

# The Highland Council

## Political and Parliamentary Briefing – 24 June, 2011

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### 1 **Scottish Government**

#### 1.1 **News**

##### **Government**

[British-Irish Council](#) Edinburgh to be base for inter-governmental work.

[Call for 'more teeth' in Scotland Bill](#) BIC summit in London debates 'Plan B' and energy issues.

[Scottish coastguards](#) Call for life-saving service to be devolved.

##### **Finance & Economy**

[Council Tax collection 2010-11](#) A National Statistics Publication for Scotland

[Public sector ICT review](#) Ministers to consider opportunities for savings identified in review.

[Government Expenditure and Revenue Scotland 2009-10](#) A National Statistics Publication for Scotland.

[Scotland's finances stronger than UK](#) Scotland contributes 9.4 per cent of revenues with 8.4 per cent of population.

##### **Environment and Rural Affairs**

[Lobbying on climate change](#) Minister presses case for EU 30 per cent reduction target.

[Praise for low carbon communities](#) Energy efficiency, domestic renewables and food growing among successes.

[Food standards in Scotland](#) Review will consider feasibility of future options

[Crown Estate - the case for change](#) Proposals for devolution of Scotland's Crown Estate

[Support for Scottish food and drink](#) New £1.1 million package for industry.

## Education and Young People

[Gaelic heritage](#) New report highlights growing optimism and support for Gaelic.

[Play, Talk, Read](#) Successful campaign aimed at improving Early Years provision to be extended.

## Justice and Emergency Services

[Police and fire reform](#) Consultation responses reveal support for change in the face of reduced budgets.

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## 1.2 New Scottish Government Consultations

No new consultations this week

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## 2 Scottish Parliament 2.1 Announcements and Publications

[Finance ask how preventative spending should feature in budget](#)

[Economy Committee to hold energy prices evidence session](#)

[Scotland Bill Committee sets out its timetable for scrutiny](#)

[Committee to hold evidence sessions on sectarianism bill](#)

[SB 11-50 Equality Act 2010](#) This paper highlights the key changes implemented by the Equality Act 2010 and refers to specific provisions relevant to Scotland.

[SB 11-49 The National Health Service in Scotland: Subject Profile](#) This briefing is intended to be an introductory text to the NHS in Scotland. It also examines some key issues that may be topical in the coming session of Parliament.

[SB 11-48 Offensive Behaviour at Football and Threatening Communications \(Scotland\) Bill](#) The Offensive Behaviour at Football and Threatening Communications (Scotland) Bill was introduced in the Scottish Parliament on 16 June 2011. The objective of the Bill is to tackle sectarianism by preventing offensive and threatening behaviour related to football matches and preventing the communication of threatening material, particularly where it incites religious hatred.

[SB 11-47 The European Union - The Budget](#) This subject profile provides details of the way in which the European Union budget is agreed and then how it is collected. This briefing updates and replaces SPICe subject map 07/04.

[SB 11-46 The European Union - The Legislative Process](#) This subject profile provides a brief introduction to the European Union's legislative process. It looks at the different forms of legislation available to the EU and the way in which that legislation is agreed at EU level. This briefing updates and replaces SPICe subject map 07/03.

[SB 11-45 The European Union - The Institutions](#) This subject profile provides information on the five institutions of the European Union. The institutions manage the way in which the EU functions and the way in which decisions are made. This briefing updates and replaces SPICe subject map 07/02.

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## 2.2 Chamber – Business

### Wednesday 29 June 2011

Committee of the Whole Parliament: Stage 2 Proceedings: Offensive Behaviour at Football and Threatening Communications (Scotland) Bill

Ministerial Statement: Higher Education

Ministerial Statement: Financial Outturn

Stage 3 Proceedings: Offensive Behaviour at Football and Threatening Communications (Scotland) Bill

### Thursday 30 June 2011

Ministerial Statement: 2020 Routemap for Renewable Energy in Scotland

Scottish Government Debate: The Role of the Supreme Court in Scots Criminal Law

General Question Time

First Minister's Question Time

Themed Question Time - Health, Wellbeing and Cities Strategy

Scottish Government Debate: Taking Scotland Forward – Infrastructure and Capital Investment

**Education and Culture Committee - 28 June 2011**

**Scottish Government priorities:** The Committee will take evidence Michael Russell MSP, Cabinet Secretary for Education and Lifelong Learning; Andrew Scott, Director of Employability, Skills and Lifelong Learning, Lesley Fraser, Deputy Director, Children and Families Directorate, and Jackie Brock, Deputy Director, Learning Directorate, Scottish Government; and then from Fiona Hyslop MSP, Cabinet Secretary for Culture and External Affairs, Wendy Wilkinson, Deputy Director for Culture, and David Seers, Head, Cultural Excellence Branch, Scottish Government.

**Appointment of European Union Reporter:** The Committee will appoint a member to serve as its European Union Reporter.

**Work programme:** The Committee will consider its work programme.

**Health and Sport Committee – 28 June 2011**

**Appointment of European Union Reporter:** The Committee will appoint a member to serve as its European Union Reporter.

**Work programme (in private):** The Committee will consider its approach to developing its work programme.

**Justice Committee - 28 June 2011**

**The Scottish Government's justice priorities for Session 4:** The Committee will take evidence from Kenny MacAskill MSP, Cabinet Secretary for Justice; Roseanna Cunningham MSP, Minister for Community Safety and Legal Affairs; and Bridget Campbell, Director of Justice, and Kenneth Hogg, Director of Safer Communities, Scottish Government.

**Offensive Behaviour at Football and Threatening Communications (Scotland) Bill:** The Committee will consider its approach to further scrutiny of the Bill.

**Public Petitions Committee - 28 June 2011**

**Consideration of current petitions:** The Committee will consider the following current petitions [PE1098](#) and [PE1223](#) School bus safety. The Committee will take evidence from Keith Brown MSP, Minister for Housing and Transport; Michelle Campbell, Road Safety Policy and Communications Manager and Ian Robertson, Road Safety Policy Officer, Transport Scotland.

**Consideration of new petitions:** The Committee will consider a number of new petitions

**Consideration of current petitions:** The Committee will consider a number of current petitions

**Notification of new petitions:** The Committee will consider a paper indicating new petitions received since the last Committee meeting.

**European and External Relations Committee - 28 June 2011**

**Europe and External Affairs:** The Committee will take evidence from Fiona Hyslop MSP, Cabinet Secretary for Culture and External Affairs, Heather Jones, Deputy Director International Division, and Ian Campbell, Head of EU Office in Brussels, Scottish Government.

**Brussels Bulletin:** The Committee will consider the latest edition of the Brussels Bulletin.

**Consideration of evidence (in private):** The Committee will consider the evidence heard at agenda item 1.

**Scotland Bill Committee - 28 June 2011**

**The Scotland Bill - evidence from the Scottish Government:** The Committee will take evidence from John Swinney MSP, Cabinet Secretary for Finance, Employment and Sustainable Growth, and Bruce Crawford MSP, Cabinet Secretary for Parliamentary Business and Government Strategy, Scottish Government.

**Proposed call for evidence:** The Committee will consider a proposed call for evidence.

**Work programme:** The Committee will consider proposals for witnesses as part of its work programme and the details of a business planning day to be held in the summer recess.

**Consideration of the Scotland Bill (adviser):** The Committee will consider whether to seek approval for the appointment of an adviser and a draft remit and person-specification.

**Equal Opportunities Committee – 28 June 2011**

**Appointment of European Union Reporter:** The Committee will appoint a member to serve as its European Union Reporter.

**Work programme (in private):** The Committee will consider its approach to developing its work programme.

## Standards, Procedures and Public Appointments Committee - 28 June 2011

**Scotland Bill:** The Committee will consider a note by the Clerk.

**Cross-Party Groups:** The Committee will consider a note by the Clerk.

**Work programme:** The Committee will consider its work programme.

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#### 2.4 Calls for Evidence

None

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#### 2.5 Scottish Government Bills

Scottish Government Bill	Description	Introduced to Parliament	Parliamentary progress	Committee
Offensive Behaviour at Football and Threatening Communications (Scotland) Bill	The Bill criminalises offensive or threatening behaviour likely to incite public disorder at certain football matches and provides for a criminal offence concerning the sending of communications which contain threats of serious violence or which contain threats intended to incite religious hatred	16/06/11	Stage one – completed 23/06/11	

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#### 2.6 Private and Members Bills

None

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#### 2.7 Oral Questions Selected for Answer

##### General

**Adam Ingram:** To ask the Scottish Executive what its position is on the future ownership of freshwater salmon fishing rights in Scotland held by the Crown Estate.

**Gavin Brown:** To ask the Scottish Executive what plans it has for promoting growth in the tourism industry.

**Colin Beattie:** To ask the Scottish Executive what plans it has to promote the development of geothermal energy.

**James Dornan:** To ask the Scottish Executive what recent discussions it has had with the UK Government regarding the possibility of a high-speed rail link with Scotland.

**Paul Wheelhouse:** To ask the Scottish Executive how much it and the Scottish Funding Council invested in research and development in the south of Scotland in 2010-11 and what share this represented of such investment across Scotland.

**Linda Fabiani:** To ask the Scottish Executive what sanctions are available to local authorities in cases of antisocial behaviour by tenants of private landlords.

**James Kelly:** To ask the Scottish Executive what action is being taken to collect uncollected fiscal fines.

**Margo MacDonald:** To ask the Scottish Executive whether it plans to legislate for the election rather than appointment of judges.

### **Health, Wellbeing and Cities Strategy**

**Siobhan McMahon:** To ask the Scottish Executive what its position is on the capacity of Social Care and Social Work Improvement Scotland to carry out its duties in light of recent budget changes.

**Gil Paterson:** To ask the Scottish Executive what impact the increase in VAT has had on the health budget for 2011-12.

**John Wilson:** To ask the Scottish Executive what discussions it has had with NHS boards and local authorities regarding care home places for people with dementia.

**Claudia Beamish:** To ask the Scottish Executive what role it considers specialist young carers services have in implementing the young carers strategy.

**Richard Baker:** To ask the Scottish Executive what steps it is taking to support sports development across Scotland.

**George Adam:** To ask the Scottish Executive what measures are being taken to ensure that local communities are involved in the delivery of preventative health messages.

**Nigel Don:** To ask the Scottish Executive what progress is being made in reducing the number of smokers.

**Mark Griffin:** To ask the Scottish Executive whether it considers that NHS services are best provided locally.

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### **Written Answers**

#### **Education and Lifelong Learning**

**Liam McArthur (Orkney Islands) (Scottish Liberal Democrats):** To ask the Scottish Executive how it plans to match the number of places allocated for teacher training with the number of teaching posts available. **Michael Russell:** The Scottish Government is determined that teachers should be in employment. The budget agreement with COSLA therefore guarantees enough teaching posts for every new probationer, for every teacher completing probation in summer 2011 to apply for and additional posts to reduce existing teacher unemployment. We will continue to work with COSLA and local authorities to achieve a better reconciliation between local and national teacher workforce planning with a view to re-establishing an appropriate balance between teacher supply and demand.

#### **Finance and Sustainable Growth**

**Sandra White (Glasgow Kelvin) (Scottish National Party):** To ask the Scottish Executive how it plans to support small businesses to promote vibrant local communities. **Fergus Ewing:** The Scottish Government is committed to maintaining a supportive business environment and to ensuring that appropriate measures are in place to support small businesses. Examples include our support for the small business bonus scheme, which has reduced the rates burden for tens of thousands of properties in Scotland and an investment of £7.5 million this year to help small businesses take on additional staff.

#### **Wind Farms**

**Mary Scanlon (Highlands and Islands) (Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party):** To ask the Scottish Executive whether it plans to make improvements to the consultation process for local people and communities regarding wind farm applications. **Aileen Campbell:** A range of enhanced opportunities for local people to express their views on planning matters have already been delivered through planning reform. The Scottish Government is also proactively seeking to further improve the consenting system and promote best practice, in particular by instigating and leading the European GP Wind Project. This EU-funded project identifies good practice in reconciling objectives on renewable energy with wider environmental objectives and in the active involvement of communities in planning and implementation. The fact that Scotland is leading GP Wind speaks volumes for how we are viewed by our European neighbours, but also demonstrates our commitment to improvement, including around community engagement and consultation.

By bringing together developers, regional and local government, environmental agencies and non-governmental organisations to share experiences, the project is developing a guide to good practice and a “how to” toolkit which the Scottish Government can use to further improve our practices.

### Onshore Wind Farms

**Adam Ingram (Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley) (Scottish National Party):** To ask the Scottish Executive what target has been set regarding wattage from onshore wind farms and how this impacts on the projected number and locations of future developments. **Fergus Ewing:** The Scottish Government has not set a specific target regarding wattage from onshore wind farms. The market will determine the specific technology mix to deliver the capacity required to deliver the equivalent of 100% of our electricity consumption by 2020. The Scottish Government will continue to deliver the stable and supportive economic environment necessary in order to allow the market to flourish. The Scottish Government recognises that it must achieve a balance in order to manage the challenge of the 2020 target for 100% of electricity consumption from renewables and the impacts this will have on the projected number and locations of future developments. The consents process is therefore subject to a programme of continuous improvement and there is currently a strong emphasis on promoting best practice, pre-application engagement and thorough scoping, in partnership with statutory consultees, to ensure that environmental and community issues are properly considered and land use is not compromised. As a result of our proactive approach to the consenting process the Scottish Government now leads and manages a European Commission-funded project, GP Wind. The project’s objective is to share and record best practice in reconciling objectives on wind energy with wider environmental objectives and in actively involving communities in planning and implementation.

### Housing Benefit

Lewis Macdonald (North East Scotland) (Scottish Labour): To ask the Scottish Executive what discussions it has had with the UK Government regarding the impact of changes to housing benefit on residents of communities with high-cost housing. **Keith Brown:** We wrote to the Lord Freud, Minister for Welfare Reform at the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP), on 20 December 2010 to express our significant concerns about the adverse consequences of the UK Government’s housing benefit reforms, and followed that by providing DWP officials with a full Scottish Impact Assessment paper. We anticipate that the raft of reforms will put considerable pressure on the availability of lower cost accommodation in many areas, not only in communities where housing costs are higher, and on services to support people suffering from financial or housing difficulties. It will adversely affect Scottish Government policies on the prevention of homelessness, the promotion of mixed communities, and the promotion of fair opportunities for disabled people. We have raised our concerns with DWP ministers and officials at various discussions since then, and will continue to take every opportunity available to us to do so.

### Southern Cross Healthcare

**Jackie Baillie (Dumbarton) (Scottish Labour):** To ask the Scottish Executive whether the Cabinet Secretary for Health, Wellbeing and Cities Strategy has met or corresponded with representatives from Southern Cross Healthcare since May 2011 and, if so, (a) with whom this has been with, (b) on what dates and (c) what matters were discussed. **Nicola Sturgeon:** On 6 June 2011, I met with the Regional Director for Scotland and Northern Ireland from Southern Cross. On 13 June 2011, I met the Chief Executive of Southern Cross, and his Regional Director for Scotland and Northern Ireland. The following matters were discussed at both meetings; ensuring the continuity and quality of care for all Southern Cross care home residents in Scotland; the wellbeing of residents and staff in Southern Cross Homes during this period of uncertainty; the continuing partnership approach to contingency planning in Scotland.

### Cities Strategies

**Drew Smith (Glasgow) (Scottish Labour):** To ask the Scottish Executive what resources it has allocated to the development of its cities strategy. **Nicola Sturgeon:** The cities strategy provides the mechanism to identify city priorities and the forthcoming spending review will provide the opportunity to ensure budgets are aligned with these priorities.

### Licensing

**Murdo Fraser (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party):** To ask the Scottish Executive what criteria local licensing boards have to consider before using the powers laid out under the Licensing (Scotland) Act 2005 to apply for restrictions based on age to licensing applications for off-trade sales. **Kenny MacAskill:** In applying any condition to a premises licence at application or following a review, a licensing board must judge whether the steps are necessary for the promotion of the licensing objectives of preventing crime and disorder; securing public safety; preventing public nuisance; protecting and improving public health; and protecting children from harm. A board cannot impose any condition which is inconsistent with any condition to which the premises licence is subject by virtue of section 27(1) of the Licensing (Scotland) Act 2005, or prescribed in regulations.

A board cannot impose any condition which would have the effect of making any such condition more onerous or more restrictive, or which relates to a matter (such as planning, building control or food hygiene) which is regulated under another enactment. Statutory Guidance issued by the Government to which licensing boards must have regard also states that in applying other conditions a licensing board should do so in line with its licensing policy and the licensing objectives of the Act. It must also apply conditions fairly across the sector so as not to disadvantage one premises against another. This requirement does not however prevent a licensing board from seeking to tackle a problem particular to a certain premises. **Murdo Fraser (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party):** To ask the Scottish Executive what evidence local licensing boards have to collect before using their powers under the Licensing (Scotland) Act 2005 to apply for restrictions based on age to licensing applications for off-trade sales. **Kenny MacAskill:** It for a licensing board to satisfy itself that it has the necessary evidence to defend a decision should it be appealed. **Murdo Fraser (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party):** To ask the Scottish Executive what consultation local licensing boards have to carry out before using their powers under the Licensing (Scotland) Act 2005 to apply for restrictions based on age to licensing applications for off-trade sales. **Kenny MacAskill:** Under the terms of the Licensing (Scotland) Act 2005, before taking a decision on a licensing application a licensing board must invite representations from statutory consultees which include notifiable neighbours; community councils; the local authority; the chief constable; the fire master and, from 1 October 2011, the NHS board. Any other person may submit a representation within the required deadlines for an application hearing. All representations are made available to the applicant before the hearing. **Murdo Fraser (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party):** To ask the Scottish Executive how challenges can be made to decisions by local licensing boards to use their powers under the Licensing (Scotland) Act 2005 to apply for restrictions based on age to licensing applications for off-trade sales. **Kenny MacAskill:** The premises licence applicant or holder may appeal a licensing board's decision through the courts by the processes provided for by the Licensing (Scotland) Act 2005.

### **British Transport Police**

**Neil Bibby (West Scotland) (Scottish Labour):** To ask the Scottish Executive what its position is regarding the arming of transport police officers in Scotland in light of the Secretary of State for Transport confirming that British Transport Police in London are to be issued with firearms. **Kenny MacAskill:** There are no current plans to arm British Transport Police officers based in Scotland.

### **Animal health**

**Tavish Scott (Shetland Islands) (Scottish Liberal Democrats):** To ask the Scottish Executive whether any of the changes to animal health and welfare legislation that it is considering deal with the prevention of the spread of animal diseases to Scotland's islands or other animal disease prevention measures specifically for the islands. **Richard Lochhead:** The Scottish Executive is currently considering proposals for new animal health legislation which if introduced would cover the whole of Scotland and as a result deal with the prevention of the spread of animal diseases to Scotland's islands. There are no proposals for islands specific measures.

### **Additional Revenues**

**Tavish Scott (Shetland Islands) (Scottish Liberal Democrats):** To ask the Scottish Executive whether it will allow a proportion of additional revenues generated from economic growth to be retained by local authorities for reinvestment in their areas and, if so, when details of these plans will be available. **Aileen Campbell:** The Scottish Government is currently taking forward three separate initiatives which could allow local authorities to retain a proportion of additional business rate income resulting from economic growth. The first of these initiatives is Tax Increment Financing (TIF). The Non-Domestic Rating Contributions (Scotland) Amendment Regulations 2010 enable up to six local authorities to capture incremental non-domestic rates (NDR) as a result of TIF enabling public sector infrastructure works. In addition to this the Scottish Government and COSLA are finalising details of a Business Rates Incentivisation Scheme (BRIS). The aim of the BRIS is two fold; to incentivise local authorities to maximise their existing business rate income and also to grow their potential business rate tax base by allowing them to retain locally a proportion of any additional NDR income they can generate. Along with final details of the operation of the BRIS, the implementation date will be discussed and agreed with COSLA. The Scottish Government is also committed to the creation of four new enterprise zones, designed to attract further inward investment where any additional NDR income could be retained locally.

### **Council Tax- Energy Efficiency**

**Jackson Carlaw (West Scotland) (Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party):** To ask the Scottish Executive what action (a) it is and (b) local authorities are taking to promote schemes for reducing council tax where improvements are made to the energy efficiency of homes, as outlined in section 65 of the Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009. **John Swinney:** The Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009 places a duty on individual local authorities to introduce a discount scheme for council tax. The Scottish Government has no formal role in developing or delivering a discount scheme, but following joint work we undertook with COSLA, local authorities, the energy companies and some other interested parties to support implementation last year, we understand all local authorities now have a scheme in place from the start of the 2011-12 financial year.

**Jackson Carlaw (West Scotland) (Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party):** To ask the Scottish Executive how much has been provided in council tax discounts under the provisions for reducing council tax where improvements are made to the energy efficiency of homes, as outlined in section 65 of the Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009, also broken down by local authority. **John Swinney:** The information is currently not held centrally. However, in line with the provisions in the Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009, Ministers will produce a report after 31 March 2012 and then report annually on the operation of local authority schemes that reduce council tax liability for energy efficiency improvements.

### **Prison Visiting Committees**

**James Kelly (Rutherglen) (Scottish Labour):** To ask the Scottish Executive whether it plans to abolish prison visiting committees. **Kenny MacAskill:** The Scottish Government has not yet reached any conclusions following the recent consultation on independent monitoring of prisons. We will do so in due course.

### **Strategic Transport Projects Review**

**Jackson Carlaw (West Scotland) (Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party):** To ask the Scottish Executive what plans it has to publish an updated Strategic Transport Projects Review. **Keith Brown:** Our approach to the prioritisation of the projects in the Strategic Transport Projects Review remains unchanged. Our priority projects remain the Forth Replacement Crossing, the Edinburgh Glasgow Improvement Programme, the Highland main line and the Aberdeen to Inverness line. We expect to deliver these projects by 2017. In terms of the remaining 25 projects, we are continuing to work hard with partners and other stakeholders to take forward the development and design of these projects.

### **20 mph zones**

**Elaine Murray (Dumfriesshire) (Scottish Labour):** To ask the Scottish Executive what guidance is provided regarding the operation of 20 mph zones in residential areas. **Keith Brown:** Between 1992 and 2006, the Scottish Government published several circulars which provided guidance to local authorities about 20 mph zones. In addition, traffic advisory leaflets published by the Department for Transport for use by all UK local authorities provide advice and practical examples of how a 20 mph zone might be operated. However, it is entirely a matter for each local authority to determine how it should operate a 20 mph zone in its own area within the regulations. **Elaine Murray (Dumfriesshire) (Scottish Labour):** To ask the Scottish Executive whether speed bumps are required in 20 mph zones in residential areas. **Keith Brown:** Speed reducing measures are required within a 20 mph zone. However, in each particular case, it is for local traffic authorities to decide on the number and type of measures which should be employed. So there is no automatic requirement for speed bumps.

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## **Question Time**

### **Wind Turbines (Local Agreement)**

**Adam Ingram (Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley) (SNP):** To ask the Scottish Government what plans it has to enhance the role of local people in agreeing sites for wind turbines when these are to be located close to their communities. **The Minister for Local Government and Planning (Aileen Campbell):** Planning modernisation has introduced enhanced opportunities for people to get involved at earlier stages in the planning process, and recent online planning advice for onshore wind has reaffirmed that role. Shortly, the Scottish Government will publish a renewables route map, setting out how it will meet challenging new targets. The route map will set out our ambitions for locally sourced energy and will include consideration of public engagement. In addition, we will consider the responses to the Government's consultation "Securing the Benefits of Scotland's Next Energy Revolution". As was stated in a written answer to Mary Scanlon last week, we are "proactively seeking to further improve the consenting system and promote best practice, in particular by instigating and leading the European GP Wind Project. This EU-funded project identifies good practice in reconciling objectives on renewable energy with wider environmental objectives and in the active involvement of communities in planning and implementation."— [Official Report, Written Answers, 16 June 2011; S4O-00051.] **Adam Ingram:** In the context of local engagement, would it not be helpful to clarify further the guidelines on where wind farms should be sited, how cumulative impact should be addressed and what contribution each area of the country is expected to make to a national target for onshore wind power? **Aileen Campbell:** Our planning guidelines on wind farms are set out clearly in Scottish planning policy, which is supplemented by online planning advice. The online planning advice, which was launched only in February this year, includes advice on how to prepare spatial frameworks for large-scale onshore wind farms and advice on onshore wind, which deals with detailed siting matters for turbines. It suggests that securing support from local communities ought to be an area of focus for planning authorities. If Adam Ingram has ideas on how that advice could be supplemented, he should feel free to write to me and my office.

**Dave Thompson (Skye, Lochaber and Badenoch) (SNP):** Some wind farm developers offer to buy a property that will be affected by a development but are willing to pay only part of the price agreed, with the balance being paid only if they get planning permission. Does the minister agree that it may be worth while looking at a formula to ensure that developers pay home owners fair compensation in situations in which property values are adversely affected by the close proximity of a wind farm development? **Aileen Campbell:** As I said in reply to Adam Ingram, the online advice can be supplemented. If Dave Thompson wishes to discuss those points with me, he should feel free to write to me and I will look at the issues that he has raised.

### Council of Economic Advisers

**Gavin Brown (Lothian) (Con):** To ask the Scottish Executive what plans it has for the Council of Economic Advisers. **The Cabinet Secretary for Finance, Employment and Sustainable Growth (John Swinney):** The Council of Economic Advisers will continue and the new council will be announced, in due course, by the First Minister. **Gavin Brown:** When the Government and the Council of Economic Advisers disagree, as we know they did in the previous parliamentary session on many occasions—on energy, education and the constitution to name but three—should the council’s advice be ignored or should it be listened to and acted upon? **John Swinney:** The Government will consider advice from many individuals and organisations in the course of its work. We set great store by the work of the Council of Economic Advisers and we consider all the recommendations that it makes to ministers. It is unlikely that any group of independent-minded individuals will produce advice that the Government can and should accept in all circumstances. The Government is elected on a series of manifesto commitments and on a political proposition to the public. It is for ministers to defend that proposition and the decisions that flow from it. Clearly, it is incumbent on us to consider carefully the recommendations and contribution of the Council of Economic Advisers, which are warmly appreciated by the First Minister, me and other ministers.

### Scottish Agricultural Wages Board

**John Park (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab):** To ask the Scottish Executive what discussions it has had with stakeholders regarding reform of the Scottish Agricultural Wages Board. **The Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs and the Environment (Richard Lochhead):** The Government carried out a formal stakeholder consultation during the most recent review of the Scottish Agricultural Wages Board, in 2009. We are committed to reviewing the wages board again during this parliamentary session. **John Park:** I welcomed the response that the cabinet secretary gave to a parliamentary question that I asked almost two years ago, when he committed to continuing the wages board, but I am a bit concerned about developments at United Kingdom level and about pressure on the cabinet secretary, particularly from Conservatives in the Scottish Parliament, to get rid of the board. I ask for a commitment from the cabinet secretary that there will be trade union engagement in taking forward the discussions. I hope that we will find a way forward to ensure that the wages board stays in place. **Richard Lochhead:** I can certainly give the member a guarantee that trade union involvement will be at the heart of any review that we carry out. I know that he has a long record of standing up for the retention of the wages board and has strong views on the issue. As he will be aware, previous Administrations have also reviewed the wages board and we will carry out our review during this parliamentary session.

### Supermarkets Ombudsman

**Maureen Watt (Aberdeen South and North Kincardine) (SNP):** To ask the Scottish Government what its position is on the time taken by the United Kingdom Government in appointing a supermarkets ombudsman. **The Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs and the Environment (Richard Lochhead):** I have made numerous representations to UK ministers on the issue in recent years. An adjudicator is crucial to safeguarding the long-term future of our producers and suppliers. I am pleased that, at long last, the UK Government finally published a draft bill on a groceries code adjudicator in March. However, I think that I speak for many people in Scotland and in the Parliament when I say that I am disappointed that the process has taken so long. We will continue to urge the UK Government to establish the groceries code adjudicator as soon as possible. **Maureen Watt:** Given the extent to which household budgets are being squeezed, does the cabinet secretary believe that it is more essential than ever that the supermarkets ombudsman—or groceries code adjudicator—is put in place to ensure that consumers and producers both receive a fair deal from supermarkets? **Richard Lochhead:** Yes. It is important that everyone in the food supply chain receives a fair share of every pound that is spent on food in Scotland. That is why we have for a long time pressed for much more transparency and for someone to enforce the contracts between the players along the supply chain. The most powerful part of that supply chain appears to be the big retailers. It is important that our primary producers who are at the bottom of the supply chain—our farmers, crofters and fishermen—have someone who stands up for them, to ensure that they are not abused. It is a pity that the UK Government’s proposals do not offer the new adjudicator enough teeth to perform their job properly. As I said, we are also disappointed about the delay in introducing the legislation. **Sarah Boyack (Lothian) (Lab):** Does the cabinet secretary think that there is a particular opportunity in relation to milk and milk producers? During the previous session of the Parliament, we had a milk summit. There is great concern about the long-term economic sustainability of the industry and about whether we will continue to have fresh milk supplies in Scotland. Does the cabinet secretary agree that the establishment of the supermarkets ombudsman must be an opportunity to ensure that milk supplies and fair prices for consumers and farmers are firmly on the agenda? **Richard Lochhead:**

I agree with the member, who makes a good point. Our dairy farmers and milk producers are some of the producers who are most affected by the imbalance in power across the supply chain. We know that to our cost in Scotland, where many milk producers have gone out of business. The adjudicator will certainly have a role to play. The European Union's high-level group on milk has made proposals on the dairy sector, which we are pushing the UK Government to adopt in the UK, to help Scottish producers. Dairy farmers in Scotland are proposing measures of their own to help to make the industry more viable, which we are looking to support if we can.

### Animals (Abandonment)

**Neil Bibby (West Scotland) (Lab):** To ask the Scottish Government what action it has taken to prevent the abandonment of animals in Scotland. **The Minister for Environment and Climate Change (Stewart Stevenson):** The Animal Health and Welfare (Scotland) Act 2006 contains a specific offence of abandonment. A person who is responsible for an animal and who abandons it in circumstances that are likely to cause unnecessary suffering, or who leaves it unattended without making adequate provision for its welfare, is subject to a penalty of up to six months' imprisonment and/or a fine of up to £5,000. **Neil Bibby:** In these tough financial times, bills are getting harder to pay, and vets' bills can be a shock to families' monthly budgets. The minister might well recall the successful campaign with the slogan, "A dog is for life, not just for Christmas." Will he reassure me that he will work with animal charities and others to raise awareness of abandonment throughout the rest of the year? **Stewart Stevenson:** I very much support the campaign for dogs for life—and cats and a wide range of domesticated and pet animals. It is important that we make adequate provision for those that we take into our homes. We take over responsibility for such animals, as we do for everyone in our houses.

### Renewable Electricity Target

**Stuart McMillan (West Scotland) (SNP):** To ask the Scottish Government what measures the Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs and the Environment will introduce to help the Scottish Government achieve its 100 per cent renewable electricity target by 2020. **The Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs and the Environment (Richard Lochhead):** Next week, we will publish our renewables route map, which will set out how our targets will be met through the deployment of all forms of renewable technologies, onshore and offshore, to deliver a transmission network that is capable of bringing vast amounts of clean, green energy to our markets in the United Kingdom and Europe. Through the route map, the Scottish Government will commit to developing new strategies for microgeneration and for agri-renewables to reflect the growing significance of small-scale generation and opportunities for local and rural ownership of energy. **Stuart McMillan:** What specific assistance does the cabinet secretary intend to introduce to help community organisations to develop small-scale community hydro schemes, which will help us to reach the 100 per cent target as well as tackle flooding in our communities? **Richard Lochhead:** The member asks a very good question. Our water resources have a big role to play in helping us to meet our clean, green energy needs, and we have already announced assistance for such community projects. In April 2011, the Scottish Government launched the community and renewable energy scheme loan fund, through which loans of up to £150,000 are available for the pre-planning consent stages of developing proposals, as well as free advice and support from a nationwide network of local development officers. That scheme has a budget of £5.3 million for supporting community-owned projects and £2.4 million for supporting projects that are owned by land managers. All of the loans have a built-in condition that community benefits must be part of the project. There is now quite a lot on the table to help communities to move forward with their local energy schemes. **Rhoda Grant (Highlands and Islands) (Lab):** The cabinet secretary may be aware of calls by Calum MacDonald for a crofters renewables act, which would make it easier for crofters to develop renewables on their own land. Will he introduce such legislation or support a member's bill on the subject? **Richard Lochhead:** I support the sentiments behind the issue that the member raises. Our farmers and crofters are sitting on massive natural resources that could be used for renewable energy and other things, to provide extra income and more self-sufficiency for them. That is a good thing, and we all support it. In my answer to Stuart McMillan, I mentioned that we are supporting the development of an agri-renewables strategy. I would be happy to think about how the needs of crofters—if crofters have distinctive needs—can be built into that. **Jamie McGrigor (Highlands and Islands) (Con):** Does the cabinet secretary accept that one of the problems for small and large developers is the difficulty in getting grid connections? What can the Scottish Government do to help with that? **Richard Lochhead:** I could not agree with the member more. The lack of grid connections and the proper infrastructure in Scotland is a huge running sore, which is why the Government has, on numerous occasions, made strong representations to both the Office of the Gas and Electricity Markets and United Kingdom Government ministers. We must sort out this matter if we want to make the most of Scotland's fantastic renewable resources.

### Zero Waste Plan Targets (Funding)

**John Pentland (Motherwell and Wishaw) (Lab):** To ask the Scottish Executive whether additional funding will be made available to enable local authorities to meet collection of food waste and other zero waste plan targets. **The Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs and the Environment (Richard Lochhead):** We have allocated an extra £4 million to zero waste Scotland this year to support the development of food waste infrastructure, which includes support to local authorities to develop food waste collections. I make it absolutely clear that achieving high levels of recycling, including recycling of food waste, is the most effective approach for local authorities to adopt.

**John Pentland:** I welcome Scotland's first-ever recycle week, but how will councils meet expectations such as that for a food waste bin for every household when they might have no additional funding? Last year, it was suggested that money could be taken from the £80 million in the zero waste fund but, so far, £4 million is on offer, and that is subject to funding applications. Should such initiatives be better funded and should funding be shared among all local authorities to help them to meet their 70 per cent target? **Richard Lochhead:** The easy answer to John Pentland's fair point is that many local authorities are just getting on with it. Given that landfill tax is set to rise to £80 per tonne by 2014-15, it is in the financial interests of Scotland's local authorities to divert their waste from landfill. Food waste collections should be part of that—about 10 councils already run such collections. Many councils are getting on with it, including Fife Council, which has just come up with innovations. As part of this week's national recycle week, I saw new ways of collecting waste that have been adopted in one part of Fife, which mean that the recycling rate will increase from just under 40 per cent—if I remember the figure correctly—to well over 60 per cent in that area, and close to 70 per cent in some streets. Many councils are using innovative ways to improve recycling rates and save our environment.

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### 2.10

### First Minister's Question Time

#### Sectarianism

**Iain Gray (East Lothian) (Lab):** Two weeks ago, I met the First Minister and told him that we want to support legislation against sectarianism, but I expressed serious concerns about the timetable. He told me that the football clubs were demanding that he legislate before the start of the season. Yesterday, both Rangers and Celtic said that the bill was too rushed. The Law Society, the churches and Christine Grahame, the convener of the Justice Committee, all agreed. The Lord Advocate said that the bill does not necessarily have to be in place before the football season. Does the First Minister now regret not acting for four years and having to squeeze the legislation into two weeks? **The First Minister:** I listened this morning to the comments that were made across the chamber. I always listen to our partners in the enterprise to try to eliminate sectarianism and sectarian displays from Scottish football. I accept—I think that everybody accepts—that we have a majority in this chamber but we need consensus. On this issue above all, I want consensus; I want consensus across the chamber and across our partner organisations. I ask Parliament at half past 12 to agree—unanimously or near unanimously, I hope—to the bill at stage 1 to allow consideration to continue. I will then propose that business managers, in consultation with the convener of the Justice Committee, discuss a new timetable that will allow for further consideration and evidence to be taken on the bill in advance of formal consideration of stage 2 amendments at the Justice Committee. Stage 3 proceedings would then follow in the usual manner for a public bill, with the intention behind such a timetable for discussion being that the bill would be passed by the end of this year. If Parliament agrees to the general principles of the bill at 12.30, I will ask Bruce Crawford to initiate discussions with business managers. What we say in this place on this issue has huge ramifications across society, so I hope that we can allow for the probability—the certainty, even—that each and every single one of us wants to eliminate sectarianism and sectarian displays from Scottish football, and that each and every one of us wants to eliminate sectarianism from Scottish society. What we do as a Parliament and how we avoid the opportunity to attack each other on who said what when, or who did what when, is an important part of that joint message. I hope that the Parliament will accept that there is a huge and genuine urgency in the matter, and that it will also accept that this Government wishes to achieve consensus in Parliament and throughout Scottish society. **Iain Gray:** I welcome the fact that the First Minister has listened to the concerns about the timetable. It is certainly the intention on this side of the chamber to support the principles of the bill. I made it clear that we want to support the Government in legislating against bigotry in football and, indeed, anywhere else. To achieve consensus, however, we have to try to get the approach right. This week's examination of the bill has not helped with that. At her appearance at the Justice Committee, the Minister for Community Safety and Legal Affairs struggled to clarify what actions would be caught by the bill. Indeed, the Lord Advocate had to return to the committee yesterday to provide further clarification. In the spirit of achieving consensus, I ask the First Minister to clarify now how actions such as singing the national anthem or blessing oneself could be considered a crime under the bill. **The First Minister:** I advise Iain Gray to look at the words of the minister and those of the Lord Advocate, who was actually making his first appearance before the committee. As the Lord Advocate explained, these things depend on “the facts, the circumstances and the context”—[Official Report, Justice Committee, 22 June 2011; c 101.] as has always been the case with many offences in Scots law. I am going to avoid the obvious temptation of saying that, in dealing with this subject, we have to be prepared to recognise that each of us has a bona fide interest in driving sectarianism out of the game of football and out of Scottish society. The bill that has been introduced is, I think, clear in its intent and purpose and can be clearly implemented. The objections that have been raised against it are not—by a vast majority—about intent or even content, but about whether enough time is being allowed to give wider society, and the groups and interest groups that we carry with us, their say on the bill. That was one of the points that was made by the Labour spokesperson in this morning's debate. What I am offering in good faith to the chamber is exactly the opportunity to do that. Given that offer, given what people have said in the debate and given what is—believe me—the reservoir of goodwill from people across Scottish society to a Parliament that is prepared to take action on this matter, cannot we now go forward on that basis? **Iain Gray:** If the First Minister had listened, he would have heard me say that, yes, we can go forward on that basis.

However, that does not mean that we can sidestep difficult questions about legislating on such a difficult and sensitive area, or questions about the way in which the legislation, which we want to be put in place, will be implemented. Concerns have been raised this week not only about the timescale, but about resourcing implementation of the legislation. Les Gray of the Scottish Police Federation said that he supports the bill, but it will not work without resources and the financial memorandum is not enough. Given that we all must prove that we are serious about legislating properly and ensuring that legislation works, will the First Minister make any commitment with regard to the additional resources that will be required to implement the legislation and make it work? **The First Minister:** The resources will be in place to ensure that the legislation is implemented effectively. I know that Iain Gray will be the first to acknowledge that the evidence from the Association of Chief Police Officers in Scotland and from the responsible police officers who are in the front line, which demonstrated their strong welcome for the legislation and their confidence in their ability to implement it, is a factor that I am sure carries sway with people across the chamber in their wish to support it. **Iain Gray:** One of the statements about the bill that the minister made this week—and which I welcomed—was that this would not be the beginning and end of legislation or other action to address sectarianism and bigotry. As the First Minister well knows, we have for some years now argued that we must at community level, and through educational measures in particular, work to root out this aspect of our society. What other measures does the First Minister envisage will follow consideration of the bill, that will go beyond football into wider society and, indeed, beyond legislation? **The First Minister:** I am glad that Iain Gray has given me the opportunity to state that the legislative arm of the actions of the joint action group was only one of six workstreams and that the other five workstreams will report to the Government in the next few weeks. Obviously, we will want to share that work. One useful aspect of that timetable—and, indeed, of the new timetable for legislation—is that it will enable people to see that legislative action is only one of the initiatives that are being taken in football. Moreover, initiatives in the game of football form only one part of the initiatives that will be taken across society. Again, I say that I listened to the debate this morning. The support for community-based organisations working against sectarianism has in the past few years been greater than ever before. In financial terms, over the past four years a budget of £224,000 has become a budget of £525,000. I think that John Park said in the earlier debate that he had come across the organisation Show Bigotry the Red Card. Both Iain Gray and I attended the launch of that organisation. However, what is perhaps more important is that in the coming year the funding for its valuable work is £120,000. That organisation is coming to the attention of members and the wider society in football because it is one of the many groups that are being funded by the Government at the present moment. The community initiatives, the educational initiatives and particular organisational initiatives will continue to be supported in a co-ordinated fashion. However, I am grateful to Iain Gray for giving me the opportunity to point out that the legislative arm is only one of the initiatives on how we will drive this evil out of the game of football. I listened to every aspect of the debate and I have spoken to many of our stakeholders, whose urgency and support in this matter are absolute in terms of their determination. I hope and believe—and I take people at their word on this—that by making available the timetable for fuller consideration, we will be able to carry the Parliament unanimously, and together exorcise and drive out this blight from our game of football and from our country.

### Sectarianism

**Annabel Goldie (West Scotland) (Con):** We all agree that we must deal with sectarianism, which is vile, odious and utterly unacceptable. The imperative of the majority Scottish Government is to get the bill right, so I welcome the common sense that has broken out and the Scottish Government's recognition of the need for a longer timetable. I am not given often to praising the First Minister, but he has shown maturity in accepting that his Government had not got the bill right. I say to him well done for accepting that and for putting the bill on to a much more realistic footing. It seems that, under the bill as drafted, there are circumstances in which making the sign of the cross or singing the national anthem could constitute a crime. Within the bill, criteria range widely: from hatred, to behaviour that is threatening or offensive, to behaviour that is likely to incite public disorder. Can the First Minister confirm that, with the new timetable, the Scottish Government will look at whether the criteria in the bill are consistent with previous legislation? Now that a more extensive consultation process is possible, will the Scottish Government consider whether the criteria as currently listed are adequate? **The First Minister:** I believe that the criteria are adequate. I think that anyone who listened to and saw the Lord Advocate explain exactly those points before the Justice Committee yesterday would be fully satisfied that the nature of the bill is well within the tradition of Scots law, because it depends on facts, circumstances and context. Some of the stories that have been running this week have no basis in reality in that sense. The Lord Advocate gave excellent examples to explain that, so that even non-lawyers like me would understand. I thought that his evidence put the canard to rest. We should bear that in mind. The bill—as Annabel Goldie knows, the legislation has two parts: offensive behaviour causing public disorder at and around football matches, and threats that incite serious harm or religious hatred—is certainly the type of legislation that is required. With the extra time that will be available for discussion and debate, I am sure, and I welcome Annabel Goldie's indication of this, that the Conservative party will be able to support the legislation. **Annabel Goldie:** I will broaden this out a bit. Even if over the longer timetable—which is very welcome—we address some of the ambiguities and uncertainties in, and maybe even limitations of the bill, the sad and ugly truth is that in certain parts of the west of Scotland we have embedded and entrenched sectarian attitudes. The bill is only part of solving the problem. What is the Scottish Government's strategy to deal with that repugnant culture that, sadly, runs more broadly than just in football stadia or certain pubs? **The First Minister:** We must not underrate the importance of not tolerating sectarian displays in our national game. There is a consequence of that having happened for generations in Scottish society. Sometimes societies decide that, on the balance of opinion, enough is enough and something requires to be done, and something that was acceptable or seen to be tolerated a generation ago no longer has a place in a civilised society.

The two things are interlinked because of the importance of our beautiful game of football and the power that it has for good, which must be mobilised—a point that was made by our church leaders during the debates that we had earlier this year. The work on driving sectarianism out of football is only part of a wider approach involving community and educational initiatives. I would be glad to go through the organisations and the import of what is being supported. We must not underrate the extent to which the two are connected. If Annabel Goldie will allow me to do so, I will make an observation. It is rather unfortunate if I contributed to the sacking last week of Paul McBride QC as an adviser to the Conservative Party; I did not mean to do so. I have been following closely what Mr McBride has had to say about the bill. He is an advocate with huge experience in Scots law and his support for the bill has been fully in the traditions of Scots law. His has been one of the powerful voices arguing for action to be taken as quickly as possible.

### Sectarianism

**Willie Rennie (Mid Scotland and Fife) (LD):** When politicians change their minds, we must welcome their reflection and consideration rather than complain and criticise. I offer my thanks to the First Minister for listening on the Offensive Behaviour at Football and Threatening Communications (Scotland) Bill. **The First Minister:** I welcome that acknowledgement from the Liberal Democrats. It gives me great hope that, as we go through the process as a Parliament, we can set an example to wider society, as Scotland would expect. **Willie Rennie:** One of the issues that we had with the bill was that we believed that, in the main, the powers already exist to tackle the fundamental problems. We believe in voluntary action, community measures and using existing law before exploring further avenues for legislation. First, I ask the First Minister to request that the Lord Advocate publish an assessment of the use of existing law. Secondly, I ask him to prepare and agree a renewed comprehensive anti-sectarianism strategy to root out this cancer from Scottish society. **The First Minister:** I am desperately trying not to break the consensus that I am trying to establish. I am sure that Willie Rennie did not mean to do that; however, he should look at the Lord Advocate's evidence to the Justice Committee yesterday. He laid out, in precise terms, the difficulties that breach of the peace as a general offence has been running into. He gave, as an example, something that would seem to most people to be a clear racial matter but that was ruled not to be a breach of the peace because of the interpretation of that general offence by the court. The argument that the existing framework of law is adequate is not borne out by the facts. The other aspect is that both the proposed offences are indictable offences that carry a maximum penalty of five years in prison and limited fines. That is an indication of how seriously we take such manifestations of sectarianism. If something becomes an indictable offence, it is because this Parliament and this society decide that no more will it be tolerated in our country. I agree with Willie Rennie that a strategy across society must be part and parcel of the approach that is taken. However, we must not underrate the importance of legislation as an indication by the Parliament—by law makers—that some things will no longer be tolerated in Scotland.

### 2012 Olympic Games Legacy

**Jamie Hepburn (Cumbernauld and Kilsyth) (SNP):** To ask the First Minister what the Scottish Government's response is to the reported concerns of the Scottish Chambers of Commerce that any legacy for Scotland from the 2012 Olympic games will be "absolutely minimal". **The First Minister (Alex Salmond):** We share some of those concerns and will continue to work with partners to ensure that Scotland gets as much benefit as possible from London 2012. However, the United Kingdom Government has made it clear that the whole UK should benefit from the Olympics, which is a promise that should be redeemed. **Jamie Hepburn:** Is not it the case that against a range of measures—the number of events to be hosted, the number of tickets for Scottish schoolchildren to attend events, the number of tourists coming to Scotland, support for grass-roots Scottish sport, and contracts awarded to Scottish companies—there is no discernible benefit to Scotland from the 2012 Olympic games? In addition, the Olympic committee continues its attacks on the integrity of the Scottish national football team. Does the First Minister agree that when about £1.7 billion is being spent on regenerating the east end of London to stage the Olympic games, Scotland should receive the Barnett consequential of that figure, which could go towards Scotland having a legacy from the 2014 Commonwealth games of which we can all be proud? **The First Minister:** Jamie Hepburn draws attention to a very important aspect. It is a view, incidentally, that is shared absolutely by the Administrations of Wales and Northern Ireland. We have put in a joint submission arguing exactly that point. The point is this: there has been substantial expenditure on sporting facilities in London, and it is perfectly acceptable that that should happen when major international games come, but a great deal of the expenditure has been specifically on transport and regeneration in London and not on the games themselves. If that argument is accepted, that expenditure should have been Barnettable, according to the Treasury funding formula. Until recently, there was a question about whether that expenditure was truly necessary for the games. However, Sebastian Coe, the chief executive of the organising committee, said very recently about the Olympics: "This is not a £9.3 billion sporting project. Seventy-five pence in every pound that will be spent is going into the regeneration of London." Let me be quite clear: although Wales, Northern Ireland and Scotland believe that regeneration spending in London is a good thing, it is also right and proper that that expenditure, under the current funding rules, should have been Barnettted and an appropriate share given to the other three nations in these islands. **Margo MacDonald (Lothian) (Ind):** The First Minister might recall that the Parliament's cross-party group on sport warned about the loss to Scottish community sport that would occur because of the Olympic games, so I heartily back his efforts to claw back some of that money. However, I ask him to take account of the legacy for Scottish sport if the Olympic committee has its way as regards the football team. Will he add his support to the Scottish Football Association in advising young footballers that it would not be a clever move for them to play in a British team?

**The First Minister:** I give my total support to the Scottish Football Association in that matter. The SFA has to look after the interests of the game of football in Scotland and our presence in national and international arenas in the long term. It has to look beyond one particular tournament, and at the best interests of the Scottish game. I believe that it is doing that and that not just the Government but the Parliament should give the SFA their total support in the view that it has expressed on moves by the Olympic committee.

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[Protection for consumers in need of reform](#) New proposals to simplify the confusing and overlapping provision of consumer protection are needed to better protect consumers, Consumer Minister announced.

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**4 UK Parliament  
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House of Commons

**Monday 27 June 2011**

Oral Questions -Home Office, including Topical Questions  
Debate - House of Lords reform

**Tuesday 28 June 2011**

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Legislation - Finance (No. 3) Bill - Report stage

**Wednesday 29 June 2011**

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Oral Questions - Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, including Topical Questions, Church Commissioners

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**4.2 UK Parliament  
Commons Select Committee Business**

**Monday 27 June 2011**

Public Accounts - DWP Cost Reduction

**Tuesday 28 June 2011**

Culture, Media and Sport: Spectrum  
Transport: High Speed Rail  
Energy and Climate Change: The UK's energy supply: security or independence

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Energy and Climate Change: Ofgem Retail Market Review

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Energy and Climate Change: A European Supergrid

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**4.3 Legislation of Potential Interest to Scotland**

UK Government Bill	Description	Parliamentary progress
Fixed-term Parliaments Bill	The Bill fixes the date of the next General Election at 7 May 2015, and provides for five-year fixed terms.	HofC Stages Complete Ping Pong - 07/07/11

Postal Services Bill	Make provision for the restructuring of the Royal Mail group and about the Royal Mail Pension Plan; to make new provision about the regulation of postal services.	Passed – 09/06/11
Public Bodies etc Bill	To make provision for conferring powers on Ministers of the Crown in relation to certain public bodies and offices, to confer powers on Welsh Ministers in relation to environmental public bodies, to make provision in relation to forestry, to make provision about amendment of Schedule 1 to the Superannuation Act 1972.	HofL Stages Complete 2nd Reading – TBC
Energy Bill	A Bill to make provision for the arrangement and financing of energy efficiency improvements to be made to properties by owners and occupiers	HofL Stages Complete Report Stage -TBC
Scotland Bill	A Bill to amend the Scotland Act 1998 and make provision about the functions of the Scottish Ministers; and for connected purposes	HofC Stages Complete Second Reading - TBC
Pensions Bill	A Bill to make provision relating to pensions; and for connected purposes.	HofL Stages Complete Committee Stage - TBC
Welfare Reform Bill	A Bill to make provision for universal credit and personal independence payment; to make other provision about social security and tax credits; to make provision about the functions of the registration service, child support maintenance and the use of jobcentres	HofC Stages Complete Second Reading – TBC

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### 5 European Commission & European Council 5.1 News

[Commission steps up its efforts in fighting fraud against the EU budget](#)

[Modernisation of EU public procurement rules – FAQs](#)

[Questions and answers on the low level presence \(LLP\) of GMOs in feed imports](#)

[Fisheries: new reports confirm need for reform of EU fisheries policy](#)

[Commission and European Parliament launch Joint Transparency Register to shed light on all those seeking to influence European policy](#)

[Consumer Rights: 10 ways the new EU Consumer Rights Directive will give people stronger rights when they shop online](#)

[Strong impetus to energy savings and energy efficiency](#)

[The Commission's new Energy Efficiency Directive](#)

**Agriculture and Fisheries Council** - Ministers will mainly discuss the Commission communication on the ways in which total allowable catches (TACs) for fisheries should be fixed. The consultation document also explains the progress achieved in the Common Fisheries Policy over the last years and sets out a way forward for the next years in order to achieve sustainable fish stocks management.

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### 6 European Parliament 6.1 News

[Aid to regions is a vital driver of growth, says Parliament:](#) The EU's cohesion policy budget for 2014-2020 should at least equal the current one, to enable poor regions to catch up and all regions, including frontier ones, to deploy their economic and innovative potential in line with the EU 2020 strategy. In four non-legislative resolutions on regional development, voted on Thursday, Parliament seeks to defend the architecture of EU structural funds.

[Agricultural policy after 2013: greener, fairer, more competitive](#) MEPs want to keep the EU agriculture budget unchanged until 2020 so that farmers have incentives to provide secure food supplies, environmental protection, create new jobs and provide for a competitive EU farming sector

[Nuclear waste: exports to non-EU countries should be banned, say MEPs](#) Nuclear waste exports to countries outside the EU should be prohibited, unless exported for recycling and imported back into the EU, and even within the EU should be permitted only when governed by bilateral agreements, said Parliament on Thursday. MEPs also backed stricter rules for protecting and training workers, called for stronger investigatory powers for national authorities, and said research on alternatives to burying the waste deep underground should be stepped up.

[2012 budget: investing in the future](#): Essential investment in education, social inclusion, poverty reduction and a knowledge-based society must go ahead without delay, said the European Parliament on Thursday in its first formal response to the Commission's draft budget for 2012.

[Consumer Rights: Parliament approves new EU-wide rules for on-line shopping](#) An EU-wide right for consumers to change their minds about an on-line purchase within two weeks of receiving the good, and new requirements that on-line traders must give buyers precise information on the total price, the goods ordered and the trader's contact details, are among the benefits of new rules approved by Parliament on Thursday.

[Food labelling: final deal one step closer](#) Parliament's negotiating team has received the Council's green light for the provisional agreement reached last week on new EU legislation on food labelling. The deal, which aims to ensure that food labels become clearer in future, now needs to be approved by Parliament in a plenary vote in July.

[Commissioner Hahn defends concept of "intermediate" regions](#) No region would lose out, but cohesion policy would gain in clarity if it put regions with a GDP of 75% to 90% of the EU average on an equal footing, regional policy Commissioner Johannes Hahn told Regional Development Committee MEPs in a discussion on Tuesday. Mr Hahn also outlined the key features of the legislative package on cohesion policy for 2014-2020, which he will present in the autumn

[Food quality labels: simpler rules for farmers, more clarity for customers](#) To help EU food producers to compete with imports from third countries, quality labels for agricultural products must be made easier for producers to register and use to explain value added to customers, said the Agriculture Committee on Tuesday. The committee amended draft labelling rules to cut the time taken to register a label, empower producers to do more to protect their products and allow a new label for mountain produce. Labels for island produce and farm gate sales may follow soon.

[How to halve road accident deaths and injuries by 2020](#) Each year 35,000 Europeans die in road accidents and 1.5 million are seriously injured, some with lifelong consequences\*. To tackle this tragedy, Transport Committee MEPs on Tuesday demanded a tough action plan and wider use of 30 km/h speed limits in urban areas.