



OFFICIAL REPORT
AITHISG OIFIGEIL

Meeting of the Parliament

Thursday 5 September 2019

Session 5



The Scottish Parliament
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

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Scottish Parliament

Thursday 5 September 2019

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

General Question Time

Population Decline (Inverclyde)

1. Stuart McMillan (Greenock and Inverclyde) (SNP): To ask the Scottish Government what discussions it has had with Inverclyde Council to halt population decline in the area. (S5O-03489)

The Cabinet Secretary for Culture, Tourism and External Affairs (Fiona Hyslop): Inverclyde is one of 14 local authorities that experienced depopulation last year. In February, my colleague Ben Macpherson met leaders of a number of local authorities, including Inverclyde Council, to discuss population decline. A further meeting with me has been agreed for 27 September.

We need to grow our population to ensure that we have sustainable, vibrant communities and to drive improvements in inclusive growth. The Government has therefore established a cross-portfolio ministerial population task force, which I chair, to identify work that is being taken forward across Government to address the challenge of population shifts and changes, identify new actions and intensify existing actions.

Stuart McMillan: The cabinet secretary will be aware that population decline is one of the most important challenges—if not the most important challenge—that Inverclyde faces in the foreseeable future. Does the cabinet secretary agree that in addition to a consistent and improved marketing strategy to promote Inverclyde, the siting of public agencies can play a part in overturning population decline, and would she consider the siting of public agencies in my constituency?

Fiona Hyslop: Inverclyde is facing a significant population change. Its depopulation figure was the highest of all the 14 local authority areas—a reduction of 0.8 per cent. There is no single solution to the issue, but the new population task force that I am chairing will look across all policy areas to see where we can intensify particular work. Some of that work will be generational, but some of it can be dealt with sooner rather than later.

It is absolutely clear, given that all our future population growth in this country is projected to come from migration, that the United Kingdom

Government's proposal to end freedom of movement of people is deeply damaging.

Obviously, decisions on the location of public sector functions are taken on a case-by-case basis and we will consider all opportunities to optimise the benefits when doing so, but at the same time we need to ensure that we secure best value for public finance. The important thing is to ensure that depopulation issues are on the agenda, that we take them seriously and that we do so on a cross-Government basis.

General Practitioner Recruitment and Retention (Fife)

2. Alexander Stewart (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con): To ask the Scottish Government what measures it is taking to improve GP recruitment and retention in Fife. (S5O-03490)

The Cabinet Secretary for Health and Sport (Jeane Freeman): Nationally, we are investing an additional £250 million in direct support for general practice by the end of this parliamentary period, delivering the new GP contract and delivering at least 800 more GPs over 10 years.

As I am sure Alexander Stewart knows, Scotland has more GPs per 100,000 of the population than the rest of the United Kingdom—the figure is 92 here, 73 in England, 70 in Wales and 71 in Northern Ireland.

In Fife, the health board that has specific local responsibility is taking a twofold approach: it is further developing its operational response to issues in practices as they emerge and, alongside that, it is taking a strategic look with a strategic group to ensure a co-ordinated approach across Fife to those practices that may need additional support. That involves working with GP representatives and the British Medical Association to explore both the implementation and impact of the new contract, and taking steps locally to increase the attractiveness of general practice, including capitalising on the Scottish graduate entry medicine programme course.

Alexander Stewart: In my region, surgeries in Perthshire and Fife are either closing or are facing closure. In one case in Dunfermline, four GPs are looking after nearly 9,000 patients—that is completely unsustainable.

Audit Scotland recently indicated that the lack of workforce planning will mean that the recruitment of 800 new GPs will be fragmented and that

“for every GP that retires more than one will need to be trained and recruited to replace them.”

Therefore, the crisis is of the Government's making. What urgent steps will the cabinet secretary take to rectify it?

Jeane Freeman: Before I go on to answer that in detail, I point out to Alexander Stewart that part of the difficulty that GPs and others in our health service face are the pension changes that his party's Westminster Government has forced on them, which for some means that it begins to cost them money to go to work. That is hardly a sensible and wise proposition from the UK Government, but then we are becoming increasingly used to that.

Mr Stewart will know—as will all members—that the point of the GP contract is to widen the multidisciplinary team to ensure that GPs can concentrate on those patients who need their particular skills for longer. Therefore that widening of those teams, along with recruitment and training of physiotherapists and pharmacists, pharmacological input and so on, is helping to manage the numbers that Mr Stewart has mentioned.

I take Audit Scotland's report very seriously indeed. We have a number of initiatives to increase GP numbers. Presiding Officer, I am mindful of your exhortation not to take too long, so I will not mention them all, but I am sure that Mr Stewart knows about them. For medical undergraduates, there is the ScotGEM programme and increased GP training. Specific financial support is being given to GP practices, including those in rural areas. All those initiatives are designed to ensure that we manage that challenge as best we can. Only this morning, I discussed with one of Mr Stewart's colleagues additional steps that we might take, and I stress that I am always open to hearing positive ideas that might come from any bench in the chamber.

Willie Rennie (North East Fife) (LD): The Cabinet Secretary for Health and Sport might have seen reports of concerns about the implementation of the new GP out-of-hours services model in St Andrews. The relationship between the healthcare partnership and local campaigners seems to have broken down and the campaigners now fear that the partnership is setting the model up to fail. Will the cabinet secretary investigate that important matter and provide some assistance?

Jeane Freeman: I am grateful to Mr Rennie for raising that question. I would be very disappointed indeed if what seems to me to be a genuine, community-devised and community-led solution to problems with out-of-hours services provision in St Andrews is in any sense now in jeopardy, whether because relationships have broken down or for any other reason. I will certainly look at the matter with some urgency and ensure that Mr Rennie and other members whose constituencies are affected are informed of what I uncover and the steps that we might take to resolve any difficulties that exist.

Annabelle Ewing (Cowdenbeath) (SNP): I say to Alexander Stewart that if he wishes to know what is going on with GP recruitment in Fife and the efforts that NHS Fife is making, he might wish to attend the quarterly meetings that NHS Fife holds with elected members. The cabinet secretary referred to the pensions fiasco that the UK Government has created in the health sector. I would have thought that it would be better for the member to seek to work with the Scottish Government and others to try to sort out the fiasco that the UK Government has created in that regard and for him constructively to support the strenuous efforts that NHS Fife is making to resolve the problem.

The Presiding Officer (Ken Macintosh): I thank Ms Ewing for her contribution, but I am not sure that it contained a question. We will move on to question 3.

Kerb Crawling

3. Ruth Maguire (Cunninghame South) (SNP): To ask the Scottish Government how many arrests were made for offences relating to kerb crawling between 2016 and 2019. (S5O-03491)

The Minister for Community Safety (Ash Denham): Kerb crawling, as it is commonly known, is an offence that is prosecuted under section 1 of the Prostitution (Public Places) (Scotland) Act 2007. That act created two offences: one is soliciting and the other is loitering in a public place

"for the purpose of obtaining the services of a person engaged in prostitution".

The Scottish Government does not hold data on relevant arrests made by Police Scotland. In 2016-17 and 2017-18, the police recorded 80 offences of soliciting the services of a person engaged in prostitution, but that number might include offences other than kerb crawling.

Ruth Maguire: I appreciate the minister's answer. Does she agree that prostitution is a form of men's violence against women, that it is both a cause and a consequence of women's inequality and that it makes the world less safe for women and girls? If she does so agree, when will the Scottish Government follow the lead of countries whose action in legislating has reduced violence against women, and also reduced trafficking, by seriously tackling men's demands to purchase sexual access to the bodies of women and girls?

Ash Denham: I recognise Ruth Maguire's longstanding interest in the issue. The Scottish Government's equally safe strategy for preventing and eradicating violence against women and girls adopts the position that prostitution is a form of gendered violence. In looking at how we should address prostitution in Scotland, it is important that

we learn from different approaches that have been adopted internationally and what their impacts have been.

Last month, I visited Sweden to learn more about its approach to criminalising the purchase but not the sale of sex. I met representatives of the Swedish Government, police, prosecutors and support services. The information that was gathered from that visit will help to develop our approach to prostitution.

I am pleased that—as published in the programme for government this week—the Scottish Government will bring forward a consultation to gather views on Scotland's approach to tackling prostitution. Views will also be sought on reducing the harms that are associated with prostitution and supporting women to exit.

Drug and Alcohol-related Deaths

4. Brian Whittle (South Scotland) (Con): To ask the Scottish Government how it plans to include third sector organisations in its plans to tackle the rise in drug and alcohol-related deaths. (S5O-03492)

The Minister for Public Health, Sport and Wellbeing (Joe FitzPatrick): I will give a statement on this later this afternoon, so I will try to avoid topics that I will cover in that.

The Scottish Government recognises and welcomes the support that third sector organisations offer. They played a key role in the development of “Rights, respect and recovery: alcohol and drug treatment strategy”, which was published in November 2018. We are now working with stakeholders, including the third sector, to finalise an action plan to support the strategy, which will be published in October. Third sector organisations are members of national working groups that advise ministers and provide advice on areas such as addressing stigma, workforce development and quality principles. They are also represented on the drug deaths task force, which will co-ordinate and drive action to improve health outcomes, reducing the risks of harm and death. I will speak more about that this afternoon.

Brian Whittle: Does the minister agree that many third sector organisations have the experience and capacity to tackle the prevention of drug issues upstream? Will the Scottish Government therefore commit to giving them an adequate proportion of funding in order to take advantage of that experience?

Joe FitzPatrick: Since taking on the position of Minister for Public Health, Sport and Wellbeing, I have visited a huge number of third sector and other organisations. When those organisations work in partnership with public services, I always

see that they are able to provide services that are welcomed by the community. It is important that we appropriately support organisations and make sure that people get the best possible treatment.

I know that Mr Whittle has visited the River Garden organisation, which I visited last year. It is an excellent example of a third sector organisation taking forward a groundbreaking principle—I think that it is the first example of its type across these islands. I am pleased that the Scottish Government was able to support River Garden to the tune of £125,000.

Kenneth Gibson (Cunninghame North) (SNP): Will the minister advise the chamber how many drugs deaths were caused not by illegal but by legally prescribed drugs—such as sleeping pills and antidepressants—last year, and how third sector organisations can assist in raising awareness of those dangers?

Joe FitzPatrick: The Scottish Government listens to experts from third sector organisations and other partners. Working with partners, we provide relevant and targeted information to the public to raise awareness of the dangers in order to improve health outcomes and reduce the risk of harm and deaths.

The National Records for Scotland “Drug Related Deaths in Scotland” report does not link to prescribing data. It is therefore not possible to identify whether a drug that was prescribed to a person was implicated in their death. However, NRS produces supplementary tables that show drug-related deaths by drug type. Those show that, for 2018, there were no drug-related deaths where the category of antidepressants was implicated in or potentially contributed to the drug-related death. However, other drugs—such as paracetamol—were implicated in or potentially contributed to a drug-related death in 23 cases. The NRS supplementary information lists nearly 250 drug types. I will write to Kenneth Gibson with a fuller answer in due course.

Neil Findlay (Lothian) (Lab): The reality is that third sector and many other organisations are grossly underfunded and stretched to the max by the drugs crisis that we have. The *West Lothian Courier* highlights today that, in that county, only 39 per cent of patients are seen by the local drug and alcohol services within three weeks, which NHS Lothian says is because of capacity and staffing issues.

Given that 1,200 people are dying on the streets, does the minister think that a paltry £10 million in additional resources is adequate to deal with the carnage that we see on the streets of Scotland today?

Joe FitzPatrick: I am pleased to have been informed that there are plans in place to improve

waiting times in West Lothian, as they are clearly not good enough. Around Scotland, waiting times have been improving, including across the NHS Lothian area, but the waiting times that people are experiencing in West Lothian are not acceptable and need to be improved.

Exam Results

5. Gordon Lindhurst (Lothian) (Con): To ask the Scottish Government what its position is on the recent Scottish Qualifications Authority exam results and whether they reflect the strength of the education system. (S5O-03493)

The Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills (John Swinney): Scotland has a high-performing education system with credible and respected national qualifications resulting in approximately three quarters of candidates at higher securing a pass at A to C.

There has been an increase in entries, passes and pass rates at national 5, including a rise of 4.4 per cent in passes for English and 1.3 per cent in passes for maths.

The results include a range of successes beyond national qualifications, including more than 54,000 skills-based qualifications, which is more than double the level that was achieved in 2012. That shows that the education system provides learners with much more choice than ever before, allowing them to find the pathway that is correct for them.

Gordon Lindhurst: We have just seen the second worst results at national 5, the worst results at higher—the fourth year of such a decline—and the worst results at advanced higher. The cabinet secretary was quick to take credit when, previously, pupils performed well. Will he now take responsibility for these worse results and for the Scottish National Party's cuts to teacher numbers and subject choice limitations, which are holding back our young people from achieving?

John Swinney: Gordon Lindhurst should know me well enough to know that I take responsibility for my actions as a minister. I am also prepared to take responsibility for and pride in what young people in Scotland achieve. Seventy-five per cent of candidates are achieving a pass at higher and scoffing at that is the wrong approach for the Conservatives to take.

If the exam pass rate continually increased, the Conservatives would be the first people telling us that the exams were not rigorous enough, as Liz Smith tried to tell us yesterday about national 4. There will be volatility in exam results year on year in a high-performing education system, and we should celebrate the achievements of young people in Scotland.

Scottish Government Ministers (Public Engagement)

6. Jamie Halcro Johnston (Highlands and Islands) (Con): To ask the Scottish Government how ministers ensure that they engage with the public in all parts of Scotland, including the Highlands and Islands. (S5O-03494)

The Cabinet Secretary for Communities and Local Government (Aileen Campbell): The Scottish Government is committed to ensuring that the voices of communities and businesses around Scotland are heard and included in the development of Scottish Government policy. That is enabled through ambitious community empowerment legislation, targeted community-led initiatives, consultations on specific policy proposals and through Scotland's rural parliament.

Ministers engage with the public in all parts of Scotland in the course of their ministerial duties. For example, travelling Cabinets are an important example of the First Minister's commitment to the Government being open and accessible. Those events, 17 of which have been held in the Highlands and Islands since 2008, have enabled ministers to engage directly with members of the public, who can meet and question ministers in a public forum about the local, national and international issues that matter to them.

Jamie Halcro Johnston: The cabinet secretary will have noticed the First Minister's three visits to Shetland during the recent by-election campaign. That is as many trips as there have been official visits to Shetland by Scottish National Party First Ministers during their whole 12 years in government. That is why many local people in Shetland and other communities in my region feel that this Scottish Government is interested in them only when there are votes to be won. Will the cabinet secretary tell me whether communities in my region can hope to see a little more of Government ministers, including the First Minister, outside of campaign periods, and whether, when they visit, they will commit to properly consult on, listen to and act on the many local concerns of those communities?

The Presiding Officer: Cabinet secretary, did you hear the question?

Aileen Campbell: I did not catch all that Jamie Halcro Johnston said, but I make the point that this Government acts on behalf of every community in all parts of the country and takes that very seriously. I also point out that one of my first acts in this post was to visit and engage thoroughly with Shetland Islands Council.

I should also point out that my in-laws are from Shetland and my husband is a Shetlander, so Jamie Halcro Johnston has picked the wrong

person to tell that they are not engaging with the matter of visits to Shetland. *[Laughter.]*

The Presiding Officer: I am delighted to see that members are in good spirits today.

First Minister's Question Time

12:00

European Union Exit

1. **Jackson Carlaw (Eastwood) (Con):** The bill that Opposition parties in the House of Commons passed yesterday once again seeks to delay the decision to leave the European Union. It gives the United Kingdom until 19 October to get a deal with the European Union. I still hope that we and the other 27 countries in the EU can reach an agreement. Does the First Minister?

The First Minister (Nicola Sturgeon): First, I will tell Jackson Carlaw something that I think he should know by now. I do not want to see Scotland have to leave the European Union at all. There is a simple, democratic reason for that: Scotland did not vote to leave the European Union. I think that any self-respecting Scottish politician would stand up for what people in Scotland voted for in the EU referendum.

Secondly, we hear all this talk from Boris Johnson about trying to get a deal, but in the past couple of days we have also seen evidence that suggests very strongly that no meaningful negotiation is going on right now. "Sham" is the word that has been used about that, and it was attributed—rightly or wrongly, I do not know—to a member of the Prime Minister's inner circle.

If Jackson Carlaw is privy to information that the rest of us do not have and can tell us, right now, the detail of the deal that Boris Johnson is trying to strike with the European Union, perhaps he will share that with us and we will all have the opportunity to give our views on it.

Jackson Carlaw: It does not sound as though the First Minister is very interested in an agreement. *[Interruption.]* Yet, her MPs voted last night for the bill that gives a deadline of 19 October to negotiate an orderly exit—something that I think would deliver what most people in Britain want, which is to go on with delivering Brexit in line with the referendum decision that we took. I ask again: does the First Minister actually want a deal or not?

The First Minister: I cannot say this any more simply, so I will try to say it a bit more slowly and perhaps a bit more loudly. I do not want Scotland to leave the European Union, because 62 per cent of people in Scotland voted against leaving the European Union. I guess that, if that vote was held again today, the percentage would be even higher.

I come back to the point about a deal. If Jackson Carlaw is asking me to give an opinion on some mythical deal that he—unlike most other people—

believes that Boris Johnson is on the verge of agreeing with the European Union, he should tell us what he thinks the content of that deal is, and then I will happily give him an opinion on it.

Right now, there are no negotiations that we know of, the so-called efforts to strike a deal have been described as a “sham” and the European Union does not appear to know of the negotiations that are making progress in the way that Boris Johnson tries to tell us they are. Clearly, Jackson Carlaw is suggesting that he knows something that the rest of us do not know. Let him share it with us now, and then we can have a meaningful discussion about it.

Jackson Carlaw: Let us spell it out. The First Minister does not really want to see successful negotiations between the UK and the EU. She has just said as much. She wants the negotiations to fail. It is not in her interests to strengthen the UK’s hand in those talks; she wants to weaken the UK’s hand in those talks. [*Interruption.*]

The First Minister does not want people in Scotland to be able to move on from this; she is determined to keep it dragging on and on and on. Is it the case that this First Minister has never seen a referendum result that she does not want to overturn?

The First Minister: I do not want to overturn the Scottish Brexit referendum result; I want to see it honoured. People in Scotland voted to remain in the EU.

I say gently to Jackson Carlaw that the Tories, and Theresa May in particular, should perhaps have been willing to listen as far back as December 2016, when the Scottish Government published “Scotland’s Place in Europe”, in which we said expressly that, notwithstanding our opposition to Brexit, we were putting forward the compromise option of single market and customs union membership. We put that on the table as a potential compromise option and it was completely disregarded.

Ruth Davidson once challenged me to support continued single market membership, but, when her Westminster bosses told her that that was not the policy, she decided otherwise. So, I will take no lessons from Jackson Carlaw on attempting to find compromise on Brexit.

I say again that we do not want Scotland to be dragged out of the European Union against our will. I absolutely will not stand by while we have a no-deal exit imposed on us, because I know how catastrophic that would be.

I end by putting a challenge to Jackson Carlaw and the Conservatives. In this chamber this afternoon, we all have the opportunity to say that a no-deal exit is unacceptable in all circumstances. I

and my colleagues will be voting for that. Will Jackson Carlaw be voting for that?

Jackson Carlaw: We respect the results of all referendums—the First Minister should give that a try.

Perhaps there is one thing on which we can agree: a general election may be required to sort out the issue. First Minister, Scottish Conservatives will stand up for and stand by our decision to remain in the United Kingdom and to back the decision that people across the UK made to leave the European Union, to ensure that this country can move on. If people want more years of division, they should vote for Nicola Sturgeon. If they want to get back to things that matter—the people’s business: schools, jobs and the police—they should vote for us. That is the clear choice that Scotland now faces.

The First Minister: I cannot help thinking that, if the Conservatives had any confidence whatsoever in that message, Ruth Davidson would still be standing where Jackson Carlaw is standing right now. She cannot stomach the direction that Boris Johnson is taking this country in—Boris Johnson’s own brother cannot stomach the direction that he is taking the country in—so the question is, why should the people of Scotland be forced to put up with that?

I really relish the prospect of a general election. The Scottish National Party will beat the Tories in a general election, just as we have done in the past number of elections. Unashamedly and unapologetically, in that election, the SNP’s message will be clear: we stand up for Scotland’s opposition to Brexit and we stand up for Scotland having the right to choose our own future and not to have a future imposed on us by Boris Johnson.

Freedom of the Press

2. Richard Leonard (Central Scotland) (Lab): What value does the First Minister place on the freedom of the press?

The First Minister (Nicola Sturgeon): I place huge value on the freedom of the press, as I hope that every democrat and member of Parliament does. Perhaps that is a note of consensus that we will be able to strike in this question session.

Richard Leonard: Let me examine recent events. On 25 August, the *Sunday Mail* published the shocking story of Allan Marshall, who died after being held in custody in Saughton prison. At the fatal accident inquiry, the sheriff ruled that Allan’s death was “entirely preventable”. When the *Sunday Mail* sought to shine a light on that in the public interest, Scottish ministers went to court in the middle of the night, seeking an interdict to prevent the newspaper from reaching the news-

stands. The Government's case collapsed and was dropped. The paper was published.

Will the First Minister tell us when it was decided to serve the interdict to ban the publication of the *Sunday Mail* on 25 August? When did she become aware of the interdict being served? Did she authorise the legal action? Was it the Cabinet Secretary for Justice? Was it both of them?

The First Minister: It was neither. The decision was taken by the Scottish Prison Service, and it decided later not to proceed with the action in the circumstances. I think that that decision was the right one.

First and foremost, my condolences—and, I am sure, all our condolences—go to the family and friends of Allan Marshall.

When any individual is in the custody of the state, serious obligations lie on the state to respect the dignity and human rights of that individual. When concerns are raised, it is important that they are properly considered and scrutinised. That is what has happened and will continue to happen in that case. There has been a fatal accident inquiry, and the outcome of that inquiry has led to a number of recommendations, which the Scottish Prison Service is now considering fully. It has a matter of weeks within which to put forward its response. The Scottish Prison Service is also taking a number of other actions to ensure that lessons are learned for the future policy of our prison service.

That is the right way to proceed, although none of that takes anything away from the grief and anguish of Allan Marshall's family. As I said at the outset, my thoughts remain very much with them.

Richard Leonard: A week later, the *Sunday Mail* reported:

"It's understood Mr Yousaf was informed at 11.30pm on Saturday night. Lawyers acting for the Scottish Prison Service rejected attempts to resolve the matter out of court after that point."

Let us be clear: Allan Marshall died following a shocking incident in prison service custody. The sheriff says that his death was "entirely preventable". The Government went to court in the dead of night to keep it out of the public eye. Does the First Minister regret that heavy-handed interference in the freedom of the press? Will she apologise to the members of Allan Marshall's family who are in the public gallery today? Will the First Minister agree to a full, independent investigation into her Government's actions, including how much money was wasted, her role and the role of the Cabinet Secretary for Justice in the matter, and will she publish the findings?

The First Minister: First, I had no role in it. The decision to initiate court action was taken by the

Scottish Prison Service, as an employer, to allow for a fuller consideration to be undertaken. The Scottish Prison Service then decided not to proceed with that action, which I think was the right decision.

The closed-circuit television footage was viewed by the fatal accident inquiry. I have since viewed the CCTV footage in full, and the Cabinet Secretary for Justice has offered to meet Allan Marshall's family. I repeat my deepest condolences to them.

I take such matters extremely seriously because I take very seriously the responsibilities of the state when individuals are in custody. Their human rights continue to require to be protected and respected. Therefore, in such situations, if there are lessons to be learned, it is vital that they are learned. The fatal accident inquiry was a critical part of that. HM inspectorate of prisons for Scotland has been asked to oversee the further work that the Scottish Prison Service is undertaking so that any lessons that require to be learned are learned.

It is up to this Parliament's committees to decide whether they want to carry out further inquiries into what happened; it is not for me to interfere with that. However, Richard Leonard should be under no illusions about the seriousness with which my Government and I treat such issues.

Levenmouth Rail Link

Jenny Gilruth (Mid Fife and Glenrothes) (SNP): On 8 August, the Cabinet Secretary for Transport, Infrastructure and Connectivity travelled across the River Forth to the magnificent kingdom of Fife to announce that Leven's railway is set to return after 50 years, confirming £75 million of investment from the Scottish Government to reopen the line. Will the First Minister join me in congratulating the resolute dedication and commitment of the Levenmouth rail campaign?

The First Minister (Nicola Sturgeon): Absolutely. I commend the commitment of stakeholders, including the Levenmouth rail campaign, who engaged with the Levenmouth sustainable transport study. I also pay tribute to Jenny Gilruth for her determination on the issue on behalf of her constituents.

From the study, it emerged that the decision to reopen the rail link to Levenmouth, alongside new bus and active travel provision, was right. The study concluded that that integrated solution would best meet the needs of people and businesses in the Levenmouth area. Earlier this month, the Government instructed Network Rail to proceed with the next stages of design development. We have also committed an additional £5 million to a Levenmouth blueprint fund, which is available to

partners, to maximise the benefits of the Government investment in the area. We look forward to working with Fife Council on that.

Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services

Jeremy Balfour (Lothian) (Con): I was recently contacted by a constituent whose teenage daughter has been left waiting by NHS Lothian for over 35 weeks for child and adolescent mental health services treatment. Meanwhile, her mental health has continued to deteriorate to a point where she is no longer able to attend school. The Scottish Government standard states that 90 per cent of children and young people should start treatment within 18 weeks of referral. Does the First Minister agree that this delay is unacceptable and will she intervene to ensure that my constituent's daughter receives treatment immediately?

The First Minister (Nicola Sturgeon): I thank Jeremy Balfour for raising the issue. Yes, I agree that waits of that length are not acceptable. If he wants to share the details with me—with his constituent's permission—I will ensure that the health secretary looks into the case as a matter of urgency.

As I have said before, and as I said again when I launched the programme for Government, long waits for CAMHS are not acceptable. That is why we have set out a programme of work to reduce those waiting times, which includes additional investment and substantial reform of how we deliver services for young people who need mental health care and treatment. The wellbeing service that we are implementing over the next year is a crucial part of making sure that there are early intervention and preventative services available. That then helps to ensure that specialist services are available for those who need them most. This programme of work is extremely important and it is a priority for the Government. In the meantime, I would be happy to have Jeane Freeman look into the case.

Shetland Ferry Service (Capacity)

Beatrice Wishart (Shetland Islands) (LD): Presiding Officer, it is good to be here. During the by-election, the First Minister experienced first-hand the struggles that people in Shetland have with capacity for freight, cabins and cars on our lifeline ferry service to Aberdeen. What are her priorities for action?

The First Minister (Nicola Sturgeon): As I did on Tuesday, I congratulate Beatrice Wishart on her election success and I welcome her to the Scottish Parliament. I wish her well in representing the good people of Shetland.

I will also take this opportunity to congratulate my party's candidate in the by-election, Tom Wills, for an outstanding result in increasing the Scottish National Party share of the vote. He and indeed other candidates in the by-election made some sensible proposals about how we can continue the work of this Government to improve ferry services, in particular, to the northern isles.

I look forward to having discussions with Beatrice Wishart and her colleagues as we get towards the budget and perhaps I can also look forward to the support of Beatrice Wishart for the budget when we continue to deliver for the people of Shetland on all these matters.

Cystic Fibrosis (Orkambi and Symkevi)

Jackie Baillie (Dumbarton) (Lab): The First Minister will be aware that Orkambi and Symkevi were both rejected by the Scottish Medicines Consortium on 12 August. She will also be aware that these life-changing drugs for cystic fibrosis sufferers have been the subject of a long campaign by my constituent Kelli Gallacher. Can the First Minister advise the chamber how she will ensure that Orkambi and Symkevi are available to all cystic fibrosis sufferers in Scotland?

The First Minister (Nicola Sturgeon): First, I want to get to a position where that is the case and I hope that Jackie Baillie recognises that. I know that Jackie Baillie also recognises the fact that the Scottish Medicines Consortium takes decisions independently of ministers. However, I also know she is aware, because I understand that the health secretary has written to her and has agreed to meet her about this, that we are continuing discussions with the manufacturers of these drugs to get to a position as quickly as possible where the drugs are routinely available to cystic fibrosis sufferers. I hope that we will continue to have the support of Jackie Baillie and other members across the chamber on making progress as quickly as possible with the manufacturers.

Müller Milk & Ingredients (Jobs)

Maureen Watt (Aberdeen South and North Kincardine) (SNP): In the light of Müller Milk & Ingredients' decision to review its depot operations in my constituency of Aberdeen South and North Kincardine, potentially leading to the closure of the depot and up to 50 job losses, can the First Minister confirm that the Scottish Government has offered the services of the partnership action for continuing employment team and that the offer has been taken up?

The First Minister (Nicola Sturgeon): I thank Maureen Watt for raising an issue that I know will be of significant concern to her constituents. In all such situations where job losses are a risk, we

offer the services of the PACE team and we will certainly do that in this case. I will ask the economy minister to correspond directly with Maureen Watt and to keep her posted on the progress of discussions between the Scottish Government, the PACE team and the company.

First and foremost, we always try to avert and avoid redundancies, but where that is not possible, for whatever reason, we want to ensure that the right support is available for affected workers.

Scottish Green New Deal

3. Alison Johnstone (Lothian) (Green): These are extraordinary times, but the climate emergency cannot wait. I commend the Scottish Government for the small steps forward that it is taking in its programme for government, but it has to do much more, and it has to do much more now.

Last week, we launched our proposals for a Scottish green new deal—a transformative programme of change that contrasts with the Scottish Government’s lack of ambition. For example, we propose that the hundreds of millions of pounds that are being spent on new roads be redirected into public transport, cycling and walking. An independent review of the Scottish Government’s clean air strategy that was published last week supports that. Will the First Minister be bold and take funds out of new, big road projects and invest them in public transport instead?

The First Minister (Nicola Sturgeon): Yes, we will be bold. We are bold in the programme for government, and I said that that is not the sum total of our actions. A number of pieces of work will come forward over the next 12 months, all of which will form our comprehensive response to the climate emergency.

I simply quote WWF Scotland’s comments about the programme for government:

“This ... shows real leadership on the climate emergency ... these commitments will slash emissions and deliver benefits to people and the Scottish environment now and for years to come.”

Lord Deben, the chair of the Committee on Climate Change, said:

“Scotland has led the UK in reducing its emissions and has ambitions to lead the world in tackling climate change ... that vision is alive and well ... Scotland is serious about its commitment.”

Those were comments about the programme for government.

It is right that the Government and all governments are challenged to do more and to do it faster, and we are up for that challenge, but I do not think that it does the cause, which both she

and I are committed to, any real justice to try to downplay the significance of what was announced in the programme for government. Instead, let us get behind it and work together to see how we can do more and do it even faster.

Alison Johnstone: I certainly cannot get behind a Government that freezes investment in cycling and walking in the face of a climate emergency.

However, it is not all about transport. Reforesting Scotland is a critical component of the Scottish green new deal but, even under the Scottish Government’s new plans, which were released this week, it will reach its modest target of 21 per cent of Scotland being forested eight years late. It would not reach the Scottish Greens’ target of 40 per cent, which is the European average, for 150 years. There is no shortage of opportunity. Almost a fifth of Scotland is a grouse moor—burnt, degraded and managed so that a few people can enjoy blood sports. Will the First Minister be bold, carry out an urgent review and adopt plans to really reforest Scotland to tackle the climate emergency?

The First Minister: First, on grouse moors, we have the Werritty report coming in a few weeks’ time, and in the programme for government we set out proposals around regional land use partnerships to look at how we use our land in a way that meets our climate ambitions.

On forestry, I am absolutely committed to increasing our ambitions and the delivery of those ambitions, but let us take a moment to reflect on the fact that, last year, Scotland was responsible for 84 per cent—I think that I am getting that figure right—of all trees that were planted across the United Kingdom. We exceeded the target that we set last year. That is why we have increased it from 10,000 hectares to 12,000 hectares, with an additional £5 million. There is no lack of ambition here.

On active travel, we doubled the active travel budget, so, whereas the member talked about freezing it, we are maintaining it at doubled levels. I see the benefits of that in my constituency, and I would be happy to talk to Alison Johnstone more about the Glasgow south city way, which is revolutionising active travel in my constituency. Patrick Harvie should be well aware of that. There are currently about 11 of these projects across the country.

We have set out bold plans and we will continue to do that. Even if the Greens cannot quite bring themselves to admit this, all international experts—in fact, many experts in the UK and in Scotland—recognise that Scotland is actually leading the world.

The Presiding Officer (Ken Macintosh): We have some more supplementary questions. The first is from Christine Grahame.

Food Promotions

Christine Grahame (Midlothian South, Tweeddale and Lauderdale) (SNP): Ninety per cent of parents who responded to a recent survey blamed food promotions such as “buy one, get one free”—BOGOF—for increases in obesity. That is of concern, especially as one in five four and five-year-olds is obese. Does this week’s announcement, under the programme for government, of a good food bill provide scope to ban such promotions?

The First Minister (Nicola Sturgeon): I welcome the results of the survey that Christine Grahame cited. Time and again, we see such surveys: that reaffirms the need to take action to help families to make healthier choices.

The case for taking mandatory action has been made. This week’s programme for government sets out our commitment to introduce a bill on restricting food promotions before the end of the current session of Parliament. That bill is in addition to the good food nation bill, which also gives us the opportunity, as a country, to translate our excellence in food and drink produce into better diets. However, there is no doubt that restricting point-of-sale junk food promotions that encourage overconsumption and impulse buying of junk food has a very important role to play in meeting our target of halving childhood obesity by 2030.

Empty Homes

Ross Greer (West Scotland) (Green): What will the Scottish Government do about the 39,100 empty homes across Scotland, now that it has abandoned its manifesto commitment to introduce compulsory sale orders?

The First Minister (Nicola Sturgeon): As Kevin Stewart outlined at committee this week, given the constraints on the legislative programme space and, particularly, given the potential implications of Brexit, unfortunately we do not, at this stage, expect to be in a position to progress our compulsory sale order power in this parliamentary session. However, we remain committed to introducing that power for local authorities. There have been a number of issues and challenges with the current proposals that we have to think through a bit more—not least, in order to ensure that any proposal is compatible with the European convention on human rights.

Local authorities have other options, of course. Many local authorities already use their compulsory purchase order powers to tackle

empty homes. I think that over the past three years, 13 CPOs have been submitted under housing legislation, and all 13 have been approved. Nine involved compulsory acquisition of empty homes, in some form.

We will continue to work closely with the Scottish empty homes partnership to support authorities to use their existing powers, as we continue to plan to introduce the new powers to which we previously committed.

Stone of Destiny

Murdo Fraser (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con): The Scottish Government has opened a consultation on the possible relocation of the stone of destiny from Edinburgh castle to Perth, where it would form the centrepiece of a new cultural centre in Perth city halls, which is a development of huge economic importance to Perth and the surrounding area. When is a decision likely to be made on the future of the stone of Scone? Does the First Minister agree that it is time that the stone came home to Perthshire?

The First Minister (Nicola Sturgeon): The Cabinet Secretary for Environment, Climate Change and Land Reform has reminded me that I have Perthshire members of the Scottish Parliament surrounding me.

Murdo Fraser has put his case on the record. I hope that he will understand that, as one of the commissioners for safeguarding the regalia who will take that decision and not, in this case, as First Minister, it is very important that I do not express a view while the consultation is on-going. The commissioners will have to look at the outcome of the consultation and all the other evidence, then reach a decision. I hope that that decision is reached soon after the consultation ends. However, I am sure that Murdo Fraser will be pleased to have put his argument on the record.

European Union Farming Funding

Emma Harper (South Scotland) (SNP): At long last, the United Kingdom Government is paying back the £160 million that it stole from Scottish farmers. Despite rural payments being the responsibility of the Scottish Government, which has already said that that cash will go straight to farmers, the UK Government has sought to decree how that money should be ring fenced. Does the UK Government’s seeking to dictate to Holyrood on spending represent the thin end of the wedge? Does the First Minister reject such attempts to erode the powers of the Scottish Parliament?

The First Minister (Nicola Sturgeon): I agree very much with Emma Harper and thank her for raising that important issue.

I welcome the fact that, at long last, farmers are getting back the money that was stolen from them by a Conservative Government. Just think about the logic of it. The Conservative Government nicked that money from our farmers then spent six long years refusing to give it back, and when it was finally shamed into having to give it back, it tried to claim credit for doing so. That is absolutely absurd. I am thankful that the farmers will now get their money. The Scottish Government will continue to do the right thing by Scotland's farmers.

Dundee Drugs Commission

Jenny Marra (North East Scotland) (Lab): The First Minister will know that the Dundee drugs commission reported on 16 August. The report showed that the character of Dundee's drugs problem is different from that in the rest of Scotland, in that more young people are tragically dying there, poly drug use is far more common, and the people who die are more likely to have lived in poverty.

The report was scathing about the national health service drugs service. It is isolated, unaccountable, maverick, punitive and wilfully ignores national and regional best practice. That service is directly under the Government's control. How can the First Minister make the Dundee drugs service better for our citizens, and reduce the number of deaths?

The First Minister: I welcome the work of the drugs commission. Its work is obviously very important in the context of Dundee. Points about differing contexts in some circumstances have been well made and have to be considered properly. I also think that the recommendations in the commission's report will have wider relevance to Scotland more generally.

The Minister for Public Health, Sport and Wellbeing has already met the chair of the Dundee drugs commission to discuss the report, and we are considering the recommendations for Government carefully. Obviously the recommendations will feed in to the wider work that the Government is leading. We have commissioned the new drugs task force, and I announced additional funding earlier this week. The Minister for Public Health, Sport and Wellbeing will make a statement to Parliament this afternoon to update members on that work. I am sure that the contents of that statement will be of interest to Jenny Marra and other members from across the chamber.

Rape (Early Stages of Dating)

4. Stuart McMillan (Greenock and Inverclyde) (SNP): To ask the First Minister what action the Scottish Government is taking in response to

Police Scotland figures that show that more than 160 people have reported being raped in the very early stages of dating in 2018-19. (S5F-03499)

The First Minister: All forms of violence against women and girls is a violation of human rights and must not be tolerated. I welcome Police Scotland's new campaign, which seeks to tackle sexual violence head on and to make it clear that sex without consent is always rape.

We are working with schools, colleges, universities and employers to deliver prevention programmes through our equally safe strategy. We continue to pilot, with Rape Crisis Scotland and Zero Tolerance, a whole-school approach to tackling gender-based violence. We also support Rape Crisis Scotland's national sexual violence prevention programme, which has been expanded to all Scottish local authorities.

However, only by tackling outdated attitudes in society can we create the conditions for sexual violence to be reduced and, ultimately, eradicated, which should be an aim for all of us.

Stuart McMillan: I recognise that the #GetConsent campaign is aimed primarily at men aged between 18 and 35 because that is the peak age for offending. However, does the First Minister agree that informed discussions about sex and consent need to take place in school settings in order to prevent sexual crime in the first place?

The First Minister: I agree strongly with that, which is why the work that I referred to in my earlier answer is so important. Education and prevention are the clear focus of the equally safe strategy, for the reasons that Stuart McMillan talked about.

We want every child and young person in Scotland to develop mutually respectful, responsible and confident relationships with other children, young people and adults. In the summer, we published a resource for professionals that aims to help them to support young people in their understanding of healthy relationships and consent. In addition, national guidance for schools will be developed to set out the range of support, and the practical prevention and intervention measures that are available to ensure the safety and wellbeing of all children and young people.

Sectarian Behaviour

5. Annie Wells (Glasgow) (Con): To ask the First Minister what action the Scottish Government will take in response to the sectarian disorder in Glasgow at the weekend. (S5F-03500)

The First Minister (Nicola Sturgeon): First, I take this opportunity to praise Police Scotland for the swift and effective way in which it managed an extremely difficult and challenging situation.

The Government has been clear and will continue to be clear that the right to peaceful and lawful assembly is an important part of our democracy, but we are equally clear that violent and sectarian disruption is not part of our democracy and should never be tolerated. That is why the justice secretary is working with Glasgow City Council and Police Scotland to ensure that we do all that we can to avoid that kind of behaviour being repeated.

As we have already stated, we remain open to giving full consideration to any proposals to tackle sectarianism in addition to the work that we are already undertaking, and to working with all partners to eradicate the scourge of sectarianism from our society once and for all.

Annie Wells: I understand that Police Scotland has advised that this weekend's marches should go ahead because, after last week's disgrace, it thinks that people will turn up anyway. We have to understand how we got here.

How on earth did an Scottish National Party Glasgow City Council leader think it was a good idea to let a republican march go through Govan on an old firm weekend? Anyone in Glasgow could have told her that that was a bad idea.

Everyone here condemns the unacceptable behaviour that shamed our city last week. Does the First Minister think that Susan Aitken was right to let that march go ahead?

The First Minister: I think that a really bad idea—probably the worst idea of all in this context—is to try to turn such a serious issue into a party-political bun fight in the way that Annie Wells has done. I say to her in all seriousness that she should reflect very carefully on the content and tone of the question that she has just asked. I suggest to the interim leader of the Scottish Conservatives that he might want to do likewise. This is not a party-political issue; it is a long-standing and challenging issue, but we are determined to eradicate it.

First and foremost, the people who are responsible for the outrageous and unacceptable scenes on the streets of Govan last Friday night are the people who behaved in an unacceptable, violent and sectarian way.

Glasgow City Council operates within the law on the basis of police and other advice. It takes the decisions that it is advised are the right ones to take. We are having discussions with Glasgow City Council to develop an understanding of whether the council has the powers that it needs within the existing law or whether changes to the law might be required. We will continue to take forward those discussions in a responsible way.

We will continue to invest heavily in projects and initiatives to tackle sectarianism. In this chamber, we opposed the repeal of the legislation that was trying to deal with the issue at football matches. I regret the fact that Opposition parties repealed that legislation, but Parliament took its decision.

Above all, we will listen and talk to anybody in considering how we deal effectively with a societal problem that has no place in modern Scotland. It is a scourge in our society. Politicians who are serious about tackling the problem will come together, so that we speak with one voice and do not engage in the tactics that Annie Wells has disgracefully used.

John Mason (Glasgow Shettleston) (SNP): The First Minister might know that, of the two marches that are planned for this Saturday, one is starting in my constituency and one is finishing there. Can she give any reassurance to my constituents that they will be able to go about their normal lives on Saturday without being disrupted?

The First Minister: Citizens, whether they are in John Mason's constituency, my constituency or any other constituency, have a right to go about their normal business. I have a duty—we all have a duty—to stand up for the rights of law-abiding citizens.

The two marches that will take place in Glasgow this weekend have been given approval. I strongly support Police Scotland to take the necessary action to facilitate the marches. I appeal to all those who will be involved to conduct themselves in an orderly manner and to demonstrate that the right to march and demonstrate can be exercised without being abused.

A strong framework of legislation is already in place but, as I said to Annie Wells, we will look carefully at where improvements can be made. Dr Michael Rosie, an independent adviser, has been asked to review the implementation of the 2016 recommendations on marches, parades and static demonstrations, and he will put forward proposals on what more might be needed. Of course, legislation has an important part to play, but it is not the only way to tackle such problems. The discussions that the justice secretary will have with Glasgow City Council and Police Scotland will not be limited to looking only at legislative measures.

James Kelly (Glasgow) (Lab): The scenes that we witnessed in Govan on Friday night were unacceptable and shocking. Bigotry and intolerance have no place in a modern progressive society. In reacting to those events, we all have a responsibility to be careful about our language and tone.

In response to Lord McConnell's comments that more can be done to tackle sectarianism, what is being done to work with parties across Parliament

and with groups across Scotland to tackle bigotry and intolerance?

The First Minister: In one respect, Lord McConnell is right: when we see the scenes that we saw on Friday night, it is self-evident that more needs to be done. First and foremost, there is a responsibility on Government, through its work with councils, but I am glad to hear James Kelly agree that there is a responsibility on all of us. Cross-party and non-political leadership is needed on the issue.

We have invested heavily by increasing the funding that goes to anti-sectarian education projects in schools, prisons, workplaces and communities, and we will continue to do that. We will also continue to work with those who are doing very good work in this area.

James Kelly said that he wants to work with us. I welcome that. I recall that when the Offensive Behaviour at Football and Threatening Communications (Scotland) Act 2012 was being repealed, he said that he would develop an anti-sectarianism strategy that was fit for 2018. I am not aware of him having brought forward such a strategy yet, but I make an open offer to him: if he does so, we will consider that, in addition to the work that we are already doing and the further work that we are considering doing. I believe that the issue is one that we should come together to tackle. If James Kelly wants to bring forward his proposals, I am happy to give him an assurance that we will consider them fully.

ScotRail Services

6. Colin Smyth (South Scotland) (Lab): To ask the First Minister what the Scottish Government's response is to the recent disruption on ScotRail services. (S5F-03513)

The First Minister (Nicola Sturgeon): The overall reliability of ScotRail services has improved this year—for example, the number of train crew-related cancellations has reduced by 91 per cent. That said, the recent disruption to services, including on the last weekend of the Edinburgh festival, when passengers were significantly inconvenienced as a result of services being overwhelmed by demand, was clearly unacceptable and lessons must be learned from that. A review by the ScotRail Alliance is under way to identify actions that will strengthen planning for future events.

Colin Smyth: In March, the First Minister said that ScotRail's first remedial plan was "the last chance saloon". Since then, as the First Minister said, passengers suffered utter chaos at Waverley station on the last day of the Edinburgh festival. Last month's ScotRail performance figures were the worst for August since the franchise began.

We are talking about a franchise that has been breached by ScotRail three times on the First Minister's watch. It is no wonder that 79 per cent of Scottish National Party voters want ScotRail to be returned to public ownership.

It is now time for the First Minister to make a decision. This month, the Government must begin the process of deciding whether to renew the Abellio franchise until 2025 or to stand up for passengers and agree to bring it to an end at its first expiry date in 2022. Which will it be, First Minister? Will you end this failing franchise at the earliest opportunity—yes or no?

The First Minister: First, we will continue to work with ScotRail to make sure that, where improvements need to be made, they are made. That is first and foremost in the interests of the travelling public. Secondly, we will take decisions about the future of the franchise in an orderly and responsible manner, and we will update Parliament as we take those decisions.

However, although Labour has talked about public ownership and public control of the railways, it has been the Scottish Government that has acted. We acted to bring to the Scottish Parliament the powers—the most recent Labour Government blocked this for years—that mean that we now have the ability to consider public sector bids for the franchise. As I said, Labour blocked that step forward for years.

When it comes to nationalisation of the railways, the Parliament still does not have the powers that would allow us to do that. Before we get much further into a discussion about the matter, I invite Labour to say whether it wants to join us in calling for all the powers over rail to be devolved to this Parliament so that that discussion becomes meaningful rather than abstract. I think that I am still waiting for an answer to that question from Labour.

Richard Lyle (Uddingston and Bellshill) (SNP): Can the First Minister give an indication of what proportion of train delays are attributable to Network Rail? Does she agree that, as I have said previously in the chamber, Colin Smyth and his colleagues might want to heed the advice of their former transport minister and support our request for the functions of Network Rail to be devolved so that it, too, is answerable to the Scottish Government?

The First Minister: Richard Lyle raises a really important point, which I know that the other parties do not want to address. Where problems—there are plenty of them—are the responsibility of ScotRail, we need to deal with that and resolve those problems. That is our responsibility, and we take it seriously.

However, over the past few months, more than half of all delays on the ScotRail network have been the responsibility of Network Rail, which does not report to me or to the transport minister in this Parliament; it reports to the United Kingdom Secretary of State for Transport. If we are to have the same ability to resolve problems with Network Rail that we have with ScotRail, we need to make sure that all the powers in question lie with this Parliament. I do not know why Opposition parties would continue to oppose that. When we have that ability, we can have more meaningful discussions about the long-term future and ownership of the railway network.

I say again to Labour: it is an open door; come with us and we will go together to the Tories at Westminster to demand that powers for railways be completely devolved to this Parliament.

Jamie Greene (West Scotland) (Con): It is a shame that the First Minister was not at the Rural Economy and Connectivity Committee yesterday, where she would have learned that the managing director of ScotRail already has the additional devolved powers that she has been calling for. If she had been there, maybe she would have reflected on her answer before responding to Mr Lyle.

Given that the incidents that were experienced by ScotRail passengers in Edinburgh over the summer were a disgrace, is it not the case that the Cabinet Secretary for Transport, Infrastructure and Connectivity should take responsibility for ensuring that there is greater co-operation between the rail companies, the police and the local authorities when managing big events? It is his responsibility to ensure that it does not happen again.

The First Minister: Of course we take responsibility for ensuring that. We work with ScotRail to ensure that passengers are not let down in the way that I agree they were at the end of the Edinburgh festival. However, it is simply a statement of fact that Network Rail reports to UK ministers and not to ministers in this Parliament. It would make sense to have those powers fully joined up.

On the member's first comment, I am happy to come to his committee and talk about those or any other matters, any time that he wants to invite me—there you go.

The Presiding Officer: On that consensual note, we conclude First Minister's question time.

12:47

On resuming—

Doors Open Days 2019

The Deputy Presiding Officer (Christine Grahame): The next item of business is a members' business debate on motion S5M-18570, in the name of Kenneth Gibson, on doors open days 2019. The debate will be concluded without any question being put.

Motion debated,

That the Parliament congratulates the Scottish Civic Trust and its partners on organising 2019's Doors Open Days, which will take place across Scotland throughout September; understands that Doors Open Days is Scotland's largest festival that offers free access to over 1,000 venues across the country; notes that this annual event provides people with a chance to explore some of Scotland's architecturally and culturally significant buildings for free, with access to properties that are either not usually open to the public or that would normally charge an entry fee; is aware that Doors Open Days first took place in Glasgow and Ayr in 1990 where it formed part of the European City of Culture celebrations, meaning that the festival is now in its 30th year; acknowledges the hard work of the 6,300 volunteers who gave their time to run tours, steward sites and activities in 2018 and the many more who are anticipated to participate in this anniversary year; encourages local residents and visitors alike to take the opportunity offered by Doors Open Days to discover some of the world-class examples of architecture and building design in their communities, including the 24 sites available to visit in Cunninghame North, and believes that Doors Open Days make a positive and valuable impact on local communities by increasing knowledge of Scotland's built heritage.

12:47

Kenneth Gibson (Cunninghame North) (SNP): I am delighted to open the debate, and grateful to colleagues who signed my motion, allowing us to draw attention to doors open days in Scotland, which this year marks its 30th incarnation.

Throughout the month of September, Scotland's historic sites open their doors to the public, free of charge, to celebrate Scotland's heritage and built environment. The first ever doors open days were held in France in 1984. Following France's lead, the Netherlands, Sweden, the Republic of Ireland and Belgium began to open their historical sites to the general public.

After witnessing the success in the Netherlands, John Gerrard—then director of the Scottish Civic Trust—introduced the concept to Scotland and piloted the scheme in Glasgow and Ayr in 1990. As part of the European city of culture celebrations, heritage sites were opened to the public to promote heritage and architecture.

After the resounding success of the pilot schemes, doors open days celebrations now take place across all 32 of Scotland's local authority areas. Their purpose is to ensure that Scotland's built heritage—new and old—is made accessible on weekends in September to people who are living in and visiting the country. Alongside the opening of historic sites, special exhibitions of new and old artefacts are showcased and expert tours are offered to visitors.

Doors open days now take place across 49 European countries and have spread to the United States, Canada and Australia.

This year, hundreds of thousands of people throughout the signatory states of the European cultural convention will celebrate Europe's cultural heritage under the programme, Europe: a common heritage. The principal purpose of the convention is to deepen and develop a European culture, building on local heritage to further cement bonds with our European neighbours.

The events in Scotland throughout September are Scotland's contribution to European heritage days and the broader European project. This year, the celebrations will be enhanced, as doors open days will coincide with Historic Environment Scotland's heritage awareness day on Thursday 28 September. As colleagues are aware, Historic Environment Scotland is tasked with investigating, caring for and promoting Scotland's rich historic environment.

This month, more than 1,000 buildings in Scotland are expected to open, generating over 200,000 visits to our heritage and architectural sites across the country. I welcome efforts to enhance citizen participation in the events. We should encourage locals and visitors to take the opportunity to explore some of the examples of world-class architecture and building design in Scotland's communities.

This weekend in North Ayrshire, 24 venues will be available to visit. For example, Ardrossan castle heritage society will open Ardrossan castle, with exhibitions of recently excavated artefacts—in fact, I was involved in excavating some of those. In Irvine, the Scottish maritime museum will open its 1920s shipyard worker's tenement flat and the fitting shed to allow visitors to explore the history of their ancestors.

Similarly, the old kirk in Beith, which was built in 1590 and was where the Rev John Witherspoon, who was a signatory to the US declaration of independence, president of the College of New Jersey—which is now Princeton University—and an ancestor of Oscar-winning actress Reese Witherspoon, was parish minister from 1745 to 1757, will be open to the public.

In the north-east, the Aberdeen treasure hub museum centre will hold an exhibition. The hub is a purpose-built storage facility for Aberdeen Art Gallery and Museums to house its extensive collection of decorative art, costume, painting, sculpture and objects relating to Aberdeen's archaeology, maritime history, science and industry.

Glasgow Building Preservation Trust has organised a doors open day festival to allow the public to explore more than 200 open buildings, with guided walks and events throughout the city. The festival highlights iconic historic sites and displays the city's stunning and well-preserved Victorian, art nouveau and gothic architecture. Doors open days covers the medieval architecture of Glasgow cathedral, which was built between the 13th and 15th centuries, the legacy of Glasgow being the second city of the empire and the Victorian architecture of Kelvingrove art gallery and museum and the city chambers, which were built in the late 19th and early 20th century, allowing those national treasures to be highlighted.

In Fife, to mark the 30th year of doors open days, a record 65 sites will be open to the public. One of the most popular is expected to be a 1940s-era house in Cupar that is fitted and furnished in the style of the pre-war era and has appliances from that time to create a truly immersive experience and to bring history alive.

In Stirling, the city's rich and vibrant heritage sites will open to mark the 25th anniversary of Stirling's participation in doors open days. In the Scottish Borders, a guided walking tour will showcase Stobs camp, a first world war training and internment camp, which is one of the world's best-preserved prisoner of war camps. Nearer the end of the celebrations, on the island of Orkney, Stromness museum will display its vast collections relating to archaeology and ethnography as well as maritime, social and natural history.

Last but not least, in Edinburgh, Barnton quarry, which was utilised during the second world war as the home of the Royal Air Force operations centre for the Turnhouse sector 13 group, RAF fighter command, will be accessible to the public. This year, the capital will also open eight new venues for the public to explore, such as Panmure house, which is the only surviving home of Adam Smith, the great Scottish economist and philosopher, from where he authored four new editions of his seminal work "The Wealth of Nations".

I have mentioned only a few of the myriad historic and heritage sites that will open to the public throughout this month. A hugely varied geographic and subject choice is on offer.

In closing, I offer a special note of thanks to the Scottish Civic Trust, which provides essential

funding and organisational assistance to ensure that doors open days take place throughout Scotland. I express my thanks to the 6,300 volunteers who last year gave up 29,000 hours of their time to ensure that 2018's events were such a great success, and I thank in advance those who will help this year.

We should all note the positive and valuable impact that doors open days have on our local communities by increasing knowledge of Scotland's built heritage. As the American historian David McCullough stated,

"History is who we are and why we are the way we are."

Therefore, we should strive to celebrate and explore Scotland's extensive and rich heritage, and I hope that colleagues and their families will join thousands of others to enjoy doors open days events this month.

12:54

Rachael Hamilton (Ettrick, Roxburgh and Berwickshire) (Con): I am delighted to speak in this debate on doors open days. I thank Kenneth Gibson for bringing the debate to the chamber and for celebrating the event's 30th birthday. What is not to like about Scotland's largest free festival, which celebrates heritage and the built environment and offers free access to thousands of venues across Scotland throughout September?

Undoubtedly, it is a fantastic initiative and it gives the public an insight into some of Scotland's greatest buildings. It is an experience to savour and one that some people have perhaps never had before.

The aim of doors open days is to ensure that Scotland's built heritage, new and old, is made accessible on weekends in September to local people and those who are visiting. I encourage everyone to take advantage of that opportunity.

I am sure that we have all looked at buildings and wondered what lies behind their facade. The built environment in our local communities often tells weird and wonderful stories of our past and doors open days are a great opportunity to get a sneak peek of areas that are otherwise out of bounds.

Doors open days are co-ordinated nationally by the Scottish Civic Trust and are part of the European heritage days, alongside Scottish archaeology month. I must commend the Scottish Civic Trust for its work, as it helps communities to develop their local built heritage and take charge in seeing it develop further. The Scottish Civic Trust can take the credit for helping to save parts of Edinburgh's new town, now a United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

world heritage site, and New Lanark, which undoubtedly offers the best display of life during the industrial revolution.

In my constituency of Ettrick, Roxburgh and Berwickshire, doors open days is a roaring success, with the majority of open buildings being in Hawick. Many buildings—11—are participating again in 2019, and two walking tours are planned, which take in textiles, rugby and a first world war military training camp, which is called Stobs camp and is based near Teviothead just outside Hawick.

One building that attracted my attention was the Borders distillery. The building was originally designed for the Hawick Urban Electric Company in a Tudor Cotswold style in the early 20th century and then became an engineers' workshop for Turnbull and Scott. It was brought back into use by the Borders distillery in 2018 with a tasteful conversion, which—brilliantly—has won a number of national awards, including the Scottish Borders Council design award in 2018 and the national Civic Trust and Royal Incorporation of Architects in Scotland awards, too.

There is a chance to have a free distillery tour and see how its award-winning spirit is made. There is a great history behind Kerr's gin, which people will get a taste of at the end of the tour—they will not be disappointed.

The fantastic men's shed, which we have often talked about in the chamber, is also open and I would thoroughly recommend visiting to see the excellent work that it does in tackling social isolation and fostering an important community spirit. Not only is it self-funding; the people involved in it carry out tasks in the local community, such as building flower boxes and bird boxes, refurbishing old furniture and making garden furniture.

I thank all those who are involved in doors open days, because they would not be achievable without the volunteers. My special thanks go to all the volunteers who will work tirelessly to give tours. I am proud, as I am sure everyone else in the chamber is, of what they do to showcase what we have on offer in Scotland and of their hard work in opening up such fantastic buildings to the public.

Scotland has the world's most intriguing, eclectic and awe-inspiring built architecture. I encourage everyone to visit and explore one of the many buildings that are open in September. I wish everybody in Hawick all the best and thank them for their hard work. I hope that more places in the Borders manage to emulate the work of Hawick in the future.

12:58

Gordon MacDonald (Edinburgh Pentlands) (SNP): I, too, thank Kenny Gibson for lodging the motion, which gives us the opportunity to highlight some interesting buildings in our constituencies.

Doors open days is Scotland's largest free festival that celebrates our heritage and built environment, offering free access to more than 1,000 venues across the country throughout September every year. As Kenny Gibson said, the first Scottish doors open days took place in Glasgow and Ayr, in 1990, when they formed part of the European city of culture celebrations. In the following year, 1991, the Cockburn Association—Edinburgh's civic trust—organised the first Edinburgh doors open day.

Twenty-nine years later, this year's event will take place on 28 and 29 September, when, across Edinburgh, a diverse range of buildings will be open to the public for the weekend—from the Seafield treatment works, which is Scotland's largest waste water treatment facility, to the anatomical museum at the University of Edinburgh, which opened in 1884 and has on display the skeleton of the serial killer William Burke.

I have no doubt that both of those buildings will attract the curious visitor, but there are also plenty of places for residents of Edinburgh Pentlands to explore on their own doorsteps. Harlaw house is one such example. It was built in 1848 as a waterkeeper's cottage, soon after the reservoir was constructed, and it is now a visitor information centre for the Pentland hills regional park, with a wildlife garden maintained by the dedicated local friends of the Pentlands group. A variety of other local community organisations will be showcasing their work, including Harlaw hydro, Balerno village trust, Youth Vision, Bonaly scout camp, BobCat alpacas and Malleny angling association.

Once members have managed to make their way round all those projects, they could head out to Ratho Byres forge, which is a family-run business—established over 40 years ago—that designs and creates contemporary metalwork. It offers a unique opportunity to see blacksmith forging of mild steel using the traditional hammer and anvil.

Heading back into Edinburgh, members could stop off at St Nicholas's church in Sighthill, which opened in 1957 and this month celebrates the founding of the original parish church 80 years ago. It is B listed and was designed by Ross, Doak & Whitelaw in a modernist style. With its copper roof, it was intended to be a landmark on the A71 route into Edinburgh.

A short distance away, in Wester Hailes, is the WHALE arts centre, which is a brilliant community

arts venue. Built in 2000, it was designed by Zoo Architects and was funded through the Scottish Arts Council. The building is a unique local asset, with its distinctive murals that brighten up the community. In its exhibition spaces, arts workshop, performance space and garden there is always something interesting going on.

After that, there is no better place to have a rest than at Redhall walled garden, which is an 18th century garden and summerhouse run by the Scottish Association for Mental Health. It is a working garden that provides a beautiful setting for a remarkable mental health service, nestled in the peaceful haven of Colinton dell. It is truly an oasis in the city, which I have visited on many occasions. I recommend that members go along and see it for themselves.

For the past 29 years, doors open days have been an annual event in Edinburgh, when, with many others, I have had the opportunity to visit remarkable buildings that are not normally open to the public. I urge Edinburgh residents to take advantage of the opportunity at the end of this month to satisfy their curiosity and find out what might lie behind that door.

13:02

Rhoda Grant (Highlands and Islands) (Lab): I, too, congratulate Kenneth Gibson on securing the debate and join him in paying tribute to the Scottish Civic Trust and its partners for organising doors open days this year.

As others have said, the event allows attractions, museums and historical and cultural sites to give free access to the public at some point in September each year. That encourages people into such places but, more importantly, it allows those who cannot normally afford access to enjoy them this month.

Access to our culture and heritage is very important for education, especially among young people, but it is also becoming increasingly important for our wellbeing. Historic Environment Scotland is investigating the effect of heritage on our wellbeing and happiness. We all acknowledge the importance of wellbeing, but we seldom give it priority. However, it is important for both physical and mental health and for the pursuit of happiness. Historic Environment Scotland's survey closes tomorrow. I encourage members to respond to it so that we can perhaps get better information on the links between wellbeing and our heritage.

While preparing for the debate, I looked at the doors open days website and saw that many organisations and places in the Highlands and Islands are involved in this year's event. There are too many of them to mention them all now, but

they include churches, civic buildings, museums and other places of interest. I noticed that the Highland folk museum, which is one of my personal favourites, is taking part. I have not been there for a long time, so, if the debate does nothing else, it might prompt me to go along and have another look. Indeed, it might prompt others to make use of and visit places of interest in their areas.

In Moray, fittingly, there is the opportunity to visit a distillery. The environmental research institute in Caithness is also taking part, which I thought was slightly different and worth bringing to people's attention. It is a centre for excellence that is placed very close to the flow country and that is leading research on the protection of peatlands. It hosts students from all over the world, including some who are doing PhDs. It is very interesting that the institute is involved, and those who are interested in our natural heritage should go along and see some of the wonderful work that is taking place.

Those few examples show the spectrum of places of interest that are taking part. There is something for everyone, and I welcome the initiative. It would be great to see it extended in order that those who cannot afford to pay entrance fees might access the sites more often. Nonetheless, it is a wonderful opportunity and I encourage people to take part and make use of it.

13:06

The Cabinet Secretary for Culture, Tourism and External Affairs (Fiona Hyslop): In closing today's debate, I first thank Kenneth Gibson for securing it through his motion. I also thank all those members who are present and who contributed to such an informative debate.

The motion rightly congratulates and celebrates the Scottish Civic Trust on its role in co-ordinating the doors open days initiative over the past 30 years. Over that period, the initiative has become a vital part of how we appreciate and experience our rich built heritage. I add to those that have already been expressed my own thanks to everyone from the Scottish Civic Trust for all the hard work that goes in to doors open days.

Since the organisation's birth in 1967, the Scottish Civic Trust has contributed to the care, promotion and understanding of our rich built heritage. As the cabinet secretary with responsibility for the historic environment, I have had the pleasure of seeing at first hand the excellent work that is undertaken by the trust on behalf of the people of Scotland. The trust's core activities give the organisation the opportunity to raise the profile of Scotland and its rich built environment, and it does a magnificent job in promoting our remarkable built heritage.

We are here to celebrate the doors open days initiative in its 30th anniversary year and the co-ordination role of the Scottish Civic Trust. Last Thursday, the First Minister helped to launch this year's festival at Govanhill baths, with a special concert set among the installation "Blooms with a View". As noted in the motion, the initiative is Scotland's largest, free, annual architectural event. It is also part of European heritage days, alongside Scottish archaeology month, which is co-ordinated by Archaeology Scotland.

I am sure that over the years many members have taken the opportunity that is provided by the scheme to visit historic properties and other buildings across Scotland that are not usually open to the public. In his motion, Kenneth Gibson acknowledges the number of activities that there are in North Ayrshire. Rhoda Grant highlighted the environmental research institute in Caithness. In his speech, Gordon MacDonald talked about the curious and eclectic stories of Edinburgh and the extensive offering that there is in the Pentlands, as well as the Ratho blacksmith activity. Rachael Hamilton mentioned the Borders distillery in Hawick, which is a remarkable reuse of heritage; I visited the distillery recently, and I certainly commend a visit to it. Next weekend, doors open days will open up a wide range of properties in my own area of West Lothian, from Blackburn house to Linlithgow museums, as well as churches of a variety of denominations.

Since it was first established 30 years ago, the doors open days scheme has become a hugely successful and popular annual event. The figures are impressive: the initiative provides free access to 1,000 venues, attracts 100,000 participants and generates more than 200,000 visits across Scotland. That is a remarkable success story and demonstrates clearly the passion and fascination that the people of Scotland have for their built heritage. The scheme allows the people of Scotland and visitors from around the globe to explore and learn about the myriad of different buildings that form part of our story and collective heritage.

As set out by Kenneth Gibson, the doors open days initiative, along with Scottish archaeology month, forms Scotland's contribution to European heritage days, with more than 25 million people from across Europe and an additional 50 countries taking part in around 50,000 events annually.

Doors open days unite our communities in unique celebrations of heritage, in our own special ways. Experiencing our shared heritage in that way is critically important for us in these deeply uncertain times, as it helps us to understand one another. Across Europe, we have a shared past and shared values, and we must not lose sight of that.

The original doors open day in 1990 meant that Scotland was the first of the United Kingdom nations to participate in European heritage days. In this 30th anniversary year, it is fitting that the cultural embassies strand of the festival links individual Scottish buildings to 27 European countries with which Scotland has cultural ties. Some of those ties are well known, such as our links with Poland, which are recorded in the Borders at the great Polish map of Scotland—I know that you have a keen interest in that, Presiding Officer—and the world famous Italian chapel in Orkney. The cultural embassies also shine a light on less familiar connections, such as between Glenrothes and Estonia, and Perth and Malta. I congratulate the Scottish Civic Trust on that imaginative initiative, which celebrates our European ties.

I want to mention the involvement of the young advisory panel in this year's doors open days. The panel of six young people have worked with designers to produce printed guides and video content, which include itineraries and places to eat, for days out in six of the doors open weekends. I welcome that initiative, which was funded by the Year of Young People National Lottery Fund and which builds on the activity that was encouraged by Scotland's year of young people in 2018.

Although the doors open days project is co-ordinated by the Scottish Civic Trust, I am pleased that the Scottish Government has been able to support the Scottish Civic Trust's work through Historic Environment Scotland. HES has funded the project for many years now, as Historic Scotland since 1991 and now as Historic Environment Scotland. Since becoming Historic Environment Scotland in 2015, the organisation has provided more than £237,000 in support of the doors open days initiative.

The importance of our built heritage to Scotland's culture, economy and wellbeing cannot be overestimated, and the doors open days initiative plays a key role in enabling local communities, as well as visitors to our country, to engage with the built heritage around us. I encourage all MSPs and as many people as possible to take full advantage of doors open days, which offer the chance to enjoy the buildings that are part of our history, culture and communities.

I congratulate the Scottish Civic Trust and thank its dedicated and hardworking staff and volunteers who help to support doors open days. I wish them well in the continued success of the initiative. Their hard work has increased appreciation and enjoyment of Scotland's built and cultural heritage, and has helped to promote inclusion in Scotland's civic spaces.

13:12

Meeting suspended.

14:00

On resuming—

Portfolio Question Time

Transport, Infrastructure and Connectivity

Cycling Action Plan

1. **Daniel Johnson (Edinburgh Southern) (Lab):** To ask the Scottish Government whether it will provide an update on its progress implementing the cycling action plan for Scotland. (S5O-03481)

The Cabinet Secretary for Transport, Infrastructure and Connectivity (Michael Matheson): I gave a full statement to Parliament on 18 June 2019, updating it on the progress in implementing the cycling action plan for Scotland. Cycling Scotland is undertaking a review of progress on the cycling action plan 2020, which will be reported on once it has concluded. At the same time, Cycling Scotland is working with other partners on the actions, outcomes and priorities that will be needed beyond 2020, which will play a key part in delivering the greener, safer, happier and healthier Scotland that we all want to see.

Daniel Johnson: The plan in question sets out a target for 10 per cent of everyday journeys to be completed by bike by 2020, but the most recent figures show that just 1.5 per cent of journeys are being taken by bike and only 3 per cent of people travel to work in this way. Can the cabinet secretary explain how he will manage to secure an almost sevenfold increase in the next year, or will he furnish Parliament with a revised, more realistic target?

Michael Matheson: As I set out in my statement to Parliament back in June, there are areas where we have made progress but there are certain areas where we have not made sufficient progress, which means that the overall target of 10 per cent will not be achieved in the timescale that was set out in the action plan. That is why Cycling Scotland is undertaking a review of the action plan, to consider what further measures we need to take in order to address the issues. Once we have its report, we will be in a position to determine what further measures we need to put in place in order to drive this area of policy forward.

The member will be aware that, in the two previous budgets, we have doubled our active travel budget to £88 million per annum in order to help to support greater infrastructure investment, particularly in cycling and walking. We made a commitment on Tuesday of this week to maintain

that in order to ensure that we continue to see infrastructure investment going into cycling and walking provision.

Neil Findlay (Lothian) (Lab): The United Kingdom Government is going to extend the cap for people taking part in the bike-to-work scheme so that it can expand the use of electric bikes. Is there any way that the Scottish Government can incentivise the uptake of electric bikes? The focus just now seems to be more on electric cars.

Michael Matheson: The member may be interested to know that we have a loan scheme whereby individuals can secure funding for the purpose of purchasing electric bikes, because they are more costly. If I recall correctly, something like £6,000 per household is available for the purchase of up to, I think, three or four bikes, and it is an interest-free loan that they receive for the purpose of doing that, so there is a scheme in place that can support people in purchasing electric bikes.

As anyone who has had the opportunity to use an e-bike will know, they are fantastic in helping to support people in getting back into cycling and being able to use a bike on occasions when they would otherwise choose not to do so, and I certainly wish to encourage other people to think about e-bikes as an option for commuting.

Ayrshire (Transport Objectives)

2. **Willie Coffey (Kilmarnock and Irvine Valley) (SNP):** To ask the Scottish Government whether it will provide an update on the work being undertaken by Transport Scotland and the regional transport partnerships in Ayrshire to identify new transport objectives for the region. (S5O-03482)

The Cabinet Secretary for Transport, Infrastructure and Connectivity (Michael Matheson): The draft south-west Scotland transport study, which was published on 27 June, covers part of East and South Ayrshire, and it includes a list of potential strategic transport interventions for the region. Once final, those interventions will be the subject of more detailed appraisal in the second strategic transport projects review, which is under way.

As part of STPR2, an Ayrshire and Arran regional transport working group has been formed, which covers a larger area. Most recently, it met on 29 August to discuss the emerging outcomes from the initial evidence gathering and stakeholder events that were undertaken in May and June.

Willie Coffey: I welcome the recent news that a new direct ferry link is to be established between the east of Scotland and Europe—the Netherlands—and remind the cabinet secretary that, in the west of Scotland, more than 1 million passengers still choose to fly between Scotland

and Dublin. Does he see the possibilities in developing a direct ferry service to Dublin from our ferry ports in Ayrshire, not only to provide a direct ferry connection for businesses to Europe, but to open up the huge potential for further tourism expansion between Scotland and Ireland that such a service would offer?

Michael Matheson: We will always be keen to see an expansion of direct ferry connections between Scotland and Europe, but any such ferry connection would have to be commercially viable. It would have to operate in commercial terms and in a way that complies with state aid rules.

Willie Coffey referred to the 1 million passengers who choose to travel by air between Scotland and Ireland. A key element of making sure that any ferry service is sustainable is ensuring that it has sufficient levels of freight traffic. That is critical to its baseload and making it commercially viable. Any party that is considering establishing a ferry route between Scotland and Ireland, Scotland and the Netherlands or Scotland and anywhere else would have to ensure that it would be commercially viable and would have a customer base that could sustain it.

We will always engage with parties that are interested in direct ferry links between Scotland and other parts of Europe, but that will always be on the basis that the operation needs to be commercially viable.

Brian Whittle (South Scotland) (Con): We already have a viable ferry option between Scotland and Ireland out of Cairnryan, which is the busiest port in Scotland, but it is being hampered by poor road and rail infrastructure in the south-west of Scotland. Given that investment in the south-west of Scotland is far less than that in the rest of Scotland, if the cabinet secretary looked at the A75, the A77, the A76, the A70 and the rail link down there, that would resolve a lot of issues, especially around the need for infrastructure, given the Ayrshire growth deal. Where are those considerations?

Michael Matheson: Brian Whittle will be well aware of the south-west Scotland transport study, which has looked at a whole range of interventions to improve the transport infrastructure in the south-west of Scotland. That will feed into the STPR process. We have consulted on that over the summer months. There was a request for that consultation to be extended, and we have extended it for a further four weeks to ensure that as many members of the public and interested stakeholders as possible have an opportunity to feed into the process in order to get it right.

I do not accept Brian Whittle's characterisation that we prioritise other parts of Scotland over the south-west of Scotland. Work is being undertaken

to create the Maybole bypass, for example. That is a very good example of infrastructure investment in the south-west of Scotland.

It is important that we ensure that, for the decisions that we make on where our priorities for transport investment should be—whether in respect of road, rail, bus or any type of active travel measure—we go through an evidence-based process to ensure that we make the right type of intervention to support the local area. That is exactly what the south-west Scotland transport study is about. It will feed into the process through the STPR, and that will ensure that we make the right types of interventions to deliver the right type of transport connectivity to all parts of Scotland.

Colin Smyth (South Scotland) (Lab): The programme for government gives a welcome commitment to decarbonise Scotland's passenger rail services by 2035. However, the cabinet secretary will know that only diesel trains run on rail routes on the ScotRail network in Ayrshire and other parts of south-west Scotland, such as Dumfries and Galloway. Does he therefore agree that full electrification of those routes should be considered to deliver faster, better and more sustainable rail services for passengers in south-west Scotland, and not least to support the ferry ports in Cairnryan?

Michael Matheson: It is important that we take an ambitious approach to decarbonising our rail network. That is why I welcome Colin Smyth's comments on the ambitions in that particular area that we have set out in the programme for government.

He will be aware that significant technological advances are taking place in the propulsion for trains. Electrification is the option that we choose primarily at present. More than 70 per cent of all daily passenger journeys now take place on electrified routes in Scotland, and we have given a commitment to look at further electrification in Scotland. However, there are also advances in battery-powered trains and hydrogen-powered trains, and we are already working with a number of parties to look at how we can explore their use within the Scottish network. Electrification will be part of the plans and different types of propulsion in the form of hydrogen and battery will be in the mix to make sure that we decarbonise our rail network by 2035.

Superfast Broadband

3. **James Dornan (Glasgow Cathcart) (SNP):** To ask the Scottish Government how much financial support the UK Government is providing for Scotland's reaching 100 per cent superfast broadband programme. (S5O-03483)

The Minister for Energy, Connectivity and the Islands (Paul Wheelhouse): All regulatory and legislative powers on telecommunications, including for broadband services, are scheduled as being wholly reserved to the United Kingdom Parliament under the provisions of the Scotland Act 1998.

Despite its reserved responsibilities, the UK Government has chosen to commit only £21 million, or just 3.5 per cent of the total investment of £600 million that is required for the reaching 100 per cent programme. With the Scottish Government committing from our devolved resources the remaining £579 million, or 96.5 per cent of the total funding that is required for the programme.

James Dornan: I thank the minister for that disappointing response. It is a strange way to treat one of the so-called family of nations that we were told we are some time ago.

How does that level of funding compare with investment by the Westminster Government in broadband and fibre in other parts of the UK?

Paul Wheelhouse: I share James Dornan's disappointment with the response. We are both disappointed because, while the UK Government has made the rather substantial sum of £150 million available to help to deliver Northern Ireland's superfast broadband programme—almost 91 per cent of the programme's total cost—Scotland and Wales have largely been left out of the picture, with the R100 programme receiving just 3.5 per cent of its total cost, as I said in my original answer. Wales's superfast broadband aspirations have been funded entirely by the Welsh Government and European Union funding.

I hope that we can have a positive relationship with the new Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport ministerial team, and I hope that its members reflect on the actions of their predecessors and look to increase support to Scotland and Wales to deliver our broadband aspirations.

Jamie Greene (West Scotland) (Con): Mr Dornan might be pleased to learn that the UK Government contributed £120 million to the digital Scottish superfast broadband programme, which delivered broadband to 95 per cent of households, versus just £60 million from his own Government.

The reality is that the Scottish Government made the commitment to the R100 programme although it did not have to. It promised £600 million but not a penny of it has been spent yet. It said that R100 will be delivered by 2021, but it will now be the end of 2021. When will R100 be delivered? When will contracts be signed? That is what people really want to know.

Paul Wheelhouse: I have already made it clear to all members that we have outlined a timetable for reaching a decision on awarding the contracts for R100. That is due to happen by the end of this calendar year. In the near future, we will be able to select preferred bidders.

I have explained to numerous colleagues of Jamie Greene that we are in the middle of a procurement exercise and cannot break embargo on a commercial contract negotiation during a procurement process. I hope that Jamie Greene understands that. We have committed to give out the information as soon as we are able to do so, and I repeat that commitment today.

Jamie Greene also referred to the amount of funding that came from the Scottish Government to DSSB. If he goes back and looks at the numbers and adds up Highlands and Islands Enterprise support, Scottish Government support, and support from local authorities funded by the Scottish Government, he will see that the Scottish Government has put in more resources than the UK Government has.

It is also interesting to hear a member of the Conservatives seeming to take credit for DSSB when we have been criticised for the past three years for a so-called failure to deliver. Perhaps Mr Greene will now acknowledge that DSSB has been a great success. In Inverclyde, which is an area close to his heart, 97.4 per cent of premises have access to superfast broadband speeds.

Traffic Congestion (Edinburgh)

4. Gordon MacDonald (Edinburgh Pentlands) (SNP): To ask the Scottish Government what support can be given to the City of Edinburgh Council to manage traffic congestion across the city, especially during periods where visitor numbers dramatically increase. (S50-03484)

The Cabinet Secretary for Transport, Infrastructure and Connectivity (Michael Matheson): The Scottish Government, through Transport Scotland, supports the City of Edinburgh Council by working with the council and transport providers to promote public transport as a viable option for visitors and local residents. The recently announced significant new funding to improve bus priority infrastructure will also support local authorities to tackle the impact of congestion on bus services.

However, the tackling of traffic congestion is the city council's responsibility. Under the Roads (Scotland) Act 1984, it has a duty to manage local roads, and duties under the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 to secure the expeditious, convenient and safe movement of traffic through the city.

Gordon MacDonald: I am sure that the cabinet secretary supports the City of Edinburgh Council's ambitious plans to tackle congestion, including plans to introduce a low-emission zone, the city centre transformation project and plans to extend the existing network of park-and-ride facilities across the city. What can the Scottish Government do to support the extension of the network of park-and-ride facilities, such as the one at Hermiston, in my constituency?

Michael Matheson: I recognise that Edinburgh council has ambitious plans to tackle congestion in the city centre and to improve public transport infrastructure in the city overall. Some of the funding that is coming through the Edinburgh and south-east Scotland city region deal is assisting that work, alongside funding from the active travel budget with which Edinburgh has recently been provided for the George Street project, which will help to improve transport infrastructure in the city.

Park-and-ride facilities are extremely valuable, and it is important that the city council looks at how they can be developed. Local authorities such as the City of Edinburgh Council can use the bus partnership funding that we announced in the programme for government to support and develop bus infrastructure in order to improve bus journey times and patronage levels. Local authorities can look at how that ties into park-and-ride facilities. Use of the more than £500 million that we have committed through the bus partnership scheme is one route that the city council could take in the year ahead to support provision of park-and-ride facilities, alongside bus infrastructure.

The Presiding Officer (Ken Macintosh): Question 5 has been withdrawn.

Inverness Airport (Rail Services)

6. Edward Mountain (Highlands and Islands) (Con): To ask the Scottish Government when Inverness airport will have a railway station. (S5O-03486)

The Cabinet Secretary for Transport, Infrastructure and Connectivity (Michael Matheson): The Aberdeen to Inverness rail improvement project is delivering the infrastructure to facilitate a new station at Dalcross, which is being progressed as planned by Network Rail and on behalf of Scottish ministers. We expect the project to be completed on schedule in the first half of rail control period 6, which runs from this year to 2024. Transport Scotland will be in a position to confirm the starting and opening dates once Network Rail has completed its feasibility work, and once third-party funding has been secured.

Edward Mountain: I remind the cabinet secretary that the planning permission is about to lapse, because the station should have been built already. Given that the proposed station will be more than a mile away from the airport, will the price of a train ticket to Dalcross include free travel on to the airport on a shuttle bus?

Michael Matheson: That matter will have to be considered as part of any proposal that is brought forward by HITRANS—the Highlands and Islands transport partnership—which is the promoter of the project.

The new planning application has been made not because of the application lapsing but because the railway station will have two platforms and a turning loop. That will mean that the station will be double the size that was originally intended, which I am sure Edward Mountain will welcome.

The work is part of the £330 million that we are investing in rail infrastructure in the north-east of Scotland. The new train station at Forres has already been provided. I was able to visit to see the good progress that is being made through the investment in rail infrastructure at Kintore: the new station is at an advanced stage and should be open this year.

I am sure that the member will welcome the fact that we are putting significant investment into rail infrastructure in the north-east of Scotland, including the train station to which he referred, which I am sure the people of the north-east will very much welcome.

Public Transport Passengers (Major Events)

7. Rachael Hamilton (Ettrick, Roxburgh and Berwickshire) (Con): To ask the Scottish Government how it manages increased passenger numbers on public transport during major events. (S5O-03487)

The Cabinet Secretary for Transport, Infrastructure and Connectivity (Michael Matheson): Transport Scotland works closely with public transport providers and relevant stakeholders to ensure that public transport provision for major events reflects anticipated demand, and that the disruptive impact on business-as-usual travel is mitigated when possible. The work is reflected in groups that bring together various transport providers that operate across a range of modes, including bus, rail and taxi, to discuss issues and ensure that any challenges that are identified are addressed. Through those groups, partnership working is taken forward in a number of areas to look at how transport provision for major events can be improved.

Rachael Hamilton: As the cabinet secretary will be aware, the widespread disruption on ScotRail

on 24 August coincided with various major events in Edinburgh. It caused chaos for my constituents, some of whom faced very expensive taxi journeys home. Others were forced to squeeze on to trains of just two carriages. One rail traveller said that the train that they were on was “dangerously overcrowded” and that somebody could have been seriously injured.

I have two questions. First, how will the transport secretary ensure that, before major events, proper planning and preparation are executed in order to anticipate demand and avoid overcrowding? It is clear that such work is not being done at the moment, even with the focus groups.

Secondly—this is an issue that members will have read about in today’s newspapers—what is the Scottish Government’s opinion on whether Haymarket and Waverley should both remain open during multiple major events?

Michael Matheson: Rachael Hamilton raises a very reasonable point. What happened on 24 August was unacceptable and is a matter that we are considering very seriously. We have made it clear to ScotRail and the other agencies that what happened was unacceptable.

As Rachael Hamilton will be aware, a review is being carried out in the rail industry to identify what went wrong and what actions can be taken to prevent difficulties such as those that were experienced on 24 August. I will see the details of that review once it has been completed, at which point I will consider what action should be taken to implement any recommendations that are made about how we can deal with such situations more effectively.

That said, it is important to recognise that, across the board, our transport network plans and manages major events well. The Commonwealth games is a good example of a major event that was managed well. Major events take place across the country at various times, and, by and large, they are managed well.

However, there are a number of factors relating to the events on 24 August that need to be addressed. The member mentioned the question whether Haymarket station should be closed on such occasions, with all passengers being put through Waverley. It is quite common for the approach to be used in other parts of the United Kingdom, with the train station that is closest to the major event being closed so that a queuing system can be put in place. The use of a train station that is slightly further away enables crowds to be managed more readily.

Before we get to that point, there is a wider issue that needs to be addressed, which is the holding of a major rugby international and a Hibs

home game on the last day of the Edinburgh festival, during an English bank holiday, when visitor numbers in Edinburgh would already have been higher. There is only so much that the system can cope with. We need to address the wider issue of how we make sure that, when it comes to managing major events, we look at the wider situation. After the review has been carried out of what happened on the rail side of things, I want to look at that wider issue of how such situations are managed and the decision-making process that is involved. Transport Scotland officials have already engaged with the City of Edinburgh Council and other parties to explore that issue. It is important not only that we take the matter seriously and that we get to the bottom of what happened on 24 August, but that we look at the wider issue and make sure that we manage such situations more effectively in the future.

Drug-related Deaths

The Presiding Officer (Ken Macintosh): The next item is a statement by Joe FitzPatrick on tackling drug-related deaths. The minister will, of course, take questions at the end of his statement.

14:23

The Minister for Public Health, Sport and Wellbeing (Joe FitzPatrick): My statement provides an update on the action that we are taking to tackle the continued rise in the number of drug deaths in Scotland. The situation that we face is a public health emergency. The latest figures from National Records of Scotland show that 1,187 people lost their lives in 2018 as a result of drug use. Each and every one of those deaths is a tragedy for the individual and for their family, friends and community. I am sure that I speak for the whole chamber when I send my sincerest condolences to all those people who have lost a loved one.

Last month, National Records of Scotland published its “Annual Review of Demographic Trends”, which showed that life expectancy improvements in Scotland have stalled. The number of drug-related deaths has been highlighted as one of the reasons for that change. The NRS’s two reports put into stark reality the effect that drug use has on the population of Scotland.

Sunday 1 September marked international overdose awareness day—a day that has come to be an all-too-painful reminder to many people across our country in recent years. To mark the day, I attended an event hosted by Addaction Dundee at which I heard directly from a range of people who have been affected by the loss of a family member, friend or loved one from substance use. I know that members across the chamber also attended events around the country, and we are all indebted to those who had the courage to speak.

Deaths caused by substance use are avoidable. This Government, this Parliament and the nation need to work together to address this emergency. I am determined that we will continue to do all that we can with the powers that we have and to press the United Kingdom Government to work with us on this vital issue to deliver change.

I am asking for the continued support of Parliament for the actions that we are taking—in particular, support for the new drug deaths task force. There is no easy solution; we need to look to the evidence to see what has worked both internationally and closer to home. For example, we know that individuals engaging with treatment services can have a protective effect, so it is vital

that we do all that we can to increase the number of people who do so, particularly among those who are most at risk.

We also know, from the evidence, that opioid substitution therapy can save lives, reduce the risk of lethal relapse, improve quality of life and reduce crime. We need to do more to ensure that its use is not further stigmatised and to make it easier for those who need such therapy to access it. That may happen through the provision of low-threshold services or through our doing more to address the high levels of discharge from some services as well as ensuring that people are on an optimal dose. The new task force’s central aim will be to identify measures to improve health by preventing and reducing drug use, harm and related deaths. It will also examine other factors that are key drivers of drug deaths, and it will advise on further changes in practice or in the law that could help to save lives and reduce harm.

I have asked Professor Catriona Matheson, who is an internationally respected expert in addiction studies at the University of Stirling, to chair the group. There will be representation from Police Scotland and the Crown Office, the Royal College of General Practitioners and Community Justice Scotland, as well as the chief medical officer and the chief social work officer, among others. The task force will also include voices of lived and living experience, giving both the perspective of an individual in recovery and the perspective of family members. That is an integral part of the work, and that input into the meetings will be invaluable.

I met Professor Matheson this week to discuss the upcoming work ahead of the first full meeting of the task force, which will take place on 17 September. We are both clear that the group needs to identify areas for change or improvement quickly rather than meet for months and then issue a final report. We need action soon.

Beyond the setting up of the group, a significant amount of activity has been going on. For example, Professor Matheson has begun to take on additional engagements in her new role, which includes engaging with the chief pharmacist to discuss the stocking of naloxone in pharmacies and the introduction of a community recovery event in Kilmarnock, which is aimed at developing evidence at a community level.

Much other on-going work will also make a difference for those who are living with problem substance use. For example, our new alcohol and drug strategy, which we published at the end of last year and which sees substance use as a public health issue and, importantly, recognises the rights of those people who are impacted by it, has been broadly welcomed. The rights-based approach that is set out in the strategy has been taken up by the Scottish Recovery Consortium,

which has been exploring just what taking a rights-based approach to recovery means.

In July, we published a partnership delivery framework that sets out a shared ambition across local government and Scottish Government that local areas should have in place specific arrangements around substance use. Furthermore, in the coming weeks, an action plan that sets out how the Government, in collaboration with a range of partners, will deliver on the remaining commitments in the strategy will go out for further consultation with our alcohol and drug partnerships, followed by publication in October.

We will also shortly consult on a workforce development framework that has been developed with the Scottish Drugs Forum, which will support the workforce to better identify and support people who experience alcohol and drug problems. In August, the Dundee commission, which was looking specifically at drug deaths, published its findings. Prior to that, I had met the chair of the commission and the authors of the report to discuss how we can enact some of its recommendations.

Over the summer, I gave evidence to the Scottish Affairs Committee at Westminster as part of its helpful and wide-ranging inquiry into problem drug use in Scotland. Thus far, the Home Office has failed to give evidence to the inquiry, which is frustrating, because drugs law that affects Scotland's ability to take a public health approach is reserved.

In August, the Office for National Statistics published the latest figures for deaths relating to drug poisoning in England and Wales, which showed that they are at the highest level on record. With figures like that, surely we should be able to work together across Parliaments on the issue. Following the publication of the Scottish figures, I contacted the previous Home Secretary, and I have since written to the new Home Secretary twice, asking the United Kingdom Government to engage with us. That included an invitation to come to Scotland to take part in a summit on this vital issue. So far, I have not had a response. I am adamant that the issue should not be a political or constitutional one, and I would welcome a commitment from the UK Government to work with us.

One area that was the focus of my session at the inquiry and that has come up numerous times since the publication of the drug-related death figures is the introduction of an overdose prevention facility in Glasgow. In June, I visited such a facility in Paris, and I am convinced by the evidence that it could make a massive difference to many people in the most desperate circumstances. We have repeatedly asked the UK Government to allow us to move forward with the

introduction of that type of service, and the First Minister raised the issue at her first meeting with the Prime Minister.

Although that is an important proposal, it is not the answer to all our problems. As I have said before, we need to be open to exploring new ideas that are supported by evidence and that might make a difference. One such proposal is the introduction of a heroin-assisted treatment service, which the health and social care partnership in Glasgow is progressing and which is expected to open later this year. That service can treat only a small number of people compared to an overdose prevention facility, but it provides the option of prescribing heroin to people who have been in and out of treatment services for a number of years, which could be the difference between life and death for them. The task force will also consider drug testing, as has been offered at a number of festivals and other sites in England.

Recognising the problem is only the first part of finding the solution. Since 2008, we have invested nearly £800 million in tackling problem alcohol and drug use. In our programme for government, we have allocated a further £10 million for the next two years specifically to support local services and provide targeted support. That is in addition to the £20 million per year that was delivered through the programme for government in 2017 and that is continuing to make a difference to treatment services.

That new money will go towards initiatives that will change and improve the lives of those who are affected by problem substance use. The money will allow our new task force to support pathfinder projects, test new approaches and drive forward specific work, which is based on evidence, to improve the quality of services. It will also allow us to establish joint-working protocols between alcohol and drug services and mental health services, with the aim of improving access, assessment and outcomes for individuals, and to develop and test integrated services for mental health and alcohol and drug use. Further, the money will aid us in developing a new national pathway for opiate replacement therapy, which will increase its effectiveness across the country. Crucially, that work will help us to reduce the stigma that is associated with the use of such therapy.

I know that health spokespeople across the Parliament want to make progress in the area. I welcome the fact that, in advance of the first meeting of the drug deaths task force, the spokespeople have accepted an offer from Professor Matheson to meet and discuss the subject. Cross-party support will be vital as we try to address this tragic loss of life and improve the health of those who are most impacted by

problematic substance use. I am committed to working across the chamber, and I hope that the spokespeople will make a similar commitment to work with me as we seek to make a real difference to this vulnerable section of society.

I will finish by reminding members of an upcoming event. September is international recovery month. As part of that, the Scottish Recovery Consortium and its friends and partners organise a recovery walk. This year, the walk will take place on 21 September in Inverness, and I will be there, as I was in Glasgow last year and in Dundee the year before. I am sure that it will be a fantastic celebration of all things recovery. The day includes a roses ceremony to commemorate each of the lives lost to substance use in the previous year. That is a particularly poignant moment, and that visual representation of the scale of loss sits heavily with me.

I am determined that I will do everything that I can to reduce the harms associated with substance use. I call on everyone across the chamber to join us and help to save lives.

The Presiding Officer: There is a lot of interest in the debate, so I encourage all members to keep their questions and answers concise.

Miles Briggs (Lothian) (Con): I thank the minister for the advance copy of his statement.

We all agree that we need to develop a radical new approach to addressing the drug deaths emergency and the increasing drug misuse that is faced by individuals, families and communities across our country. I wish the task force members well and hope that they can achieve a consensus and drive real and positive change. Families and people with lived experience want to be directly involved in the work of the task force, but I have concerns that, to date, we have seen limited scope for their involvement.

During the recess, I visited the Lochee hub in the public health minister's constituency and was told by drug service workers and users about cuts to drug education projects in primary and secondary schools in Dundee. The public health emergency needs cross-ministerial and cross-governmental department working to develop the radical new approach that we all want to see. If that does not happen, ministers will not turn the national emergency around.

In the minister's statement, why was there no mention of education and prevention? Can he assure me that those matters will be priorities? Will the minister agree to monthly meetings with health spokesmen, to make sure that the work is taken forward?

Joe FitzPatrick: I thank Miles Briggs for his comments and his good wishes for the task force,

which is crucial. I also thank him for the tone of his questions. There were three substantial points, which I will address as briefly as I can.

The first point, which relates to lived experience, is hugely important. I am absolutely clear that the lived experience of both the individuals and the families who have been affected must be at the heart of the task force. The details of the task force are published on the Scottish Government's website, and spokespeople can see that it specifically includes people from both of those groups. Their role is not to be a token person; I hope that their role will be to make sure that we are managing to reach out and hear those wider voices.

It would be impossible to get everyone who could add value to the task force's work into a room, but I am sure that, as the task force goes on, Catriona Matheson will be happy to discuss matters with parties' spokespeople. The task force members will be expected to look outwith their number for expert advice—we could have involved a huge number of people, and it is important that we hear all those voices—but lived and living experience is absolutely crucial.

On education, it is obviously impossible to get everything into a statement, but, if members speak to Catriona Matheson, I am sure that she will be open to discussing particular points. Education is very important, and I am told that we are doing quite well on it and that levels of drug use among younger people across Scotland remain relatively low. However, there is anecdotal evidence that there are areas in which that is perhaps not the case. Therefore, we need to be mindful of ensuring that our education is as up to date as possible. That is partly why I am supportive of the principle of having a drug testing system to make sure that the information that we are giving people is as good as possible.

I am sorry, but I have forgotten the third point.

Miles Briggs: Monthly meetings.

Joe FitzPatrick: Monthly meetings are a great idea. If spokespeople are up for having those, we can discuss how to take them forward.

Monica Lennon (Central Scotland) (Lab): I thank the minister for advance sight of his statement and for his time over the summer recess when we met to discuss the seriousness of the drug death crisis that is gripping Scotland.

It is a public health emergency. Those who have died are not statistics to be debated; they are human beings—mums, dads, sons and daughters, brothers and sisters and our friends. They are people who are gone forever and whom we should have been able to save. I am glad that the minister acknowledges that those deaths are avoidable.

There is a lot to welcome in today's statement. However, since the 2018 figures were published in July, we have to accept the reality that things have been getting worse instead of better. Therefore, although we welcome the establishment of the drug deaths task force, I will repeat the question that I asked the First Minister on Tuesday. Will the Scottish Government legally designate a public health emergency under the existing powers that it has, in the way that it would for any other major event that was causing such a huge loss of life, so that it can compel every public body—health boards, councils, the police and everyone on the front line—to now take the urgent and bold action that is needed to save lives?

Joe FitzPatrick: I thank Monica Lennon for the constructive way in which she has approached the subject. From what all the party spokespeople have said, it is clear that the issue goes beyond normal party politics. Ms Lennon is absolutely right about how important it is for us to remember the lives lost and that although a high number of them was mentioned, that number represents individual losses, each of which is a tragedy.

I agree that this is a public health emergency—that is a fact. The suggestion that all our public services should work together is central to the strategy that I launched last November, and it is exactly why we are doing that. Our action plans are about ensuring that rather than putting people into boxes—for example, saying that someone has a housing, substance misuse or mental health problem—we bring all those factors together in a more integrated way and look at all their needs, which is crucial.

The idea of our being able to use legal powers in this context comes from Canada, where British Columbia was able to press a legal button that meant that the Canadian federal Government had to take particular actions based on that. Unfortunately, such a button is not available here. I assure Ms Lennon that if there were a legal mechanism whereby I could press a button to make the UK Government respond in the way that the British Columbian Government was able to make the Canadian Government respond, I would press it. We should be able to do so.

I reiterate that I would be happy to engage with Monica Lennon on the issue again, in the constructive way in which she has engaged with me.

Alison Johnstone (Lothian) (Green): Drugs deaths are avoidable, yet Scotland now has the highest rate of such deaths in the European Union, so the Government's recognition that this is a public health crisis—as is the consensus that we need to act together across the parties and across the Parliament—is welcome.

I ask the minister what steps he can take to ensure that community practices that really know what they are doing—for example, the Edinburgh access practice—have the capacity and the resources that they need to ensure that they can continue to deliver the fabulous help that they provide. Sometimes it is too difficult for people to get on to the programmes that they want to, or they can be on them for only a very short time. What action will the minister take to ensure that such practices do the best that they can? They do a great job.

Joe FitzPatrick: I thank Alison Johnstone for raising the work of the Edinburgh access practice, which I visited in the Christmas and new year period. It does fantastic work and is staffed by amazing people.

In the past, we have perhaps talked too much about finding innovation, which is why my statement has been clear that, as well as looking at the best international evidence, we should look closer to home. The Government is clear that where there is good practice here that needs a bit of extra support, additional funding would be made available.

This morning I visited the north-east Edinburgh recovery hub. There we discussed the fact that there are lots of pockets of very good practice across the country and we agreed that perhaps we need to think about how we can facilitate getting together and sharing the best practice. That does not necessarily require money; it is simply about sharing ideas and helping people to realise that they are part of a much bigger campaign to fight against drugs deaths. We should do what we can to facilitate that.

Willie Rennie (North East Fife) (LD): The minister has just mentioned international evidence. I encourage him to ask the task force to look at the Portuguese model. It is trying to treat the problem as a health issue rather than a criminal one and has had some success in that regard.

We are clearly failing when 50 per cent of prisoners who leave Addiewell are testing positive for illegal drugs. Our system is clearly not working, and the reports of a large number of deaths are harrowing. I urge the minister to look at the Portuguese model. If that requires UK-wide action, that is exactly what we should be asking for, because our current policy on drugs is not working.

Joe FitzPatrick: I thank Willie Rennie for his contribution. I certainly think this is an area in which we should be able to work across the two Parliaments. If we look at Portugal, we can see a country that, 20 years ago, was on a trajectory to have similar levels of drug deaths as that which Scotland now has.

It took a bold decision, which no other country in Europe was in a position to take at that time. We have taken a bit longer to come to the idea that we need to deal with the situation as a public health issue, which is, in effect, what Portugal did 20 years ago. I would not for a second suggest that we could just take what has been done in Portugal and import it to Scotland. However, we need to start looking at the issue, across these islands, as a public health issue.

I thank Willie Rennie for not making it into some sort of constitutional issue. We need to make the changes—however they happen. If the UK Government will not help us, I would be delighted to work with Willie Rennie to find other ways for us to achieve them. The most obvious way would be to give this Parliament the powers. That is not any kind of constitutional point. We just need to get on with it, because we have an emergency here in Scotland.

Emma Harper (South Scotland) (SNP): Will the minister provide further detail on the commitment on page 102 of the programme for government to

“developing a national pathway for Opiate Substitute Therapy”?

Specifically, will he outline whether that plan includes the prescribing of Buprenorphine, which has been shown to reduce associated stigma due to its method of administration?

Joe FitzPatrick: Emma Harper is right that the Scottish Medicines Consortium published advice that recommended Buprenorphine as a therapy for adults and adolescents who are aged 16 or over and who have a dependency on opioids such as heroin and morphine. It is important that there are a range of options for people. Clearly, the decision about what is best for someone is for a discussion between the individual and their clinician; that is how it should be taken forward. However, it is good that there is now another option that they can discuss.

Brian Whittle (South Scotland) (Con): I start by saying to the minister that, contrary to his assertion that there is no collaboration between Westminster and the Scottish Parliament, members of the Health and Sport Committee—all of whom are here—have been taking part in the Scottish Affairs Committee’s investigation at Westminster. The Scottish Parliament and Westminster are starting to work together on the issue.

With any tragic death, there is a huge impact on the family and the community. The question that I wanted to ask is about what consideration the Scottish Government has given to support for those who are suffering in the aftermath of such a tragic loss due to drug or alcohol addiction.

Joe FitzPatrick: First, I appreciate that good work is going on between the Scottish Affairs Committee and the Health and Sport Committee; there has been a number of exchanges. My issue is with the UK Government. Drugs policy remains reserved, and if people do not want to have the constitutional argument about it being devolved here, the UK Government should at least answer the request to sit down and have a meeting with us to discuss how we can take some public health approaches, which the evidence shows make a difference.

I add that the task force will consider some of those approaches. It will look beyond our powers to see what might make a difference in Scotland, because if—at the end of all those discussions—the way forward is that Westminster decides to devolve those powers to this Parliament, we should be ready to rise to that challenge and make a difference. That is really important.

I have now forgotten Brian Whittle’s question.

Brian Whittle: It was about family support.

Joe FitzPatrick: Yes—that is also a very important point. That is why I was clear that, as well as having someone with direct lived experience on the task force, someone with family experience will also sit at the core of the meetings and be central to them.

It is important that we get the wider voice of families—that is absolutely crucial. Families feel the devastating tragedy of loss, but they can be part of the solution in helping to prevent deaths in the future. Brian Whittle is absolutely right, and that is why families are central to the task force.

Rona Mackay (Strathkelvin and Bearsden) (SNP): I welcome the minister’s statement, and the programme for government’s announcement of additional funding of £20 million to be invested to help tackle the crisis.

Although I appreciate that the minister touched on it in his answer to Monica Lennon, could he expand on how the Scottish Government is engaging with wider public service agencies to address issues such as poverty, poor mental health and homelessness, in order to prevent drug-related deaths?

Joe FitzPatrick: I will try to be quicker than I might have been, given that I answered some of the question before. Rona Mackay is right; around 80 per cent of people with drug issues have other challenges such as mental health or homelessness issues, so it is really important that we work together. That will be one of the things that the drug deaths task force looks at, as well as supporting pathfinder projects and looking at evidence-based approaches to drive forward specific work to improve the quality of service.

It is really important that joint protocols between alcohol and drug services and other services work, whether those services are for mental health or poverty-related issues, some of which are not under this Parliament's control. Today, at the recovery hub, I heard that it has had to massively increase the number of food vouchers that it provides to people, because individuals are being sanctioned and we have services that do not understand the challenges for people who are in recovery or treatment. We need to do better.

Neil Findlay (Lothian) (Lab): I will work with anyone on this issue, because it is one of the most important issues in Scotland at the moment. However, that must not stop us from holding ministers to account for their actions—or their inaction.

Why was there no mention in the minister's statement of the current HIV outbreak in Glasgow? Will the minister confirm whether there is someone on the task force with lived experience—either a current or former drugs user—so that they can give their input? Six months after the task force was announced, why has it still not met? Does the minister support the Portuguese model of decriminalisation?

The Presiding Officer: I think that the minister has answered some of those questions.

Joe FitzPatrick: Some of the questions have already been answered, but, given that Mr Findlay has specifically asked again about lived experience, I note that that is very important. I cannot say too often that it would not be right for us to develop policy without input from people with lived experience, and I confirm that there is someone with lived experience on the task force. That person is a central part of the task force, but my expectation—I know that Catriona Matheson has already started some of this work—is that the task force will look at how to get a wider view from people with lived experience, because it is hugely important.

I wish that I could have included in my statement everything that is going on in my portfolio, but it would have taken all afternoon, leaving no time for questions.

The HIV outbreak in Glasgow is just one piece of the evidence that makes the compelling case for an overdose prevention facility in the city. The evidence is overwhelming that such a facility would save lives; the HIV outbreak is one of the unfortunate issues that confirms that. Services in Glasgow are working hard together and in innovative ways to provide outreach support. There are lessons to be learned from Glasgow's approach to the HIV outreach, not just for HIV services but for how to provide any service to people who are harder to reach.

Neil Findlay raised important points, but there were four or five of them—I apologise for not getting to them all.

The Presiding Officer: I apologise to Stuart McMillan, as we will not have a chance to call his question. I apologise also to five other members—Pauline McNeill, Shona Robison, Gail Ross, Annie Wells and Jenny Marra—as we do not have time to take their questions.

European Union Exit (No Deal)

The Presiding Officer (Ken Macintosh): The next item of business is a debate on motion S5M-18695, in the name of Michael Russell, on avoiding a no-deal exit from the European Union.

14:53

The Cabinet Secretary for Government Business and Constitutional Relations (Michael Russell): Today, the Scottish Parliament has the opportunity to add its voice to those from around these islands who are urging the Prime Minister to pull back from the brink of inflicting major damage on our country, our prospects and our reputation.

There is no doubt that, in less than two months' time—unless he is stopped—the Prime Minister intends to take Scotland and the United Kingdom out of the EU without a deal. To do so, he has executed a shabby sleight of hand by attempting to prorogue the Westminster Parliament in order to silence any opposition. However, to their credit, many members of the House of Commons, across parties—including the Conservatives, although, alas, not the Scottish Conservatives—are working together to prevent him from having his way.

That situation is both a challenge and an example for each and every one of us here. As representatives of Scotland, chosen by Scottish voters, we have to decide who we stand with. Do we defend basic democratic principles or do we crumble at the onslaught of the ultra-Brexit fanatics?

My party is committed to stopping no deal. I know that other parties in this Parliament—Labour, the Liberal Democrats and the Greens—are in the same position. The question today is what the Scottish Conservatives will do. Do they stand for Scotland and for democracy, or for their United Kingdom leader and United Kingdom party—*[Interruption]*—and for nothing else? They are answering that already, clearly.

Murdo Fraser (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con): Will the cabinet secretary take an intervention?

Michael Russell: I ask the member to allow me to make some progress.

I hope that, when we come to decision time, we can present the unanimous view of a united Scottish Parliament. I hope that the Parliament can be united in saying to the Prime Minister, “You have no mandate for a no-deal Brexit. Under no circumstances should you inflict such damage on our people”, and, “We condemn your suspension of the UK Parliament.”

We might hear two arguments from the Tories today in an attempt to defeat that important outcome. The first will be—

Murdo Fraser: Will the cabinet secretary give way now?

Michael Russell: Yes, of course.

Murdo Fraser: I am grateful to the cabinet secretary for giving way at last. *[Interruption.]*

Three times, Scottish National Party members of Parliament in the House of Commons voted down a withdrawal agreement that would have taken us out of Europe without risking no deal—*[Interruption.]*

The Deputy Presiding Officer (Linda Fabiani): Please let Mr Fraser speak.

Murdo Fraser: Thank you, Presiding Officer. If members want to intervene on my intervention, they are welcome to do so.

If the withdrawal agreement is reintroduced in the House of Commons, will SNP members of Parliament support it and avoid the no-deal Brexit that they claim it is so important that they avoid? Will they do so?

Michael Russell: I anticipated that the Tories might make that argument and I shall come to it in just a moment.

The first Tory argument is that the outcome that we seek would undermine the Prime Minister's negotiating position. Let us be clear about that: the Prime Minister might have sent a negotiator to Brussels but he has sent him with nothing on which to negotiate. That is because the Prime Minister's intention is non-negotiable. He wants the EU to cast aside Ireland, one of its member states, and imperil the Good Friday agreement to placate the Democratic Unionist Party and his faction of hardline Brexiteers.

Even the Prime Minister's Attorney General has told him that that is impossible—perhaps even his brother has told him that, too. If the Tories argue that what happens in this Parliament will weaken Boris Johnson's hand, that is not true, because there is nothing in his hand.

We might also hear—indeed, we have heard this argument from Mr Fraser—that the problem lies with the Opposition, because the SNP, Labour, the Lib Dems and the Greens refused to vote for May's deal and therefore there can be only no deal. It is perhaps churlish to point out to Mr Fraser—but I shall point it out—that more Tory MPs than SNP MPs voted against the May deal; that is true.

However, the real answer to Mr Fraser's point lies in the reality of what Brexit will do. Brexit will make the people of Scotland poorer and cut this

country off from the European mainstream. The SNP will never vote for that. The deal that the previous Prime Minister negotiated would have taken Scotland and the UK out of the single market and the customs union. That dreadful outcome does not become tolerable just because another Prime Minister is threatening us with something even worse.

In line with the result of the referendum in Scotland in June 2016 and subsequent, repeated votes in this Parliament, the Scottish Government believes that the future wellbeing and prosperity of Scotland and the UK as a whole are best served by staying in the European Union. That means staying in the single market and the customs union.

In our 2016 publication, “Scotland’s Place in Europe”, we argued that a compromise might be found that would have retained membership of the largest and most lucrative market in the world, which provides Scotland’s businesses with unrestricted access to more than 510 million people.

Other people took that stance, too. In this chamber, the week after the EU referendum, Adam Tomkins said:

“leaving the EU’s political institutions does not mean that we have to leave the EU’s single market, for there are several countries, including Norway ... that have just such an arrangement.”—[*Official Report*, 28 June 2016; c 26-7.]

I agree with Mr Tomkins. The EU’s four freedoms—the free movement of goods, services, capital and people—have, for decades, brought huge advantages to Scotland.

Inward migration has made an overwhelmingly positive contribution to our economy and society. If the number of EU citizens who come to live in Scotland halves, the projected growth in the working-age population of Scotland will be reversed. We will simply not be able to care for our sick and elderly people if our health and social care sector cannot attract and keep the dedicated staff we need, so many of whom come from EU countries.

Our economy and society have gained enormously from the opportunity, based on shared values, to trade freely with the expansive community of nations on our doorstep. At a time when climate change, tackling inequality and adopting new technology while creating the jobs of the future are key challenges, Scotland is well placed to benefit from and contribute to shared European endeavour.

In a world where intolerance and isolation appear to be on the rise, it is essential that, now more than ever, we work to further the EU’s founding values: respect for human dignity and human rights, freedom, democracy, equality, and

the rule of law. We must not turn our backs on those values.

In our horror at the prospect of no deal, we should not accept for a second that leaving the EU, the single market and the customs union is justified. We continue to believe that there should be a new EU referendum. If that takes place, the SNP would campaign for remain, because any hard Brexit outside the single market and the customs union would be costly and deeply damaging. However, it is a measure of how awful a no deal would be that the costs and effects of such a chaotic Brexit would be even more severe.

The UK Government’s own evidence tells us that a no-deal exit would result in an economic shock with a significant impact, but, in fact, nobody knows the full extent of the damage to the interests of Scotland and the UK that would result, nor how long that would last. We know that it would cause real problems for every citizen in every part of Scotland, so it should be clear to us all that a no-deal Brexit is an outcome that no sensible person could contemplate, let alone promote.

Of course, the Scottish Government has been engaging with all sectors of our society, from exporters and rural communities to the national health service and the police, to try to mitigate or manage the worst effects of a no-deal exit. We will do everything that we can to make a difference, but we will not be able to do everything.

In our preparations, we are prioritising activity in areas that will be heavily impacted by Brexit, such as transport, food and drink, medicines, agriculture and the marine economy. We are working with business organisations, local authorities and the third sector. However, the stark reality is that the UK is not and cannot be completely or fully ready for a no-deal EU exit on 31 October—or any other date.

Moreover, the same UK Government is making matters worse by failing to engage with the devolved Administrations. In the run-up to 29 March, there was considerable co-operation and consultation between our Governments.

Mike Rumbles (North East Scotland) (LD): Will the member take an intervention?

Michael Russell: No, not at the moment—I have to make this point, and then I will give way.

We disagreed on policy, but both sides knew that we needed to work together. The new UK Government has a different approach. It could be that it is simply disorganised, or it might be that it is deliberately keeping the devolved Administrations in the dark in order to blame them when things go wrong.

Let me tell the chamber how difficult the situation has become. At the end of July, the new UK Administration introduced a revised committee structure to oversee EU exit. We were assured that the devolved Administrations would be invited to take part when the agenda required it, as we had been in the equivalent structures during the May premiership.

We understand that there have now been at least 26 meetings of the new EU exit operations committee—the XO committee—which is responsible for overseeing preparations for no deal, yet Scottish Government ministers have been invited to only two. If those meetings are, indeed, intended to prepare the UK for Brexit, we must assume that important matters relating to health, justice and public order, immigration, transport and many other areas would be discussed, yet the devolved Administrations have not been asked to take part.

Then there are the yellowhammer documents, which have recently been the subject of media coverage. In the past, we have seen versions of the documents as they developed and changed—and we need to see them, as the planning assumptions are always developing and changing. We know that that process continues, but the last version that we saw was dated 7 August, almost a month ago.

The Prime Minister told the First Minister when he met her in Bute house on 29 July that he would host a joint ministerial committee plenary very shortly. That has not yet happened and no date has been set. The first meeting of the JMC (European Union negotiations) since the change of Government has also not yet taken place, but is now scheduled for a week today. We will see whether that happens.

We also await a response to a significant number of letters from my cabinet secretary colleagues to their UK Government counterparts on matters of pressing concern. Over July and August, the Cabinet Secretary for Health and the Minister for Public Health issued a number of letters about urgent priorities, including no-deal issues. As yet, there has been no response. Nor has the Cabinet Secretary for Justice had a response from the Home Secretary about how the UK proposes to manage the loss of access to key EU databases and systems that are essential to the effective operation of our police forces. I could go on with examples in the rural economy and across other crucial areas.

Members will no doubt be aware of the UK Government's get ready for Brexit campaign. However, details of that campaign, which is running in Scotland, were shared with the devolved Administrations only after Michael Gove launched it on Sunday. That is the reality of the

“intense” liaison with the Scottish Government that the UK Government claims to be undertaking.

Today's motion is not controversial. Whatever constitutional future we believe in for Scotland, it is in no one's interests to leave the EU in chaos without a deal, for the final irony is that a no-deal Brexit does not mean the end of the Brexit process.

The Scottish Tories have been on a journey. Most did not want to leave the EU. Then they told us that the “over-riding priority” was to stay in the single market. Then they insisted that we must accept Theresa May's deal, which would take Scotland out of the single market. Are they now going to tell us to give up on democracy, too—all in the service of a Brexit that Scotland did not vote for and which is not supported across this chamber?

We all have different ambitions for Scotland's future. It is no surprise that mine is independence within the EU. However, a no-deal Brexit will be chaos for everyone. It will mean starting over again, from a much worse position—outside the EU with all influence gone. All the issues that have bedevilled the long three-year process to date will still have to be addressed—a trade agreement, migration, citizens' rights and a financial settlement.

The “clean break” is not a clean break at all. It is a messy fit of petulance, the consequences of which will haunt us for years.

Today, whatever divides us, let us unite and send a message to the Prime Minister. That message is that under no circumstances should the UK leave the EU without a deal. That is what my motion says and I commend it to the chamber.

I move,

That the Parliament agrees that the UK should in no circumstances leave the EU on a no-deal basis, and condemns the Prime Minister's suspension of the UK Parliament from as early as 9 September until 14 October 2019.

15:06

Donald Cameron (Highlands and Islands) (Con): I pay tribute to Jackson Carlaw and Adam Tomkins, who have spoken on Europe and external affairs for the Conservatives in the past. They are hard acts to follow.

Before turning to the issues around no deal, I will briefly address the subtext to the part of the Scottish Government's motion about prorogation. In the past week, various assertions have been made that the UK Government is somehow subverting democracy. That was repeated today.

In the past week or so, we have heard much hyperbole about “dictatorship”, including the First Minister’s ridiculous suggestion that the UK Government might abolish this Parliament. The implication is that the guardians of democracy are, instead, the SNP.

That, from a Government whose commitment to democracy involves rejecting the result of not just one, but two referendums. That, from a Government whose Referendums (Scotland) Bill was criticised at committee as being without equivalence in “well-functioning” parliamentary democracies. That, from a Government that routinely ignores votes expressing the will of this Parliament whenever it suits it.

Therefore, let us have no more lectures on democracy from the SNP.

Patrick Harvie (Glasgow) (Green): The member speaks as though the criticism of the UK Government and its behaviour has come only from those of us on the pro-independence side or only from those outside the Conservatives. If the Conservative MSPs in this chamber were working under the constraints of a Boris Johnson whip, how many would have been purged by now?

Donald Cameron: The short answer is that we are not operating under a Boris Johnson whip.

With regard to no deal, the basic principles of our position are that the Scottish Conservatives have consistently said that we should respect the result of the referendum for the UK to leave the EU.

We have always seen a negotiated exit from the EU as the best outcome and the best way to deliver on the referendum result.

That was the position in March, when the Conservatives supported Theresa May in her attempts to get the withdrawal agreement bill through Parliament, and it is true now.

We support the UK Government’s policy to reach a deal with the EU and, given the recent comments of EU leaders, such as Angela Merkel, we believe that that remains a realistic outcome.

I disagree with the cabinet secretary, not least because, only yesterday, there were talks at a technical level in Brussels.

Michael Russell: Will the member give way?

Donald Cameron: I will in a second. David Frost, the UK Government’s representative in these talks, has been in the EU capital with a full negotiating team exploring various proposals and the UK Government remains committed to leaving the EU with a deal and indeed to securing a deal to leave at the European Council on 17 October.

Michael Russell: I am quite sure that the member—whom I welcome to his new role—believes what he has said, but I wonder whether he wants to contradict the official spokeswoman for the European Commission, Mina Andreeva, who said this morning that the British Government has made no proposals for ending the Brexit deadlock ahead of a new round of technical talks. Does he disagree with her? Is she lying?

Donald Cameron: As the minister said, discussions are on-going; negotiations continue. *[Interruption.]* Undoubtedly, time is running out and we are nearing the end, but there is still a good chance that a deal will be struck and that is where efforts are rightly concentrated.

Daniel Johnson (Edinburgh Southern) (Lab): Will the member give way?

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

Even at this point, a deal is achievable. A deal is not just achievable but desirable. This spring, organisations across Scotland wanted a deal. Scottish business wanted a deal. Scottish exporters wanted a deal. Scottish farmers wanted a deal. There is no reason to suppose that that has changed.

We have always sought a negotiated exit from the EU, as demonstrated by the fact that in the third meaningful vote, all 13 of our MPs supported the withdrawal agreement. They were the only Scottish MPs to vote to prevent no deal by voting for that agreement. It was therefore particularly grating to hear the First Minister say on Tuesday that SNP MPs would do everything in their power to prevent the UK from leaving the EU without a deal. Let me tell her that there is one simple way to do that—get her MPs to back a deal. *[Interruption.]*

Three times, the SNP and others had an opportunity to back a deal earlier this year and three times, they failed to do so. Such a deal would have achieved their key demands—*[Interruption.]*

The Deputy Presiding Officer: Mr Cameron is coming to the end of his remarks very soon. I ask members to please give him some quiet to do so.

Donald Cameron: Thank you. Three times, the SNP and others had an opportunity to back a deal and three times, they failed to do so. Such a deal would have achieved their key demands—frictionless trade, a transition period, protecting citizens’ rights and, crucially, no hard border for Ireland. By voting against a deal, they bear some of the responsibility for bringing no deal closer.

On the issue of no deal and its impacts, the Scottish Conservatives as a party have never actively pursued no deal as an outcome in and of

itself, although we have always accepted that it is a possibility. That was made clear in our manifesto two years ago.

We want to avoid no deal. That is why we believe that we must continue to pursue a negotiated exit. I acknowledge some of the cabinet secretary's points about the impact of no deal—he knows the respect that I have for him on this and other matters. Speaking personally, I believe, and I have always believed, that a no-deal Brexit should be avoided, given the effects that it would have. There are friends of mine on the Conservative benches, some of whom will speak after me, who may take a more robust approach on that than I do. There is a spread of opinion about Brexit on these benches—there always has been—and we are entirely comfortable with that.

The opposite of no deal is a deal. The route to an orderly departure from the EU is via a deal. If the cabinet secretary and his party truly want to prevent no deal, they should support the UK Government in achieving a deal. That is where all our energies should be directed at this, the eleventh hour. I urge the cabinet secretary and his party, in the interests of Scotland, to support a deal. If the SNP and others fail to support a deal and no deal becomes a reality, we will accept that and we shall all have to live with the consequences.

I move amendment S5M-18695.1, to leave out from “agrees” to end and insert:

“should respect the result of the 2016 EU referendum; agrees that a negotiated exit remains the best way to deliver on that vote, and supports the UK Government in reaching a deal with the EU.”

15:14

Alex Rowley (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab): In opening for Labour today, I state our support for the Government motion. We are clear that a no-deal Brexit must not be allowed to happen and Labour is doing and will continue to do everything we can to prevent such a scenario from happening. We also condemn the suspension of Parliament by Boris Johnson—it is obvious to all that it is simply a ploy to block proper democratic scrutiny.

Is it not ironic that the very people who talked about taking back control and restoring sovereignty to Parliament are the same people who are now shutting Parliament down? We must appreciate the dangers of allowing any leader to shut down our democratic processes just because they cannot get their own way. Democracy might at times seem difficult, but we should be clear that it is far better than anything that I have seen around the world, and we disrespect it at our peril.

That is why this Parliament in Edinburgh must today condemn the actions of Boris Johnson and his cabal, who are demonstrating a total disregard for our democracy. Boris Johnson cannot be allowed to crash us out of the European Union, throwing the country under his infamous Brexit bus, in order to pursue an ideological, hard-right project that will benefit only him and the wealthy donors to the Tory party—there will be no benefits for hard-working people or hard-working families when the cost of living runs out of control.

The Tories have refused to publish the impact assessment that was asked for of how a no-deal Brexit would affect poverty levels in this country. The Poverty Alliance, which is based in Glasgow, is right to highlight that issue. Is it not a scandal that its freedom of information requests were refused by the Department for Work and Pensions, which stated that it would not serve the public interest to release that information?

I ask the Scottish Tories in the chamber where their priorities lie. Are they with their country, their party or their careers?

Our path is clear. The legislative process against the disastrous no-deal plans is under way, and we will support a vote to call a general election so that the people can decide our country's future once the bill to stop a no-deal Brexit is law. However, that option will be pursued only when we can guarantee that a no-deal Brexit is off the table. Ken Clarke, the former Tory chancellor said yesterday:

“I do think that the Prime Minister has a tremendous skill in keeping a straight face while he is being ... disingenuous.”—[*Official Report, House of Commons*, 4 September 2019; Vol 664, c 293.]

In other words, we cannot trust a word that Boris Johnson says. The man is a stranger to the truth.

However, what of the Scottish Tories, or should I say, “the Scottish Conservative and Brexit party”? Not one of their MPs, under the threat of expulsion from the Tory party, had the conviction to stand up for Scotland and oppose a no-deal Brexit. We should be under no illusions. The impact of a no-deal Brexit would be devastating for Scotland—indeed, for the whole of the United Kingdom.

I understand that people are fed up with Brexit and that they just want it to be over with, but it will not be over with if we crash out on Halloween without a deal. The nightmare will just be beginning. The National Farmers Union has warned that a no-deal Brexit would be a disaster for agriculture. The Royal College of Physicians, health leaders and indeed the UK Government itself have all warned of the risk of food and medicine shortages, and the Trades Union

Congress is explicit about the threat to our economy, jobs and hard-won workers' rights.

As Jeremy Corbyn said this week,

"A no deal Brexit is really a Trump deal Brexit, leading to a one-sided US trade deal that will put us at the mercy of Donald Trump and big American"

business. That is not what the people voted for in 2016, and that is why we must go back to the people so they can make an informed decision based on the facts, and I want to be clear that remain must be an option on that ballot paper.

Scottish Labour will support and campaign for remain: remain and reform within Europe alongside remain and reform within the United Kingdom. The fundamental question is: what best meets the needs and aspirations of the Scottish people? Nobody voted for food shortages or job losses.

We must continue to do everything in our power to resolve the Brexit crisis. When no deal is securely taken off the table, Labour will give the people the option to have their say.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: I heard some name calling during Mr Rowley's speech. I want all members to treat other members with respect, and I do not believe that name calling in loud voices from seated positions is appropriate in the chamber.

15:20

Ross Greer (West Scotland) (Green): The past few weeks, and especially the past 48 hours, have seen a level of chaos descending on Westminster that even those of us who used the most imaginative rhetoric in 2014 could scarcely have suggested. Phrases such as "constitutional crisis" are overused in UK politics, but that is exactly what we are now in the grip of. Britain's Executive and legislature are at a level of conflict that we simply have not seen in the modern era. That conflict is now playing out not just in Parliament and the media, but in the courts in Edinburgh and London.

The days in which we described events such as the 2012 pasty tax budget as an "omnishambles" seem almost quaint. That is not because that era of Conservative austerity was anything other than a cruel disaster inflicted on the most vulnerable people; it is simply because the current Johnson Administration has, at its moment of most acute crisis, combined every one of the British ruling class's worst characteristics—the arrogance, the incompetence, the contempt and the inability to understand that it cannot have its own way all the time. There is its failure to understand that this is not a parlour game that is being played by old Eton chums, and there is its tolerance for

parliamentary democracy that lasts only until that starts to get in its way.

The British state and the British political class are tearing themselves asunder. On one level, I cannot pretend to be anything other than delighted that the corporate and populist wings of the Conservative Party are locked in a fight to the death. If only they could both lose, then the people of this country would be the real winners.

The decision to suspend the Westminster Parliament in an attempt to force no deal is an affront to democracy, and we now know that it was being planned for weeks, while the Government lied in denial after denial to Parliament and the press. That is the behaviour of authoritarians, not democrats, and it has shown the British constitution to be wildly unfit for purpose. In what normal democracy can an unelected monarch suspend an elected Parliament on the request of a Government without majority support?

However, I have to take my hat off to the Brexiters. By the time this ends, they might have destroyed the principle of parliamentary sovereignty, popular support for the monarchy, and the union itself.

We see the shameful spectacle of Government ministers adopting the language of nationalist authoritarians as they suggest that they could ignore laws that have been passed by Parliament, and we are faced with a Prime Minister lashing out wildly as he tries to cling on—supported, it seems, to the last by the Scottish Conservative MPs.

Neil Findlay (Lothian) (Lab): Ross Greer is making an excellent speech, and I agree with a great deal of what he has said. He is right in many things that he has said about the constitution. However, if we look at how the House of Commons has operated this week, we see that it has exerted its power over the Executive. In that regard, Parliament has worked. My fear is that, if we had a situation in the Scottish Parliament in which the Government was doing something outrageous, Parliament would not prevail.

Ross Greer: Mr Findlay makes a fascinating point for a separate theoretical discussion in Parliament about the constitutional set-up. The reality is that the UK Parliament has had to fight a last-minute and last-ditch effort against its own suspension by an out-of-control Executive. We have moved beyond lies, deceit and demonising opponents as traitors, and have moved into the territory of a Government that is deliberately trying to override Parliament, despite lacking support for doing so.

As if that dangerous turn in British politics is not bad enough in and of itself, it is all in pursuit of allowing the UK Government to drive the country head first into a no-deal Brexit. We have heard

many of the predicted impacts of that already, but it cannot be emphasised enough how devastating it would be. The UK would face shortages of medicines—in particular, those that cannot be stockpiled for any significant length of time. That is a severe risk for anyone in the UK who relies on medication to control or treat a condition that they have. It is genuinely life threatening, and it has already caused a huge amount of anxiety for people with cancer, diabetes and epilepsy. People who already have to deal with serious health conditions are being made to suffer even more uncertainty.

What is the Government's response? Leader of the House of Commons Jacob Rees-Mogg, when questioned on no-deal mortality rates by a respected doctor who was involved in drawing up the Government's own operation yellowhammer no-deal planning, accused the man of being a "remoaner". The Government is turning on its own professional advisors because they dare to tell the truth and they dare to question the Government's rhetoric.

There would also be shortages of food. The Conservatives have repeatedly sought to assure us that there would be sufficient food. There is not even sufficient food for millions of people in the UK right now. An estimated 8.4 million people struggle to eat enough week by week in one of the richest nations on earth. Millions rely on food banks, often after suffering directly at the hands of callous Tory benefit sanctions. How will those people fare under a no-deal Brexit? Food bank charities already rely on donations and the goodwill of others. How long will that last when shelves start to go empty and the price of food spikes?

All those consequences are the result of a Government pursuing a policy for which it just does not have a mandate. For the Prime Minister, it is just a means to the only end that has ever mattered to him: staying in power for as long as he can.

Throughout the EU referendum, we were told repeatedly by the leaders of the leave campaign that voting to exit the EU would not mean leaving without a deal. No deal was not on the ballot.

I commend the MPs in Westminster who have fought directly against the UK Government's attempts to subvert democracy. I suppose that there had to be something that Winston Churchill's grandson and I agreed on, eventually. Their efforts to enact a bill prohibiting no deal are vital. Once that is done, I look forward to seeing the Conservatives being tossed out of power, the damage that they have done to this country being reversed, and the final verdict on Brexit being given back to the people in a referendum.

Ultimately, though, whatever the actions of the majority of MPs at this moment, the crisis in Westminster has demonstrated that Scotland is not safe in this union. The Greens will work with others and will exhaust every option to stop a no-deal Brexit, to stop Brexit entirely, to rid us of the disastrous UK Government, and to give Scotland the say over our own future that is now so clearly needed.

15:27

Willie Rennie (North East Fife) (LD): Donald Cameron seems to be one of the few Conservatives left who support Theresa May's deal. It was not my, Mike Russell's or Alex Rowley's MPs who blocked that deal. It was not us on our own; it was not possible for us to do it on our own. It was his own new Prime Minister and his colleagues in the European research group who blocked that deal. He should not blame us; he should blame his own divided party, which has divided this country for decades on this issue. He should accept his responsibility for this mess.

It will be useful for the Parliament to stand together to send the clear message to Boris Johnson that we join people across the United Kingdom who are deeply concerned by the prospect of there being no deal.

I wanted to believe that Boris Johnson was striving for a deal with Europe. Last week, Ruth Davidson was quite convincing in saying that she believed that Boris Johnson was striving for a deal. However, the Prime Minister has moved quite significantly—from saying that no deal was "a million to one" chance during the leadership contest to saying that it is now "touch and go", but it is pretty clear that no deal is the Prime Minister's actual goal.

Why on earth would he want that? The operation yellowhammer reports are very clear, and even if only a tenth of the predictions come true, they will mean an enormous hit on the country, including food shortages, lorries backed up at ports, price rises and medicine shortages.

Anna-Ruth Cockerham from my constituency is anxious. She has a chronic condition called functional neurological disorder, which results in chronic pain and seizures. She takes controlled medicine that can be prescribed for only 28 days at a time. Lack of medication worsens her seizures, and her pain can last for weeks afterwards. Her prescription is due to be filled at the end of October. She worries about medicine shortages in the event of a no-deal Brexit. That is why she contacted me this week. She has experienced shortages before and felt their effects, and that was without Brexit. She points out that the UK Government's "Get ready for Brexit"

tool contains absolutely no information for patients who are in such circumstances. Those are the real-life impacts of a reckless Prime Minister and a reckless UK Government.

Why would the Prime Minister ever keep a no-deal Brexit open as an option? I am afraid that political interests have trumped the national interest. Quite simply, he has made a cynical calculation that he can get the votes of the Brexit Party behind the Conservatives. It seems that a no-deal Brexit is the only thing that would convince Nigel Farage. The Prime Minister is forging a pact with Nigel, and the Scottish Conservatives have bought it hook, line and sinker. Forget the economy, forget prices, forget medicine shortages and forget Anna-Ruth Cockerham. Not one Scottish Conservative MP stood up against their Prime Minister's strategy in the House of Commons this week—every single one of them buckled. They all put the party interest ahead of the national interest. It is my hope that today's motion will add to the growing weight of opinion across the United Kingdom. The opposition is clear not just in Scotland; it is strong and growing across the UK.

However, we need to stop Brexit altogether, not just a no-deal Brexit. The sooner the Labour Party stands up and says so, the better it will be for the country. I have heard that, apparently, Scottish Labour's position is different, as explained by Alex Rowley a few moments ago. Scottish Labour says that it is for remain, but, just like on independence, it has been completely unable to persuade the UK leader, Jeremy Corbyn. We have the farcical situation in which Labour in Scotland would campaign to remain in the EU, but a Jeremy Corbyn premiership would negotiate to leave. At this moment of national crisis, Labour must stand up and oppose Brexit. It will never be forgiven if it does not.

Last year, we were pleased that the SNP joined us to back a people's vote to stop Brexit. It took a while, but the SNP did the right thing. We stand together today to oppose a no-deal Brexit. However, for goodness' sake, will the SNP stop using Brexit to campaign for independence? Does it not realise that breaking up long-term economic partnerships is a pretty hard thing to do? Does it not realise that looking at the chaos of Brexit and concluding, "We want some of that right here, too" is the wrong conclusion to reach? Does the SNP not realise that there is another way to stop Brexit? We could revoke. The idea of a people's vote is growing in popularity.

The Cabinet Secretary for Health and Sport (Jeane Freeman): Will the member take an intervention?

The Deputy Presiding Officer: Mr Rennie is just closing, so he cannot take any interventions.

Willie Rennie: A million people were on the streets of London, and six million people have signed a petition. The power of a strong argument is building the pressure for remain. To give up on the aspirations of millions of British people would be cavalier and reckless, and it is not something that the Liberal Democrats will ever do.

We are speaking with one voice today on a no-deal Brexit. We are backing Westminster. We are encouraging the House of Lords. We are telling the Prime Minister to stop—to stop a no-deal Brexit, and stop it right now.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: We move to the open debate. [*Interruption.*] Can I have some attention, please? Thank you. I ask for speeches of six minutes. Time is really tight, so please be concise.

15:33

Gillian Martin (Aberdeenshire East) (SNP): Today is the chance for the Scottish Parliament to have its say on Boris Johnson's undemocratic and increasingly dictatorial plans for a no-deal Brexit. As we vote tonight, regardless of our party, we should all remember who it was that made it possible for each one of us to have the privilege of serving in Parliament: our constituents. We all have a duty to reflect their stated wishes with regard to leaving the EU.

As we know, not one council area in Scotland had a majority for leave—deal or no deal. In Scotland, 62 per cent of people voted to remain, just a few weeks after they made the decision to vote us in. Those who voted SNP did so knowing that we stood for Scottish independence and that we desired to remain in the European Union. The party that was able to form the main Opposition—the Scottish Conservatives—made its pro-EU position clear, with only a handful of pro-Brexit exceptions.

Those who voted in Ruth Davidson as the representative of Edinburgh Central did so after hearing her many forceful speeches in favour of remaining in the EU long before the EU referendum. We all know stories of many people who were convinced to vote no in the Scottish independence referendum because people such as Ruth Davidson, and others like her in the chamber, warned them that we would be out of the EU if they voted yes.

Just an hour ago, a guest of mine who came into the Parliament to talk to me about fish health was at pains to tell me that, because of Brexit, he was now an independence supporter. I hear that all the time back in my constituency. After all, my area of Aberdeenshire is set to be one of the worst hit economically by any type of Brexit, and my constituents are rightly furious.

Oliver Mundell (Dumfriesshire) (Con): Will the member take an intervention?

Gillian Martin: I will not.

Enough of the Tory rhetoric before the vote on 23 June 2016. Let us look at the messaging of some of the prominent Tories in the Scottish Parliament as they came to terms with the fact that Scotland would be taken out of the EU as a result of that vote. On 28 June 2016, Adam Tomkins said:

“To my mind, leave should mean that we retain full access to the EU’s single market. As I understand it, even the small number of MSPs who advocated a leave vote are of the view that we should maintain as full access to the single market as is possible.”—[*Official Report*, 28 June 2016; c 26.]

In September of that year, he said:

“being completely outside the single market would, in my view, be contrary to the British national interest.”—[*Official Report*, 14 September 2016; c 68.]

Adam Tomkins’s comments were bolstered by those of his then leader, Ruth Davidson, who, on 30 June that year, said:

“it was access to the single market and trade that was at the very core of my support for the European Union, because it helps our economy, helps sustain jobs and helps to keep our public services in Scotland well funded ... Retaining our place in the single market should be the overriding priority.”—[*Official Report*, 30 June 2016; c 24.]

She reiterated that view again in December, when she made exactly the same points.

Members should make no mistake: if the Scottish Tories reject the motion, they will be making an official declaration that they do not reject a no-deal scenario. Those Scottish voters who put their trust in them based on their words—

Oliver Mundell: Does the member remember the 2017 general election, when voters in her area elected a candidate who stood on a manifesto that made it clear that there was at least a possibility of leaving the EU without a deal?

Gillian Martin: I am extremely grateful for that intervention, because Colin Clark was a remainer, and he has turned into a Brexiteer. I wonder how people in my constituency feel about that; in fact, I know how they feel about it—they are asking me to complain. I will come on to Colin Clark later.

I turn to the so-called prorogation—or, in plain English, which members in this place are more fond of, the suspension—of the UK Parliament by the current Prime Minister. We are looking at a five-week suspension that is designed to allow Boris Johnson to leave the EU in a manner that will not be scrutinised by those who have been elected to carry out such scrutiny.

After being prompted by so many of my constituents, I wrote to Colin Clark, the member of

Parliament for Gordon, who has recently been promoted—for his U-turn abilities—to a junior ministerial post by Boris Johnson. In answer to my concerns about the lack of scrutiny available to MPs on this most important of constitutional decisions, he said something very revealing by way of reply. He said:

“I honestly believe the best outcome for the UK is a deal which the PM will now be able to pursue unencumbered on the 17th of October.”

What does it mean for a parliamentary democracy if a Prime Minister can remove the so-called encumbrance of the scrutiny of MPs? It means that he can do anything he likes. It sets that precedent for ever. Such an approach is straight out of the despot playbook. Trump tried it with executive orders in the US, and Johnson is trying it out for size with the prorogation rules in Westminster. That is how it starts—once a mechanism has been found and exploited, the path is open to subverting parliamentary democracy at will. If we do not stop Boris Johnson’s first attempt now, we will open the floodgates to totalitarianism.

I urge everyone to reject those attempts, to reject a no-deal Brexit and to support the Government’s motion. I hope that Tory MSPs are able to vote with their conscience tonight, rather than being whipped. Even today, at First Minister’s question time, it was evident that the Tories are ignoring all signs to the contrary and are making a good fist of pretending that they are convinced that Boris Johnson is pulling out all the stops to get a deal with the EU. Mr Johnson’s own foreign office civil servants are not convinced. We know that the negotiating team has been reduced.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: You must close, please.

Gillian Martin: A member of that team said:

“Our team has basically been sent”

to Brussels

“to pretend to negotiate”.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: Close please, Miss Martin.

Gillian Martin: I ask the Scottish Conservatives not to be bystanders as democracy is subverted, because the people of Scotland will never forgive you—

The Deputy Presiding Officer: Miss Martin, please sit down.

I have told everyone how tight time is. If you go over time, you will disadvantage members of your own group, as they may be dropped from the speaking list.

15:40

Graham Simpson (Central Scotland) (Con):

This is the 34th debate that we have had on Brexit in the course of this parliamentary session, the 34th afternoon of hot air filling this chamber and the 34th time that we will have a vote that will achieve precisely nothing. That is not to mention 25 statements of varying levels of usefulness and 29 committee inquiries. What have any of them achieved? Very little.

The majority of that debating time has been marked by the almost complete lack of a voice from anyone who, in 2016, believed that Brexit would be a good thing, because most members said that they wanted the UK to remain in the EU. I was one of only six members who said before the vote that they wanted out. All of us were Conservatives.

A million of our fellow citizens in Scotland agreed with us. Their voice has hardly been heard in this chamber since then. The Scottish Parliament has not been representative of Scotland on that. So, today, I speak for the million, and I speak for democracy, for it was democracy—or the lack of it—that led me to conclude, with regret, that the UK should leave the EU project.

It is also democracy that leads me to say that the SNP motion today is completely wrong. Of course, when it was written by the cabinet secretary, we had not witnessed the spectacle of the House of Commons riding roughshod over the will of the people. However, we should have expected a remainder Parliament, with a partisan Speaker, to do its bit to thwart the result of the referendum. The votes in the Commons this week have nothing to do with stopping no deal, and everything to do with stopping Brexit altogether. What a disgrace.

When David Cameron called the referendum he certainly never envisaged losing, but if a Government calls a referendum, it must be prepared for any outcome and must respect it. A Government does not respect a referendum by repeatedly trying again until it gets the result that it wants. Various figures in the SNP, including Alex Neil, Kenny Gibson, and even Pete Wishart, recognise the danger to the SNP of repeating referendums on the EU—should Scotland ever vote for independence.

I felt very let down by Mr Cameron when he resigned as Prime Minister. He should have swallowed his pride and got on with the job, which he was good at. Theresa May, who also wanted to remain, told us that Brexit means Brexit, but, of course, it did not, once we caved in and took the option of no deal off the table. Why would anyone take seriously in a negotiation someone who was

not prepared to walk away? Europe has not taken us seriously and it does not. That is why we still have the appalling spectacle of Monsieur Barnier insisting that the Irish backstop will remain.

Every Conservative member of Parliament, including Philip Hammond, stood on a manifesto that said:

“We continue to believe that no deal is better than a bad deal for the UK.”

That is my view, and given that Parliament has rejected the only deal on the table three times, then no deal really is all that is left—or remaining.

As Ruth Davidson said in her dignified resignation press conference last week, those who have rejected the deal need to get behind a new deal when it comes. Members of my own party certainly do, if the Prime Minister succeeds in persuading the burghers of Brussels to shift.

What of the other parties? What—if any—deal would the SNP, the Greens, the Lib Dems or Labour be happy with? Do they even respect the referendum result? It does not look like it, and if the people’s vote to leave was overturned by the Westminster Parliament, what would the SNP think about that precedent being set? What if we had a situation where Scotland had voted for independence, only for a pro-union Parliament to be elected here, which then blocked it?

Once we have a result in a referendum, we must act on it. The real threat to democracy is not a Prime Minister intent on giving the people what they voted for; it is a cabal of preening and posturing politicians who are not the slightest bit interested in what the people think.

Anyway, what is this no deal that people talk about? Hundreds of agreements are being reached, on cross-border transport, airports, shipping, insurance and foreign residency status. Even the deputy mayor of Calais admits that there will be no hold-ups for British trucks. Finally, I think that I am well within my time, so I will ask this question. If the situation was that Scotland had voted for independence, would the SNP ever be prepared to leave with no deal? If so, what is it that SNP members are complaining about?

15:45

Stuart McMillan (Greenock and Inverclyde) (SNP): Graham Simpson gave at the beginning of his speech a helpful resumé regarding the number of occasions on which Parliament has discussed Brexit and its implications. That highlighted the importance that the Scottish Parliament and Government place on Brexit and its implications for all constituents across the country, whether we have a deal or no deal. On Mr Simpson’s point about democracy, I remind him that 62 per cent of

the population of Scotland voted to remain in the EU. Parliament is talking about the issues that really matter to the population of Scotland and is highlighting the implications of Brexit, whether we have a deal or no deal.

Historians will be writing about the events of Brexit for decades to come, but in that time, how many lives will have been changed for the worse if we leave the EU with no deal? I voted to remain and would do so again tomorrow. I do not believe for a minute that the EU is a perfect organisation, but given the many things that have been shown about the UK political system and the so-called mother of Parliaments, it is clear that the UK is broken beyond repair. The EU functions, and it is getting on with work for its citizens. At its centre, it has determination to support all its members. If the UK wants to take a lesson from the EU—it probably will not—that lesson should be about how a union looks after its members. That is what a union of equals is all about—unlike what we see now in the discredited United Kingdom.

I do not want a no-deal exit, because that would be catastrophic for many of my constituents, as well as for many more people across Scotland and elsewhere in these islands. The fact that the Prime Minister has been determined to deliver a no-deal exit highlights how out of touch with reality he is. However, as we all know, he is a Prime Minister in name only. His power has been removed and even his brother has given up the ghost.

Various reports and commentators have highlighted why a no-deal exit would be disastrous. Unite the union raised its concerns in a letter to all members of the Scottish Parliament during the summer. It said:

“With the spectre of a no deal Brexit looming, we have grave concerns over existing legislation which maintains safety and standards on UK roads. We are seeing attacks on drivers’ regulations in the United States and with the much reported discussions on a UK/US trade deal we believe that the government may have similar plans.”

According to yesterday’s *Financial Times*, an interesting recent report by the initiative called the UK in a changing Europe says that

“no deal will not get Brexit done’ and instead would be the start of a ‘period of prolonged uncertainty for citizens, workers and businesses’”.

The report goes on to say that

“A recession is highly probable—but its depth and severity are uncertain”.

Anand Menon, who is a director of the UK in a Changing Europe, and who has given evidence to the Parliament’s Culture, Tourism, Europe and External Relations Committee, has highlighted that one of the most challenging effects of a no-deal exit would be the long-term consequences, starting with the problem that Britain would still

need to negotiate a deal with its largest trading partner but would be doing so from a more difficult position. For Scotland, which exports goods worth £14.9 billion to the EU, that would be hugely damaging. Furthermore, the Fraser of Allander institute, which has also given evidence to the committee, has suggested that

“EU exports ... are—on their own—nearly as much as Scotland exports to North America, Central and South America, the Middle East, Asia, Africa and Australasia combined”.

If the Tories do not believe the Fraser of Allander institute, they can look at their own UK Government’s analysis, which is devastating. It states that no deal could leave the UK economy 6.3 per cent to 9 per cent smaller after 15 years than it would otherwise have been. It says that the worst-hit areas economically in a no-deal scenario would be Wales, with an 8.1 per cent hit, Scotland with an 8 per cent reduction, Northern Ireland with a 9.1 per cent reduction and the north-east of England with a 10.5 per cent reduction.

The UK Government also points out that disruption to cross-Channel trade could lead to delays in UK food supply, 30 per cent of which comes from the EU. The possible disruption to cross-Channel trade

“would lead to reduced availability and choice of products.”

The analysis also warned that

“some food prices are likely to increase, and there is a risk that consumer behaviour could exacerbate, or create, shortages in this scenario.”

The Tories have stated—

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

Stuart McMillan: I will, in a moment. The Tories have stated, and will continue to do so, that they want a deal to be done so that no deal is not an option. However, the powerless Prime Minister has sent a negotiator to Brussels who is not negotiating. The Belgian MEP Philippe Lamberts, who is on the EU’s Brexit steering group and who has also spoken to the Scottish Parliament’s Culture, Tourism, Europe and External Affairs Committee, was pretty clear last night on the Channel 4 News when he was asked the question about negotiation. I will not use his exact words, but he said that it is BS. He also said:

“There’s no negotiations, simply because the British position is to say, ‘We don’t want the backstop’, and ‘We don’t want the backstop.’ Has there been a counter proposal? There has been nothing. So, basically they are saying, ‘Come back with something that pleases us’. That is not a negotiation.”

I will take Liam Kerr’s intervention.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: No, you will not, Mr McMillan, because you have only 30 seconds left.

Stuart McMillan: People realise that Westminster does not work, and the gaming and downright lies that have been told in order to remove the UK from the EU have alerted many people to the disintegration of the political elite, who are hell-bent on making people poorer.

The oft-used phrase “Perfidious Albion” is just so apt for today’s situation.

15:51

Neil Findlay (Lothian) (Lab): This Parliament and the UK Parliament are supposed to be representative parliamentary democracies in which power is loaned by the people to MSPs and MPs to exercise for a term of that Parliament, be it four, five or any other number of years.

Throughout the Brexit referendum and since, we have heard much comment and spurious rhetoric from Johnson, Gove and the rest about taking back control, the need to restore UK sovereignty, the desire to make our own democratic decisions, the rights of the people and the primacy of the House of Commons. Great pronouncements were made championing parliamentary democracy and the will of the people.

However, what we have seen this week was an attempt to trash all that and to undermine parliamentary sovereignty, and an attempt to circumvent the very representative democracy that they claimed Brexit was going to restore.

I regularly read in the media that class is no longer an issue in our politics; we hear pundits and commentators tell us that it is an outdated concept. Well, I have to say, if anyone who has watched the antics of Boris Johnson, Jacob Rees-Mogg and the rest of the Bullingdon boys this week thinks that class is irrelevant in our politics, they need to lay off the cooking sherry.

What we saw was an attempted establishment coup. What we saw was an arrogant abuse of power on a scale that has not been seen in modern British political history. These were not jolly public school dormitory japes, but the antics of a bunch of privileged, arrogant, elitist, sinister and entitled proven liars who are corrupting our democracy, trying to close the doors of our Parliament and, like thieves in the night, trying to steal the rights of every citizen in the land.

Their contempt was epitomised by the sight the other night of Rees-Mogg lounging on the House of Commons benches as though he owned the place. All he needed was his nanny to come along with his teddy and cocoa and tuck him in for the night. Who do these people think they are? What

right do they have to try to take away all our rights and the rights of all the people whom we and they represent? That power is not theirs to give away simply because the Government of the day cannot secure a majority for its bigoted, dangerous and irresponsible no-deal agenda.

It will not be Rees-Mogg who will lose his business because of Brexit uncertainty—he has already relocated it to Dublin. Boris Johnson is not a Honda worker in Swindon who will lose his job because of this shambles. Gove is not a small food producer who has no idea how he will manage to export his produce in a few weeks if Britain leaves the EU without a deal.

Willie Rennie: Does Neil Findlay mean that he now wants to stop Brexit altogether?

Neil Findlay: Mr Rennie really needs to keep up. I urge him to pay a bit more attention to what is going on.

Those Tories’ inherited wealth, shareholdings and investments, and their highly paid newspaper columns and speeches will see them through quite nicely, untouched by the crisis that will have a catastrophic impact on working people if the no-deal scenario prevails.

I never thought that, in my lifetime, I would see a Prime Minister, who was elected by a tiny number of Tory party members and who has no popular democratic mandate and zero legitimacy or credibility, use threats, patronage, expulsion, lies, arrogance and deception to close down our Parliament—a move that has been supported by every single subservient brown-nosing Scottish Tory MP. They must—and will—be held to account for their actions.

Imagine the reaction of the establishment if a Labour Prime Minister could not get legislation through and so decided to close down Parliament. We would see the media, the judiciary, the security services and all arms of the state deployed to bring that Government down. What about the hypocrisy of the Tories who raise concerns about democracy in China, Russia, the middle east or Latin America and who then go on to vote to close down our democratically elected Parliament? What a bunch of charlatans they are. We must prevent a no-deal exit—for the sake of our jobs, our economy, the health and education of our people and our children’s future. For so many reasons we must prevent the disaster that a no-deal scenario would bring.

This week, the UK economy was threatened by the actions of the Prime Minister and his Government. However, on Tuesday, the Westminster Parliament did its job in defeating the Government’s march towards no deal. Members of Parliament of all parties stood up for the rights of their constituents over those of the Executive,

which is a good thing. In the House of Commons, 21 Tories stood up against that march. However, in this Parliament, every one of the Tory MSPs who cheered on Theresa May's deal now cheer on Boris Johnson's attempt to get no deal. Not one of them has any credibility or backbone.

15:57

Jenny Gilruth (Mid Fife and Glenrothes) (SNP): We must sit up straight in this place. Each member has a chair, a desk and a lectern. It is no place for lounging, because this is a Parliament whose members come here to work and to represent the people who elect us.

I am sure that, over the past while, we have all watched more television coverage of the Westminster Parliament than we care to remember. All that that has done for me is to reaffirm the political beliefs that I have held all my life. We have seen the pomp, the arrogance and the sheer entitlement on display. My opinion of our esteemed mother of all Parliaments has slumped faster than Jacob Rees-Mogg down those green leather benches.

However, above all that, what angers me the most is the game playing and the joy that the Tories take in plotting chess moves with which they will always win and my constituents will be the losers. In my constituency, Brexit is not a game—it is about life. It is about my constituents' rights to stay here, their jobs, the cost of what it takes to feed their families, all the days lost to the Brexit debate that could have been spent tackling poverty in their communities, and the fear that they are no longer welcome to call this country home.

In Mid Fife and Glenrothes, we like to make things that travel around the world—from Tanqueray gin at the Cameron Bridge distillery to the aluminium pigment used in car paint that is made at Silberline in Leven. Thanks to the Scottish Government, we are now welcoming the return of Leven's railway after half a century—an investment that will be transformational for the communities that I serve.

Contrast that with the behaviour of a UK Government that is hellbent on making business for the communities that I serve harder. The Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster has confirmed that food prices would rise after a no-deal Brexit. He told Andrew Marr:

"I think that there are a number of economic factors in play. Some prices may go up. Other prices will come down."

Mibbes aye, mibbes naw.

That is not good enough. It is not good enough for the one in three children in my constituency who is growing up in poverty; not good enough for

the mum in Glenrothes who can barely afford to feed herself, never mind her four hungry children; not good enough for the pensioner in Kennoway who is forced to live in just one room of his house because he cannot afford the heating bills. No deal is not good enough for my constituents who live with long-term health conditions such as diabetes and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease.

The leaked documents from the UK Government's operation yellowhammer tell us that medical supplies will be

"vulnerable to severe extended delays",

as three quarters of the UK's medicines enter the country via the main Channel crossings. Glenrothes already has the highest percentages for hospitalisation for COPD in Fife. It is not good enough.

Today's Conservative amendment asks the chamber to support

"the UK Government in reaching a deal with the EU."

However, that premise accepts that the UK Government actually wants a deal. Perhaps the Scottish Tories might listen to one of their own on this "absurd" argument that Boris is trying to get a deal:

"He's obviously not trying to get a deal ... he's dug himself in, he assumes he's going to get no deal. Because he can't get the right wing of the Conservative Party, many of them now stuck in his Cabinet, to agree to it."

Those are not my words, but those of Ken Clarke, who was this week expelled from the Conservative Party, making him the first independent MP to hold the position of the father of the house since 1815. From the rape clause debate to the debate on gender representation on public boards, Ruth's Tories have already proven themselves entirely incapable of doing the right thing in this place. Now, even Ruth knows that the game's a bogey. In July, she said:

"I don't think the government should pursue a no-deal Brexit and, if it comes to it, I won't support it."

Yet not a single one of her MSPs can admit it, and not a single one of them will vote to rule out no deal at 5 o'clock tonight, because—ultimately—they believe that this Parliament should be subservient.

Liam Kerr: If faced with the options of no deal and the withdrawal deal, would Jenny Gilruth urge MPs to back that deal?

Jenny Gilruth: I do not know what deal he is talking about—there is no deal. He is living in a fantasy land. Boris has not secured a deal—it does not exist. Boris Johnson is exactly who the Scottish Tories would rather have in charge of this. Boris, whose comments led to the imprisonment of

Nazanin Zaghari-Ratcliffe; Boris, who compared women who wear burqas and niqabs to letterboxes; Boris, who yesterday referred to the leader of the opposition as a “big girl’s blouse”.

Then again, why should we expect any more from a group of individuals who will soon be led by Murdo Fraser? Talking of the ridiculous, I will return to Jacob Rees-Mogg. In 1997, he stood in the Central Fife constituency against one Henry McLeish and my predecessor, Tricia Marwick. As Neil Findlay mentioned, it is a well-known story that Rees-Mogg took his nanny out on the campaign trail. He confirmed as much, stating:

“I was going to take my Bentley, but she”—

that is the nanny, by the way—

“wisely said that this would be seen as ostentatious and I should take Mummy’s Mercedes instead.”

Suffice it to say that mummy’s Mercedes did not go down well in Leven, where he referred to those claiming benefits as

“the scourge of the earth.”

Let us return to what a no-deal Brexit will mean for our constituents: fewer jobs, food shortages and depleted medical supplies. All of that is confirmed by the UK Government’s own analysis. What is left of the United Kingdom is a place that is being governed by a party that has deselected Winston Churchill’s grandson. The father of the house said that he did not recognise his party. As he put it:

“It’s been taken over by a”

bizarre

“character”

and the

“most right-wing Cabinet ... The prime minister comes and talks total rubbish to us.”

The Tories’ amendment is worse than total rubbish; it lacks any suggestion of a political backbone. The time for Ruth’s Tories to prove their worth has long since passed—we all know that they are Boris’s backers now. I just hope that their unwavering loyalty pays them the dividend that they deserve at the ballot box.

16:03

Jamie Greene (West Scotland) (Con): Mr Russell and I may not agree on many things politically, not least Scotland’s position in the UK or—as we now know—the UK’s position in Europe. However, I have participated in many debates like this one—some of the 34 that were mentioned—and I have listened to the discourse between those on these benches and those on Mr Russell’s. At times over the past few years, I have respected his academic approach to the

arguments that he makes while disrespecting the motions that he has penned.

However, today’s motion is different and I am surprised by it. I am surprised not least that, after two months of this Parliament being in recess, the Government chose to donate such a chunk of the precious nine hours for which we sit each week to Mr Russell for him to repeat the same well-rehearsed mantras about Brexit and his opposition to the Conservatives in Westminster: 34 debates—every one another chapter for his book.

I have heard no suggestions from SNP members about what MSPs are expected to do about how the UK exits the EU or what we are supposed to do to alter the dates or duration of the prorogation of Westminster. It is the full outrage of the SNP over Brexit that is as confusing as it is predictable, because Michael Russell’s motion asks us to condemn a no-deal Brexit, yet there is no type of Brexit that the SNP would support.

The SNP has been nothing but obstructive and obtrusive throughout the entire process. SNP members here can protest otherwise, but their colleagues will be judged on their track record in Westminster. They voted against triggering article 50 in the first place and they refused to accept the democratic result of the UK-wide referendum—the SNP has never been very good at accepting the results of referendums. They voted for extensions to article 50, trying to delay Brexit. They voted against a sensible withdrawal deal not once or twice but three times and, each time, they made no deal more likely. They voted against the deal that was designed to secure EU citizens’ rights, agree our financial exit from Europe and, more importantly, enter into the transition that business was crying out for. They voted for Parliament to take control over House of Commons business, undermining the Government’s ability to negotiate, and they voted for the no-deal bill, handing all the negotiating power back to Brussels on a plate.

There is no version of Brexit—deal or no deal—that the SNP would support, so why are SNP members pretending that it is this or that type of Brexit that offends them so? Graham Simpson is absolutely right: more than 1 million Scots voted to leave the EU and they must have a voice in this debate and in this Parliament.

Who were those million people? They were Conservative voters, Labour voters and some of them were SNP voters. Some were voters of no political persuasion. Time after time, they have to sit and listen to debates such as this and endure a narrative that says that their votes do not count. Their votes matter to the members on the Conservative benches. It was a UK-wide referendum. I know that the SNP does not want the UK per se to exist, but it does exist. It is what

Scotland voted for and it is about time that the SNP accepted that.

I have always said that we should leave the EU with a deal. However, presented with that challenge, Westminster would not let it happen. The question now is, if presented with a deal—be it the withdrawal agreement that was previously agreed with the EU27 or another deal—will SNP MPs get behind and vote for it, or are they so ideologically opposed to Brexit that they will oppose any form of deal? Today's motion does not even seek to answer that question.

If the EU's position is that it will not even negotiate with the UK on its future relationship with the EU until after the UK has left the union, what makes Nicola Sturgeon so sure that Scotland's experience with Europe would be any different? Can members imagine a scenario at an SNP conference—

Willie Rennie: Jamie Greene talked about whether SNP MPs—and, presumably, others—would support any deal that was forthcoming. Can he guarantee that all his own party's MPs would back such a deal?

Jamie Greene: I will echo Ruth Davidson's words from the speech that she gave the media last week. She urged all MPs—who have a duty in Westminster—to support a deal. I do not want no deal, the country does not want it and I hope that our MPs do not want it, either. The reality is that they have to vote for a deal for it to happen, and I hope that they do.

Members on the Conservative benches are the only members in this chamber who will respect the outcome of the referendum, who want Scotland to come out of the hated common fisheries policy and who do not want to hand those powers straight back to Brussels. We want a deal and we will support the UK Government in getting one .

I say to Mr Russell that actions speak louder than words. If he wants a deal, he must stop grandstanding and instruct his MPs to vote for one.

16:09

Stewart Stevenson (Banffshire and Buchan Coast) (SNP): *The Independent* newspaper reports that

“some loud bloke who stunk of booze yelling at us”

is a description of how number 10 attempted to persuade 21 former Tory MPs to vote for Prime-Minister-in-name-only Johnson's plans. The *New York Times* today describes this week as “a sobering week” for the Prime Minister—if only.

The cabinet secretary and others have confirmed that the EU has seen nothing by way of proposals from the UK Government.

Our colleague Donald Cameron is a serious man, with a demonstrated ability to think through complicated issues and break them down into solvable bite-size chunks—the attributes of the Scottish advocate down the ages. However, today's amendment in his name falls substantially short of what his pupil master would have required of him in his days of training as an advocate.

Proper parliamentary procedures continue in the Scottish Parliament—they have been abandoned by a Prime Minister who is yet to win any vote in the house of which he should remember that he is a servant. Here, our duty is to offer sober-minded dissection of even the most obtuse proposal, so I will consider the three planks of Mr Cameron's amendment.

First, we are asked to respect the referendum result. There has always been a fundamental conflict between the 2014 and 2016 referendums. A key reason why the argument for Scottish independence was lost in 2014 was the Scottish people's attachment—later proved, in the 2016 vote—to our membership of the EU. The no campaign asserted that Scotland could remain in the EU only if it rejected independence. My side of the argument then lacked the ammunition that would convincingly rebut that—now provably implausible—argument.

In passing, I note that many of my constituents see opportunity—even a sea of opportunity—in leaving the common fisheries policy, which is a policy that only the SNP has always opposed. [*Interruption.*] The Tories had better keep listening. However, many of my constituents also see the ruin that awaits our fish processors as a result of Theresa May's choice of the method of exit.

At 8.58 this morning, I received an email from the largest fish processing firm, which I am able to quote on the record. I will read out exactly what it says:

“The Scottish Conservatives today in Edinburgh Parliament will hit their normal drum of stating that the Conservatives are ‘champions’ of the Scottish Fishing Industry ... From my end I am very clear: leaving the EU without a deal will cause long term damage to the fishing industry, both the catching and onshore sector and will result in a considerable economic loss to our coastal communities. A ‘no deal Exit’ has to be avoided at all cost.”

It goes on:

“I wish you well in the debate ... all sectors of the Scottish economy will be adversely affected and damaged through the actions of a Conservative group of UK Ministers driven by a right wing ideology. It has to be stopped.”

That is from the fishing industry—the one area in Scotland that might have been expected to benefit from a proper exit. The industry clearly sees that what the Tories are progressing will not benefit it.

The conflict between the two referendums defeats the argument behind the first plank of the Tory amendment. The second plank is the call for a “negotiated exit”. We know that there is no negotiation, so no negotiated exit is in prospect. Mr Johnson is not negotiating. No proposals have been tabled. My long history of business negotiation has persuaded me that going into a negotiation with a blank sheet of paper and waving that paper under the noses of the people at the other side of the table does not progress the negotiation.

It is clear that Johnson has spent too much time with Trump and is adopting Trump’s relationship with truth, rationality and clarity.

On the third plank of the Tory amendment, I do not know how one reaches a deal when one refuses to allow civil servants to engage meaningfully with the EU and politicians carry blank sheets of paper to Brussels.

As Yogi Berra said:

“If you don’t know where you are going, you will end up somewhere else.”

As a lawyer, Donald Cameron will be familiar with the saying:

“A man who is his own lawyer has a fool for a client.”

It is perhaps time to update that old saying: a man who journeys without a map will never know his destination.

The Tories: clueless; leaderless; mapless. The Tories: beyond reason; beyond parody; beyond hope.

16:15

Pauline McNeill (Glasgow) (Lab): The country has never been so divided, and it feels irreversibly so. It is hard to see how we can undo the damage to British politics as the Tory party continues to preside over Brexit and probably destroys itself in the process.

According to Tory peer William Waldegrave—a man whom I never thought that I would quote—Britain has lost touch with its position in the world. He said:

“Whatever happens about Brexit, Britain is going to change forever.”

After Brexit, we will be a diminished country and we will have less influence in the world without our partners and other EU members. We are not even out of the European Union, but we already do not

recognise the country that we live in, with people stockpiling medicines and food.

The party of Thatcher, Major and Heath is fixated only on the issue of Brexit. As others have said, the Conservative Party will be without Kenneth Clarke, Rory Stewart, Nicholas Soames and all the moderates who we have come to know. Although we may disagree with them, they are, nonetheless, moderates. They have been threatened by their own leader and purged by their own party for opposing the Johnson-Cummings plan and standing up for what they believe in.

The deeply cynical behaviour of the current Cabinet was best summed up by Nicholas Soames when he thanked members of the Cabinet by saying that their

“serial disloyalty has been such an inspiration to so many of us.”—[*Official Report, House of Commons*, 4 September 2019; Vol 664, c 235.]

I have never heard of such a hypocritical Cabinet in my life.

I found it quite amusing last week when the journalist Steve Richard first described Philip Hammond as Britain’s own Che Guevara. In all seriousness, I think that history will judge Philip Hammond as someone who did the right thing—when the time came, he stood up for what he believed in.

I say to Jamie Greene and others that that is what tonight is about. Tonight is about whether the parties in this Parliament can find a consensus that, no matter what we think about Brexit, a no-deal exit is damaging and not desirable. Actually, it would be sad if the Scottish Tories cannot find it in themselves today to stand with the rest of us and send a clear message that no deal is unacceptable. I thought that that was the one thing on which we could agree.

It is quite clear where Ruth Davidson—the most popular Tory leader of all time—stands on the issue. I say to Tory members that they have lost their way if they do not come to that conclusion at 5 pm tonight. If you cannot stand up and be counted in this place when we know, as other members have recounted, the real and present danger of a no deal, you not only risk betraying the poorest of people—I would go as far as to say that you would be betraying the values of your own party if you do not make clear your position on no deal tonight.

Jamie Greene: I am intrigued to hear what effect the member thinks not delivering the Brexit result would have not just on our party but on her party.

Pauline McNeill: You have had three years! The Tory party has had three years to deliver Brexit, but we have not seen a credible deal.

I think that Jamie Greene knows. I think that you are pretending that you do not know the purpose of tonight. If, as you said, you really oppose no deal, I challenge you to vote on that basis tonight.

Donald Cameron said that Scottish businesses want a deal. That is not really true—most Scottish businesses have said that they would take a deal. There is a difference between wanting and taking a deal.

The Minister for Local Government, Housing and Planning (Kevin Stewart): Will the member give way?

Pauline McNeill: I am sorry, but I have got only six minutes so I cannot take a further intervention.

Achieving an orderly departure after three years was the Tories' responsibility and you have absolutely failed.

If you look back at the speeches that I have made in this place, you will see that I have supported a form of Brexit that would best protect the people and the lives of our economy, but that has never really been on the table, and I do not need to point out that the withdrawal agreement is not a deal.

I have come to realise that leaving Europe regardless of the consequences is the primary objective of the leave camp, and it has concealed the true damaging consequences of doing that from people.

It is interesting that the question of Northern Ireland and the peace that was achieved by your party's contribution has not been mentioned. I and others know that, through a no-deal Brexit, there will be decades of austerity, which is why I feel so strongly about it.

People are entitled to know the truth. The leaked UK Government operation yellowhammer report revealed the probable consequences of leaving without a deal. People have a right to know that. I do not see why it was a secret document. We know that there will be transport disruption across the Channel and that there will be immigration checks. We do not know the half of what might come about. World trade terms leave Britain exposed to high tariffs that we cannot control. I do not see why you would trust Donald Trump to give Britain a decent set of trade terms, when he is already at war with China and Canada over steel imports. That is not a man who can be trusted to strike a trade deal.

I will not take lessons on democracy from the Tory party, which, this week, has thwarted the mother of Parliaments, threatening its own MPs for standing for what they believe in. It either believes that Parliament is sovereign or it does not.

On this occasion and on this motion, I will be proud to stand with every single member in this Parliament on the single message that a no-deal Brexit is not acceptable to Scotland and that it is not in the interests of Scottish people.

If you are a politician who has come here to stand up for working people, you have a duty to support and vote for this motion tonight. Thereafter, we can argue about the things that we disagree on but, tonight, you have to vote against no deal.

The Deputy Presiding Officer (Christine Grahame): I do not like being picky, but that is my job. The term "you" should not be used directly towards each other. I understand that people get excited, but they should try to desist.

16:21

Fulton MacGregor (Coatbridge and Chryston) (SNP): In 2016, the idea of the UK leaving the EU without a deal seemed impossible. Over the past three years, like everybody else, I have watched with horror as that became a possibility, then a likelihood and now, with only a matter of weeks remaining, a real and present danger to our country.

As others have said before me today, a no-deal Brexit is unthinkable—it would have catastrophic economic and social effects. That is widely accepted by people, whether, like me, they voted to remain or they voted to leave. Leave voters to whom I have spoken did not cast their votes to damage the economy or to leave themselves and their friends, family and neighbours unemployed.

The situation has again laid bare the unequal state of this so-called union of equals and the huge democratic deficit that we have. Scotland voted overwhelmingly to remain and we have reiterated that wish at every election since the vote. However, we are being ignored. We are told that we voted as a UK and that we must accept the decisions that are made for us. To my mind, people who continually use that argument do not understand the principles of self-determination, devolution and equality in decision making.

Scotland deserves better. The people and businesses in my constituency of Coatbridge and Chryston deserve better. EU nationals who call Scotland their home deserve better. Over the past year, like many colleagues, I have been engaging directly with EU nationals in my constituency, and the message from them is clear. They want to stay, to continue to provide in the amazing ways that they do and to do what is best for this country.

Hundreds turned up to an EU surgery that I held on 7 December, at which it was clear that what was going on was an attack on their basic human

rights. My constituents were concerned about the homes that they had bought, the rights of their children who were born here, where they stood with the permanent jobs that they were committed to, the pensions that they had contributed to and the access that they would have to healthcare.

My constituents are right to be concerned. Only this week, the Home Secretary had to backtrack on the vow to end the freedom of movement for EU nationals on 31 October. That was not because she had a change of heart; it was because lawyers and policy experts deemed it impossible to implement.

That is not what Scotland wants. We are an open, inclusive and welcoming country. Of course, I believe that independence is the best way for us to achieve our potential but, at a minimum, power over immigration should be devolved to us in order to allow us to treat people with humanity and to grow our economy.

It has been said time and again in the chamber, but I must repeat that a no-deal Brexit will be disastrous for Scotland. No sector of the Scottish economy will be unscathed by Brexit. In February, a Scottish Government report showed us that a no-deal Brexit could lead to our gross domestic product dropping by 7 per cent. If anyone needs a reminder of how bad no deal would be, here is a recap of what was found in the operation yellowhammer Cabinet contingency papers—lower food stocks hitting our most vulnerable groups, medical supply shortages, petrol import tariffs leading to job losses and impacting fuel supplies, shortages in social care and a return of a hard border in Ireland. Does this Tory Government know no bounds at a time when people are struggling under austerity and welfare cuts?

Only a couple of weeks ago, I put out an appeal for Coatbridge food bank, which was struggling for supplies. Of course, the people of Coatbridge and Chryston responded with their usual generosity and kindness, but it is a pretty grim state of affairs to be in in the first place—and what does our elitist Government think is a good idea? Oh yeah, a Brexit cliff edge. The UK Government is not a Government that is standing up for ordinary families in Scotland or across the UK, but if the Tories are not the people for people, surely they are the people for business. Not in my area. The number of businesses in Coatbridge and Chryston that have come to me to say that they are worried about Brexit and the impact on their mainly local workforce is staggering.

In 2014, the Tories told Scotland that we would be better together and that we would be stronger as a union. I hope that the irony of those sentiments is not lost on the chamber this afternoon—I do not think that it is. Never have Holyrood and Westminster been on such different

paths. While Westminster is in chaos, this week the Scottish Government launched another progressive and exciting programme for government, with climate change, fairness and social justice at its heart. It is clear that we are on different paths.

During the debate, someone from my office has been in touch to say that they have been speaking to someone today who has just had their settled status denied by the UK Government. The individual has been asked for further evidence—a letter from their employer, a letter from their university and a letter from the school they attended several years ago. She has been here for eight years already and she is being asked for that information. This is an attack on human rights—it is staggering. That is a real-life example, texted to me this afternoon while we have been having this debate.

There is little doubt that we are moving towards a general election—the sooner, the better, I say. It is clear that Scotland must be given a choice over our own future. It is time for Scotland's future to be firmly in Scotland's hands.

16:27

Liam Kerr (North East Scotland) (Con): It will come as no surprise to the chamber that I shall not be voting for the SNP motion and that I commend the Conservative amendment.

We need to be clear about where we started. In a UK-wide referendum on 23 June 2016, 17.4 million people cast their vote for leave while 16.1 million people voted remain. It was a straight question, which—despite what has just been asserted—was not caveated by considerations of a second referendum, the form of any deal or indeed whether any deal would be struck.

I was one of those who voted remain, but the voters of the UK disagreed with me, in what was arguably the largest democratic exercise ever seen in this country. I am a democrat, which means that I do not think it appropriate to say to people that, because they voted differently from me, they must have been mistaken or misguided and we should have another go.

Clare Adamson (Motherwell and Wishaw) (SNP): The member says that the referendum was the largest democratic event in the UK. Does he not agree that it is a pity that European Union citizens in the UK did not get a choice to take part in that exercise, as they would have done in Scottish Parliament or council elections or in a referendum from this place?

Liam Kerr: The point is that the form of the referendum and the franchise and electorate for it were all agreed. Everything about it was agreed

beforehand. That gives the lie to the proposition that the people did not know what they were voting for.

Parliament voted to hold that referendum and the people delivered a result. It is incumbent upon our elected representatives to respect that vote and to act on it, as they said they would when the referendum was called.

In that context, however, I agree with Donald Cameron that the rational and sensible thing to do is to strike a deal with the EU to ensure that our leaving is as frictionless as possible. It makes sense to me, when a relationship such as that between the UK and the EU fundamentally changes, for both parties to agree on how that relationship will look going forward, and that is why the UK Government has been clear that it has never pursued a no-deal Brexit. It is clear that the UK Government has always seen a negotiated exit from the EU as the best outcome, and that is evidenced, in that MPs have had three opportunities to vote on a deal. The Prime Minister has said repeatedly that we want to do a deal, and we have seen movement in Brussels.

Neil Findlay: Will the member take an intervention?

Liam Kerr: Do I have time, Presiding Officer?

The Deputy Presiding Officer: The time will not be made up.

Liam Kerr: I apologise to Mr Findlay. I had better not take the intervention.

That shows why the SNP motion should be rejected, because what it demonstrates beyond all doubt is that there is a paucity of commercial experience in the SNP ranks and/or that those in the SNP who have some commercial experience have spent too long out of the world of negotiation. To those with any commercial nous, it is almost trite that one cannot present a single proposition without a fallback—a walk-away position. We do not negotiate by saying, “This is what we want, and if you don’t like it, well, that’s okay—what would you give us instead?” That is an extraordinary position for this Parliament to be asked to take.

If we truly want to act in the national interest, we must surely support the Prime Minister and the UK Government in their efforts to renegotiate the deal and leave on 31 October, but we must do that in circumstances where the EU—

Mike Rumbles: Will the member take an intervention?

Liam Kerr: I will.

Mike Rumbles: I find it curious that Liam Kerr has such trust in Boris Johnson’s word as our Prime Minister when Boris Johnson’s brother, who

was a ministerial colleague this morning, does not have that same faith in his brother because he understands that there is no deal in the offing.

Liam Kerr: On the contrary, we heard from Donald Cameron earlier just how much is going on to secure that deal.

At the end of the day, the SNP is not serious. Just this week, Nicola Sturgeon claimed:

“Scottish National Party MPs will do everything possible to stop the UK crashing out of the European Union without a deal.”—[*Official Report*, 3 September 2019; c 15.]

The question that that begs is simple—“Why didn’t they?” The withdrawal agreement was brought forward three times, and the people of Scotland will not forget that not one of the SNP MPs voted for the very thing that would have taken a no-deal Brexit off the table; they voted against it despite the fact that it met their demands—“everything possible” indeed.

Whether it conformed with our personal vote or not, the people of the United Kingdom voted that the UK should leave the EU, and Parliament voted to trigger article 50 to effect that exit. Fulton MacGregor opines that a no-deal Brexit would be disastrous, and maybe he is right. That is why I welcome the Prime Minister’s attempts to reach a deal with the EU, and I believe that the Scottish Parliament should support and not undermine that.

That is the crucial difference between the Scottish Conservatives and the SNP. We respect referendums in which people have their say even when we might not agree with the result. I and many unionists across Scotland—including Willie Rennie, I was glad to hear earlier—are incandescent about the SNP trying to use our votes to remain in the EU as proxy votes to drag Scotland out of the United Kingdom. A million people in Scotland who voted to leave expect their democratic votes to be respected, and all of us in this Parliament who are genuine believers in democracy expect it, too.

16:33

Ruth Maguire (Cunninghame South) (SNP): I have a confession to make. As I watched Jacob Rees-Mogg, the leader of the house in that wonderful mother of all Parliaments, recline languidly on the front bench during the debate on Tuesday night, I initially felt a wee bit sorry for him. It was late, they had had a long day and it must be tiring in that uncomfortable chamber with its ridiculous customs and archaic way of doing business. However, that flash of empathy soon left me. With his entitlement, arrogance and disdain for colleagues, the reason why he could so comfortably lounge around during an important debate—I believe that the point stands for most if not all of the current Westminster Government—is

that it does not matter to them what happens. They will be cushioned and protected. None of this will impact on their families or their friends. Their privilege means that they can treat this like a game. However, it is not a game.

Exiting the EU with no deal would be an economic catastrophe for Scotland and would undoubtedly cause real harm to the most vulnerable in the communities that we are here to represent. The Tories' own analysis shows just how devastating a no-deal scenario would be, but they do not think that we should rule it out. Thirty per cent of our food comes from the EU, and disruption to cross-channel trade

"would lead to reduced availability and choice of products".

The analysis warned that food prices are likely to increase and that there is a risk that consumer behaviour could exacerbate or create shortages. Some of us are already seeing examples of that changing consumer behaviour. People tell me that they are stockpiling food, but much more important than that are the many people in my constituency who simply will not have the resources to do that. Food shortages in 2019 in a country as wealthy as ours are absolutely shameful.

As parliamentarians, we have a responsibility to provide reassurance where we can. However, I cannot provide reassurance on that, and I will freely admit how concerned I am. As with most things, the most vulnerable will be hit the hardest, and the wealthy and privileged will be cushioned. This is the only time in my adult life when the more I have learned about something, the worse I have felt about it and the less able I have been to provide reassurance.

In an open letter to all UK party leaders that demands action to stop a no-deal exit from the European Union, the Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations reiterated who will feel the pain and highlighted the hugely negative impact that a no-deal Brexit could have on staffing. It said that a no-deal exit could

"wreck communities, lives and organisations that so many people rely upon."

The work of the voluntary and third sectors in Scotland is vital to our communities. There are more than 40,000 voluntary sector organisations, and every member will know of such organisations in their constituencies and regions. They are central to the quality of our constituents' lives. They already operate in some of the most challenging situations, and they deliver vital work in a time of huge budget constraint. We should listen and act when the SCVO describes leaving the EU without a deal as a "reckless act" and states:

"it is clear that increased demand for assistance, coupled with a loss of funding and staff will undoubtedly see

charities collapse and leave a vacuum of support that cannot be filled."

We know that many voluntary and third sector organisations are involved in providing health and social care services alongside the national health service and local authority provision. A no-deal Brexit would have damaging and lasting consequences for our health and social care systems and would impact on some of those who need the most support.

Six per cent of the current health and social care workforce are non-UK nationals. Their contribution is greatly valued, and I am heartsick that they feel unwelcome in this country.

UK immigration policy after leaving the EU could create a barrier to entry level routes into health and care professions. Salaries in social care in particular would not meet the Tory Government's proposed minimum threshold, with average salaries closer to £18,000. Does making an assessment of the amount of money that someone will have rather than of the skills that they bring or the needs that our community has for those skills not say everything about the Tories? The UK Government's immigration plans could reduce the number of workers in Scotland by up to 5 per cent. We need to increase our workforce here, not reduce it.

Despite attempts to spin otherwise, Boris Johnson's attempts to shut down Parliament in order to force through a no-deal exit from the EU are an outrageous assault on democratic principles. There is no democracy, security or prosperity for Scotland in Boris Johnson's Brexit Britain. The people of Scotland deserve so much better, and I hope that MSPs will act accordingly this evening.

16:38

James Kelly (Glasgow) (Lab): It is right that Parliament has the opportunity to speak out on the issue of a no-deal Brexit. Let us be absolutely clear: a no-deal Brexit would be an absolute disaster. As Mike Russell pointed out, it would be even more severe than many commentators realise. If we look at just its economic impact and what would derive from that, we see that it would have a drastic impact on our communities. Think of the collapse of trading arrangements and trading agreements and the jobs that that would cost in economies not just in Scotland but throughout the United Kingdom. The knock-on effect of that is that people would lose their jobs. It would drive up already drastic poverty levels and, as we have heard, there would be a shortage of medicines in the NHS, meaning that people would become more vulnerable and more ill.

The impact on UK and Scottish budgets would also be more severe. With less money in the economy and fewer people paying taxes, budgets would be driven down and we would see more severe cuts and a drastic impact on public services. That is the reality of no deal, and it is right that Parliament should speak out to reject it.

I was surprised to hear Donald Cameron defend the suspension of Parliament. As Alex Rowley quite rightly said, it is really an attempt to shut down democracy and close down debate. Boris Johnson and his cohorts realise that they do not have the votes or the support in Parliament for a no-deal Brexit, so they have tried to shut down the operation as much as possible to get to 31 October. It is right that Parliament has spoken out and reacted against that this week.

Liam Kerr gave us the impression that Boris Johnson and the Tories want a deal, but the evidence points to the fact that Boris Johnson does not want a deal. He was elected as Prime Minister on 24 July. It is now 5 September, which is more than seven weeks down the line. As we have heard in this debate, he is still to put any proposal to the EU so we cannot take seriously the claims that Boris Johnson or other Tories want a deal. The strategy has been devised by Dominic Cummings to crash out with a no-deal Brexit and to try to drive towards an election. As Willie Rennie pointed out, they are trying to buy off the Brexit Party and return these right-wing Tories to power.

As Ross Greer pointed out, the Tories are in chaos. Boris Johnson has been in Parliament for only three days and he has lost three votes. His credibility has been severely undermined by the way in which he has treated some in his party by sacking 21 MPs for having a different view on such an important issue.

Neil Findlay was right to point out the hypocrisy of the Scottish Tories. They must be ashamed. I sit on the Finance and Constitution Committee with Murdo Fraser. We have looked at Brexit issues and, earlier in the year, all the Tories on the committee, including Murdo Fraser and Adam Tomkins, signed up to make it clear that no deal would not be a desirable outcome. That is what the Tories are crashing towards and group of Scottish Tories opposite have sat on their hands. Pauline McNeill was right to challenge them. If those members really care about these issues, at 5 o'clock they should press their buttons to oppose no deal.

It is quite clear and welcome that the no-deal legislation is progressing through Parliament. The House of Commons is taking the correct steps. There is no doubt that a general election is coming.

When that general election comes, I firmly believe that Boris Johnson will be exposed as a right-wing Etonian who is out of touch with communities up and down Scotland and the United Kingdom. If Boris Johnson comes to Cambuslang—where I grew up, where I stay, and where I represent—he will not be able to understand the struggles that local people face. He will not understand people who have to do three jobs to make ends meet. He will not understand people who cannot afford the bus fare and have to walk to the jobcentre in the rain. He will not understand families who have to send their kids out to school in the morning without a proper breakfast. When that general election comes, Boris Johnson and the Tories will be exposed up and down the country for the right-wing traitors that they are—out of touch with people. Bring on the election and kick the Tories out.

16:45

Murdo Fraser (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con): Earlier in the debate, Graham Simpson reminded us that we have already had 34 debates on Brexit in the chamber. It might have been hoped that, in the course of two hours this afternoon, we would have heard some new arguments. Although we have had quite a lot of heat, there has been very little light. As Jamie Greene said, no arguments have been put forward that we have not heard many times in the past.

I did not agree with all the points that Graham Simpson made, but at least he spoke up for the 1 million Scots who voted leave—38 per cent of people in Scotland who voted in the referendum. That group is all too often airbrushed out of Scottish history, but those people need to have a voice and be represented.

There are two essential points to take from the debate. First, we need to respect the referendum result. It is the UK Government's duty to do as it promised to do in advance of the referendum and deliver on the outcome of the referendum, which was a UK-wide vote.

John Mason (Glasgow Shettleston) (SNP): Will the member accept that, if the message from the referendum had been a 90 per cent to 10 per cent vote for Brexit, that would have shown support for a harder Brexit, but that there having been such a close vote clearly shows support for a soft Brexit?

Murdo Fraser: If that is the member's argument, if we ever have another independence referendum I will look forward to him supporting a higher threshold than is currently required.

The fact is that the terms were set. The majority voted for Brexit, and we should respect the outcome. We know that the SNP does not like

respecting the outcome of referendums. As Donald Cameron reminded us, it does not even like respecting votes that take place in this Parliament.

I am sorry to say that Labour and the Liberal Democrats are equally culpable. They do not like the result of the referendum either, and they are both now signed up for a rerun. They want to overturn the result of the referendum, and they have the temerity to lecture us about not supporting democracy. We have heard from the Labour Party the most ridiculous and hysterical hyperbole about the Conservative Party undermining democracy. If the Labour Party really cares about democracy, why is it blocking a general election? Let there be a general election, and let the people decide—or is Labour worried that nobody will vote for Jeremy Corbyn?

Secondly, I do not want a no-deal Brexit. James Kelly referred to what happened in the Finance and Constitution Committee. I have not changed my mind on a no-deal Brexit; I share many of the concerns that have been expressed about its impact. However, we cannot just say that we are against a no-deal Brexit; we have to act by delivering on the referendum outcome and reaching an agreement and a deal. That is the policy of the UK Government.

Neil Findlay: Will the member take an intervention?

Murdo Fraser: No. I need to make some progress.

Donald Cameron reminded us that the withdrawal agreement was supported by Scottish Chambers of Commerce, the Scotch Whisky Association, Diageo, the Scottish Fishermen's Federation, NFU Scotland and Sir Ian Wood, among many other voices. The House of Commons had three opportunities to support the withdrawal agreement and, on each of those occasions, every single SNP MP rejected it. I know that members of other parties also rejected the withdrawal agreement, but for the final vote, every single Scottish Tory MP supported it, as did the current Prime Minister. It was voted down on the back of the votes of MPs from other parties that are represented in this chamber. The other parties say that they do not want a no-deal Brexit, but that is just words. They are not doing anything to stop it happening.

On Tuesday, the First Minister said:

“Scottish National Party MPs will do everything possible to stop the UK crashing out of the European Union without a deal.”—[*Official Report*, 3 September 2019; c 15.]

She said that they would do “everything possible”. However, when I intervened on Michael Russell a couple of hours ago, he gave the game away by saying that even if the withdrawal agreement

came back, SNP MPs would still vote it down. That would not be doing “everything possible”; it would be SNP MPs voting down a deal that would prevent a no-deal Brexit, which they say they are against.

Mr Russell showed a staggering lack of self-awareness when he talked about the risk of Brexit making us poorer and cutting us off from our markets. He comes from a party that supports independence, which on the basis of his own Government's “Government Expenditure and Revenue Scotland 2018-19” figures, which were published just a month ago, would create a deficit of £12.6 billion in the Scottish public finances. He would cut off the union dividend of annual support from the rest of the UK of £2,000 per head of population. The UK market that he would cut us off from is worth three times as much to Scottish business as the EU market that he seems more concerned about. He needs to get his facts right.

Gillian Martin said that we should vote with our conscience. That is precisely what Conservative members will do. I do not want a no-deal Brexit. We want a deal. We must respect the referendum result, but we must avoid a no-deal Brexit. It is a rich irony that those who opposed the withdrawal agreement not once, not twice, but three times, and who are still saying that they will oppose a deal, are the ones who are saying that they must do everything to prevent a no-deal exit. They say that, but it is just words, because they have no intention of doing anything to progress a deal and rule out a no-deal scenario.

Another political stunt this afternoon will make no difference to the outcome of the Brexit process. What will make a difference is votes in the House of Commons for a deal that delivers on the referendum result. That is what we should be working for, why is why members should support the amendment in Donald Cameron's name.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: I call Michael Russell to close for the Government.

16:51

Michael Russell: I start by welcoming Donald Cameron and Alex Rowley to their new positions. I have worked with both of them in different circumstances; I have worked with Alex Rowley for a very long time indeed, since before the first elections to this Parliament took place. It is a measure of the tragedy of Brexit that we should have to spend so much time on something that Scotland does not want. We could spend our time much more profitably, but we are here—I will come back to this—because of the flawed policy that is being pursued by a deeply flawed political party.

I will touch on some of the contributions before I try to explode four myths that we have heard this afternoon. I commend Alex Rowley, because he was right to make the point that the people who say that they just want Brexit to be done do not really understand what they are saying. Getting Brexit over with on the terms that Boris Johnson wishes to get it over with, which would involve leaving without a deal—there is no doubt that that is what he wishes—would not get Brexit over with, but would start a spiral of decline that would last for years. There is no doubt about that. In the end, there is no such thing as Brexit without a deal. There would have to be a deal at some stage, and it would take a very long period for the UK Government to get its head into that space. The damage that would be done to every one of our constituents—including those whom Conservative members represent—would be enormous. If Conservative members allow the UK to leave the EU without a deal, they will be putting themselves in the position of condemning many of their constituents to poverty.

I was slightly depressed by Willie Rennie's contribution, because I thought that we had agreed to work together this afternoon. The first few minutes of his speech were all about how we should do that, but he could not resist having a go at Alex Rowley and at me. I will put that to one side, because I hope that we will all vote the same way this evening. The next time, perhaps the period of consensus could last a little longer.

I was heartened by Neil Findlay's intervention on Ross Greer, because in it, he used the word "if" in relation to the idea of the Scottish Government doing something "outrageous". I thought that Mr Findlay believed that we did something outrageous every 20 minutes, so I am heartened by the fact that he is still waiting for us to do something outrageous.

I am told that the Welsh Assembly has just voted overwhelmingly in favour of a motion in which it opposes the prorogation of Parliament and reiterates its view that a no-deal exit would cause long-term damage to Wales. I hope that we will take the same decision as far as Scotland is concerned this afternoon, thereby isolating the Tories.

Of course, the Welsh Assembly also has representatives of the Brexit party, which we do not have—well, we do have, because Mr Simpson is one in all but name, as we know from his speech. However, I will come to that in just a moment.

Let me deal with those four Tory myths, the first of which says that if you do not want no deal, you have to vote for their deal. The reality is that we have tried repeatedly to get a compromise. I could bring in evidence of all the papers that we

published in December 2016, which indicated how a deal could be done. However, the people who did not want that deal were the Conservatives—specifically Theresa May. She did not want to compromise in any way.

The fact that we are here now without a deal is to do with the Tories, and no deal would be a choice of the Tories. That is the choice that would take place, and it would be a disaster. Others know that. Donald Cameron knows that, because he wrote an article at the end of March 2019, which was published in *The Herald*. That article talks about

"the chaos of a 'no-deal' Brexit".

Donald Cameron knows that what the UK Government is about to do will produce "chaos", and that should go on the record, too.

Let me deal with the second of the myths that exist, which is that the Tories have a plan, that they have a purpose—the Prime Minister has something that he will take to Brussels and everything will be fine. It is extraordinary that people believe that. Paul Masterton commented that people, on seeing how he voted the other day, would say "You're an idiot, Paul." I was tempted.

In reality, the people are being conned by the Prime Minister. The people who know that there is no deal are the people who are involved in negotiations. For example, Tony Connelly, RTÉ's Europe editor, who is one of the best-informed Brexit commentators, said two days ago that he had had a message from one source who said that

"Nothing has been put on the table, not even a proper sketch or hint of a plan."

Michel Barnier is reported to have said this week that the talks are in

"a state of paralysis".

The Finnish Minister for European Affairs, Tytti Tuppurainen, said yesterday—and she is in the presidency of the EU—that the EU is willing to negotiate, but cannot negotiate on something that does not exist.

I do not know who the Tories would actually believe on that matter, because all the people who are involved in the discussions say that the UK does not intend to bring anything meaningful to the table. Still, the Tories go on believing it.

The third myth that I would like to explode is that the Tories are a moderate party that is waiting and wishing for a deal. Graham Simpson gave the game away—or, rather, he did not, because he is absolutely entitled to argue the extremist Brexit case. He did that, and he did so essentially as a spokesperson for the Brexit Party. The revealing thing was the applause that he got from the Tory members—from people who I know are not

extreme Brexiteers, but have now put themselves in that position. There are Tory members who will be able to ride out a no-deal Brexit because they have the money to do so, but there are wiser people among them who know that it will be a disaster for their constituents, yet they applauded the extreme Brexit position. Why did they do that? It is because Nigel Farage has taken over their party. That is, essentially, where things now are. There is no doubt about it at all.

What has happened is that the Prime Minister is desperate to take Brexit Party votes and he has gone on to Brexit Party ground. Conservative members shake their heads, but they know it to be true. They will particularly know it to be true if I can make a prediction about what will happen in any election: the Tories in Scotland will suffer major losses in that election because they have moved on to that ground. Then, the Tory members here will look at the forthcoming Scottish Parliament election and say “Oh, dear. We’ve gone too far”, but it will be too late. That is where the Scottish Conservatives are going now, and they need to recognise that. If any of them have the convictions that I believe that they have, they should change course now.

Let me make a final point about honouring the results of referenda. David Allen Green, who is one of the best commentators on Brexit—I commend to members his Twitter feed and what he writes—made a very important point this week. He said:

“A referendum can be democratic or irrevocable, but it cannot be both”

When you have a referendum, the result is already changing, because people change their views on what they believe. So, if people go on saying that the Brexit referendum result stands for ever and a day, it cannot, by definition, still be democratic, but that is what the Tories are saying.

It seems that the Tories do not believe in any democratic choice at all, because they think that, once a referendum has taken place—although referenda are utterly incompatible with their belief in the sovereignty of the Westminster Parliament—the result is set in stone and we will just do it. However, the Tories do not believe that. They simply want Brexit, and the Scottish Tories want Brexit because they have been told to want it by their leaders at Westminster. That is a tragedy.

Today, the Parliament will vote to condemn a no-deal Brexit and the undermining of democracy by the Prime Minister, and it will send a message to the Prime Minister. The message that the Scottish Tories will send to Boris Johnson is this: “We are as supine as ever. We will just do as you tell us. Go on—tell us how high to jump and we’ll

jump.” The trouble is, there is a fall coming for the Scottish Conservatives.

Points of Order

17:00

Jenny Marra (North East Scotland) (Lab): On a point of order, Presiding Officer. Today, during the drug deaths statement, at least six members who were due to ask questions, including me, were not called to speak, because time ran out. If we are to properly hold the Government to account, can more time be allocated so that there is sufficient time for proper scrutiny? Today's situation meant that no members from North East Scotland were able to raise the important Dundee drugs commission report with the Minister for Public Health, Sport and Wellbeing. In the light of that, will the Parliamentary Bureau and the Government prioritise a debate on drug deaths in Government time at the earliest possible date so that the Parliament can properly discuss and debate that public and human crisis?

The Presiding Officer (Ken Macintosh): It is, indeed, a matter for the Parliamentary Bureau to decide allocation of time. Today, we were hard pushed for time and there was a lot of interest, partly because members were coming back after the recess with a lot of issues to raise. All our debates and statements this week have been oversubscribed, and we have struggled to get everybody in. Today, I was conscious that I had selected you, Ms Marra, and Mr Findlay to ask questions on drugs at First Minister's question time. However, I recognise that you, along with Pauline McNeill, Stuart McMillan and a number of other members who were lined up to speak on the statement, did not get a chance to contribute.

We try not to cut members off from the chair. We constantly try to encourage members to keep their questions and answers short, but we try not to interrupt. We would prefer it if members would self-discipline, because, if they do not, the members who are last on the list to ask questions or to speak in the debate will not be called to ask a question or will have their time cut. That is the balance that we are trying to strike. However, I accept the general point, which I am sure the bureau will bear in mind, that there was a lot of demand on the drug deaths statement and perhaps not quite enough time. That point is noted, and I will take it to the bureau.

Rona Mackay (Strathkelvin and Bearsden) (SNP): On a point of order, Presiding Officer. On 3 September, Liam Kerr MSP stated in Parliament:

"The First Minister said last year that the Government would give criminal justice social work £100 million, which is a pledge that has been betrayed."—[*Official Report*, 3 September 2019; c 49.]

However, the independent Scottish Parliament information centre—SPICE—has confirmed that the Scottish Government has, indeed, allocated £100 million to criminal justice social work. If Liam Kerr aspires to become the next leader of the Scottish Conservative Party, he really needs to up his game. Presiding Officer, can you advise how he might go about correcting the record?

The Presiding Officer: If a member wishes to correct the record, they can correct the *Official Report* or they can raise matters in the chamber or through written statements. Rona Mackay's point has been noted, and I am sure that the member will take account of it.

Decision Time

17:03

The Presiding Officer (Ken Macintosh): We have two questions today. The first question is, that amendment S5M-18695.1, in the name of Donald Cameron, which seeks to amend motion S5M-18695, in the name of Michael Russell, on avoiding a no-deal exit from the European Union, be agreed to. Are we agreed?

Members: No.

The Presiding Officer: There will be a division.

For

Balfour, Jeremy (Lothian) (Con)
 Ballantyne, Michelle (South Scotland) (Con)
 Bowman, Bill (North East Scotland) (Con)
 Briggs, Miles (Lothian) (Con)
 Burnett, Alexander (Aberdeenshire West) (Con)
 Cameron, Donald (Highlands and Islands) (Con)
 Carlaw, Jackson (Eastwood) (Con)
 Carson, Finlay (Galloway and West Dumfries) (Con)
 Chapman, Peter (North East Scotland) (Con)
 Corry, Maurice (West Scotland) (Con)
 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)
 Halcro Johnston, Jamie (Highlands and Islands) (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)
 Simpson, Graham (Central Scotland) (Con)
 Smith, Liz (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 Stewart, Alexander (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 Wells, Annie (Glasgow) (Con)
 Whittle, Brian (South Scotland) (Con)

Against

Adam, George (Paisley) (SNP)
 Adamson, Clare (Motherwell and Wishaw) (SNP)
 Allan, Dr Alasdair (Na h-Eileanan an Iar) (SNP)
 Arthur, Tom (Renfrewshire South) (SNP)
 Baillie, Jackie (Dumbarton) (Lab)
 Beattie, Colin (Midlothian North and Musselburgh) (SNP)
 Bibby, Neil (West Scotland) (Lab)
 Boyack, Sarah (Lothian) (Lab)
 Brown, Keith (Clackmannanshire and Dunblane) (SNP)
 Campbell, Aileen (Clydesdale) (SNP)
 Coffey, Willie (Kilmarnock and Irvine Valley) (SNP)
 Cole-Hamilton, Alex (Edinburgh Western) (LD)
 Constance, Angela (Almond Valley) (SNP)
 Cunningham, Roseanna (Perthshire South and Kinross-shire) (SNP)
 Denham, Ash (Edinburgh Eastern) (SNP)
 Dey, Graeme (Angus South) (SNP)
 Dornan, James (Glasgow Cathcart) (SNP)
 Ewing, Annabelle (Cowdenbeath) (SNP)
 Ewing, Fergus (Inverness and Nairn) (SNP)
 Fabiani, Linda (East Kilbride) (SNP)
 Fee, Mary (West Scotland) (Lab)

Findlay, Neil (Lothian) (Lab)
 Finnie, John (Highlands and Islands) (Green)
 FitzPatrick, Joe (Dundee City West) (SNP)
 Forbes, Kate (Skye, Lochaber and Badenoch) (SNP)
 Freeman, Jeane (Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley) (SNP)
 Gibson, Kenneth (Cunninghame North) (SNP)
 Gilruth, Jenny (Mid Fife and Glenrothes) (SNP)
 Gougeon, Mairi (Angus North and Mearns) (SNP)
 Grahame, Christine (Midlothian South, Tweeddale and Lauderdale) (SNP)
 Grant, Rhoda (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)
 Gray, Iain (East Lothian) (Lab)
 Greer, Ross (West Scotland) (Green)
 Harper, Emma (South Scotland) (SNP)
 Harvie, Patrick (Glasgow) (Green)
 Hepburn, Jamie (Cumbernauld and Kilsyth) (SNP)
 Hyslop, Fiona (Linlithgow) (SNP)
 Johnson, Daniel (Edinburgh Southern) (Lab)
 Johnstone, Alison (Lothian) (Green)
 Kelly, James (Glasgow) (Lab)
 Kidd, Bill (Glasgow Anniesland) (SNP)
 Lamont, Johann (Glasgow) (Lab)
 Lennon, Monica (Central Scotland) (Lab)
 Leonard, Richard (Central Scotland) (Lab)
 Lochhead, Richard (Moray) (SNP)
 Lyle, Richard (Uddingston and Bellshill) (SNP)
 MacDonald, Angus (Falkirk East) (SNP)
 MacDonald, Gordon (Edinburgh Pentlands) (SNP)
 MacGregor, Fulton (Coatbridge and Chryston) (SNP)
 Mackay, Derek (Renfrewshire North and West) (SNP)
 Mackay, Rona (Strathkelvin and Bearsden) (SNP)
 Macpherson, Ben (Edinburgh Northern and Leith) (SNP)
 Maguire, Ruth (Cunninghame South) (SNP)
 Marra, Jenny (North East Scotland) (Lab)
 Martin, Gillian (Aberdeenshire East) (SNP)
 Mason, John (Glasgow Shettleston) (SNP)
 Matheson, Michael (Falkirk West) (SNP)
 McArthur, Liam (Orkney Islands) (LD)
 McDonald, Mark (Aberdeen Donside) (Ind)
 McKee, Ivan (Glasgow Provan) (SNP)
 McKelvie, Christina (Hamilton, Larkhall and Stonehouse) (SNP)
 McMillan, Stuart (Greenock and Inverclyde) (SNP)
 McNeill, Pauline (Glasgow) (Lab)
 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)
 Smith, Elaine (Central Scotland) (Lab)
 Smyth, Colin (South Scotland) (Lab)
 Somerville, Shirley-Anne (Dunfermline) (SNP)
 Stevenson, Stewart (Banffshire and Buchan Coast) (SNP)
 Stewart, David (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)
 Stewart, Kevin (Aberdeen Central) (SNP)
 Sturgeon, Nicola (Glasgow Southside) (SNP)
 Swinney, John (Perthshire North) (SNP)
 Todd, Maree (Highlands and Islands) (SNP)
 Torrance, David (Kirkcaldy) (SNP)
 Watt, Maureen (Aberdeen South and North Kincardine) (SNP)
 Wheelhouse, Paul (South Scotland) (SNP)
 Wightman, Andy (Lothian) (Green)
 Wishart, Beatrice (Shetland Islands) (LD)
 Yousaf, Humza (Glasgow Pollok) (SNP)

The Presiding Officer: The result of the division is: For 28, Against 87, Abstentions 0.

Amendment disagreed to.

The Presiding Officer: The final question is, that motion S5M-18695, in the name of Michael Russell, on avoiding a no-deal exit from the European Union, 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)
 Beattie, Colin (Midlothian North and Musselburgh) (SNP)
 Bibby, Neil (West Scotland) (Lab)
 Boyack, Sarah (Lothian) (Lab)
 Brown, Keith (Clackmannanshire and Dunblane) (SNP)
 Campbell, Aileen (Clydesdale) (SNP)
 Coffey, Willie (Kilmarnock and Irvine Valley) (SNP)
 Cole-Hamilton, Alex (Edinburgh Western) (LD)
 Constance, Angela (Almond Valley) (SNP)
 Cunningham, Roseanna (Perthshire South and Kinrossshire) (SNP)
 Denham, Ash (Edinburgh Eastern) (SNP)
 Dey, Graeme (Angus South) (SNP)
 Dornan, James (Glasgow Cathcart) (SNP)
 Ewing, Annabelle (Cowdenbeath) (SNP)
 Ewing, Fergus (Inverness and Nairn) (SNP)
 Fabiani, Linda (East Kilbride) (SNP)
 Fee, Mary (West Scotland) (Lab)
 Findlay, Neil (Lothian) (Lab)
 Finnie, John (Highlands and Islands) (Green)
 FitzPatrick, Joe (Dundee City West) (SNP)
 Forbes, Kate (Skye, Lochaber and Badenoch) (SNP)
 Freeman, Jeane (Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley) (SNP)
 Gibson, Kenneth (Cunninghame North) (SNP)
 Gilruth, Jenny (Mid Fife and Glenrothes) (SNP)
 Gougeon, Mairi (Angus North and Mearns) (SNP)
 Grahame, Christine (Midlothian South, Tweeddale and Lauderdale) (SNP)
 Grant, Rhoda (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)
 Gray, Iain (East Lothian) (Lab)
 Greer, Ross (West Scotland) (Green)
 Harper, Emma (South Scotland) (SNP)
 Harvie, Patrick (Glasgow) (Green)
 Hepburn, Jamie (Cumbernauld and Kilsyth) (SNP)
 Hyslop, Fiona (Linlithgow) (SNP)
 Johnson, Daniel (Edinburgh Southern) (Lab)
 Johnstone, Alison (Lothian) (Green)
 Kelly, James (Glasgow) (Lab)
 Kidd, Bill (Glasgow Anniesland) (SNP)
 Lamont, Johann (Glasgow) (Lab)
 Lennon, Monica (Central Scotland) (Lab)
 Leonard, Richard (Central Scotland) (Lab)
 Lochhead, Richard (Moray) (SNP)
 Lyle, Richard (Uddingston and Bellshill) (SNP)
 MacDonald, Angus (Falkirk East) (SNP)
 MacDonald, Gordon (Edinburgh Pentlands) (SNP)
 MacGregor, Fulton (Coatbridge and Chryston) (SNP)
 Mackay, Derek (Renfrewshire North and West) (SNP)
 Mackay, Rona (Strathkelvin and Bearsden) (SNP)
 Macpherson, Ben (Edinburgh Northern and Leith) (SNP)
 Maguire, Ruth (Cunninghame South) (SNP)
 Marra, Jenny (North East Scotland) (Lab)

Martin, Gillian (Aberdeenshire East) (SNP)
 Mason, John (Glasgow Shettleston) (SNP)
 Matheson, Michael (Falkirk West) (SNP)
 McArthur, Liam (Orkney Islands) (LD)
 McDonald, Mark (Aberdeen Donside) (Ind)
 McKee, Ivan (Glasgow Provan) (SNP)
 McKelvie, Christina (Hamilton, Larkhall and Stonehouse) (SNP)
 McMillan, Stuart (Greenock and Inverclyde) (SNP)
 McNeill, Pauline (Glasgow) (Lab)
 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)
 Smith, Elaine (Central Scotland) (Lab)
 Smyth, Colin (South Scotland) (Lab)
 Somerville, Shirley-Anne (Dunfermline) (SNP)
 Stevenson, Stewart (Banffshire and Buchan Coast) (SNP)
 Stewart, David (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)
 Stewart, Kevin (Aberdeen Central) (SNP)
 Sturgeon, Nicola (Glasgow Southside) (SNP)
 Swinney, John (Perthshire North) (SNP)
 Todd, Maree (Highlands and Islands) (SNP)
 Torrance, David (Kirkcaldy) (SNP)
 Watt, Maureen (Aberdeen South and North Kincardine) (SNP)
 Wheelhouse, Paul (South Scotland) (SNP)
 Wightman, Andy (Lothian) (Green)
 Wishart, Beatrice (Shetland Islands) (LD)
 Yousaf, Humza (Glasgow Pollok) (SNP)

Against

Balfour, Jeremy (Lothian) (Con)
 Ballantyne, Michelle (South Scotland) (Con)
 Bowman, Bill (North East Scotland) (Con)
 Briggs, Miles (Lothian) (Con)
 Burnett, Alexander (Aberdeenshire West) (Con)
 Cameron, Donald (Highlands and Islands) (Con)
 Carlaw, Jackson (Eastwood) (Con)
 Carson, Finlay (Galloway and West Dumfries) (Con)
 Chapman, Peter (North East Scotland) (Con)
 Corry, Maurice (West Scotland) (Con)
 Fraser, Murdo (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 Golden, Maurice (West Scotland) (Con)
 Greene, Jamie (West Scotland) (Con)
 Halcro Johnston, Jamie (Highlands and Islands) (Con)
 Hamilton, Rachael (Ettrick, Roxburgh and Berwickshire) (Con)
 Harris, Alison (Central Scotland) (Con)
 Kerr, Liam (North East Scotland) (Con)
 Lindhurst, Gordon (Lothian) (Con)
 Lockhart, Dean (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 Mason, Tom (North East Scotland) (Con)
 Mitchell, Margaret (Central Scotland) (Con)
 Mountain, Edward (Highlands and Islands) (Con)
 Mundell, Oliver (Dumfriesshire) (Con)
 Simpson, Graham (Central Scotland) (Con)
 Smith, Liz (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 Stewart, Alexander (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 Wells, Annie (Glasgow) (Con)
 Whittle, Brian (South Scotland) (Con)

The Presiding Officer: The result of the division is: For 87, Against 28, Abstentions 0.

Motion agreed to.

That the Parliament agrees that the UK should in no circumstances leave the EU on a no-deal basis, and condemns the Prime Minister's suspension of the UK Parliament from as early as 9 September until 14 October 2019.

Meeting closed at 17:06.

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.

Published in Edinburgh by the Scottish Parliamentary Corporate Body, the Scottish Parliament, Edinburgh, EH99 1SP

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