

Monday 27 April 2015

SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT

Enterprise and Environment

David Stewart (Highlands and Islands) (Scottish Labour): To ask the Scottish Government how it will avoid further job losses at the Arnish yard on Lewis.

(S4W-25090)

Fergus Ewing: Arnish is a valuable asset for Lewis and home to a range of businesses including Burntisland Fabrications Ltd, Hebridean Seaweed and The Scottish Salmon Company.

The site has been identified as a key location for the renewables sector in the Scottish Government's *National Renewables Infrastructure Plan* and Highlands and Islands Enterprise is working to market the site as a location for businesses in the renewables sector as well as in oil and gas and other sectors.

In 2013, Arnish received £2 million for site development and improvement from funds made available by the Scottish Government in 2012-13.

With regard to the recent job losses announced at Burntisland Fabrications Ltd at Arnish and Fife, Highlands and Islands Enterprise, Scottish Enterprise and their partners are working closely with the company to help it diversify and grow its business and to help ensure its future both in Arnish and in Fife.

Finance

Neil Findlay (Lothian) (Scottish Labour): To ask the Scottish Government how many enforcement officers with the sole remit of tackling landfill tax evasion will be required; how many are in place, and what plans it has to recruit additional officers.

(S4W-25196)

John Swinney: This is an operational matter for Revenue Scotland. I have asked the chief executive to write to you.

Health and Social Care

Richard Baker (North East Scotland) (Scottish Labour): To ask the Scottish Government how many NHS Grampian patients had to travel to other NHS boards for treatment in the last year.

Holding answer issued: 30 March 2015

(S4W-24897)

Shona Robison: The number of Grampian patients who had treatment in a different NHS board area during the calendar year 2014 was 2,150. This represents 1.5% of NHS Grampian's overall annual acute activity of around 139,000 inpatients and day case discharges. This information relates to acute surgical specialties and is derived from Information Services Division Scottish morbidity returns for inpatient and day cases.

It is important to note that it is not unusual for patients to be treated in another health board area, particularly if a patient requires to be seen at a regional or national centre.

Learning and Justice

Liam McArthur (Orkney Islands) (Scottish Liberal Democrats): To ask the Scottish Government when student support rates for 2015-16 will be published.

Holding answer issued: 24 April 2015

(S4W-25134)

Angela Constance: The 2015-16 funding guide, which includes details of student support rates, became available on the Student Awards Agency Scotland (SAAS) website on 2 April 2015. The SAAS events team has distributed the guide at events since 26 March 2015.

The Scottish Government is committed to free tuition and providing financial support for students' living costs. Ministers will always take the opportunity (including in-year) to further improve student support when that is affordable.

Linda Fabiani (East Kilbride) (Scottish National Party): To ask the Scottish Government what involvement it has had in formulating the UK Government's *Consultation on Reforming the Electronic Communications Code*.

(S4W-25141)

Paul Wheelhouse: In 2011, the UK Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) arranged for the Electronic Communications Code to be reviewed by the Law Commission for England and Wales. The report by the commission (<http://lawcommission.justice.gov.uk/publications/2172.htm>) was published in February 2013.

The Scottish Government advised DCMS at the time that we would be happy to help with the implementation of a revised code to ensure that Scottish interests were represented.

Initially, engagement by DCMS with the Scottish Government was very limited, but in November 2014, DCMS told the Scottish Government that they intended to table a revised code as an amendment to the then Infrastructure Bill (now the Infrastructure Act 2015) at Westminster. Provisions were added to the Infrastructure Bill, but were then removed, following representations to DCMS by stakeholders. DCMS then decided to carry out a consultation on the proposed revised code.

The Scottish Government worked with DCMS to try and ensure that Scottish interests were reflected in the consultation paper. The consultation was launched on 26 February 2015 and closes on 30 April 2015. It can be found at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/consultation-on-reforming-the-electronic-communications-code>

A stakeholder engagement event on the consultation was held in Edinburgh on 16 March 2015. Scottish Government officials worked with DCMS to help set this up and attended the event.

The Scottish Government will continue to work to try and ensure that Scottish interests are represented and reflected in any revised Electronic Communications Code.

Transport Scotland

David Stewart (Highlands and Islands) (Scottish Labour): To ask the Scottish Government what assessment it has made of the potential to encourage the modal shift of the (a) Motorways of the Sea, (b) Marco Polo and (c) TEN-T funding packages.

(S4W-25223)

Derek Mackay: The Scottish Government welcomes all programmes that can help encourage modal shift and we would support any application that met the criteria of the funding streams available.

We would encourage any port, shipping company or other party looking to make an application under EU funding streams to engage with Transport Scotland at an early stage to discuss their proposals.

Scottish Ministers have supported successful applications for TEN-T projects in the previous funding round, such as feasibility study work to support the Aberdeen Harbour expansion, and have supported projects in the recent call for bids.

The following question received a holding answer:

S4W-25139