

Tuesday 3 September 2013

SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT

Enterprise and Environment

Gavin Brown (Lothian) (Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party): To ask the Scottish Government how much it plans to award for oil and gas innovation in (a) 2013-14 and (b) 2014-15.

Holding answer issued: 23 August 2013

(S4W-16525)

John Swinney: In May 2012, Scottish Enterprise announced a grant fund of £10 million to oil and gas research and development and innovation projects over the three years from 2012-13 to 2014-15 as part of Scotland's oil and gas Strategy.

In the first year, 2012-13, Scottish Enterprise awarded grant funding of £ 2.7 million to oil and gas research and development and innovation projects and anticipates awarding at least £7.3 million in total over the two year period 2013-14 and 2014-15. It is not possible to determine the likely breakdown over those two years as it will depend on applications received.

Highlands and Islands Enterprise have no plans to establish a ring fenced budget for oil and gas innovation, and will look to continue to support account managed businesses to invest and innovate in this sector.

Nanette Milne (North East Scotland) (Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party): To ask the Scottish Government what recent discussions it has had regarding the provision of abattoirs in the north east.

(S4W-16612)

Richard Lochhead: The Scottish Government recognises the pivotal role that the processing sector plays within the supply chain and is in regular discussions with a number of parties on the provision of abattoirs in the north east, including the proposed new facility at Inverurie.

Nanette Milne (North East Scotland) (Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party): To ask the Scottish Government what assessment it has made of the provision of abattoirs across the country.

(S4W-16613)

Richard Lochhead: The provision of abattoirs across the country is a key consideration for the Scottish Government to ensure that there is sufficient capacity in Scotland to process the output of the livestock sector. That is why we have awarded grant support totalling £9.7 million to 58 projects across the Scottish meat industry.

Nanette Milne (North East Scotland) (Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party): To ask the Scottish Government what assessment it has made of the development of new IT software ahead of the implementation of the reform of the common agricultural policy (CAP).

(S4W-16614)

Richard Lochhead: We have commenced a significant programme of work to update the business and IT processes which underpin the delivery of rural payments and inspections and to deliver CAP Reform. This is a long term programme of IT enabled business change, which will deliver significant improvements to the services which customers receive in the coming years.

Iain Gray (East Lothian) (Scottish Labour): To ask the Scottish Government on what date the paper on pensions that the First Minister referred to in his interview with *The Sunday Post* on 4 August 2013 will be published, and what its scope will be.

(S4W-16634)

John Swinney: I refer the member to the answer to question S4W-16620 on 2 September 2013. All answers to written parliamentary questions are available on the Parliament's website, the search facility for which can be found at:

<http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/parliamentarybusiness/28877.aspx>.

Iain Gray (East Lothian) (Scottish Labour): To ask the Scottish Government whether the reported comment by the First Minister in *The Sunday Post* on 4 August 2013 that "the way to deal with [European pensions regulations] is to get a derogation so nobody is forced into a more accelerated settlement of the pension deficit" reflects a change in the Scottish Government's position from that of 2 May 2013 when the First Minister said that "the Scottish Government would not seek an opt-out from European pensions regulations in an independent Scotland because one is not required or necessary" and "we are not seeking an opt-out from the EU regulations" (Official Report, c. 19317).

(S4W-16636)

John Swinney: I refer the member to the answer to question S4W-16616 on 2 September 2013. All answers to written parliamentary questions are available on the Parliament's website, the search facility for which can be found at:

<http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/parliamentarybusiness/28877.aspx>.

Iain Gray (East Lothian) (Scottish Labour): To ask the Scottish Government, further to the reported comment by the First Minister in *The Sunday Post* on 4 August 2013 that "the way to deal with [European pensions regulations] is to get a derogation so nobody is forced into a more accelerated settlement of the pension deficit", what form of derogation it would seek.

(S4W-16638)

John Swinney: I refer the member to the answer to question S4W-16616 on 2 September 2013 All answers to written parliamentary questions are available on the Parliament's website, the search facility for which can be found at:

<http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/parliamentarybusiness/28877.aspx>.

Iain Gray (East Lothian) (Scottish Labour): To ask the Scottish Government what discussions it has had with the European Commission regarding an opt-out from pensions regulations for an independent Scotland.

(S4W-16639)

John Swinney: I refer the member to the answer to question S4W-16616 on 2 September 2013. All answers to written parliamentary questions are available on the Parliament's website, the search facility for which can be found at:

<http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/parliamentarybusiness/28877.aspx>.

Iain Gray (East Lothian) (Scottish Labour): To ask the Scottish Government, further to the reported comment by the First Minister in *The Sunday Post* on 4 August 2013 that "the way to deal with [European pensions regulations] is to get a derogation so nobody is forced into a more accelerated settlement of the pension deficit and secondly, an option of splitting the schemes between Scotland and the rest of the UK", whether it can rule out the possibility of breaking up pension schemes

(S4W-16640)

John Swinney: I refer the member to the answer to question S4W-16616 on 2 September 2013. All answers to written parliamentary questions are available on the Parliament's website, the search facility for which can be found at:

<http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/parliamentarybusiness/28877.aspx>.

Iain Gray (East Lothian) (Scottish Labour): To ask the Scottish Government, further to the reported comment by the First Minister in *The Sunday Post* on 4 August 2013 regarding EU pension

regulations, what its position is on an independent Scotland (a) opting-out of such regulations, (b) breaking up cross-border schemes and (c) any other options in relation to these.

(S4W-16641)

John Swinney: I refer the member to the answer to question S4W-16616 on 2 September 2013. All answers to written parliamentary questions are available on the Parliament's website, the search facility for which can be found at:

<http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/parliamentarybusiness/28877.aspx>.

Gavin Brown (Lothian) (Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party): To ask the Scottish Government how much it awarded for oil and gas innovation in 2012-13.

Holding answer issued: 23 August 2013

(S4W-16524)

John Swinney: Scottish Enterprise awarded grant funding totalling £ 2,726,604.93 to oil and gas research and development innovation projects in the operational year 1 April 2012 to 31 March 2013.

Highlands and Islands Enterprise does not have a specific measure for oil and gas innovation. However, 2012-13 investment in businesses that generate a significant proportion of their turnover from oil and gas activity totalled £5,963,340.00.

Governance and Communities

Jackie Baillie (Dumbarton) (Scottish Labour): To ask the Scottish Government how much funding it has provided to (a) local authorities, (b) housing associations and (c) others in relation to rough sleeping in each year since 2007-08.

(S4W-16681)

Margaret Burgess: The Scottish Government has not provided local authorities, housing associations or other bodies with specific, ring-fenced funding related to rough sleeping since 2007-08. Local authorities determine what they allocate to homelessness services from their share of the local government settlement. This may include services to people who sleep rough. Since 2007-08, over £2.1 billion has been provided to housing associations to develop homes for social rent, to help satisfy local housing need and demand.

A range of Scottish Government funds including the Housing Voluntary Sector Grants scheme; People and Communities Fund; and the Hostels Deficit Grant all support activity assisting the prevention of homelessness. To support homelessness prevention directly, we have committed £300,000 to fund local authority led housing options hubs over the next two financial years. Since 2010, £650,000 in total has been provided for this purpose.

Learning and Justice

Hugh Henry (Renfrewshire South) (Scottish Labour): To ask the Scottish Government how many closure notices have been (a) applied for and (b) enforced in each accounting period since January 2007.

(S4W-16590)

Kenny MacAskill: In March 2009, the Scottish Government and COSLA jointly published their framework for tackling antisocial behaviour, *Promoting Positive Outcomes: Working Together to Prevent Antisocial Behaviour in Scotland*. Our emphasis since then has been to address the causes of antisocial behaviour, such as drink, drugs and deprivation, and not just the symptoms.

The number of closure notices authorised under section 26 of the Antisocial Behaviour etc (Scotland) Act 2004 is not held centrally. An analysis of the use of the powers provided for in the 2004 Act up to March 2008, which includes statistical information in relation to the closure of premises provisions, can be found on the Scottish Government's website at:

www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Justice/public-safety/17141/practitioners/Commsafetypublications.

Hugh Henry (Renfrewshire South) (Scottish Labour): To ask the Scottish Government how many closure notices have been (a) applied for and (b) enforced in 2013.

(S4W-16591)

Kenny MacAskill: I refer the member to the answer to question S4W-16590 on 3 September 2013. All answers to written parliamentary questions are available on the Parliament's website, the search facility for which can be found at:

<http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/parliamentarybusiness/28877.aspx>.

Liam McArthur (Orkney Islands) (Scottish Liberal Democrats): To ask the Scottish Government whether there are part-time wildlife crime liaison officers based in (a) Orkney and (b) Shetland.

(S4W-16598)

Kenny MacAskill: The Scottish Government does not hold this information. The deployment of wildlife crime liaison officers within Police Scotland is a matter for the chief constable.

Any operational officers within Police Scotland can deal with wildlife crime. In addition, 109 officers specialise in wildlife crime. The Scottish Government is aware that each division in Police Scotland has a wildlife crime liaison officer (WCLO). There are currently five full-time WCLOs and nine part-time WCLO posts across Scotland. In addition, a full-time wildlife crime coordinator is based in the specialist crime division.

Liam McArthur (Orkney Islands) (Scottish Liberal Democrats): To ask the Scottish Government how many wildlife crime cases there have been in the former Northern Constabulary area over the last five years and whether it considers this workload sufficient to base a full-time wildlife crime officer in this police division.

(S4W-16599)

Kenny MacAskill: Figures held by the Scottish Government show that from 2007 to 2012, there were 298 wildlife crime cases in the former Northern Constabulary area. The deployment of wildlife crime officers within Police Scotland is an operational matter for the Chief Constable.

Liam McArthur (Orkney Islands) (Scottish Liberal Democrats): To ask the Scottish Government, further to the answer to question S4W-15816 by Kenny MacAskill on 25 July 2013, whether it will provide a breakdown of the (a) full-time and (b) part-time wildlife crime liaison officers by local policing area.

(S4W-16679)

Kenny MacAskill: The Scottish Government does not hold this information. The deployment of wildlife crime liaison officers within Police Scotland is an operational matter for the Chief Constable.

Strategy and External Affairs

John Scott (Ayr) (Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party): To ask the Scottish Government how much of the reported £104,600 that was fraudulently spent on Creative Scotland's corporate credit card has been recovered and what steps are being taken to (a) recover the remaining money and (b) identify those who were involved.

(S4W-16715)

Fiona Hyslop: I have asked Janet Archer, Chief Executive of Creative Scotland, the national organisation for Scotland's arts, screen and creative industries, to write to the member. Further information about Creative Scotland's activities is available at:

<http://www.creativescotland.com/>.

John Scott (Ayr) (Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party): To ask the Scottish Government, in light of the reported £104,600 that was fraudulently spent on Creative Scotland's corporate credit card, what changes have been made to security and staff training to ensure that this is not repeated.

(S4W-16716)

Fiona Hyslop: I have asked Janet Archer, Chief Executive of Creative Scotland, the national organisation for Scotland's arts, screen and creative industries, to write to the member. Further information about Creative Scotland's activities is available at:
<http://www.creativescotland.com/>.

John Scott (Ayr) (Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party): To ask the Scottish Government, in light of the reported £104,600 that was fraudulently spent on Creative Scotland's corporate credit card and recent reports criticising the running and the management of the organisation, what steps it is taking to protect the profile of Creative Scotland.

(S4W-16717)

Fiona Hyslop: The incident of fraud on Creative Scotland's corporate credit card to which you refer, involved transactions which occurred in 2010 and 2011.

Sound management of public resources is a top priority for Scottish Ministers. Creative Scotland takes seriously the requirement to mitigate the risk of fraud in all its operations. Ministers are reassured that Creative Scotland has now introduced a robust financial monitoring and internal audit regime to minimise the risks of a similar incident occurring.

Transport Scotland

James Kelly (Rutherglen) (Scottish Labour): To ask the Scottish Government how many (a) ScotRail and (b) Scottish Water staff are employed on so-called zero-hour contracts.

(S4W-16622)

Keith Brown: No staff are employed by ScotRail or Scottish Water on so-called zero-hour contracts.

Anne McTaggart (Glasgow) (Scottish Labour): To ask the Scottish Government what its position is regarding the feasibility of the construction of a road bridge linking Scotland with Northern Ireland.

(S4W-16740)

Keith Brown: We have no plans to consider the feasibility of the construction of a road bridge linking Scotland with Northern Ireland.

However, we recognise the importance of providing good passenger and freight links between Scotland and Northern Ireland via the Loch Ryan Port facilities. In this context, £26 million is currently being invested in the A75 with £9 million being spent on the Hardgrove to Kinmount scheme and £17.3 million on the Dunragit Bypass. Over £44 million is also being spent on the A77, including the Symington to Bogend Toll Improvements scheme and the Maybole Bypass. All these schemes will improve journey time reliability on these key strategic routes.