

Scottish Parliament

Written Answers

27 July 2020

Willie Rennie (North East Fife) (Scottish Liberal Democrats): To ask the Scottish Government, further to the answer to question S5F-03404 by Nicola Sturgeon on 9 May 2019, in light of the First Minister's comments regarding the Scottish Government's position about the proposed expansion of Heathrow Airport and that the Scottish will "look at all our policies across all areas of [its] responsibility through that new lens of climate change" (Official Report, c.18), when this work in relation to Heathrow Airport expansion (a) began and (b) concluded, and whether it will publish the findings.

S5W-30433

Willie Rennie (North East Fife) (Scottish Liberal Democrats): To ask the Scottish Government, further to the answer to question S5F-03817 by Nicola Sturgeon on 9 January 2020, (Official Report, c.18), when it will conclude the review of its position on the proposed expansion of Heathrow Airport; whether it will place a copy of its conclusions and all supporting documents in the Scottish Parliament Information Centre (SPICe), and whether there is a requirement for the result of the review to be announced in the updated climate change plan.

S5W-30434

Michael Matheson: Routes between Scotland and global hubs like Heathrow and Amsterdam are essential for Scotland's international connectivity, supporting economic growth in Scotland and helping us deliver our Trade and Investment Strategy. We recognise the need to reduce emissions from all forms of transport and the forthcoming update to our 2018 Climate Change Plan will set out how we will achieve that.

Willie Rennie (North East Fife) (Scottish Liberal Democrats): To ask the Scottish Government, further to the answer to question S5W-26605 by Michael Matheson on 20 December 2019, whether it remains committed the memorandum of understanding that it signed with Heathrow Airport, and what consideration it has given to withdrawing from it.

S5W-30436

Michael Matheson: Yes, we remain committed to the memorandum of understanding between the Scottish Government and Heathrow. We are clear that expansion of the UK's only global hub airport should deliver benefits for all the nations of the UK. Routes between Scotland and global hubs like Heathrow and Amsterdam are essential for Scotland's international connectivity, supporting

economic growth in Scotland and helping us deliver our Trade and Investment Strategy. As these reasons remain valid we have not considered withdrawing from the memorandum of understanding.

Willie Rennie (North East Fife) (Scottish Liberal Democrats): To ask the Scottish Government what meetings and correspondence it has had with Heathrow Airport since signing a memorandum of understanding in 2016, and whether it will place copies of this in the Scottish Parliament Information Centre (SPICe).

S5W-30438

Michael Matheson: I refer the member to the answer to question S5W-17111 on 21 June 2018. All answers to written parliamentary questions are available on the Parliament's website, the search facility for which can be found at <http://www.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/28877.aspx>.

Willie Rennie (North East Fife) (Scottish Liberal Democrats): To ask the Scottish Government, further to the statement by the Cabinet Secretary for Environment, Climate Change and Land Reform on 16 June 2020 regarding the greenhouse gas emissions statistics and confirming that the 2018 emissions target was not met (Official Report, c, 17), what assessment it has made of how extra flights arising from an expansion of Heathrow Airport could impact on its ability to achieve its targets.

S5W-30440

Willie Rennie (North East Fife) (Scottish Liberal Democrats): To ask the Scottish Government, in light of the information provided in FOI/19/02661 on 10 January 2020, which suggested that an expansion of Heathrow Airport could lead to an additional 75,000 flights to Scotland's airports over 15 years that would produce 600,000 additional tonnes in emissions, whether it considers that its position on any expansion is compatible with its declaration of a climate emergency.

S5W-30445

Michael Matheson: Routes from Scotland to global hubs like Heathrow and Amsterdam are essential for Scotland's international connectivity, supporting economic growth in Scotland and helping us deliver our Trade and Investment Strategy. However, we recognise that more needs to be done to reduce emissions. The Scottish Government's forthcoming update to our 2018 Climate Change Plan, recast as part of a green recovery from COVID-19, will set out a pathway to meeting Scotland's economy-wide greenhouse emissions reduction targets over the period to 2032. This includes plans to create the world's first zero emission aviation region and trial low and zero emission aircraft in Scotland. The actual number of flights operating between Scotland and Heathrow in the future will be

determined by capacity, demand, and competition from airlines serving other global hubs.

Willie Rennie (North East Fife) (Scottish Liberal Democrats): To ask the Scottish Government, further to the answer to question S5F-00381 by Nicola Sturgeon on 27 October 2016 (Official Report, c 16), in light of the First Minister's comment regarding then proposed expansion to Heathrow Airport n that "the UK Government will have to answer questions [about climate change and emissions] and satisfy people with its answers to those questions" what analysis it has carried out of whether the UK ministers achieved this.

S5W-30442

Michael Matheson: It is for the UK Parliament to hold the UK Government to account.

Willie Rennie (North East Fife) (Scottish Liberal Democrats): To ask the Scottish Government, further to the publication of FOI/19/02661 on 10 January 2020, what the basis was for it forecasting "improvements to aircraft emissions efficiency of 0.8% per year".

S5W-30446

Michael Matheson: This was based on the Climate Change Committee's report "Meeting the UK aviation target - options for reducing emissions to 2050" which estimated that the combination of aircraft, Air Traffic Management and operational efficiency improvements could result in a range for annual improvement in fleet fuel efficiency from 0.8-1.5% per seat-km between 2005 and 2050.

30 July 2020

Willie Rennie (North East Fife) (Scottish Liberal Democrats): To ask the Scottish Government, further to the statement on 5 February 2020 by the Cabinet Secretary for Transport, Infrastructure and Connectivity on 5 February 2020 regarding its transport strategy (Official Report, c.19), in light of the potential impact on its greenhouse gas emissions targets of any decision reached by the UK Parliament, whether it had any discussions with the SNP group at the UK Parliament regarding an unselected Liberal Democrat amendment to a motion that was scheduled to be debated in the House of Commons that evening, which referred to "cancelling the proposed third runway at Heathrow Airport" and whether it discussed with the group how its MPs should vote in the debate.

S5W-30444

Michael Matheson: The decision to support Heathrow airport's expansion was one for the Westminster Government and Parliament.

Willie Rennie (North East Fife) (Scottish Liberal Democrats): To ask the Scottish Government, further to the answer to question S5O-04248 by Fergus Ewing on 11 March 2020 (Official Report, c.28) for what reason the cabinet secretary did not refer to the review of its position on the proposed expansion to Heathrow Airport in his response.

S5W-30437

Fergus Ewing: The question did not ask about the Scottish Government's position on Heathrow.

Willie Rennie (North East Fife) (Scottish Liberal Democrats): To ask the Scottish Government, further to the answer to question S5F-03817 by Nicola Sturgeon on 9 January 2020, (Official Report, c 18) and S5F-03986 on 27 February 2020 (Official Report, c. 20), in light of the First Minister's comment in both responses that when the proposed expansion of Heathrow Airport was last debated in the House of Commons SNP MPs "did not vote for it" and the potential impact on its greenhouse gas emissions targets of any decision reached by the UK Parliament, what discussions it had with the SNP parliamentary group ahead of that debate and what its response is to the comment made in it by the leader of the SNP group that "100 flights...it is simply not enough" and its transport spokesperson that "I have spoken in favour of expansion before. The Scottish Government have also spoken in favour of it - that is why they have signed a memorandum of understanding...we are just looking for protections and deliverability".

S5W-30439

Michael Matheson: The decision to support Heathrow airport's expansion was one for the Westminster Government and Parliament.

5 August 2020

Willie Rennie (North East Fife) (Scottish Liberal Democrats): To ask the Scottish Government what account it took of its commitments under the Paris climate change agreement prior to signing its memorandum of understanding (MoU) with Heathrow Airport in 2016 and, in light of the ruling by the Court of Appeal on 27 February 2020 that the UK Government had failed to carry out an assessment of its environmental commitments under the agreement with regard to the proposed expansion of the airport, what its position is on the validity of MoU.

Michael Matheson: Our approach to appraising transport investment in Scotland quantifies the potential impact of projects on the environment. It is for the UK Government to do the same for transport investments in England.

The Court of Appeal ruling has no bearing on the validity of the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU). Various sections of the MoU have already been delivered and others will be realised during the construction phase and after Heathrow has been expanded. The MoU ensures Scotland will benefit from this major infrastructure project which will bring significant job creation and investment opportunities to Scotland.

Willie Rennie (North East Fife) (Scottish Liberal Democrats): To ask the Scottish Government, further to the answer to question S5F-00381 by Nicola Sturgeon on 27 October 2016 (Official Report, c 16), in light of the First Minister's comment that "the Scottish Government has shown global leadership by including domestic and international aviation in our emissions reduction targets", what action it has taken to reduced emissions in each of the last four years, also broken down by its performance in meeting each emissions reduction target

S5W-30443

Michael Matheson: Over the four most recent years for which greenhouse gas emissions data is available (2015 to 2018), Scotland's total emissions fell by 10%. Over this same period, emissions from aviation (both domestic and international) rose by 11% reflecting the positive growth in our international connectivity over this time. Scotland's statutory emissions reduction targets are set at the level of the economy as a whole, reflecting the importance of a joined up approach that supports the delivery of overall reductions. The annual emissions targets for 2015 and 2016 were met, but those for 2017 and 2018 were missed.

The update to our Climate Change Plan, recast as part of a green recovery from COVID-19, will set out a pathway towards meeting Scotland's economy-wide emissions reduction targets out to 2032 and which also makes up for the excess emissions arising from the missed annual targets in 2017 and 2018. An example of a policy towards meeting these targets is our plan to create the world's first zero emission aviation region and trial low and zero emission aircraft in Scotland.

Transport Scotland

Willie Rennie (North East Fife) (Scottish Liberal Democrats): To ask the Scottish Government, in light of the potential impact on its greenhouse gas

emissions targets, what its position is on whether the number of short-haul flights across the UK should be increased.

S5W-30447

Michael Matheson: Scotland's air connectivity with the rest of the UK is important to business and tourism, particularly where surface alternatives are not conducive to day trips for business such as Inverness-London or Edinburgh-Southampton. The collapse of Flybe followed by the COVID 19 pandemic has had a negative impact on our domestic connectivity. We also recognise that some domestic routes, particularly between Scotland and Heathrow serve a dual purpose of providing point to point capacity and options to connect to the rest of the world. Short haul routes are therefore an important part of our overall transport infrastructure

We believe that in the future many of these journeys will be done by low and zero-emission aircraft, and we are working to ensure that these new types of aircraft will be trialled in Scotland.