forestry that our farmers and crofters plant, or for the grasslands that they manage, yet both those activities sequester carbon. We hear that we should get rid of livestock, sheep and cows. However, no cognisance is taken of the fact that those animals protect the very grasslands that sequester more carbon than forestry. Livestock also protect biodiversity, which is already suffering because of a lack of stock in the hills.

As a matter of urgency, the Scottish Government must draw up a new subsidy scheme that helps farmers and crofters to work to sequester more carbon and greenhouse gases. If we are to meet the targets that it has set, we cannot go on with the schemes that we have.

Soil management is good not only for the environment but for production. It is a win-win, helping the climate and helping to make farms more productive. However, it can be expensive for crofters and farmers. We therefore need a scheme that recognises that, and helps them with those costs. It will be too late to meet the interim targets if we delay devising a new scheme until post-2021.

Although there is uncertainty surrounding Brexit, we cannot simply sign up to climate change targets, declare a climate emergency and then do nothing to deal with it. Our farmers and crofters are seeking leadership from the Scottish Government. They need a measure that takes account of the greenhouse gases that they produce but also of what they sequester, so that they can move to net zero. We need subsidy payments to reflect that, along with the other

public goods that agriculture provides—public money for public goods.

We need to set a direction of travel that gives producers a clear indication of what they can and cannot expect help with in the future. We need to seek reassurance about a no-deal Brexit—and yes, staying in the European Union would be the best way to support the status quo. However, we had a referendum and we need to try to honour the democratic will of the people.

That said, I do not believe that people voted for the chaos that we now face. We therefore need to find the best outcome possible. Governments cannot alone overturn the will of the people. If they seek to do that, they need to go back to the people to give them the final say. However, we need to consider that a majority may still vote to leave the EU, so we need to have a reasonable deal in place to prevent further crisis before we take that step.

My reasons for campaigning for remain are exactly the same as they are for campaigning to stay in the United Kingdom. Our food and drink sector and the country as a whole are better served as part of a larger alliance that allows trade and assistance to flow, whether that be the EU or the UK.

A good food nation bill that takes account of environmental issues, farm-to-fork agricultural support, health and hunger, and a comprehensive subsidy scheme would not only give reassurance to the food and drink industry in a time of upheaval but set a direction of travel that we want for the country. That is the direction in which we must go.

I move amendment S5M-17304.2, to insert at end:

“and remaining part of the UK; believes that, should the UK leave the EU, any Brexit deal must protect the UK’s close relationship with the EU, and further believes that the Scottish Government should bring forward a Good Food Nation Bill that enshrines a right to food, and, in light of the climate emergency, must also, as a matter of urgency, bring forward a new agricultural support scheme that assists farmers and crofters to become carbon-neutral.”

15:21

Mark Ruskell (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Green): I, too, welcome the opportunity to debate the impact that Brexit will have and, in many cases, is already having on our food and drink sector.

In leaving the EU, we stand to lose economic benefits and much more. For two generations, Scotland’s food system has been defined by European regulations, policy levers, and funding streams underpinned by the common agricultural policy. Greens have long been critical of the CAP, but hard-won reforms over the past two decades

have at least succeeded in ensuring that every country in Europe directly supports agri-environment measures that have led to the production of much greener food.

There is a strong European consensus that the future of our food system and the future of our environment are inextricably linked. I doubt that we would have achieved that unanimity without the driving force of the European Union. Greens, of course, would argue that that needs to go further. Climate change and environmental protection should be at the very heart of our farm support system, rather than stuck on the fringes and, while the UK has been embroiled in the never-ending Brexit row, the rest of the EU has been considering just that system. The current CAP round finishes next year and, from 2021, we will have a new, revised system. Scottish members of the European Parliament should be around that table, negotiating a united European approach to addressing the climate crisis and providing a strong future for farming communities. Instead, they have been disempowered by the UK Government and sidelined from the process.

Greens from across Europe have been participating. They have brought together 10 priorities for the future of the CAP, which include harmonising agricultural policy with health, environment and climate change targets; fairer distribution of CAP subsidies to support our small and medium-sized farmers; a refocusing on extensive rather than intensive food production; and a comprehensive public goods audit for all public funding and investment.

The majority of parties in the chamber have said that they want to remain in the EU. That means that we should be having parallel discussions right now about what a CAP for the climate emergency should look like, whether or not we end up being part of it. As my amendment makes clear, if we act now, we can turn a crisis into an opportunity for Scotland’s food and drink sector.

In the past few decades, public attitudes to the food that the public buy, cook and eat have shifted radically with an increasing understanding of the environmental impact of our diets. For example, the number of vegans in the UK has quadrupled since 2014. Concern for the environment and concern for health are the top reasons that people give for changing their diet. Many more people are looking to make more gradual changes, with 35 per cent of British consumers reporting having meat-free days throughout the week.

The recent UK Committee on Climate Change report worked on the assumption that we would see a 20 per cent reduction in meat and dairy consumption in the coming years. In evidence to the Environment, Climate Change and Land Reform Committee on Tuesday, the UKCCC

admitted that that is a very conservative estimate and is based on the consumer patterns that we currently see. There is no need for a big push for behaviour change to achieve that 20 per cent because people are already making the change. However, the report said that a 50 per cent reduction in meat and dairy consumption would make a net zero target more achievable, and even that would still mean people eating more meat and dairy products than are recommended by public health guidelines. If we were all to eat according to the model that Public Health England has recommended, we would see a total reduction of meat and dairy consumption by more than 80 per cent.

We should not fight against those recommendations and the growing consumer trends that they reflect, nor should we see them as a threat to our food and farming sector. We need to embrace the opportunities. Scotland's climate and land mean that we can produce carbon-neutral meat and dairy, and there is an appetite for highly sustainable, ethical food. Imagine the opportunities at home and globally if, eventually, we were able to say that all Scotch lamb and beef was carbon neutral. That will, however, require significant change and investment, including mainstreaming techniques such as holistic pasture management to lock more carbon into our soils; incorporating more trees on our farms, not just as patchy windbreaks but as integrated silvopasture systems; and, like it or not, reducing herd densities and switching to more extensive farming.

The reward will be a premium price for a desirable, sustainable product and more land and resources to invest in growing climate-friendly, plant-based foods. Other countries have already recognised that. Ireland's successful origin green scheme highlights the most environmentally sustainable food that the country has to offer and accounts for 90 per cent of its food and drink exports.

It is time for Scotland to adopt a similar approach. I hope that our future lies firmly in the EU but, whether we stay or not, the climate crisis and our ability to respond to it will determine whether, in the years ahead, Scotland's food and drink sector thrives or just survives.

The final part of my amendment is a reminder to the Scottish Government—Donald Cameron and Rhoda Grant have already given one—of what the chamber agreed last September. We know that the cabinet secretary inherited his role as champion of the good food nation bill, but Opposition parties recognise the desperate need for a joined-up food policy that brings together multiple strands, from health to land use and social policy. Parliament expects primary

legislation this year, so the Government must deliver soon.

I move amendment S5M-17304.3, to insert at end:

“; notes the role that the EU has played in reducing the environmental impact of Scotland's food and drink through the Scottish Rural Development Programme, and the protection provided through world-leading food safety and quality standards; recognises the future opportunities for the food and drink sector that will come from adopting climate-neutral farming and food production measures, and calls for the Scottish Government to make this a core principle of its approach to Scotland becoming a Good Food Nation, including through legislation to be introduced within the next year.”

15:27

Mike Rumbles (North East Scotland) (LD): Food and drink are at the heart of our culture and traditions in Scotland. Generations of farmers and thousands of European Union workers have contributed to our world-class food and drink sector, particularly in my North East Scotland region; they have built it into the genuine success story that it is.

As we have heard, the food and drink sector is vital to our rural economy; it brings much-needed employment and business opportunities to families and communities all over rural Scotland.

However, our producers are on the front line of the greatest threat to our economy for many years. I do not say that lightly. We have just heard from the cabinet secretary that Brexit could cost our farming, fishing and crofting sector some £2 billion per year. I am astonished that the Conservatives do not think that that is a major threat. There is no doubt that a no-deal Brexit would be catastrophic for our rural economy. I questioned Michael Gove on that yesterday, and he is inexplicably relaxed about a no-deal Brexit. The man who is in charge of agriculture south of the border refused to confirm that he would do everything in his power in the UK Cabinet to avoid at all costs a no-deal Brexit. It is astonishing that the Conservatives have failed to rule out a no-deal Brexit.

We will support—absolutely—the Scottish Government's motion. As far as the amendments are concerned, the Liberal Democrats prefer the Government's motion as it stands; it properly reflects our position. We are the only party in this chamber that wants to stay in both our unions. Therefore, we will not support any of the amendments, because they all dilute the message that we want our Parliament to send out.

By far the largest market for our food and drink remains the rest of the UK, for which 61 per cent of Scottish exports are destined. Cheap, low-quality imports from countries outside the EU would undermine all the good work of our

producers and endanger our progress towards green and sustainable land use. For that reason, our food and drink industry's reputation for quality must be protected.

Scotland's food exports are sold across the European Union, and the removal of the common EU framework could have a serious impact on our trade. On top of that, as the cabinet secretary mentioned, non-tariff barriers with the EU could cause administrative delays that would be particularly detrimental to our trade in fresh produce. In addition, we are now seeing how important non-UK nationals are for agriculture and our wider food and drink industry. It annoys me intensely that the UK Government is just ignoring that. Although the UK Government has allowed 2,500 visas for migrant workers, the NFUS has reported that, this year, a staggering 10,000 vacancies will be left open across the UK as a whole. What will happen to our fruit growers if those jobs cannot be filled? The answer is simple: thousands of tons of food will rot in the fields because of the lack of workers. That is a deliberate policy of the Conservative UK Government.

Currently, a third of the labour force for Scotland's food and drink sector comes from EU countries. I fail to see how those numbers can be replaced without free movement across the continent. I know that many of my Rural Economy and Connectivity Committee colleagues believe that it is important to have free movement across the continent, but they seem to be silent in this debate.

A no-deal Brexit would write off some of our best producers and damage many rural communities. Until now, the Scottish food and drink industry, assisted by the Government, has been going from strength to strength, and we have a duty to support it. There is, of course, more that the Scottish Government could do to mitigate the damage that Brexit will inflict on our rural economy. I have said many times in the chamber that I want a bespoke system of support to be developed for Scotland, one that will offer continued financial support for the foreseeable future, and I know that the cabinet secretary is making progress on that. However, as long as Brexit—in particular, the threat of a no-deal Brexit—remains on the table, the UK Government and the Conservative members of the Scottish Parliament who support it will have a great deal to answer for and a great deal of responsibility for the damage that will be thrust on our rural economy.

I will end on a positive note. The Liberal Democrats believe that the continued success of our food and drink industry—it is hugely successful—can, as the motion before us says,

“best be achieved through continued membership of the EU.”

The Deputy Presiding Officer: We move to the open debate.

15:32

Bruce Crawford (Stirling) (SNP): It is now nearly seven weeks on from the date on which the UK was originally expected to leave the European Union. Many of us in this place simply cannot believe that we came as close to the precipice of economic catastrophe as we did. That said, even to this very day, the UK Government will not categorically rule out leaving the EU without a deal, despite the fact that even its own analysis says that that would severely hit the Scottish economy. As we see in the media reports, the Tories are intent on putting this country through the wringer of despair yet again by attempting to resurrect May's deal from the dead. They have learned nothing from the months and months of purgatory that they have put our citizens and our businesses through and which they are continuing to hold them in. It is clear that Westminster is incapable of finding a resolution, so I agree with the cabinet secretary—it is time to let the people decide.

Before I am tempted to get into full European Parliament election mode, I had better move on. Excluding oil and gas, in 2017, we exported £14.9 billion-worth of goods to the EU, which represented a 13.3 per cent increase on the previous year. The EU remains our fastest-growing trading partner. Of course, our biggest export success story is the food and drink sector. As recently as March this year, we learned that Scotland's overseas food and drink exports had increased in 2018 by £293 million—an increase of 4.9 per cent—to an impressive record high of £6.3 billion. As the cabinet secretary said, the EU remains the destination for two thirds of our food exports.

Despite those impressive figures, I am pleased that the Scottish Government has shown its determination to grow our export business even more, with an ambitious growth plan that aims to increase the value of exports from the current 20 per cent of Scotland's gross domestic product to 25 per cent of our GDP over the next 10 years.

“A Trading Nation—a plan for growing Scotland's exports” sets out how Scotland can add about £3.5 billion to GDP and create 17,500 jobs. In the face of EU exit uncertainty, “A Trading Nation” gives a clear signal of Scotland's ambition to remain an open, progressive nation where our businesses trade in global markets, particularly in food and drink, with extra support for that sector included in the plan.

Make no mistake, that growth, trade and aspiration will be undermined by the threat of leaving the European Union. Those who support crashing out of the EU without a deal tell us that they want the UK to trade with the rest of the world, as if that will happen by waving a magic wand. There is a very good reason why we have built a single market with our closest international neighbours: they are our closest neighbours. Having a single market with your neighbours makes it so much easier and makes much more sense for fresh products, such as Scotch lamb and beef and Scottish Salmon. It is clear that any tariffs applied to those products for sale in the EU would have a devastating impact on Scottish farmers, including those in my constituency.

Moreover, the UK Government's planned abandonment of the free movement of people presents a real and present risk to our food and drink sector. EU immigrants make an incredible contribution to the sector, all the way through from the farm gate to processing, marketing, retail, and indeed the hospitality business. Scotland's economy needs that constant stream of inward migration from our neighbouring countries, but that is being threatened by the UK Tory Government.

Another important area that I will touch on briefly is the European Union's protected geographical indications. I put on record my gratitude to my colleague Emma Harper, who has raised the issue time and again in this place. PGIs are the best way to ensure that products specific to locations in Europe do not suffer from the competition of, as Mike Rumbles suggested, cheap copycats of much lower quality and non-existent provenance. PGI status ensures the integrity of Scottish products bought and sold across the entire European single market and throughout countries that have trade deals with the EU.

Of course, the only real way to retain the protected status of Scottish products is to remain in the European Union. Presiding Officer, if I could be so bold, the best way of ensuring that we remain in the EU is to vote for the SNP at next week's European elections.

15:38

Peter Chapman (North East Scotland) (Con): I declare my registered interest as a partner in a farming business.

In the Brexit referendum, I voted to remain. Nevertheless, as soon as I heard the result, I was committed to make it happen. Unfortunately, we all underestimated how difficult Brexit would be; as of now, we have, obviously, not left and we do not know what deal will gain Parliamentary support.

I want to leave with the only deal on the table, as do NFU Scotland, the Scotch Whisky

Association and virtually the whole business community, but uncertainty abounds. Most of us agree that we do not want a no-deal Brexit. Let me be clear that the only sure way to avoid a no-deal Brexit is to vote for the deal that is on the table.

Our food and drink industry is a vital part of our economy. Since 2007, the industry has grown by 44 per cent to £14 billion. Our exports are up 56 per cent and are worth £5.5 billion. The food and drink industry has grown at twice the rate of the rest of the manufacturing economy. That is a great success story for Scotland. To be honest, it is no surprise that our food and drink industry has grown at that rate, because we have such a diverse natural environment and some of the best farmers, businesspeople and fishermen in the world.

Mike Rumbles: As we have heard, 70 per cent of the workforce in our food and drink industry comes from the EU. Given that, does Peter Chapman believe that it is worth keeping free movement of people in order to help it?

Peter Chapman: We do not need free movement, but we do need to allow in the people who will grow our economy—and that is exactly what we will achieve.

Accounting for around 80 per cent of our food and drink exports, Scotch whisky is not just Scotland's but the UK's largest net contributor to our balance of trade. It is a premium product that is sought worldwide, and it is growing in value and volume year on year.

With its obsession with independence, the Scottish National Party would like us all to forget that our biggest and best export market for food and drink is the rest of the UK. For example, 80 per cent of Scotch beef is sold into England. The UK single market is more than three times more important to Scotland than the EU single market—Scottish exports to the UK are worth £48.9 billion, against £14.9 billion in exports to the whole EU.

Gillian Martin (Aberdeenshire East) (SNP): Will the member give way?

Peter Chapman: I have no time.

EU exports are important, and if we vote for the deal on the table, which aims for frictionless and tariff-free trade, there is no reason why we cannot keep all those exports—and, indeed, grow them.

We must also recognise that there are markets for our produce all around the world. To name just two, I point out that America takes large amounts of our salmon, and the far east is now a premium market for much of our shellfish. We should be debating how we can make more of that happen instead of debating how we can go back on a democratic vote.

With the food and drink sector aiming to grow to £30 billion by 2030, we must continue to support our farmers, fishermen and salmon producers who produce the high-quality food and raw materials on which our world-renowned goods are based. I have said time and again in the chamber that Brexit offers the prize of being able to design a system of support that suits our farmers and our environment here in Scotland. However, the Government has done precious little to attempt to seize that opportunity.

Future support must also focus on our already strong animal welfare and environmental standards, and we must never undermine such high standards by allowing imports that are produced under systems that are illegal here.

The Scottish Government motion makes it abundantly clear that it does not respect the views of Scotland's fishermen. Continued membership of the EU would be a disaster in respect of taking back control of our waters, but the debate shows that taking back control is not a priority for the Government. It wants to maintain the status quo and to stay in the EU and the hated CFP. Tell that to our north-east fishermen and see how the message goes down. Fishing matters to the Conservatives: we are the only party that recognises, and is fighting to obtain, the sea of opportunity that Brexit will bring, and our fishermen know it.

I know that many people here today have been left disappointed by the SNP's delayed and discredited promise to deliver a good food nation bill. It could have used this slot to bring that to the chamber instead of using another parliamentary debate to scaremonger about Brexit. It is clear that it wants only one thing, and pushing for a chaotic Brexit is just another tool that it is cynically using to achieve it.

15:43

Annabelle Ewing (Cowdenbeath) (SNP): I am pleased to speak in the debate.

At the outset, I want to highlight the important role that the sector plays in my Cowdenbeath constituency. In fact, Mowi—which members might know under its former name of Marine Harvest—has a salmon processing plant in Rosyth, where it employs 636 full-time-equivalent workers, and accounts for about 11,200 tonnes of product sold and £165 million in sales.

As for the Scottish salmon industry itself, its turnover is just over £1 billion, and the gross value added is £365 million. International exports are worth in excess of £600 million, and the EU remains the largest single regional market, with exports increasing year on year, and the first quarter of 2019 being up 22 per cent on the first

quarter of 2018. It is clear, therefore, that the Scottish salmon sector is a hugely important industry for the Scottish economy. It is a premium award-winning product, and the sector has seen tremendous growth.

However, the continuing Brexit uncertainty is casting a considerable shadow over it. The Scottish Salmon Producers Organisation has said—I quote—that

“The Scottish salmon sector believe a no deal Brexit would be the worst outcome”.

The SSPO has also said that

“A no deal Brexit would put barriers in the way of our biggest single export market jurisdiction and would present major new problems in getting our fish to the European market”.

It has identified key problems in this regard, including non-tariff barriers.

At present, export health certificates are not needed for exports to the EU, but under a no-deal Brexit, the possibility of there being a requirement for anything up to 200,000 certificates per year looms very large. Where would we rustle up all the extra environmental health officers and vets that would be required, and what would the cost be? We have heard that the cost has been estimated at up to £15 million per annum extra. How would that impact on the need to get the product to market in a timely fashion?

Then we come to transportation, which is another key concern for the salmon industry. With the prospect of total gridlock in the south-east of England, a delay of even just a few hours will make it impossible for fish to get from Scotland to France with one driver, given the restrictions on driver hours. A delay of more than 12 hours will make it difficult to reassure customers that they will still be getting fresh fish, which is a key consideration for the buyer.

Although the French seafood hub of Boulogne-sur-Mer has put in place arrangements to fast track fish once they have been cleared, the possibility of lengthy queues in south-east England poses a real threat. To date, the approach of the UK Government has been extremely unhelpful: it has rejected the possibility of special lanes for hauliers of perishable goods. The UK Government has also failed to provide any clarity as to whether new driving licences and permits will be needed and, if so, how many will be available.

The situation is untenable and it is unacceptable. No-deal Brexit must be taken off the table. That is called for in an open letter from the chief executives of organisations including Scotland Food & Drink, NFU Scotland, Quality Meat Scotland, the SSPO and others. The letter states:

“There is no tolerance for No Deal as an option. It must be rejected now.”

At the same time, the UK Government must alter its anti-EU immigration policy plans. If adopted, the plans would be extremely detrimental not just to the Scottish salmon industry, which relies on EU nationals, but to the entire Scottish food and drink sector. Why does the UK Government not listen to the NFUS? It has stated:

“NFU Scotland is very concerned about the obstructive position of the UK Government”

with regard to the future immigration system after Brexit. Why does it not listen to the director general of the Confederation of British Industry Scotland, who said just this week that the UK’s “immigration plans don’t work” for Scotland, and called for “flexibility”?

What does the anti-EU-nationals rhetoric say to EU nationals from the EU27 who are currently employed in my constituency? What certainty can they have? What about their families? What about their plans to send their children to school and to see their wider families over the years? Why is the UK Government disrespecting those workers?

A no-deal Brexit is bad news for Scotland, and a hard Brexit is bad news for Scotland. In fact, any Brexit is bad news for Scotland. Scotland did not vote to come out of the EU: 62 per cent voted to remain in the EU. Scotland wants to be in the single market and customs union—Scotland is for Europe.

In closing, I echo my colleague Bruce Crawford’s call on the people of Scotland to send that message loud and clear by voting SNP next Thursday at the ballot box.

15:49

Colin Smyth (South Scotland) (Lab): I was under the impression that we are not allowed to advocate how people should vote, but if it is part of the debate today, I ask people to vote Labour next Thursday.

As we have heard, the food and drink sector is vital to our economy and to the people of Scotland. It accounts for a fifth of our manufacturing turnover—some £14.8 billion a year, with exports alone worth over £6 billion.

The nearly 19,000 food and drink businesses employ more than 115,000 people directly, and many more people have jobs in the supply chain, often in some of our most fragile rural economies. In my home region of Dumfries and Galloway, the sector is worth £1.2 billion to the economy and employs more than 9,000 people.

As a local councillor, I had the privilege of launching the Dumfries and Galloway food trail,

which invites people to eat and drink their way round the natural larder of the region to discover the artisan food and drink that are produced by some of the most passionate people in the business. An example is Cream o’ Galloway, near the food town of Castle Douglas, where David and Wilma Finlay are delivering an ethical farming model that shows that there is an alternative to exporting live calves and are, along the way, producing some of the most amazing ice cream and cheese.

Another such business is Loch Arthur Camphill Community Ltd. I had the privilege, as chair of Dumfries and Galloway’s Fairtrade steering group, of awarding it Fairtrade flagship employer status, which helped to deliver Fairtrade status to the region.

The food trail takes people behind the scenes at food and drink producers including Annandale Distillery, which after three years is producing its first whisky—a product for which I personally can vouch.

The region boasts some of the busiest farmers markets, including at Dumfries railway station. We have some of the best food festivals and celebrations in the country, including Stranraer oyster festival, which celebrates the area’s culture and heritage and, of course, Loch Ryan’s world-class oysters.

As a result of the importance and potential of the sector, the local Labour-led council has just published a new regional food and drink strategy that aims to double the value of the region’s industry to £2.5 billion by 2030.

As is the case across Scotland, however, that ambition is under threat as a result of Brexit—especially a no-deal Brexit. Some 96 per cent of businesses in Dumfries and Galloway are small businesses or microbusinesses, which means that the impact of Brexit could put their very existence at risk. With everything from trading terms and tariffs to labour supply now uncertain, it is hard to overstate how damaging Brexit could be to the sector.

Increased congestion at ports such as Cairnryan poses a serious threat to Scottish food exports, especially of perishable products such as seafood that rely on just-in-time delivery.

An end to freedom of movement without a proper and adequate replacement will weaken the workforce across the supply chain.

Leaving the common agricultural policy and common fisheries policy without any idea at all from the Government of what will replace them leaves those who are at the heart of our world-class food and drink sector in a state of uncertainty.

One of the key challenges for the Scottish food and drink sector is the potential loss of geographical indication, which provides legal protection against imitation and is estimated to more than double the value of products. From Ayrshire Dunlop cheese to Teviotdale cheese, many of our food and drink products benefit from that protected name status. It is especially important for Scotch whisky, which is by far our biggest export. The industry is worth more than £4 billion a year and accounts for almost three quarters of our exports. Retaining geographical indication status is therefore vital to Scotch whisky. However, the protected status of our products is under threat from Brexit and the consequential trade deals that might be negotiated in the future.

The importance of food and drink, however, goes beyond economic importance. It impacts on everything, from health to the environment to the fight against poverty, here and beyond our shores. In a nation that provides so much outstanding food and drink, it is to our shame that so many children in Scotland still go to bed hungry at night, as a result of child poverty levels being on the rise. Our food and drink sector has grown, but so, too, has the tragedy that is food poverty. That is why, irrespective of the outcome of the current impasse over our future in the EU, we should be better prioritising the fight against food poverty, including enshrining in law a statutory right to food through a good food nation bill, which Parliament has consistently voted for and which the Government needs to get on with delivering.

I will conclude with this point. The fight against poverty goes beyond our shores. Scotland is a proud fair trade nation, and many businesses and consumers in Scotland support and trade Fairtrade products. If the UK leaves the EU, the next few years will see our trade rules being rewritten and new trade deals being negotiated. That will mean big changes for all of us, but for millions of farmers and workers in the world's poorest countries who rely on trading with us, it will be make or break. The Fairtrade principle of a fair price for a fair day's work therefore must be at the heart of those trade deals. If it is not, that will be yet another example of the damage that Brexit will do to the food and drink sector, here in Scotland and around the world.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: Before I vacate the chair, I will say a few words. I have heard rumblings and had notes about what has been seen as electioneering in the chamber. All I will say is that it has ever been thus; we are all political people from political parties. Members will excuse my saying that we are all big enough and ugly enough to know what is and is not sensible. I ask everyone to take a bit of care about being overtly blatant, and to recognise that all members

have political things to say. Perhaps we can all get on quite well with that.

15:55

Stewart Stevenson (Banffshire and Buchan Coast) (SNP): I will look in the mirror to see whether I fit the description that you just used, Presiding Officer.

I declare that I have a share in a very small registered agricultural holding for sheep.

A number of points have been put before us about the UK's planned departure from the EU—Brexit. Donald Cameron said that we must vote for the deal that is available because it is the only deal. There is a reason why it is the only deal—it is because it is the only deal that Theresa May asked for. In her Mansion House speech in 2017, she drew the red lines that constrained the ultimate deal to the deal that is before us.

The deal is rather opaque, because the proposed withdrawal agreement bill has not been shown even to the UK Cabinet yet. I predict that it will not be published until after 23 May; Theresa May is trying to keep publication until as late as possible in the debate, because the bill will cause internal chaos in the Tory party and she knows that she does not command her party's support. In those circumstances, it is hard to work out why anyone else should support the bill. The only on-the-record reference that I have is from Sir Graham Brady, who chairs the 1922 committee and who said today—

John Scott (Ayr) (Con): On a point of order, Presiding Officer. Will Mr Stevenson please address the motion? He has not done that so far.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: What Mr Scott just said has a bit of validity. I ask Mr Stevenson to bear that in mind.

Stewart Stevenson: I think that I started with the word "Brexit", which is core to the debate, whereas it was four minutes and 33 seconds before the previous Labour contributor mentioned that. However, I have listened to what you said, Presiding Officer.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: If you addressed food and drink, we would all be a lot happier.

Stewart Stevenson: Until we see what the withdrawal agreement bill says, some of the impacts on food and drink will definitely not be clear. However, it is clear that being out of the single market and the customs union will have severe impacts on food and drink. Proposals were made on that in December 2016, which was a month before the Mansion House speech. Our food and drink sector's future success will be

determined largely by what happens in the UK's departure from the EU.

In every constituency—be it urban or rural—we all have important food and drink interests. Summerhouse Drinks is a small company in my constituency that is a particular favourite of my wife, who loves its lemonade. That touches on something, because we do not grow terribly many lemons. A lot of the company's drinks are entirely local products—it uses lavender and mint that are grown locally—but the lemons are imported. Who knows what will be the condition of the lemons that Claire Rennie from the Rennie family farm can import and what price she will have to pay for them?

It is worth saying that a lot of preparation is associated with Brexit. We in the Parliament have done a great deal. The prepareforbrexit.scot website that has been established to help Scottish businesses talks about a number of issues for food and drink businesses and others. Exporters and importers might face huge increases in costs; 53 per cent of goods in the UK are imported, and they include many materials that the food and drink industry requires.

On recruitment, we have heard that the fruit industry cannot get people into the country. Yesterday, Michael Gove gave us no meaningful assurance that people will be able to travel to the UK and particularly Scotland to harvest our excellent fruit and continue to support our excellent fish-processing industry.

I brought the debate on the sea of opportunity to the Parliament, because leaving the CFP—into which the Tories took us—will certainly benefit the fish-catching industry, in so far as it can catch more fish. However, we will be denied the economic benefit if our processing industry is unable to process the extra fish that are caught. If we catch 50 per cent more fish and earn half the value of that, we will actually be worse off. We have to get our processing industry in a good place.

As for my three whisky distilleries, if—as the Americans want to negotiate—we abandon our three-years-in-a-warehouse position, the quality product that earns so much for our food and drink industry will be devastated.

16:00

Rachael Hamilton (Ettrick, Roxburgh and Berwickshire) (Con): We have heard today that Scotland's food and drink industry has been a success story for many years now, and that it continues to grow and grow. Food and drink is Scotland's largest international export industry with a strong reputation—whether for Scottish whisky or fine Aberdeen Angus beef.

Farmers are at the heart of food production, and as we leave the EU, we have the fantastic chance to design and construct an agricultural support system that really delivers for Scotland. Our amendment recognises the need for change and to move to a system that promotes environmentalism—as Mark Ruskell mentioned—drives productivity, increases food production and ensures that farmers can innovate to be ahead of the technological curve.

Under years of the CAP, farming has not necessarily had the chance to properly thrive. Its one-size-fits-all policy has to suit farmers and producers from the Arctic circle to the Mediterranean Sea and everywhere in between. The CAP has taken us so far, but with rising farm debt and falling incomes, it is starting to ring alarm bells. We need a new system that continues to support and grow agricultural output, which in turn drives our food and drink sector further—which is the Scottish Government's ambition.

However, so far, we have seen very little progress from the SNP Government, which has left farmers in the dark by refusing to include Scotland in the UK Agriculture Bill. The SNP said that it would bring forward its own bill, but it has not included it in the programme for government.

Agriculture is devolved and will be devolved for many years to come, but the Scottish Government needs to get its act together and get the ball rolling on the bill. To top it off, it has even closed the new entrants scheme, pulling up the drawbridge to new talent, which could have boosted our food and drink industry. The SNP has effectively prohibited entrepreneurially minded people from entering the agricultural industry, which is quite astonishing when we hear the cabinet secretary routinely remind us that the average age of a farmer is 59. Scotland's food and drink sector is a welcome success, but its biggest threat is this Government and its lack of action.

If we are to engage the next generation in food and drink and get the sector to grow even further, that must start in schools. I have raised that issue before in the chamber, when I called on the Scottish Government to consider introducing a national 5 qualification in agriculture. We need to see lessons to improve the tackling of food waste and the education of children on the provenance of their food. For far too long there has been a disconnect between the classroom and the farmyard, and we need to engage our younger generation to realise the potential of the food industry.

In my constituency next week, the Border Union Agricultural Society will run its schools day, which is an invaluable way of reaching school children. I urge local authorities across the whole of Scotland to take the issue on board.

With our wonderful locally grown and high-quality food, it is no wonder—as many members have mentioned today—that people are disappointed that the good food nation bill has been ditched. It would have brought tremendous benefits to the food and drink industry and potentially put Scottish farmers at the heart of local procurement. Scottish schools currently spend more than £1 million sourcing meat from outside Scotland, including hundreds of thousands of pounds on chicken from Thailand.

On that issue in particular, we need local authorities to offer more contracts to local producers, not only to boost the economy but to reduce food miles and tackle climate change. Imagine children learning about locally produced ethical food in the classroom, visiting the farm and then enjoying that food every day in the canteen. Would that not be fantastic?

It is entirely possible, if the SNP would just bring back the good food nation bill, not just for the sake of the children but to tackle the rising obesity levels and to provide much-needed stimulus for the rural economy.

Scotland's food and drink sector is an integral and extremely valuable part of our economy, but it could be much more. We have a unique opportunity to grasp the significant opportunities that Brexit will bring. We must place Scottish products on an international stage, and we have this opportunity to build a tailored farm support system that encourages better farming practices and puts farmers at the centre of driving innovation and productivity in their businesses.

At the end of the day, it is the farmers who we must thank for producing the excellent raw ingredients for the Scottish success story. We must also commend the entrepreneurialism, the determination and the hard work of Scottish producers, who never fail to amaze us in their constant pursuit of exciting new products.

16:05

Gail Ross (Caithness, Sutherland and Ross) (SNP): In Scotland, we rightly pride ourselves on our world-class food and drink sector. It is worth billions, and we have set ambitious targets to double growth by 2030. Whisky and salmon are our two biggest exports, and their production employs many people in my constituency.

No one knows whether we are to leave the EU with a deal. Indeed, no one knows whether we are to leave the EU at all, such is the mess that the Westminster Government has made of the negotiations. However, there is no doubt that, in every sense, whether we leave with a deal or not, Brexit is the biggest current threat to our rural areas, our tourism and our food and drink sector.

We have thousands of small and medium-sized businesses and producers, and a worldwide reputation for excellence.

Within that sector, we have products that have been given special EU protections and PGI status, as Bruce Crawford has already mentioned. That geographical indication, which is protected in the EU, represents an agricultural, food or drink product with deep local roots, whose protection under EU law has generated significant value for its producers and the local and national economy and includes products such as Scotch whisky, Scotch beef, Scotch lamb, Orkney cheddar and Arbroath smokies.

In the event of a no-deal Brexit, the UK Government has stated that existing holders of protected status should prepare to reapply to the EU for protection and use of the EU logo. That is significantly different from the previous position, which sought to reassure current holders that their status would be maintained and protected, irrespective of our future relationship with the EU.

Yesterday, when the Rural Economy and Connectivity Committee questioned the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, Michael Gove, I asked him about that issue and, specifically, whether costs would be incurred as a result of that process and, if so, who would pay for them. He replied that the UK Government would cover any unnecessary costs. What "unnecessary costs" are remains to be explained.

The industry body Scotland Food and Drink has stated that a no-deal Brexit would be catastrophic for the sector. Its chief executive, James Withers, said:

"Any form of Brexit is a backward step for the Scottish food and drink industry. At best it will hit our ambition to double the industry's turnover by 2030. But if it's a No Deal Brexit it will pull the rug from underneath the business."

A no-deal Brexit would be unthinkable for the sector.

Just at the start of this year, as Annabelle Ewing said, industry representatives from Scotland Food and Drink, the Food and Drink Federation, the Scottish Salmon Producers Organisation, Quality Meat Scotland, Scottish Bakers and the Scottish Agricultural Organisation Society wrote to Theresa May to implore her to take a no-deal Brexit off the table. She refuses to do so. The Westminster Government's own projections say that that will result in an estimated annual loss to the industry of £2 billion.

This is a sector that relies on migrant labour. Research by Skills Development Scotland has said that the food and drink sector will need to fill 27,000 jobs by 2022, but that is before the impact of Brexit, which is expected to have a significant

effect on the availability of labour, is taken into account.

Another question that was put to Mr Gove yesterday concerned how we are going to fill those positions when the immigration proposal from Westminster is that, in the future, people coming to work in Scotland will need to be earning at least £30,000.

Unfortunately, Mr Gove's response was less than encouraging. He said that he recognises that we need people to work in the sector, but the Westminster pilot project, which is lauded by Scottish Conservatives, has fallen woefully short of providing the number of workers that are needed in the sector. Although it was encouraging to hear that Mr Gove has raised the issue with the Home Secretary, there was no reassurance that the concerns and needs of the Scottish food and drink sector will be taken into account. We need control over our own immigration policy.

Despite what others will say, nothing has been as divisive as Brexit. The sooner we can get certainty for our people, our businesses and our economy, the better.

Rachael Hamilton: On a point of order, Presiding Officer. I declare an interest. I am not a farmer or a food manufacturer, but I have an interest in a business that sells food and drink.

The Deputy Presiding Officer (Christine Grahame): That is fine. Well done.

16:10

Alex Rowley (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab): The potential impact of Brexit on the food and drink sector is huge, whether it is in relation to trade, inward investment, labour and employment or policy and regulation. Brexit is a concern for not just UK food producers but any food manufacturer—whether they are in the EU or not—that serves the UK market.

With more than 50 per cent of the UK's food currently being imported, there is no definitive blueprint for what a new trading relationship would look like. Even if a deal were to be agreed at Westminster, it would take years to put the detail in place. Donald Cameron talked about another independence referendum, but I do not believe that we would be in a position to hold any type of referendum within the next year other than a second EU referendum, because we would need to find a way forward to put all the regulations and so on in place. However, the fact that the UK is dependent on 50 per cent of our food being imported should ring some alarm bells.

A no-deal Brexit might lead to higher prices and food shortages. To ensure that Scotland's people are protected from the worst effects, surely we

need a good food nation bill that enshrines the right to food. The cabinet secretary needs to pull together the plans for where we are heading in such a bill. Scottish Labour supports Scotland's food and drink strategy—ambition 2030—but continuing uncertainty over Brexit will make meeting that target challenging.

James Withers, the chief executive of Scotland Food & Drink, said:

"Any form of Brexit is a backward step for the Scottish food and drink industry. At best it will hit our ambition to double the industry's turnover by 2030. But if it's a No Deal Brexit it will pull the rug from underneath the business."

When I hear Conservative member after Conservative member declaring interests as farmers or as working in the food industry, I cannot for the life of me understand why they defend the Westminster Government and the shambles that it has made of Brexit, which has created such uncertainty.

A few members have talked about the elections next week. As I have found when I have been out campaigning—I also found it when I was in a newspaper shop in Kelty this morning—people are sick to the back teeth. Brexit has led to people not being sure about who to believe. The real threat is the threat to democracy and the rise of the right, because politicians have told so many lies and got us into such a mess over these issues and the threats that come from them.

As Mark Ruskell said, this is already an uncertain time for the food and drink industry, as climate change, biodiversity loss and concerns about public health change how we produce and consume food.

Mark Ruskell pointed out that, regardless of Brexit, other countries in Europe are starting to work out what a new common agricultural policy will look like. I am not sure that in Scotland we have even got to the starting line when it comes to examining how we move forward and what a good food nation would look like.

More than 200,000 children are in families that are unable to afford to eat healthily, and there are food banks in communities up and down Scotland. Surely it is for the Government to introduce a bill that enshrines the right to food, so that everyone in Scotland can access food.

Agriculture accounts for 26.1 per cent of our total greenhouse gas emissions. How can we address the climate emergency if we are not addressing that?

When I was a member of the Environment, Climate Change and Land Reform Committee, members of the committee who are farmers would say that the farming industry wants to address those issues and adopt best practice. However, I

am not sure that the Scottish Government is at the starting line of addressing these issues—

The Deputy Presiding Officer: Well, you are at the finishing line. You will have to sit down.

Alex Rowley: I will finish, Presiding Officer, simply by saying that we need a good food nation—

The Deputy Presiding Officer: No. You have finished, Mr Rowley. I call Alasdair Allan.

16:16

Dr Alasdair Allan (Na h-Eileanan an Iar) (SNP): In this chamber, we often talk about how food and drink are a significant part of Scotland's economy. The Parliament cannot say that too often; we need to keep saying it until the point is more widely understood.

Like other members, I will shamelessly mention examples from my constituency. In Na h-Eileanan an Iar, the food and drink sector accounts for £18 million in gross value added to the islands economy. In many ways, the industry is closely related to the tourism sector in the Outer Hebrides, which itself was worth approximately £53 million in 2013 and has almost certainly grown considerably since then.

Stornoway black pudding and Harris gin are among the best-known island products. Harris is soon to produce whisky and beer, too. Lewis has its own small distillery, as North Uist will have soon. The Western Isles are famous for salmon, seafood, lamb and venison, as well as being home to a biscuit factory and many smaller food enterprises. Behind much of all that lie crofting and fishing, making the sector's overall impact on the community much wider.

The food and drink industry faces many challenges, not least of which is—I am sorry to have to mention this so early on in the conversation—Brexit. The industry nationally has assessed that leaving the EU without a deal will result in the loss of £2 billion in sales annually. That assessment was based on the UK Government's economic projections. Moreover, the industry says that businesses have already invested millions of pounds in time and money to try to mitigate and minimise the consequences of leaving without a deal.

Even if the Prime Minister's bad deal were to go through, we would still be leaving the EU without any of the benefits for the food and drink industry that the EU single market provides. The shellfish industry, in particular, needs that market and has to be able to get live shellfish very quickly from the Outer Hebrides to Spain, without waiting at international borders. Island seafood exporters already face enough obstacles to getting their

produce to continental markets in time; the last thing that they need is the addition of further barriers to trade as a result of Brexit. I should also say that non-tariff barriers are a concern to the salmon industry.

I would have serious concerns if Brexit had an effect on the diligent workforce that presently staffs much of our fish processing industry. Many of those workers are from other European countries—largely they are from Poland, Lithuania and Latvia—which demonstrates the sector's dependence on its European workforce. Any moves to limit migration have the potential to seriously harm our rural and remote communities and will have a major impact on the future success of the food and drink industry.

A point came up in the debate that I feel is relevant to how the industry would operate in the islands. I understand the motivations that lie behind the Green Party amendment, but I ask Mark Ruskell, who moved the amendment, to understand that asking crofters in my constituency to move from livestock to arable farming is no small ask. With only 8 per cent of Scotland's land mass being suitable for commercial arable farming, I respectfully suggest that it would be a tall order to achieve what the Greens are asking for nationally.

In the past few days, at least one EU member state has shown a bit more interest in its farming community, and that is Ireland. Ireland has offered €50 million to its farmers by way of apology for the mess that Britain has caused with Brexit. I look forward to the United Kingdom Government offering a similar apology to our farmers and crofters.

As an EU member state, the UK participates in the EU's approach to PGIs and many members have mentioned PGIs as an important feature. I could list all the PGIs that apply to the Western Isles, but I will not, and others have mentioned those that apply elsewhere. I understand that the Scottish Government has written to the UK Government on a number of occasions over the past year, spelling out the vital importance of the protected names, and I hope that meaningful replies are being received from Westminster about that, but—on the Scottish Government's behalf—I do not hold my breath.

16:21

John Scott (Ayr) (Con): I declare an interest as a farmer, a food producer and a pioneer of farmers markets; other interests are set out in my entry in the register of members' interests.

I note with regret the gratuitously divisive and negative tone of the Scottish Government motion, which talks down the future of our food and drink

industry. That Fergus Ewing's motion does so needlessly is a surprise to me, because Mr Ewing is a not an unreasonable man. He is an arch-pragmatist, and he well knows that many of the concerns that he and his SNP colleagues have raised today are in his and their grasp to resolve, but he and they choose not to do so. By that I mean that the many fears that he raises over a no-deal Brexit could be resolved by voting for the Brexit deal that the UK Government has negotiated with the EU.

Dr Allan: Will the member give way?

John Scott: No.

Time after time, we hear SNP MPs, led by Ian Blackford, but driven by the First Minister, dismiss the UK Government's proposed deal with the EU without ever offering any credible alternative. Bruce Crawford reinforced that attitude today. Therefore, we know that the Scottish Government is not serious about wanting to help to create a solution to the many potential problems that the SNP Government highlighted today. We on the Conservative benches realise and, certainly, people in rural Scotland fully understand that the SNP wants to sow only divisions and discord with a view to using Brexit to break up the United Kingdom.

Fergus Ewing: I have always respected Mr Scott's knowledge and appreciation of and support for Scottish agriculture, and I will continue to do so, but we have previously made alternative proposals for a Brexit deal, although we do not think that Brexit is the preferred option. More than two years ago, we suggested an option that was ignored at the time. We profoundly believe that Brexit is not the best way ahead for Scotland, but I agree with John Scott that it is preferable that debates happen in a reasonable and constructive fashion. It is useful to reiterate that.

John Scott: As I come from the Turnberry area, I remind Mr Ewing of Robert the Bruce's stricture: "If at first you don't succeed, try, try again."

In today's debate, the people who really matter are the farmers, processors, retailers and the tens of thousands of people who have to live in the real world and whose jobs are at stake, who have all backed the UK Government's negotiated deal. NFU Scotland, the Scotch Whisky Association and the Scottish Chambers of Commerce have backed the deal, as have individual companies such as Diageo. Scottish fishermen back the deal. Scottish salmon producers do not want a no-deal Brexit, which is apparently almost advocated today by the SNP. History will remember and judge this SNP Government's unwillingness to compromise and work with the UK Government to find solutions or offer meaningful ways of improving and sustaining

the UK Government's negotiating position within Europe.

On the other hand, the UK Government has guaranteed support to our farmers until 2024, but this SNP Government chooses not to believe that offer. It knows that it cannot make such an offer to Scotland's farmers, crofters and land managers without the support of the UK Government standing behind it; and in the meantime, the SNP Government pursues independence.

Similarly, the declaration by the First Minister of a climate change emergency makes for a great headline, but the First Minister knows, as does her cabinet secretary, that the cost of meeting the targets that the Committee on Climate Change has suggested cannot be met, as things stand, by the Scottish Government without the UK Government and UK taxpayers providing the finance for the SNP Government's objectives.

Gillian Martin: Will the member take an intervention?

John Scott: No, I will not. Thank you.

Even if the SNP Government refuses to see or offer anything positive in this debate, Scottish Conservatives know how important the views of our food and drink experts are—and will remain—in Scotland. With over 60 per cent of our exports already going to the rest of the UK, that market will remain and grow unless the SNP Government deliberately sets out to make it harder to access. Our food and drink exports will continue to grow, particularly our whisky exports. Again, the UK Government has delivered practical financial support to the industry by freezing the duty on spirits in the most recent budget. On the other hand, the actions of this SNP Government are driving many producers, particularly red meat producers, to the wall and reducing the amount of basic produce that is available to our food processors for them to come even close to meeting the food and drink industry 2030 targets using home-grown primary produce.

Failing information technology systems; the rewilding of Scotland's landscapes; a determination that farmers and landowners should be portrayed as not pulling their weight in the efforts to reduce climate change, with no effort to recognise the contribution that they make—all those things send signals of discouragement to an industry that, under this SNP Government, is becoming less profitable and daily more indebted to high street banks.

Parliament should today reject this divisive SNP motion, which is calculated to further talk down rural Scotland and Scotland's food and drink industry, and accept the Scottish Conservative amendment as the way forward.

16:27

Joan McAlpine (South Scotland) (SNP): It is instructive to compare and contrast Scotland's ambition for its food and drink industry with the chilling effect that Brexit imposes. As we have heard, the Scottish Government aims to double the value of food and drink to £30 billion by 2030. That is setting the bar high, but aiming high is what we should be doing.

We have made so much progress already. Our overseas food and drink exports have increased by 78 per cent, or £2.8 billion, since 2007. However, all that progress is in peril. The EU is without a doubt Scotland's largest market for our food and drink.

Peter Chapman: Will the member take an intervention?

Joan McAlpine: No, I will not. I do not have time.

In the area that I represent, the south of Scotland, the success of food and drink reflects the national picture—indeed, more so, because it is an agricultural area. The high quality of our natural produce helps to underpin many businesses. As Colin Smyth mentioned, almost half—48 per cent—of Scotland's dairy herd is in Dumfries and Galloway. Almost one in four of all cattle in Scotland can be found in the region.

As has been said, Dumfries and Galloway Council, which is led by an SNP and Labour coalition, recently launched a food and drink strategy—an action plan for the region—mirroring that national ambition. The strategy is absolutely clear about the biggest threat to the growth of the region's food and drink, and that is Brexit. We have heard the reasons for that from colleagues today; they include access to labour, geographical indications, just-in-time production and trade barriers.

However, I will focus on one issue that my committee has been considering recently, and that is causing me particular concern; the effect of future trade deals on the food and drink sector in this country.

We know that future trade deals—particularly with America—could result in a diminution of standards in our food and drink industry and lead to the flooding of the market with poor-quality products. International trade experts who gave evidence to the Parliament's Culture, Tourism, Europe and External Affairs Committee made clear that consultation at every level of Government and across all sectors is absolutely essential to reach a suitable agreed negotiating position that will protect economic sectors—such as the food and drink sector—that have a strong geographical footprint, in that they are more

important to some areas of the country than others.

The UK Government has still not outlined how it will include the devolved Administrations in determining trade priorities, and its record on that is not good. In March, a unilateral decision was taken by the Department for International Trade at Westminster to drop tariffs in certain key sectors of the economy in the event of no deal, which was ostensibly to ensure that we kept supplies coming in. For clarity, however, it meant that imports would not face tariffs, but that our exporting producers would. The UK Government said that the sectors that it chose for liberalisation were chosen because they were not considered to be vital areas of the economy. However, one of the affected areas was the dairy industry, which is—as I have said—of huge importance to the south-west of Scotland. EU most-favoured nation dairy tariffs are currently 72.3 per cent on average. In the event of a no-deal scenario, the UK Government proposes to drop that to zero per cent. We have absolutely no guarantee, of course, that the EU will reciprocate.

During the committee's evidence taking, Dmitry Grozoubinski, a former Australian World Trade Organization negotiator, told us that

“it is entirely possible, that without adequate consultation and feed-in”—[*Official Report, Culture, Tourism, Europe and External Affairs Committee, 28 March 2019; c 5.*]

dairy was just not considered important enough. We later took evidence from the Scottish Government's Minister for Trade, Investment and Innovation, Ivan McKee, and asked him about how he had been consulted on the liberalisation of those tariffs. He told us that, the night before the decision was announced, he was pulled out of a dinner with his officials on Calton Hill to hear a voice down the line from Westminster explaining that the announcement would be made the next day. That is the level of respect and consultation that the UK Government shows the Scottish Government and vital areas of our economy, such as the dairy industry. If that is the way that it intends to proceed in the future, I have very great misgivings about the future of not just the dairy or food and drink sector but the whole of the Scottish economy after Brexit.

16:33

Mark Ruskell: I suppose that, true to form, we will always divide over constitutional questions, particularly given that there is an election next week. However, I will reach out to Donald Cameron and Rhoda Grant, because I agree with them in some ways.

I believe that the Scottish Government needs to get on with the day job and deliver with the

devolved powers that this Parliament has. It needs to deliver a good food nation bill with a strong right to food in it, tackle disadvantage and protect the environment. Although it also needs an agriculture bill, an agriculture strategy and an environment strategy, it is important that the Government delivers that vision to show what this Parliament can achieve even with the limited powers that it has. I believe that, if we can show the people of Scotland what this Parliament can achieve even with its limited powers, we will build the case for Scotland to have all the powers of a normal independent country.

On creating that inspiring vision of what we can be, a number of members have talked about the real leadership that is being shown by many people who work in our food and drink sector.

Colin Smyth spoke passionately about the work of David and Wilma Finlay at the ethical dairy. They are tremendous food pioneers who have developed high-welfare and highly innovative forms of organic farming. They are also incredibly productive, with products that are much loved in Scotland's food economy.

Rachael Hamilton spoke very well about the link between innovation and environmentalism, and the need to bring new entrants into our food economy and our farming economy. That is what the green new deal is all about. It is all about transformation not just in the oil and gas sector, but in our food and farming sector. That needs an active state—an active Government—that invests and drives innovation forward with the private sector.

I say to Alasdair Allan that I recognise the particular challenges of the crofting communities, but there are strong opportunities, as well. There are opportunities to recognise the public goods that farmers in the uplands and crofting communities are already delivering; we simply need to find a better way to support them through financial mechanisms and the market. There are ways forward through innovation, reducing stocking density and valuing the carbon sequestration that can happen on common grazings. We need to support that.

What else have we learned this afternoon? We have talked a bit about freedom of movement and have learned that Mr Chapman does not like it, although he is a big fan of letting people into Scotland, which is great.

We have heard from lots of others who want to let more people into Scotland. The National Farmers Union, for example, has pointed out that we have let only 2,500 people into the UK as seasonal workers, although we needed to let 10,000 people in. Gail Ross spoke about that issue as well.

It is quite clear that we cannot have a withdrawal deal that is based on protecting only one of the European Union freedoms. We need to defend freedom of movement. That is why I say comradely to the Labour Party that its position on protecting a customs union but not embracing the single market is deeply flawed. We need only look at the issue of the food service sector. We have talked a lot about trade in fantastic products that we all enjoy, such as whisky and salmon, but the food service industry is, of course, also hugely important. Employing 1.7 million people, it is the biggest employer in the UK food supply chain. Forty per cent of those who work in food services are migrant workers. That point was highlighted by the cabinet secretary and Alasdair Allan in relation to seafood.

Alex Rowley raised the image of ungathered food rotting in the fields while hungry children have to wait outside food banks in Fife. That is an utter disgrace.

We need to ensure that Scotland remains an attractive place to welcome European Union citizens into. I was very proud to work with my friend Bruce Crawford and with Ben Macpherson recently in organising a meeting in Stirling, at which we threw open the doors to European Union citizens. More than 60 people from widely different backgrounds came along and talked about their experiences. They talked about how hard it is to get settled status and the fact that people have to prove who they are, where they have lived, their worth and their citizenship. That is disgraceful and is no way to treat people. It is a hostile immigration policy.

Many things worried me at that event but, in the context of this debate, what worried me in particular was speaking to people who work in the food industry and are now thinking about voting with their feet and leaving this country. That is absolutely disgraceful. We should be defending their rights all the way.

16:38

Rhoda Grant: Many members have rightly talked about the importance of food and drink to the Scottish economy. Some have taken that a step further and used the debate as an opportunity to name check every food and drink organisation in their constituency. I represent the Highlands and Islands and, if I did that, I would have well exceeded my time. Therefore, I will not—suffice to say that I think we top the tree with good food and drink businesses in the Highlands and Islands.

Another major point of agreement in the debate was that nobody thought that a no-deal Brexit could be a good thing. Everyone agreed that because of the damage that it would do, not only

to the food and drink industry but to all our industries, it should be avoided at all costs.

A further point of agreement was the support for a good food nation bill. It seems that the whole Parliament supports it, so there is no reason for delay. The bill would get a fair wind through the Parliament and I urge the Scottish Government to bring it forward. It will be a complex bill, because it will take time and discussion to simplify the food chain. The sooner the Government brings forward proposals, the sooner the discussion can happen with all the parties in the Parliament around the table. The good food nation bill is backed by the Co-operative Party, of which I am a member, and the food coalition, which is made up of non-governmental organisations, trade unions and organisations that deal with people who suffer from poverty.

Colin Smyth pointed out that poverty is on the rise—200,000 children in Scotland are brought up in families that cannot afford to eat healthily—and Rachael Hamilton talked about obesity. However, all of this is storing up problems for the future, when poor health and diseases related to malnutrition will come back and life expectancy will fall. We desperately need a good food nation bill that deals with all those issues. Alex Rowley also pointed out the impact of Brexit on food and how that could further contribute to the hunger that we already see in our communities. Therefore, we must have a good food nation bill, it must be a Government priority and it must enshrine a right to food.

Climate change is another issue on which members are genuinely agreed. Everyone has signed up to the fact that climate change has presented us with an emergency. Alex Rowley and Mark Ruskell talked about a new CAP and how the European Union is already looking at what needs to be in the post-2021 CAP scheme. Whether we are in or out of Europe, we need to bring forward a scheme and we also need now to look at what that scheme would be. We have not started to put a framework in place for that. Farmers and crofters need to know what the scheme will look like, and at its heart, it needs to tackle climate change. As Alex Rowley pointed out, the new scheme must be linked to a good food nation bill, because, if we are going to deal with climate change and food poverty, we must recognise that the two things work hand-in-hand.

Colin Smyth raised the issue of fair trade. Nobody else raised it but it requires emphasis. We pride ourselves on supporting fair trade, and we must ensure that that does not get lost in Brexit negotiations and that Brexit does not lead to the imposition of huge tariffs on businesses and countries where there are vulnerable producers and workforces. We must make sure that,

although we are concerned for ourselves and the dangers that we face, we never forget to protect those who are weaker than us.

Colin Smyth, Gail Ross and Bruce Crawford talked about PGIs, which, as someone who has campaigned for a long time for protection for Stornoway black pudding, are close to my heart. I do not want that protection to be watered down in any way. Any deal must look at the protections that we already have. If we are trading with the European Union, those protections must exist throughout the union and, if need be, further afield to protect our excellence in producing food.

A number of speakers spoke about workforce issues, in relation to which there are several concerns, including concerns about whether migrant workers will come to Scotland for the farming industry. Berry picking is a big issue, for example. Farmers need reassurance. If they are going to plant a crop, they need to know whether they will have the workforce to harvest it or whether it will rot in the ground.

Our fishing community talks about the huge opportunity that coming out of the common fisheries policy will provide. However, unless we invest in the workforce and make sure that it is in place, we do not have people to process that fish. Fishermen in Shetland tell me that there is no capacity in Shetland to do the processing. We need to look elsewhere in Scotland, because, if Brexit happens, that is an opportunity that we should not miss.

Our amendment is very simple. As well as adding to the Government's motion a point about the importance of our EU and UK markets, it emphasises the need for a good food nation bill to simplify the food chain and end hunger, and a subsidy scheme that will take us to net zero emissions from the agriculture industry. I do not know how other parties can vote against it. I wonder how the Liberal Democrats will explain that to their members, and I urge them to change their minds.

16:45

Edward Mountain (Highlands and Islands) (Con): I welcome the debate, as it has given Scottish Conservative members another opportunity to say how much we support Scotland's food and drink sector. We have a vision for ensuring that Scotland's food and drink industry goes on to achieve more success—we published that vision in our document "A New Approach to Scottish Farming" some months ago—and it is time that we had some vision from this Scottish National Party Government. In my view, that has been sorely lacking.

As the cabinet secretary knows, promises are easily made, but they are more difficult to deliver. Where is the good food nation bill that was promised back in May 2017? Where is the Scottish agriculture bill that was talked about more than two months ago? They are nowhere to be seen; they are not even in the SNP's programme for government. It is no wonder that farming and food experts are beginning to lose confidence in the Government. I do not need to remind the cabinet secretary that, only last week, Jonnie Hall, the NFUS's director of policy, stated:

"In many senses there is no vision in Scottish Government in terms of where it wants to be".

I could not agree more. I agree with Jonnie Hall, and I agree with the farmers in the countryside.

If we are to grow our food and drink industry so that it is worth £30 billion by 2030, as we all aspire it to be, we need to ensure that the Government's ambitions match the ambitions of farmers, fishermen and producers across the whole of Scotland. I call on the cabinet secretary to stop dithering and start delivering. That point was made by Donald Cameron and Peter Chapman, who highlighted that the common fisheries policy has been bad for Scotland and that there will be plenty of opportunities once we get out of it. They also highlighted the fact that it is clear that the Scotch whisky industry is supportive of the exit deal that has been put forward, and they reiterated that the Scottish Government lacks vision, which is being said in the fields across Scotland.

Keith Brown (Clackmannanshire and Dunblane) (SNP): Will the member take an intervention?

Edward Mountain: I am afraid that I am very pushed for time. I might give Mr Brown an opportunity to intervene later in my speech.

Like Peter Chapman, I believe that farmers are optimists and that they always seek to grasp opportunities. I believe, too, that they have the highest standards of production, which is what makes all food producers in Scotland world leaders. Rachael Hamilton made the point that the CAP has not delivered, and I agree that it would be much more beneficial to bring farms to the classrooms to ensure that our children and future generations are educated.

Emma Harper (South Scotland) (SNP): Will the member give way?

Edward Mountain: I am quite short of time; I will see whether I can give way when I come to the member's party's contributions.

I also agree with Rachael Hamilton's point that we should be using more Scottish produce in our schools; it is one that Conservative members have hammered home on every possible occasion.

However, we are still taking chicken from Thailand. That is not good enough.

I agree with the points that John Scott made. It is clear that the UK Government has a vision, whereby support will continue in its current form till 2024. The Scottish Government has not made that point.

I do not always agree with the cabinet secretary, but there is one point on which I agree with him: it is the farmers who make our countryside worth visiting, and we should be proud of their hard work and their success in shaping the countryside and the environment. It is a pity that we have heard nothing about why the cabinet secretary is not prepared to accept the inclusion in the UK Agriculture Bill of a schedule to support our farmers.

Bruce Crawford said that a no-deal Brexit would not be good for farmers. I agree. I also agree with what he said about the importance of PGIs. Michael Gove agreed with that point yesterday in his evidence to the Rural Economy and Connectivity Committee and said that he did not think that there was any chance that that would change.

Mike Rumbles: Will the member give way on that point?

Edward Mountain: I will give way on that point to a member of the Rural Economy and Connectivity Committee.

Mike Rumbles: A link to the *Official Report* has just come through on my phone, so I have read what Michael Gove said about no deal. He said:

"the UK could get through the initial turbulence that no deal would cause".—[*Official Report, Rural Economy and Connectivity Committee*, 15 May 2019; c 39-40.]

Does the member agree with him?

Edward Mountain: There is nothing like making a late intervention. I thought that Mike Rumbles was going to make an intervention on PGIs, which is what we were discussing and what is important.

As far as a no-deal Brexit is concerned, I have made my position clear: I believe that we should have a deal, that we should work hard to make that happen and that it is up to every single party in the UK Parliament to find compromise and to work together.

I also believe that it is a pity that, when discussing this issue this afternoon, so much of what members said in their speeches was not directed at farmers. As my time is short, I will pick up on a couple of Mark Ruskell's points, which I think are very important. We should never forget that farmers are doing an excellent job on the environment. We need to recognise what they are doing and encourage them to do more. I agree

with his point that the Scottish Government needs to get on with the day job.

Having a vision is easy. Implementing that vision is where it gets hard, and that is proving to be too hard for this Government. That is not good enough for farmers. We need a good food nation bill and a Government that will work out what will happen to farming not next year or the year after but in 10 years' time. We need to work together to help the industry. I know that industry well, and it thrives with innovation and hard work. Let the cabinet secretary and the Government rise to the standards that the industry has set on innovation and hard work, because, at the moment, they are not meeting them.

16:51

Fergus Ewing: There have been some very good speeches in the debate and some other ones. There is a consensus that the prospect of a no deal will be devastating for the food and farming industry and the wider food and drink sector.

Mike Rumbles set out the arguments clearly and cogently. On the impact of Brexit, he quoted a figure for the loss of £2,000 million. As I understand it, that is not a Liberal Democrat or SNP figure but one that is based on the UK Government's own modelling.

Michael Gove, who is nothing but unflinching courteous and polite to everybody, has recognised in speeches such as the one at the Oxford farming conference, and in his discussions with me and, no doubt, with many others and perhaps with the committee yesterday—I have not had the chance to read the *Official Report* yet—that a no-deal Brexit would be devastating for farming and the rural economy. To my mind, that makes it very frustrating that that devastatingly bad option for Britain has not been removed from the table, when there is the power to do that.

It is relevant to point out that the reason why the no-deal option has not been removed from the table is that it acts as a lever to force us to go into what we might consider to be the Brexit frying pan instead of the Brexit fire of a no-deal option. There is something pretty seedy about using that as a device and allowing an option that is admitted to be extremely damaging to remain on the table as a compulsator to try to persuade people to accept something that we see as being damaging but not perhaps immediately so. That is an unusual if not unique feature in British politics—I cannot think of a parallel.

There have been excellent speeches and, as always, I apologise for not having the time to deal with all members' points. With respect, I do not agree with Rachael Hamilton's view about new

entrants, but I do not have the time to go over the stats—that would just use up all the time. However, I will write to her setting out the facts, which show that Scotland has helped hundreds of young people as new entrants. I will set out the statistics and point out that we have had a better—

Rachael Hamilton: Will the cabinet secretary give way?

Fergus Ewing: I am very sorry, but I just do not have the time if I am to do justice to everybody.

Colin Smyth made the kind of speech that we are more used to hearing, giving examples from his region of positive contributions to the rural economy. I was pleased that he did that, as, indeed, did many other members, who mentioned their constituents.

In his closing speech, Mr Ruskell put forward a very telling argument for the importance of freedom of movement. I entirely agree with Mr Ruskell—I do not think that I have uttered that phrase before, but there is always a first time. To be serious, I think that he set out very clearly the conundrum that we have to deal with, which is, on the one hand, the plain desirability on an economic, social and, indeed, human level of maintaining the welcome that Scotland has given to people from other EU countries and, on the other, the apparent message that is being sent by the Brexiteers.

Many members, including Gail Ross, in particular, and Bruce Crawford, Rhoda Grant and Dr Allan, mentioned the importance of PGIs, with specific examples given. It is easy to forget that PGIs are massively more important to Scotland than to any other part of the UK. Gail Ross made a point that I have not heard recently but which is absolutely right when she said that the UK Government initially seemed to be inclined to support the broad continuance of PGIs but that, of late, that message seems to have changed somewhat. I hope that we can come back to that point and debate it in more detail.

Much was made by the Conservatives of the Scottish Government's perceived failings. I just do not accept that the picture is as black, as bleak and as depressing as they paint, and I think that it does them an injustice if they ignore some of the very positive things that are being done and which are being appreciated by rural Scotland and the food and drink sector. We have provided support in respect of trade shows in Dubai and Boston as well as the world's largest—the seafood expo in Brussels—and we have supported two regional showcasing events and another in Gleneagles that I will be attending later this year. We have also provided a further round of funding for our regional food fund.

As far as Scottish agriculture is concerned, we made loan payments worth £241 million on 5 October last year, the earliest date that we have made that funding available. In fact, farmers here received payments in many cases months ahead of farmers elsewhere in the UK. I think that that is a positive thing. Obviously, I cannot divulge confidences—and I am not looking at anybody in particular when I say this—but one or two Conservatives have privately indicated that that has been appreciated by farmers. Why, then, can the Conservatives not just tell the truth and say that it is not all bad? Before I came to this place, I was a lawyer for 20 years, and if I had used arguments so flawed, so fallacious and so unfounded on fact, I would have been shot down by the sheriff in a nanosecond. What we get is this partisan political argument that seems to allow a complete ignorance or perversion of facts—*[Interruption.]*

The Deputy Presiding Officer: Can you please pause for a minute, cabinet secretary? I know that you are in full flow but, grand though it is, I have to say to the chamber that the level of little chitty-chatty going on is rising and rising. I am finding what the cabinet secretary very interesting, as we all are, so let us hear him.

Fergus Ewing: Well, I strongly disapprove of chitty-chatty.

This is free advice from a non-practising solicitor to the Scottish Tories: stop being so negative. They are not getting anywhere with it. What is happening is that they are in an alpine crevasse of their own creation; there is no rescue team; and they are freezing to death. Their political prospects have frozen over—they have discovered political permafrost.

We are here to celebrate Scottish food and drink. For lunch today, I had a tin of Baxters cream of chicken soup with some Graham's butter on a Scottish morning roll. I have not yet had the opportunity to have my second course: the Tunnock's caramel wafer. It says on the wrapper that more than 6 million of these biscuits are made and sold every week. All of those things are prime Scottish produce, and I am proud of them all. We are here to celebrate them all—so for goodness' sake, let us, even the Tories, be positive about Scotland.

The Presiding Officer (Ken Macintosh): That concludes our debate on the impact of Brexit on Scotland's food and drink.

Decision Time

17:00

The Presiding Officer (Ken Macintosh): The first question is, that amendment S5M-17304.1, in the name of Donald Cameron, which seeks to amend motion S5M-17304, in the name of Fergus Ewing, on the impact of Brexit on Scotland's food and drink, 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)
 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)
 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)
 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)
 Beattie, Colin (Midlothian North and Musselburgh) (SNP)
 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)
 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)
 Greer, Ross (West Scotland) (Green)
 Griffin, Mark (Central Scotland) (Lab)
 Harper, Emma (South Scotland) (SNP)
 Harvie, Patrick (Glasgow) (Green)
 Haughey, Clare (Rutherglen) (SNP)
 Hepburn, Jamie (Cumbernauld and Kilsyth) (SNP)
 Hyslop, Fiona (Linlithgow) (SNP)
 Johnstone, Alison (Lothian) (Green)
 Kelly, James (Glasgow) (Lab)
 Kidd, Bill (Glasgow Anniesland) (SNP)
 Lamont, Johann (Glasgow) (Lab)
 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)
 Martin, Gillian (Aberdeenshire East) (SNP)
 Mason, John (Glasgow Shettleston) (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)
 Rennie, Willie (North East Fife) (LD)
 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)
 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)
 Todd, Maree (Highlands and Islands) (SNP)
 Torrance, David (Kirkcaldy) (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 29, Against 82, Abstentions 0.

Amendment disagreed to.

The Presiding Officer: The next question is, that amendment S5M-17304.2, in the name of

Rhoda Grant, which seeks to amend motion S5M-17304, in the name of Fergus Ewing, be agreed to. Are we agreed?

Members: No.

The Presiding Officer: There will be a division.

For

Baillie, Jackie (Dumbarton) (Lab)
 Baker, Claire (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab)
 Dugdale, Kezia (Lothian) (Lab)
 Grant, Rhoda (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)
 Gray, Iain (East Lothian) (Lab)
 Griffin, Mark (Central Scotland) (Lab)
 Kelly, James (Glasgow) (Lab)
 Lamont, Johann (Glasgow) (Lab)
 Macdonald, Lewis (North East Scotland) (Lab)
 McNeill, Pauline (Glasgow) (Lab)
 Rowley, Alex (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab)
 Sarwar, Anas (Glasgow) (Lab)
 Smyth, Colin (South Scotland) (Lab)
 Stewart, David (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)

Against

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)
 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)
 Cole-Hamilton, Alex (Edinburgh Western) (LD)
 Constance, Angela (Almond Valley) (SNP)
 Corry, Maurice (West Scotland) (Con)
 Crawford, Bruce (Stirling) (SNP)
 Cunningham, Roseanna (Perthshire South and Kinrossshire) (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)
 Finnie, John (Highlands and Islands) (Green)
 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)
 Greer, Ross (West Scotland) (Green)
 Hamilton, Rachael (Ettrick, Roxburgh and Berwickshire) (Con)
 Harper, Emma (South Scotland) (SNP)

Harris, Alison (Central Scotland) (Con)
 Harvie, Patrick (Glasgow) (Green)
 Haughey, Clare (Rutherglen) (SNP)
 Hepburn, Jamie (Cumbernauld and Kilsyth) (SNP)
 Hyslop, Fiona (Linlithgow) (SNP)
 Johnstone, Alison (Lothian) (Green)
 Kerr, Liam (North East Scotland) (Con)
 Kidd, Bill (Glasgow Anniesland) (SNP)
 Lindhurst, Gordon (Lothian) (Con)
 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)
 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)
 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)
 Rennie, Willie (North East Fife) (LD)
 Robison, Shona (Dundee City East) (SNP)
 Ross, Gail (Caithness, Sutherland and Ross) (SNP)
 Rumbles, Mike (North East Scotland) (LD)
 Ruskell, Mark (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Green)
 Russell, Michael (Argyll and Bute) (SNP)
 Scott, John (Ayr) (Con)
 Scott, Tavish (Shetland Islands) (LD)
 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)
 Todd, Maree (Highlands and Islands) (SNP)
 Tomkins, Adam (Glasgow) (Con)
 Torrance, David (Kirkcaldy) (SNP)
 Wells, Annie (Glasgow) (Con)
 Wheelhouse, Paul (South Scotland) (SNP)
 White, Sandra (Glasgow Kelvin) (SNP)
 Whittle, Brian (South Scotland) (Con)
 Wightman, Andy (Lothian) (Green)

The Presiding Officer: The result of the division is: For 14, Against 97, Abstentions 0.

Amendment disagreed to.

The Presiding Officer: The next question is, that amendment S5M-17304.3, in the name of Mark Ruskell, which seeks to amend motion S5M-17304, in the name of Fergus Ewing, be agreed to. Are we agreed?

Members: No.

The Presiding Officer: There will be a division.

For

Baillie, Jackie (Dumbarton) (Lab)
 Baker, Claire (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab)
 Dugdale, Kezia (Lothian) (Lab)
 Finnie, John (Highlands and Islands) (Green)
 Grant, Rhoda (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)
 Gray, Iain (East Lothian) (Lab)
 Greer, Ross (West Scotland) (Green)
 Griffin, Mark (Central Scotland) (Lab)
 Harvie, Patrick (Glasgow) (Green)
 Johnstone, Alison (Lothian) (Green)
 Kelly, James (Glasgow) (Lab)
 Lamont, Johann (Glasgow) (Lab)
 Macdonald, Lewis (North East Scotland) (Lab)
 McNeill, Pauline (Glasgow) (Lab)
 Rowley, Alex (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab)
 Ruskell, Mark (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Green)
 Sarwar, Anas (Glasgow) (Lab)
 Smyth, Colin (South Scotland) (Lab)
 Stewart, David (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)
 Wightman, Andy (Lothian) (Green)

Against

Balfour, Jeremy (Lothian) (Con)
 Ballantyne, Michelle (South Scotland) (Con)
 Bowman, Bill (North East Scotland) (Con)
 Briggs, Miles (Lothian) (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)
 Fraser, Murdo (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 Gibson, Kenneth (Cunninghame North) (SNP)
 Golden, Maurice (West Scotland) (Con)
 Greene, Jamie (West Scotland) (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)
 McArthur, Liam (Orkney Islands) (LD)
 Mitchell, Margaret (Central Scotland) (Con)
 Mountain, Edward (Highlands and Islands) (Con)
 Mundell, Oliver (Dumfriesshire) (Con)
 Rennie, Willie (North East Fife) (LD)
 Rumbles, Mike (North East Scotland) (LD)
 Scott, John (Ayr) (Con)
 Scott, Tavish (Shetland Islands) (LD)
 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)

Abstentions

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)
 FitzPatrick, Joe (Dundee City West) (SNP)
 Forbes, Kate (Skye, Lochaber and Badenoch) (SNP)
 Freeman, Jeane (Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley) (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)
 Hepburn, Jamie (Cumbernauld and Kilsyth) (SNP)
 Hyslop, Fiona (Linlithgow) (SNP)
 Kidd, Bill (Glasgow Anniesland) (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)
 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)
 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)
 Todd, Maree (Highlands and Islands) (SNP)
 Torrance, David (Kirkcaldy) (SNP)
 Wheelhouse, Paul (South Scotland) (SNP)
 White, Sandra (Glasgow Kelvin) (SNP)

The Presiding Officer: The result of the division is: For 20, Against 35, Abstentions 56.

Amendment disagreed to.

The Presiding Officer: The final question is, that motion S5M-17304, in the name of Fergus Ewing, on the impact of Brexit on Scotland's food and drink, 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)
 Baillie, Jackie (Dumbarton) (Lab)
 Baker, Claire (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab)
 Beattie, Colin (Midlothian North and Musselburgh) (SNP)
 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)
 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)
 Haughey, Clare (Rutherglen) (SNP)
 Hepburn, Jamie (Cumbernauld and Kilsyth) (SNP)
 Hyslop, Fiona (Linlithgow) (SNP)
 Kelly, James (Glasgow) (Lab)
 Kidd, Bill (Glasgow Anniesland) (SNP)
 Lamont, Johann (Glasgow) (Lab)
 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)
 Martin, Gillian (Aberdeenshire East) (SNP)
 Mason, John (Glasgow Shettleston) (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)
 Rennie, Willie (North East Fife) (LD)
 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)
 Russell, Michael (Argyll and Bute) (SNP)
 Sarwar, Anas (Glasgow) (Lab)
 Scott, Tavish (Shetland Islands) (LD)
 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)
 Todd, Maree (Highlands and Islands) (SNP)
 Torrance, David (Kirkcaldy) (SNP)
 Wheelhouse, Paul (South Scotland) (SNP)
 White, Sandra (Glasgow Kelvin) (SNP)

Against*Meeting closed at 17:04.*

Balfour, Jeremy (Lothian) (Con)
 Ballantyne, Michelle (South Scotland) (Con)
 Bowman, Bill (North East Scotland) (Con)
 Briggs, Miles (Lothian) (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)
 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)
 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)

Abstentions

Finnie, John (Highlands and Islands) (Green)
 Greer, Ross (West Scotland) (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 76, Against 29, Abstentions 6.

Motion agreed to,

That the Parliament acknowledges the significant contribution that food and drink makes to Scotland's economy, society and reputation; notes analysis and warnings, including from the food and drink sector, of the disastrous impact of a no deal Brexit that would result in the loss of freedom of movement and trade, harming food and drink businesses and exports of quality meat and seafood; recognises the importance of growing markets for Scottish produce internationally, across the UK and here in Scotland, and considers that this can best be achieved through continued membership of the EU.

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

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