

Scottish Affairs Committee

Oral evidence: [Immigration in Scotland](#), HC 488

Tuesday 20 February 2018, Fife

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Members present: Pete Wishart (Chair); Deidre Brock; Tommy Sheppard.

Questions 384-471

Witnesses

[I](#): Maciej Dokurno, Fife Migrants Forum, Margarita Permomaite, Fife Migrants Forum, and Saphia Clough, Fife Migrants Forum.

[II](#): Jonnie Hall, Director of Policy and Member Services, National Farmers Union, Scotland.

[III](#): Lorraine Cook, Policy Manager, Migration, Population and Diversity Team, Convention of Scottish Local Authorities, and Carroll Buxton, Regional Development Director, Highlands and Islands Enterprise.

Written evidence from witnesses:

- [Highlands and Islands Enterprise](#)
- [NFU Scotland](#)



Examination of witnesses

Witnesses: Maciej Dokurno, Margarita Permomaite, and Saphia Clough.

Q384 **Chair:** Thank you very much for coming along this morning. This is the Scottish Affairs Committee. This is part of our inquiry into immigration in Scotland, and we are very, very grateful to New Volunteer House, Kirkcaldy, for hosting us today and being so helpful. They have put all this gear in so that this could be recorded, which it is and which will be available online for people to review and to watch. Again, I'm pretty certain you all will want to do that but can I thank you all for coming along this morning? This is the official proceedings of a House of Commons Select Committee, so I would ask if people could listen and not participate. That would be very helpful.

To get things started, we will go immediately to our guests this morning and perhaps, just for the Committee, could you tell us who you are, which organisation you represent and tell us a little bit about your own experiences of coming to Scotland. We will start with you, Margarita.

Margarita Permomaite: I am Margarita Permomaite. I came from Lithuania and have been living in Scotland since 2004. I was a volunteer for Fife Migrants Forum, and I also work there. At the moment I am taking an internship with them from the University of Dundee, where I am doing a Masters degree in social research methods. It is my second Masters degree, so this is me.

Q385 **Chair:** Thank you ever so much for that. I will let you pronounce your name properly so I don't get that wrong. Is it Maciej?

Maciej Dokurno: Yes. My name is Maciej Dokurno. I originally come from Poland. I came to Scotland back in 2003 and I have lived here ever since. I live in Leven in Fife with my wife and son, who was born here. In my professional life, I work for a local authority. However, I am here in my voluntary capacity as the chairperson of Fife Migrants Forum, and I will be speaking about my own and some of our clients' experience while here. Thank you.

Q386 **Chair:** I am grateful; thank you for that. Saphia?

Saphia Clough: Hello, my name is Saphia Clough. I came to Scotland in 2012. I am married to a British citizen, so I have studied higher English in 2015. After that I just had my little ones, so I am spending the time with them but I have decided again to go back to studying and doing voluntary. I am starting volunteering with Fife Migrants Forum as well, with Arabic speakers and the French as well.

Q387 **Chair:** Thank you. I think that is about the youngest person we have ever had give evidence to this Committee, so thank you for bringing her along this morning. Perhaps just to get things started, could you tell us



HOUSE OF COMMONS

how you came to choose Scotland as a place to stay and how you have found your experience of being here since you have arrived? We will start with you with that one, Saphia, if that is okay.

Saphia Clough: For me, to be honest, Scotland—and, I would say, the UK in general—is a different world compared to Morocco. Everything is different, so I found it hard the first time when I came here to integrate with the society, maybe just language-wise and also how to get on with everything, but after that I had to go and learn English through ESOL, going for ESOL classes and then, knowing people, I started to socialise, and that helped me so much to integrate with Scottish society.

Maciej Dokurno: I did not come here for economic reasons, and I came here a year before the European Union. But I had been coming to Scotland for shorter periods of time long before I actually ended up coming over and settling in Scotland. The reason for that was that I already had familial links. Obviously the history of links between the two countries, Scotland and Poland, goes back centuries. My uncle came to Scotland during the war with the Polish Navy, and then he became part of the Royal Navy special boat service, so this was the familial link that I already had in Scotland.

We had been coming here for holidays, and people were just so nice and welcoming always. My wife and I just thought that, although we absolutely love the place where we originally come from in Poland, we didn't want to spend our entire lives in one place and, now that the iron curtain was gone, we wanted to go and explore and try living somewhere else and we just loved it here so much that we stayed.

Margarita Permomaite: When I first came to Scotland, I just came on a temporary visa and I thought, "Now I will improve my pronunciation and I will go back to Lithuania." That was my initial plan, but then I fell in love with the place, with the country, with the people. At first it was very difficult for me because I couldn't speak a word of English. I had not studied English in Lithuania, just German and Russian at school and university. Therefore, in order to be able to live here, and because I wanted to go to university, I had to learn English, so I began learning English independently and I did enrol in English ESOL higher with Fife College.

Life went on and I met my husband, who is Kurdish-British now. We went through all the legal migration procedures in order to get British citizenship, which wasn't very easy, so I learned the language, I studied here and Scotland became my home.

Q388 **Chair:** I am grateful for that. Just generally, have you found employment opportunities quite readily available since you have come to Scotland, and have you managed to secure the type of career profession trajectory that you had imagined that you would secure when you came here, Maciej?



HOUSE OF COMMONS

Maciej Dokurno: When I first came here it was a year before Poland joined the European Union, so I came here to study and I completed my diploma in public service interpreting. The work choices at the time, because of the immigration restrictions, were very limited for me. I remember, when I applied for a job with the local authority then, it was 20 hours and one quarter.

At that time, as a student, I was eligible to work 20 hours per week. I went to the interview. I was successful at the interview. I was offered the job. I was really happy at the time, and then I was contacted and told that unfortunately the offer had to be withdrawn because that post was more than the 20 hours that I was allowed to work. I said, "Yes, I know, it is 20 hours and a quarter, so would it not be possible to make it 20 hours and I will work that quarter voluntarily over a period of a week?" That basically meant five minutes longer every day. This wasn't possible, so I learned the hard way about the strict immigration criteria there, because what could have been the start of a more professional career at the time was not available for me. I could only do 20 hours a week until such time as Poland joined the European Union and therefore some of the mainstream job opportunities that were over 20 hours were not available to me.

Q389 **Chair:** How long have you been in Scotland? You say you came here before the accession, so that would be—

Maciej Dokurno: I have been in Scotland since April 2003, so I was here just over one year before Poland joined the EU.

Chair: Accession was 2004 or 2005?

Maciej Dokurno: 2004.

Q390 **Chair:** Thank you. Margarita.

Margarita Permomaite: I found that employers actually had very limited knowledge about what to do with EU migrants and how to deal with them. I remember when I wanted to apply for an EU residence card—the temporary one and then the permanent one from the Home Office—I did not have the right documents because the employer didn't say anything and didn't let me know that I needed to get registered with the Home Office. Because of that, I lost about three years of employment because I had not been registered with the Home Office. Some years later I reapplied again with the right documents, but that registration was abolished I think in 2011.

Saphia Clough: I am still keen to study and also do my volunteering, and then I would love to look for an employment opportunity in future. I am focusing now more on building my career and then I will get the job that I would love to get involved with. Yes, for now.

Q391 **Chair:** Thank you for that. In the course of this inquiry we are finding that there are parts of Scotland that are facing depopulation, particularly



HOUSE OF COMMONS

in some of the rural areas. You are obviously part of the community here in Fife. Are there any issues that you have detected in particular parts of Scotland that people from outwith Scotland have settled in, and is there more we could do to encourage people to look at relocating and working in some of the rural areas that are facing this depopulation? Maciej, we will come to you with that.

Maciej Dokurno: Certainly here in Fife we are a combination of rural and non-rural areas. The experience within the Fife Migrants Forum has been that there has been great contribution and input from the migrant community that supports those rural areas. Some of the less populated areas of Fife are often also very wealthy areas of Fife, therefore farmers there find it very difficult to find people willing to work in the agricultural sector, for example, or whether it is the agricultural or the hospitality sector. Certainly, in terms of Fife, there has been a very positive impact with people coming over.

Also, from my experience of travelling around Scotland and linking up with other parts of the migrant community, I have noticed personally a big influx of migrants up in the north of Scotland, again in the areas that have traditionally struggled in terms of demographics, population and simply labour for industries like agriculture and fish processing, for example.

Q392 **Chair:** Why Fife, why did you choose Fife to come to? I am a west Fifer, so I know the obvious attractions of this part of the world but maybe you could tell us about the way that you found yourself here, Margarita.

Margarita Permomaite: To be honest, it just happened by chance. First, I came here in 2004 because I knew someone who helped me to get a job in a local company, a factory job, so this is where everything began. Then I moved to Dundee and I am kind of back to Fife—but also Dundee, because I study in the University of Dundee now. I think it is just that where you live becomes your home and I cannot see myself living in other parts of Scotland. It should be somewhere in Fife or around Fife, because this is where I consider myself at home. I have travelled all over Scotland—and around England—and to all the islands of Scotland, Orkney, Lewis, Harris, the Shetlands, but still I consider central Scotland as my home.

Saphia Clough: I first came to Dunfermline because my husband is from Dunfermline. He's a Fifer. He likes it the way it is, but I love Fife so much because it is quiet. It is not as busy as the big cities. Because I am from Casablanca, and it is a huge city, with a big population and so on, so it is a big difference for me, but I really like it and I don't think I would go back to live in a city or even go outside of Scotland. Scotland is my second home now and my children were born here and now it is part of me. I am Moroccan, plus I am Scottish and British as well, which I am proud of, of course.

Q393 **Chair:** That brings me on to my last question in this opening of the



session. Is Scotland now going to be your permanent home? Do you have ambitions to stay here and make a contribution to our economy and community? You are obviously already doing that but is it your intention to remain in Scotland?

Saphia Clough: For me, my children were born in Scotland—in Kirkcaldy, actually. I love it in Scotland. It is my second home, as I said, after Morocco, so it has taken a big part of me as well. Scotland is a lovely country, and there is also the people of Scotland. The Scottish people—a big history—are welcoming other people from other countries, wherever they come from or their background, their religion and so on. This is what I like the most about Scotland and the Scottish people.

Margarita Permomaite: Yes, I consider Scotland as my home and I am planning on staying here. Lithuania has become like my second home now. I travel there once a year—actually, I don't have a great passion for going there; it's because of my relatives. When I come back from abroad, from Spain or from a holiday somewhere, and the aeroplane lands, I feel, "Oh, welcome back home." This is how I feel—that I've come back home—so yes, Scotland is my home.

Maciej Dokurno: Scotland is definitely my home and my family home now. I always give the example of my nine year-old son, who was born here in Kirkcaldy, who lives here in Fife, who speaks local Fife as his first language. He still speaks fluent Polish, but Polish is his heritage language. Fife is his local language and Poland is only a holiday destination for him. We try to go to Poland every year for one or two weeks.

Whenever we hear conversations and disputes about Brexit, it makes my son quite worried. Some discussions that suggest that people may have to go back to where they came from mean for him that he would go to a totally alien country for him—somewhere that he only knows as a holiday destination, somewhere where he spends a week or two weeks every year, somewhere where he does not even know the education system, somewhere where people speak the language that is not his first language. I think that is very important because this is the situation that refers to the majority of children of migrants here in the UK.

Chair: You mentioned the B word, which brings us on to a couple of questions from Deirdre Brock.

Q394 **Deidre Brock:** Yes, Brexit. Well, you have given a very comprehensive answer on your opinions of Brexit at the moment, but I wonder, Margarita, whether you can perhaps give us your views on your feelings about the whole Brexit situation at the moment and its effect on EU citizens in particular.

Margarita Permomaite: As far as I know, most EU citizens feel unsure of what to do. Friends told me that they don't feel welcome anymore in Scotland, because they are not sure about their future. They have their jobs here. They have their homes. Many of them have bought a home. Their children go to nurseries, to schools, and they cannot guarantee



HOUSE OF COMMONS

what is going to happen to them and their children, their families, their lives, to their jobs finally.

Q395 **Deidre Brock:** Maciej, is there anything you want to—

Maciej Dokurno: We are a bit luckier here in Scotland. Our friends are down south. I have been speaking to some of them. I was supposed to be in London today at a meeting of the Polish-British Belvedere Forum. I am in contact with some people and I know that they feel the pressure of Brexit more than we do here, predominantly because the tone of the political and public discourse there is very different to the way it is in Scotland. We are very lucky here in the way that the Scottish Government made it absolutely clear, from the very beginning, that all EU nationals can still treat Scotland as their home and are still very welcome here.

In fact, we had agreement I think across all mainstream political parties in the Scottish Parliament that people are welcome here. That whole discussion about immigration has been very positive, without scapegoating migrants, without that kind of negativity that we could see down south. Speaking to people, people obviously listen to the news, listen to the media, and sometimes it makes them worried. However, among their neighbours and other people the atmosphere is very positive. We did not see an increase in hate crime or examples of any incidents that we could see down south, so I very much think that this is thanks to the Scottish politicians who have been having this very positive discussion about the contribution of migrants and about immigration in general.

Q396 **Deidre Brock:** That is good to hear. Have you seen the agreement that was in the first phase of negotiations between the EU and the UK Government with regard to the future rights of EU citizens? I was interested to hear your thoughts on that.

Maciej Dokurno: Yes, I have seen it. However, I have also noticed small-print parts within that agreement that basically mean, if I understand it correctly, that until such time as it has all been sealed, we cannot be sure exactly what is going to be, so it is still very much up in the air.

Again, some elements of it talk about different registration schemes. I usually give the example of the worker registration scheme. We were part of the so-called A8 countries—so, they accessioned eight countries. At the same time, back in 2004, my wife and me, both in exactly the same circumstances at the time, following the worker registration scheme we both applied for a residence permit. She received her response and card several weeks after. I am still waiting for my response, over a decade later. I don't know what happened to my application. I have never heard back. I was lucky to receive my original documents back.



HOUSE OF COMMONS

My worry is that, with any scheme that requires us to register, there will always be instances where people's papers will be lost, or their cases will take longer than expected and so on. Anything that makes us feel different; I have experienced being here as a non-EU member and also being here as a member of the EU, and I can very much say it is a horrible feeling when you feel you are a second-class citizen. That is what it was like for me between 2003 and 2004, and it has been absolutely fantastic being able to feel equal with everybody else as part of our membership of the European Union.

Now I am particularly worried that again I will face being a second-class citizen, whatever form it may take. Whether it is the form of me having to apply and have my rights recognised in the form of any registration document, I don't know. I just feel obviously that means that I am going to be treated differently to everybody else, and I don't feel that is right. I don't know why I should be treated any different to neighbours that I have in my street or children that go to school with my son and so on.

Q397 Deidre Brock: Thank you very much, that is good to hear. Margarita, your thoughts on the negotiations?

Margarita Permomaite: I feel that people should be more informed: employers, educational institutions, social groups and individuals themselves because, when I said that migrants don't feel welcome any longer in Scotland, this is what they feel. This is what they told me because they don't have information. As you know, many of them do not speak English and are unable to understand what they hear on television or read the newspapers. Therefore, I feel they should be more informed, more approached and more precise directions should be given to them on what aspects and what pathway they should go and what procedure they should undertake, either to apply for documents that would help them to stay—

Q398 Deidre Brock: So, better information. Are there specific areas that you would like to see protected for EU citizens after Brexit? What are the specific things you would like that would make a difference to you?

Margarita Permomaite: The first would be employment—that employers should know what to do and how to treat EU citizens. From my personal experience, when I came to Scotland, basically they did not even know what registration was needed and what documents we had to have. Later I found out that I was employed illegally by a local company, so I don't know whether it was just lack of knowledge. I don't know. Then educational institutions, for example, concerns like funding of education, so students would know they are still eligible for funding, those who stay in Scotland three years and longer, or they should fund their studies by themselves.

Q399 Deidre Brock: Do any of you have experience of applying for your status to be recognised? I think, Saphia, you had experience of applying for settlement status, didn't you?



HOUSE OF COMMONS

Saphia Clough: Yes, the visas. I came here with a fiancée visa, but I was required to pass an English exam. That was in Morocco. I passed it and when I came here again I had to pass another English exam at that time to get my settlement, so I had a spouse visa of two years, then getting the settlement and then the British citizenship, and I had to pass Life in the UK as well. It is great to read about British and Scottish history. I didn't regret doing that. Also, studying English and passing the exams gave me a very good knowledge of the English language and helped me to learn the language as well. It may be hard to pass these exams, but at the end of the day, they are still very important to be part of this society here.

Q400 **Deidre Brock:** Is there any part of it that you think could have been improved a little bit?

Saphia Clough: Sorry?

Deidre Brock: Going through that process, was there anything you think could have been improved?

Saphia Clough: Yes, of course. As a person, that helped me to know more about the history of this country and also the people and how they are. I didn't know that you had so many doctors, professors and things that came from this country, especially Scotland as well—so many scientists and things that.

Q401 **Deidre Brock:** Was going through the process easy or difficult, applying and waiting for them to get back to you and so on?

Saphia Clough: Yes. It is not that easy, but I would say yes, it is okay. But I think it is harder now for people. They have to wait for five years to get residence in this country, so it is not as easy as I experienced it before, because I was in the load that they had in 2012. Now they have changed everything again for people to come and stay in this country.

Q402 **Deidre Brock:** Thank you. Maciej and Margarita, have you gone through that experience yourself, or do you know of people who have had that experience? Perhaps you can tell us a little bit about that.

Margarita Permomaite: Yes. When I wanted to obtain the EU residence card some years ago, I didn't know that if I am a job seeker or if I am a student, I should have private health insurance. This was quite a well known issue in the UK, because people weren't informed that they are not covered under the NHS if they want to get an EU residence card. This caused me to lose a couple of years in order to obtain the card. I simply wasn't eligible because I didn't have private health insurance.

Q403 **Deidre Brock:** So, better information again. Maciej?

Maciej Dokurno: What I remember from the time that I already mentioned, when my wife and myself applied for the residency card, was that, not only was the application lengthy and time consuming, but we had to attach so many payslips that it would not fit in the envelope



HOUSE OF COMMONS

actually. I wondered whether everybody always keeps their payslips for the length of time and years that they have worked. However, as I explained earlier, I have still not received not only the card, but even a response from the Home Office to my application 13 years later. So this is my concern when it comes to any process like this.

I am also aware now of growing numbers of Fife Migrants Forum clients—people that come for help to the forum—asking about applying for their residency permit in the light of Brexit. They are incapable of completing that almost 90-page long document. A lot of them are either coming to an organisation like the Forum for help or they are seeking help from private legal companies, which obviously charge a lot of money for it. That seems to be a process that is putting too many barriers in front of people, even those that can communicate well in English, because communicating well in English is different to completing a complicated legal form and attaching a book-length of documents to it.

Q404 Chair: I am very impressed by your written evidence to this Committee, where you list a number of concerns about the process that has been going on since the UK voted to leave the European Union, the main point being that you have received no direct communication from the Government about your status in the UK, what to expect and what is expected of you in the future. Is that still the case? Have you received anything from the Government about what is expected from you as European Union nationals, what your rights are, and what responsibilities and obligations you have?

Maciej Dokurno: No, I personally haven't received anything, neither me nor my wife. The only correspondence and the only updates I received through mail to my home address were from our MPs, who are trying to keep us up to date. It is more in terms of reassurance and making sure that we still feel welcome here, rather than any Government updates on what is happening.

Chair: Anything through? Nothing at all; thank you.

Q405 Tommy Sheppard: Good morning. Some of my questions have already been answered but, Maciej, you were saying you felt that the way in which the debate about migration had been discussed during Brexit was relatively positive when you were working there. What is the perception do you think that Brexit is creating among potential migrants from elsewhere, people who might want to do what you did? Do you think Brexit is making this a less attractive place to come?

Maciej Dokurno: Oh, definitely. That is what I think in the first place, and that is what we, as the Fife Migrants Forum, have evidence of—that is the second point. When they face coming here maybe with an uncertain future, people are not doing it. They would not want to be a second-class citizen. Nobody wants to be a second-class citizen. It is now almost 30 years since the Iron Curtain came down in central and eastern



HOUSE OF COMMONS

Europe. People now value their freedom and democracy and they definitely don't want to be second-class citizens. That is one point.

Another point is that we have already seen the decreasing value of the pound and, unfortunately for our economy, I can say that a lot of people have decided against coming here. That is the evidence that I am hearing from people over in Poland that I am speaking to, from reading Polish newspapers. That is just one of the nations that people were coming here from. Well, they decided it is simply not worth coming to an uncertain future, with the dropping value in the currency, when they can choose other countries in Europe, which will still be members of the European Union and which have a much more attractive value in their currency. Certainly, I have experienced—and we as the Fife Migrants Forum have experienced—people deciding not to come to Scotland, not to come to the UK, because of Brexit.

Q406 **Tommy Sheppard:** Margarita, do you agree with that?

Margarita Permomaite: I agree, and I also know that many Lithuanians have left the UK and gone back to Lithuania because they want to be sure they can call a country their home, so they basically decided to go back.

Q407 **Tommy Sheppard:** Saphia?

Saphia Clough: I really have no idea about how European people from outside the UK are dealing with Brexit. As someone who came from outside Europe, I have experienced the visas and I have to pass some kind of exams—English exams, Life in the UK and so on—to stay in this country. I think that it was harder for me as someone who came from outside Europe than for someone who came from Europe.

I think Brexit is a big challenge now for both sides: British people and also European people who come from outside the UK. I would say economically that is really affecting the British economy, and I can see now how the pound is going lower, and some people from outside the UK have decided to go back to their own countries or they do not have the opportunity to stay here in the UK as normal citizens.

Q408 **Tommy Sheppard:** Do you think after Brexit there should be a different system of governing migration to the UK from the European Union than there would be from the rest of the world? Do you think there is a case for legacy arrangements that treat European Union citizens a little bit differently?

Maciej Dokurno: Obviously, as the Fife Migrants Forum, we would like to see as open a system as possible of welcoming migrants to the UK from anywhere in the world. It is quite obvious that that absolutely makes sense for me, as an EU national and a great enthusiast of the whole concept of the European Union—to keep as much of the EU arrangements as possible post-Brexit. Personally, I don't think that Brexit is a good idea, so whatever we can keep as legacy I am sure will be good



HOUSE OF COMMONS

for the UK, but as I say, I also believe in the very positive impact of immigration on different countries.

I have studied immigration throughout history, from different continents to different continents, and I am very much for as open a system of immigration as possible. The one that we had in the European Union arrangement is a very good example of how good and effective that freedom of movement has been.

Margarita Permomaite: I would just add that I agree with Maciej's idea that the EU citizens should be—I don't know how to put it—treated more positively because of the UK's ties with the EU. EU nationals maybe would have—I don't know, if I can put it this way—more liberalised ways to come and stay or work in the UK.

Q409 **Chair:** I am grateful. You touched on this a little bit earlier in some of your responses to our questions, but what has it been like for you since the UK voted to leave the European Union? We all see the dramatic headlines about bargaining chips for EU nationals and the new arrangements for settlement rights. What has it personally been like for you when you observe all this going on, and do you have any real concerns or worries as we go forward as this is still relatively unresolved? We will start with you, Margarita.

Margarita Permomaite: Well, I am thinking about my future in terms of education because I would like to move on to a PhD to continue my studies. I am not sure how Brexit is going to have an impact on my future and on my studies—whether I will be eligible for any funding, or whether I will have to leave the UK and I will not be able to enter again; the status. When I apply for a PhD at universities, I am not sure what my future will look like in Scotland. This is what I feel.

Q410 **Chair:** I know you are not EU, Saphia, but has there been any impact on how you felt about living here in the UK?

Saphia Clough: Yes. That night we never slept. We just stayed awake looking at the results. I still remember the Prime Minister's speech in the morning after the results. It was a big shock hearing the UK now is going to be out of the European Union, but hopefully everything goes well for both sides: the EU citizens and also the British citizens. Hopefully, they are still one, because they still belong to one continent at the end of the day, so yes, hopefully the negotiations go well for both sides.

Maciej Dokurno: I feel that Brexit, for me and for EU citizens here, is like a double-edged sword. On one side we bear the negative effects of Brexit on EU citizens—we are worried about the uncertain future. We don't know what the arrangements are going to be for any future registration—how much this is likely to cost, how many barriers this may create, whether all local authorities, for example, will be interpreting the legislation in the same way. I know in the past, while we still had the A8 arrangement, that people in the same circumstances were treated



differently—in Dundee, for example, to Fife—because legislation was interpreted in different ways. There are all those worries that we as EU nationals have.

On the other side, I will also bear the negative effects that Brexit is having on all citizens of the UK in terms of the negative effect on the economy, so yes, I am very worried and I have been ever since the referendum.

Q411 **Chair:** Just lastly—we have only a couple of minutes left, so it will have to be short answers on this—one of the things that we are obviously examining and looking at is whether Scotland can design its own immigration system. I have heard a couple of encouraging remarks from some of you this morning about your experience in Scotland, which you have noted as being markedly different from the experience in the United Kingdom. We have looked at examples across the world, in Canada and Australia, for example, where subnational immigration policies are in place. Is that something that you—in particular, speaking to my EU friends—would welcome if Scotland was able to design its own policy that met the requirements of our EU nationals here in Scotland?

Margarita Permomaite: I think we would love to.

Maciej Dokurno: We have seen that discussion about immigration has been very different in Scotland in the first place, so yes, I would say very much so. Also, in terms of the key economic sectors where we as migrants work or used to work in Scotland, across agriculture, hospitality and tourism, we know that those sectors are very reliant on EU migrants' labour. Therefore, not just for the sake of those people coming to this country, but also for the sake of the Scottish economy, Scotland deserves and would be better off with a bespoke immigration system that addresses Scotland's needs in terms of immigration, in relation to the economy and in relation to the still decreasing Scottish population.

Chair: I am grateful. Thank you ever so much for that. That was really helpful. If there is anything else that you observe during the course of this inquiry, please get in touch with the Committee again. We will gratefully receive any further written contributions, but we are very grateful to you for coming along this morning. Thank you, and thank you for your little girl. We just about got there, didn't we, which is great. As long as a biscuit appeared, we seemed to manage to get to a satisfactory place, but thank you all for coming this morning.

Examination of witness

Witness: Jonnie Hall.

Q412 **Chair:** Mr Hall, good morning to you and thank you for coming in this morning. If you could just tell us who you are, who you represent and anything by way of a short introductory statement.



HOUSE OF COMMONS

Jonnie Hall: Good morning. My name is Jonnie Hall. I am the Director of Policy and Member Services with the National Farmers Union Scotland. By way of an introductory comment, from the outset the union, NFU Scotland—and indeed the whole of the agricultural industry, I would say—has been very concerned about the potential implications of Brexit. We obviously also have been very keen to look at new opportunities that might arise, in terms of new trade and so on, but there are three fundamental components that we have been working on continuously for the last—well, it is longer than 18 months now; 20 months, I guess—in terms of, first of all, trade and the new trading arrangements that we will find ourselves with in a post-Brexit era.

The second thing is the labour requirements—I guess that is going to be the main focus of our discussion this morning, but clearly non-UK, both from the EU and beyond the EU labour, is critical to UK and Scottish agriculture and, indeed, the food and drink sectors of the UK economy—and the final thing is agricultural support. I am assuming that much of the discussion we will now have will focus on the second of those three elements.

Q413 **Chair:** It most certainly will. Thank you for that; it is very concise and helpful. Just on the labour requirements, could you start to tell us the dependency that Scottish agriculture has on EU nationals to supply them with the labour that they need?

Jonnie Hall: I will try to paint a picture. Scottish agriculture is extremely diverse, as you know, because that is driven by our very diverse landscape. In the west and in the north in particular—I am generalising—we have very extensive farming systems based around hill cattle and hill sheep. Moving further south and east, you obviously move into more productive agricultural land, where you have grain growing, beef production, dairying, and into the vegetables and cereal sectors and into soft fruits and so on, and potatoes in particular. We also have a pig and poultry sector, which is up and down the east coast as well.

In particular, it is arguably the more intensive, more productive elements of Scottish agriculture, particularly in the soft fruits and the vegetable producing areas—we are in a particular area of that sort right now, in Fife and up into Angus, Tayside and so on—where seasonal agricultural workers are absolutely critical to the viability of those agricultural businesses. Those agricultural businesses are relatively small in number compared to the mainstream agriculture that we have in Scotland, but nevertheless, they are very productive and very important to the Scottish economy as a whole.

However, it is not just about on-farm agricultural labour. It is also about the off-farm, in terms of the labour that comes from the EU and beyond to help in our processing sectors, particularly in the red meat processing sector, and also the hauliers, vets and so on—all sorts of other service elements that are vital to underpinning the agricultural industry and the food processing industry of Scotland.



HOUSE OF COMMONS

We have to remember that agriculture and food and drink in Scotland is a rapidly growing sector of the economy. The food and drink sector has an ambition to grow from its current turnover of £14.5 billion to £30 billion by 2030. That is a Scottish Government target. As an agricultural industry, we are very much part of that, providing the raw material, the primary product. But that will come to nothing unless we have the skills and the competency of a motivated workforce, both on-farm and off-farm.

Q414 Chair: You seem to describe the areas of Scotland as divided into the productive areas and the less—the more hill farming areas—and we will describe it as such. Does that mean that Scotland is therefore a bit different from the rest of the United Kingdom when it comes to a dependency upon EU national labour?

Jonnie Hall: To a degree, yes. I think there are parallels with certain other parts of the UK, in terms of the vegetable producing areas and so on. Nevertheless, the UK agricultural profile is different from the Scottish agricultural profile, in the sense that we have more less favoured areas, as they are known. We have a greater dependency on support from the common agricultural policy than perhaps the UK as a whole and therefore we are probably in a more vulnerable place as an agricultural economy and a food-producing economy, because we will rely probably more heavily on the right sort of trade deals.

Food and drink is far more important to the Scottish economy than it is to the entire UK economy, I would argue. In particular, when we are looking at the labour issues—and I stress the point—it is about non-UK labour. It is not just from the EU, but it is non-EU as well. I think there are particular high-value sectors of the Scottish agricultural economy—

Q415 Chair: Just on that, before we lose our point—because it is what I was going to come to next: the portion of non-EU labour that is on Scottish agricultural farms and agricultural businesses—could you help us by maybe giving a picture of what the balance is between EU and non-EU who work on our farms?

Jonnie Hall: The balance is very difficult to pin down with any hard evidence. The balance is still very much a predominance of EU seasonal workers and EU permanent workers within Scottish agriculture and the food and drink sector. Nevertheless, there is a significant number of non-EU. I suspect, if we move to a situation whereby we don't have the free movement of people—as we currently enjoy as being part of the single market—then the ability to retain the number of folk that we attract from the EU would become harder and harder. Those points were made very clearly by the first panel. The gentleman sitting where I am right now made it very, very clear, and I could not agree more with him, in terms of the attractiveness right now of wanting to come to the UK and to come to Scotland to work. Obviously there is a cultural dimension and social—
[Interruption.]



HOUSE OF COMMONS

Chair: All right. We will just take a break for a fire alarm.

Sitting suspended.

On resuming—

Q416 **Chair:** Thank you for your patience, Mr Hall. Please proceed.

Jonnie Hall: Jonnie will do fine as well. What I was saying, I was echoing the views of the first panel in terms of the attractiveness of coming to the UK and to Scotland purely for employment purposes. That is clearly on the wane right now, with the exchange rate issue, but, increasingly, greater employment opportunities in other EU member states making it less attractive to come here. Nevertheless, we still firmly believe that there will be a significant demand from our point of view for skilled and competent individuals to come to the UK, to come to Scotland, to work on farms and to work in the food-processing sectors as well.

Q417 **Chair:** Of course, there are a lot of people who would be watching this who would say to you or ask you, "Why don't you just employ local people? Give them the opportunity to work in these businesses."

Jonnie Hall: That opportunity is there and available.

Q418 **Chair:** Why are you not able to recruit them, then? That is the big question.

Jonnie Hall: That is maybe a question for those folk themselves, but certainly in days—

Q419 **Chair:** What is your view?

Jonnie Hall: In days gone by, well, clearly agricultural work can be challenging. It is outside. It is in all sorts of weather, all sorts of conditions. It is very well paid in this day and age, but I think it is less attractive for some folk, who perhaps see their futures and their careers not working on the land as in days gone by.

We all know that a fortnight's holiday was always taken in Tayside, in particular, so that people could go and pick potatoes. That was the tradition behind the fortnight tattie hawking time. Attracting folk to work on the land, as I say, is becoming harder and harder. There are not better-paid roles, but there are probably more comfortable roles, depending on your outlook in life, and I can't really answer for those people.

Q420 **Deidre Brock:** Some of the figures you have provided the Committee with are pretty startling, aren't they? The Scottish Association of Meat Wholesalers estimates that 50% of the workforce in some of Scotland's abattoirs and meat processing plants are non-UK workers. In the poultry meat sector an estimated 70% to 80% of the workers are non-UK, and around 70% of the workers in some UK egg-packing stations are non-UK,



HOUSE OF COMMONS

and the vast majority of dairy processor workers are non-UK. These are pretty staggering figures, aren't they? I think it pretty much illustrates how important those workers are to the food and drink industry. But I wanted to ask: the last time the NFUS appeared before the Committee—in October 2016, I think—you were talking about a seasonal workers scheme and you were still working on the details. I would be very interested to hear where you are on that and what your proposals are.

Jonnie Hall: Where we are on that is we have just published this particular document—which I will leave with you—which argues the case as to why non-UK labour is so important to the agricultural and food and drink sectors of Scotland, but also then goes into more detail about how we think we could resurrect, quite simply, quite easily, what was the seasonal agricultural workers scheme, known as SAWS. That was a scheme that was set up a few years ago, when Bulgaria and Romania were accession states that were not full members of the EU and therefore they were not part of the single market at that point and they did not have the enjoyment of the free movement of folk across the Union.

We think it is incredibly low-hanging fruit for the Home Office to simply take that off the shelf and revise it quite easily, and that would address very quickly the requirement for seasonal workers. That requirement is here now. Everybody is talking about Brexit being 2019 and then transition or implementation phases of 2020-21. The requirement to sort out agricultural labour is here and now. There are already difficulties and challenges, partly because of the lack of attractiveness of coming to the UK, coming to Scotland, and that is an economic driver.

There is still a significant demand by employers here for those skills and those abilities. At any one time in Scotland there would be between 5,000 and 15,000 seasonal agricultural workers picking fruit, picking veg and so on, earning significant amounts of money and contributing enormously to the rural economy. We think that we need to secure their future ASAP, and we think the SAWS scheme, or a version of the SAWS scheme is the easiest thing to do.

The Home Office has been very reluctant to make any statement whatsoever about this at all. We have pressed both the Secretary of State for DEFRA, Michael Gove, on this particular issue and the Home Office, but had little or no response, and we think that the UK Government need to come out with a very clear statement, very, very soon indeed, certainly addressing labour issues for 2018, not necessarily for any time beyond that.

Q421 **Deidre Brock:** Because you have asked for a trial to be implemented in 2018, haven't you?

Jonnie Hall: Yes.

Q422 **Deidre Brock:** With a view to it potentially coming in permanently in 2019, is that right?



Jonnie Hall: Yes.

Q423 **Deidre Brock:** You have also suggested it could cover seasonal workers from outside the EU. What is your thinking behind that?

Jonnie Hall: Well, again, we really see no differentiation in terms of EU or non-EU workers. It is about non-UK workers providing an essential input to the agricultural and food-processing sector. It does not matter to us whether they are EU or non-EU. Clearly, they are starting in different positions from today because of the existing EU rates of the free movements under the single market, but nevertheless in terms of the contribution they make economically, culturally and socially, we are very, very open to saying why can you not apply a SAWS-type scheme to anybody from anywhere.

Q424 **Deidre Brock:** I believe there is a suggestion that the permits could last for 10 months of the year. Could you tell us your thinking behind that as well, and why that is required?

Jonnie Hall: Again, the greatest flexibility is required, and by “seasonal workers” we are obviously talking about a temporary situation, but the season can be very, very long in different agricultural activities. You can start picking fruit or working on farms pretty early in the spring in the south of England and you could end up working in Scotland much later in the year. Equally, the technology of growing: once upon a time, things like strawberries and raspberries were grown from about the end of May to about the beginning of June. Technology now is that the growing season is much, much longer. It is starting earlier and finishing much later, so we have about a six-month growing season. It is not just about the picking; it is about the packaging, it is about the processing, and that is a year-round activity. Providing storage facilities—which Scottish agriculture has invested heavily in, in terms of vegetable production and so on—is a year-round activity. Seasonality issues—driven by the consumer as much as anything, so that we are less reliant on imports from other parts of the world—have meant that we have invested heavily in making our growing season and our supply season, if you like, much longer.

Q425 **Deidre Brock:** You have also argued there should be greater flexibility in recruiting permanent workers from non-EU countries for food processing, I think. Is that right?

Jonnie Hall: Absolutely.

Q426 **Deidre Brock:** The Road Haulage Association estimated that 60,000 HGV drivers from other EU states are currently working in the UK haulage industry, and I know that there is a shortage. They are suggesting a shortage of 45,000 drivers.

Jonnie Hall: Obviously, we are looking at the agricultural and the food and processing sector, but there is a whole logistical industry on the back of this as well.



Deidre Brock: Exactly, yes.

Jonnie Hall: Vets are a permanent issue. We have a high dependency on veterinary services within Scotland from people who have been trained particularly in the EU. Equally, if you look at the dairy sector, that is not about seasonal workers at all. People who come and work on dairy farms, and there is a high proportion, are here 365 days of the year. They are very skilled, very able individuals indeed. Obviously, I am only speaking for agriculture and food and drink, but other sectors of the economy you ought to be aware—

Q427 **Deidre Brock:** All of these cross, don't they? Yes.

Jonnie Hall: There are huge crossovers, and obviously our colleagues within the likes of CBI Scotland share exactly these views. There are other businesses in other industries equally concerned about the availability of both seasonal and permanent workers.

Q428 **Chair:** Just before we lose the SAWS-related issue—because I know Deidre has other questions to come to—I would like to ask this. I was at the debate when the EFRA Committee, our sister Committee looking at agriculture right across the UK, suggested that SAWS should be put in place. We have heard strong representations from the NFU both in Scotland and across the United Kingdom that this should be made. We hear Members of Parliament, not just from Scotland but right across the UK, once again saying that SAWS should be reimplemented. What is your view about why this has not been done?

Jonnie Hall: I honestly don't know—political expediency, political sensitivities within, dare I say it, the Government themselves. Clearly, as was referred to in the first panel, an awful lot of the voting intentions and habits in the referendum were based around the immigration issues and questions, perceived or otherwise. I think it remains a very politically sensitive issue for Government, particularly within the Conservative party, if I may say so. Therefore, doing the obvious, most practical and most uncontentious of post-Brexit activity in terms of implementing a new seasonal agricultural workers scheme, which would have universal support, is beyond them.

Q429 **Chair:** If we do not get something in place, it is calamitous. I represent Perthshire, where we have, I would suggest, the finest soft food sector across the United Kingdom. We have seen the reports from the NFUS and others, who are suggesting that unless this is resolved, the crop will be rotting on the fields next year.

Jonnie Hall: We already have experience of that—not so much fruit, but certainly broccoli production and other vegetable producers in your part of the world, in Perthshire, Tayside, and moving up into Angus. That has already happened. We have experience of our members who have very, very high-value crops in the field that have simply rotted over the winter because there has not been the labour to pick the vegetables. We are always being told by Mr Gove that we will be driving an agricultural



HOUSE OF COMMONS

industry that is based on new technology. We are yet to discover the technology that can recognise and pick the right crop at the right time as effectively as a human being can.

Q430 Deidre Brock: That is very interesting. I wanted to ask about the tier 3 visa, which, of course, has not really been used, I think, because of the free movement of folk from Europe. There are suggestions that that could potentially be used for unskilled migrants. What are your thoughts on that? What would be most effective in using that as a method?

Jonnie Hall: Clearly, obviously when you are talking tier 3, you are talking about permanent workforce, fully residential here. As I said earlier, we split this labour conundrum down into those different components of being on-farm and off-farm, seasonal and permanent, and skilled and competent. Therefore, there is every element of that that we need and to just focus on simply a seasonal agricultural workers scheme might be the short-term solution for the 2018 growing season, but we also need a longer-term solution. We need a longer-term solution that will give confidence to folk, as I keep saying, not only from the EU but from beyond the EU. It should be demand led, clearly. If we have industries and sectors of our economy that have a clear case for having these people involved and engaged in production, processing, retailing, healthcare, tourism, catering and so on, then let's develop a system that allows these people to come and go.

Q431 Deidre Brock: Any thoughts on what sort of elements of that you would like to see?

Jonnie Hall: We have put some detail in this document, which I will leave with you.

Deidre Brock: It is in there, okay. We will have a look at that.

Jonnie Hall: It is getting into the detail of how we think it might work. The important point I would make to this Committee is that we are finding it very difficult to get traction with the Home Office in talking about some of these things. While we have had conversations with DEFRA and other Departments of the UK Government and we have had these conversations with the Scottish Government, the real door that we are failing to get through and have a proper, clear discussion about it is the Home Office.

Q432 Deidre Brock: Okay. We heard some witnesses talk about the tier 2 visas and how smaller employers tend not to recruit through that process because they find it so cumbersome, so bureaucratic and expensive. Are you worried that, say, farmers might find that an added burden?

Jonnie Hall: I think that, whatever the system, it is always going to be the case, and it is something that farmers are always reminding me about, bureaucracy and red tape. If any system for doing anything is too onerous and too expensive, then people will tend to back away from it. We want a system that is dynamic; we want a system that is relatively



simple at the same time. We think in this day and age, with technology and databases and all the rest of it, it should not necessarily be a great paper chase that requires to go through lots and lots of pairs of hands for approval and otherwise, which was illustrated by your previous speakers as well about processes and not being responded to and so on. If that is the case, then it is too late by the time you get these things in place.

Q433 **Deidre Brock:** Yes, so whatever the system, it has to be simple?

Jonnie Hall: It has to be.

Q434 **Deidre Brock:** Of course, the EU system, the freedom of movement, has made it much easier for employers?

Jonnie Hall: Of course. We are starting from a point that we certainly do not want to move very far away from at all. We still want an accessible labour force that is willing and able to come and work on Scotland's farms and within the food and drinks-processing sector.

Q435 **Tommy Sheppard:** In search of a medium-term solution, if not a long-term one, you are aware that there is a shortage occupation list for Scotland. Do you think there is any scope for looking at that as a mechanism to define some jobs in the agricultural sector as going on that list and therefore making it easier for employers to recruit from outside the UK?

Jonnie Hall: Again, one of the reasons why we have published this and why we have made so many statements about the importance of labour on-farm and off-farm is that, fundamentally, food and food production will cease without people. It is one thing to talk about the land and livestock and what you are growing and all the rest of it, but you do need people to make it all happen. The whole supply chain is driven by people. We can have automation and we can have technology and all the rest, but we still fundamentally need people.

In terms of the critical components of the Scottish economy where there are key occupations that are fundamental to delivering of service and delivering to the economy itself, then this is no different. Delivering food to people is a fundamental service, we would argue, and if you do not have the right people in place, then it is not going to happen. Interestingly enough, an amusing headline with Kentucky Fried Chicken running out of chicken—that is not because there is a shortage of chicken, that is because of logistical things and all sorts of other things that have caused that problem.

Now, I am not saying it is going to happen, but imagine a situation where you do not have the infrastructure and the people in the supply chain who can turn the primary product that we produce in Scotland into something that is accessible for folk to buy in supermarkets. I think it is just as important that we have a system whereby we have an absolute continuity of labour requirements, so that we are not going to undermine



HOUSE OF COMMONS

our ability to produce what we do and deliver safe and healthy food to the people of Scotland, the UK and beyond.

Q436 **Tommy Sheppard:** Is that a yes, then, that there should be some?

Jonnie Hall: It was a very long yes. I thought about it while the fire alarm was going.

Q437 **Tommy Sheppard:** So, there are unskilled or semi-skilled jobs in the agricultural sector where the problems of recruitment are so acute that they should be added to the shortage occupation list?

Jonnie Hall: Yes. I think agricultural jobs and food-processing jobs are perceived to be relatively low skilled, and can be perceived to be, but in fact competence and skill are absolutely paramount. If you are dealing with livestock, operating very technical machinery, working as a vet in an abattoir—well, vets obviously have had formal training—having very skilled and able people doing what might be perceived to be very mundane jobs is not the case. We continue to emphasise the point that it is not just about bodies on the ground who are basically there to provide a bit of brawn. To modern-day agriculture and food processing, it is a very technical and very skilled sector indeed. We need people who are willing to learn those skills and use those skills in the right way. Yes, there are different levels of skill need; nevertheless, we always talk about skilled and competent, we never talk about unskilled.

Q438 **Tommy Sheppard:** On a different point, we have been told in several previous sessions that it would be a relatively straightforward thing to introduce some aspects to the immigration system that would be Scotland-specific and which could allow for differentiated arrangements in Scotland that might then allow immigration to focus more directly on the circumstances within Scotland. Have you considered that and would you regard that as something that would be a positive move?

Jonnie Hall: Our position at the moment is that we would 100% preferentially want to pursue a UK approach, so that we had something like the SAWS scheme operating on a UK basis, governed by the Home Office, et cetera.

However, if it comes to such an impasse, whereby that is not happening for whatever reason, then we would be more than up for considering a bespoke Scottish set-up. That is our position on the situation, because it is far too much of an issue just to say, "Okay, let's go with that." Our view is that we would much rather have a UK common approach, but if that is not going to happen, then we are up for a discussion about how we might implement something that might afford Scotland to do its own thing.

Q439 **Tommy Sheppard:** Okay. In your discussions with your colleagues throughout the UK, are you suggesting that there is not a differentiated need for immigration in different parts of the UK and that it is a general problem?



Jonnie Hall: Across the farming unions of the UK—and we are in constant collaboration with them on an awful lot of things—yes, we have our differences, but on labour and labour requirements and immigration issues I think we are 100% aligned, whether it is England, Wales, Northern Ireland or Scotland. There are different degrees of emphasis when you get to different parts of the United Kingdom, because the agricultural systems are different. Nevertheless, there is still a common desire to see skilled and able folk being able to come on both a seasonal and a permanent basis to continue to do what they have been doing for many, many years.

Q440 **Tommy Sheppard:** Let me put it this way, then. In the absence of the UK Government post-Brexit wanting to have a visa scheme for agricultural workers from outside the UK, if the UK Government were not minded to do that, you would welcome a situation where the Scottish Government might be able to do that in Scotland?

Jonnie Hall: We would certainly want to have that discussion with the Scottish Government, because it is too much of an issue just to say, “If the UK Government are not minded to that, then we will find another alternative,” because I do not think there is another alternative.

Q441 **Deidre Brock:** You mentioned the importance of the food and drink sector to the Scottish economy being one of the reasons why you felt some sort of differentiation would be appropriate.

Jonnie Hall: Yes. Again, the Scottish food and drink sector is now the largest sector of the Scottish economy. It outstrips oil and gas. That is partly because of the demise of oil and gas over recent years; nevertheless, there is significant growth and potential, huge growth within Scotland’s food and drink sector.

The Scottish Government, through Scotland Food and Drink, have set a very ambitious target to double the turnover by 2030 from £14.5 billion to £30 billion. That is not going to happen without significant investment: significant investment in primary production—that is, on-farm—but also significant investment in people and the people who will make that happen. That is not just upskilling the people who are already here; it is ensuring that we have a continual supply of people who want to come and work in what will be a growing industry. Whether they are from Scotland anyway or whether they are coming in from the EU or beyond, in some ways should that matter?

Q442 **Chair:** For the few moments that are left to us, I know we have largely left your other main items that you said in your introductory statement. I do not think we are going to have a chance to examine trade, and I think we have done a good kick-around with some of the migration-related issues, which is the purpose of this Committee’s inquiry. Can I just ask about the common agricultural policy? I will use the word dystopian; that seems to be the word of the day when it comes to addressing EU-related issues. What is your view about what is going to happen in terms of



HOUSE OF COMMONS

replacement for the CAP? Maybe you could also tell us what you would like to see in the way of a replacement for the CAP.

Jonnie Hall: Well, how long do you have?

Chair: Only a few minutes.

Jonnie Hall: Clearly, Brexit means leaving the CAP as well, and that exercises us significantly. What we would like to see by way of a replacement in terms of agricultural policy across the United Kingdom, but particularly within Scotland—and it is very clear what we have said about this—is, we think there is an absolute need for a United Kingdom commonly agreed framework in terms of regulatory requirements, standards in animal health and welfare, the environment; that is, avoiding dystopia or the “Mad Max” version of the world. That is the last thing we want. We do not want a race to the bottom. We want a race to the top. We want to set very, very high standards, because that is what is going to enable Scotland in particular to sell high quality products on to all sorts of markets, new markets and existing markets. That is what is going to differentiate us from the “stack it high, sell it low” agricultural economies of the world.

In terms of then taking that forward into a new CAP, we want to see that CAP adjusted so it focuses far more on activity-based support rather than just being land-based support. I could get into all the nuances of that, but that is obviously a discussion we have with DEFRA.

Q443 **Chair:** Is that not roughly where the UK Government seem to be going?

Jonnie Hall: To a degree, yes. In that sense, we are all for driving productivity improvements and increasing our environmental delivery. That is exactly where we want to be and, therefore, that will reward farmers and crofters in Scotland who are delivering both in the public interest and in terms of what the market wants. Those things remain absolutely vital.

An absolute key for us, though, going back to the dystopia argument, is that we clearly see no value whatsoever in trying to undermine the very, very high standards that we set ourselves within the UK in terms of animal health and welfare and particularly environment as well. That is particularly so in Scotland. It is our unique selling point in many ways.

Q444 **Chair:** Absolutely. Thank you for being so concise with that. Lastly, this touches on another inquiry that this Committee has undertaken in the past few months, and that is the powers coming back from the European Union. There is still no certainty and clarity that the powers that I think the Scottish Government believe should be returned to the Scottish Parliament will actually be coming, in terms of the ongoing conversation about common frameworks. What is the NFU’s view about this and what would you like to see happen?



Jonnie Hall: Again, on common frameworks, we see the value in having a UK-wide common framework when it comes to those regulatory standards in order to preserve or protect intra-UK trade. It would be very difficult to imagine a situation whereby you had different rules on pesticides in Cornwall from Dumfries or different animal health and welfare standards in Angus and Northumberland, for example. It would be a chaotic situation for the internal UK market, but thereafter, as is now under the CAP, we are 100% certain that we have to have devolved delivery of agricultural policy.

Under the CAP as we currently have it, we have four settlements: Northern Ireland, Wales, England and Scotland do four separate things. We think that should be absolutely the case going forward. Anything that was dropped down in a, as I describe it, DEFRA-centric approach, whereby the whole of the United Kingdom looks rather like Cambridgeshire, would be a bit of a disaster for Scotland. That is what we need to be very aware of, but we do make these points very clearly to your colleagues in other Committees.

Q445 **Chair:** You made them very clear to this Committee in the past when we were undertaking that inquiry, but it is always good just to check in again to see what the current view of NFU Scotland is.

Jonnie Hall: Quite right.

Chair: Thank you ever so much once again, Mr Hall. Again, if there is anything else that you observe as this inquiry continues its course, please get back in touch with any further written evidence. Thank you.

Jonnie Hall: Thank you.

Examination of witnesses

Witnesses: Carroll Buxton and Lorraine Cook.

Q446 **Chair:** Good morning. Welcome to our inquiry in Kirkcaldy this morning. Could you for the record tell us who you are, who you represent and anything by way of a short introductory statement? Given you are on my left, Ms Buxton, we will start with you.

Carroll Buxton: Good morning, and thanks for the invitation to join you here today. I am Carroll Buxton. I am director of regional development with Highlands and Islands Enterprise, which is the community and economic development company for the northern half of Scotland's land mass. We cover an area stretching from Shetland in the north down to the tip of the Argyll Peninsula and right from the east coast across to the Outer Hebrides. It is a very large area, predominantly rural, quite sparsely populated, and we work with communities and businesses across the region, with an aim of making it a very attractive and competitive place to live, work, study and invest.



HOUSE OF COMMONS

Lorraine Cook: My name is Lorraine Cook and I am a policy manager in COSLA. I sit within the migration, population and diversity team.

Chair: That was very concise. Thank you for that.

Lorraine Cook: I can give you all our brief if you want.

Q447 **Chair:** I am going to start with you then, Ms Cook, in terms of our questions. In your very interesting written submission you say that Scotland is differentially dependent on migration to the rest of the United Kingdom. Could you perhaps explain to this Committee how that is the case?

Lorraine Cook: Yes, definitely. Scotland's population is increasing, but that has been largely due to migration. According to the most recent population projections, we rely on 100% net migration for any population increase that we will have. Compared to the rest of the UK, which I think is 51% net migration and 49% natural change, it is a huge difference from Scotland. As I also said, our population is increasing and that has been through migration, but then when you drill down to 32 local authorities in the different areas, it is vastly different. I think I gave the examples of Inverclyde in terms of the decrease in working-age population and their population in general; Argyll and Bute; Dumfries and Galloway in terms of their ageing population in comparison to their working-age population; and also the Western Isles. There are huge differences when we drill down into local authority areas with the working-age population and an increasing ageing population as well.

Q448 **Chair:** I am grateful. For both of you, then, are there any key sectors in Scotland that are starting to face these skill gaps because of concerns about immigration? You talked about Inverclyde and the Highlands. Can you try to give us a picture about what is required in different parts of Scotland?

Lorraine Cook: We have been asking for evidence from local authorities basically since the referendum and there have been quite a few inquiries. The last one was the MAC inquiry, and we had a roundtable discussion with I think it was 15 local authorities. A key one for them is workforce, and what we are hearing consistently is health and social care, particularly social care; teachers, teaching assistants, so education; but also local economy, as we were hearing about, our rural economy, seasonal agricultural workers, but also our hotels and food processing.

In terms of health and social care and trying to drill down and get numbers, we have a lot of data, but they are looking at different things. It is very difficult to look at. If we are looking at particularly Brexit in terms of the EU workforce, we do not have this magic number of EU workers in social care. We are working with the Scottish Government to try to look at workforce and workforce planning and how much we rely on EU nationals in this sector. What is coming back and what all the data is saying is that we do heavily rely on EU nationals in this sector as well.



HOUSE OF COMMONS

We have also been speaking to Edinburgh City Council, who have done a workforce audit, if you like, of their workforce in terms of EU nationals that they employ. They are hearing a lot about teachers as well and classroom assistants. They have a template, so we are looking at putting this out to all 32 local authorities through the society of directors of personnel, getting that feedback and collating that so that we do have a better understanding of local authority workforce. What we are definitely hearing is education, health and social care, but local economy impact as well.

Carroll Buxton: Looking at the Highlands and Islands, obviously Scotland as a whole has a lower forecast population growth than the rest of the UK. That situation is probably exacerbated when you start looking at regions like the Highlands and Islands, where forecasts tend to be lower. In the Highlands and Islands, obviously I think all growth is forecast to be from migration and natural growth is actually in decline, and significantly in decline in some areas. There are differences between the local authority areas within the region with some, like Argyll and Bute and Shetland, facing a very significant challenge and other areas where there is more growth, but as I say, all forecast to come from migration.

In terms of sectoral demands, we have heard a bit about the primary industries, particularly agriculture, today. The food and drink sector and other primary industries like forestry do also depend on migrant workers. I think, though, in the Highlands and Islands all sectors have a proportion of migrant workforce and at all skill levels. Again, to echo what was said earlier, it is not necessarily at lower-skill levels in terms of the oil and gas sector, life sciences, higher-level skilled jobs, which are being filled currently by migrants.

We are seeing some challenges. We have a business panel that has over 1,000 businesses, which are representative of sectors and business sizes across the geography of the Highlands and Islands. Coming back from that, the food and drink and tourism sectors have faced significant skills challenges and challenges in recruiting the skills that they need over the last few years.

Q449 **Chair:** This Committee visited the Highlands in our population and demography inquiry. We were quite astounded by some of the evidence that was secured and received and you are right to characterise it as depopulation, but we did find areas of growth—for example, Inverness, one of the fastest-growing cities in the whole of the UK. We were in the Isle of Skye, which now has a very thriving and developing population base, but then there are other areas like Argyll and Bute and Caithness and Sutherland. Is there any reason for that at all? Is there anything that could help explain that?

Carroll Buxton: Talent attraction is a really complex issue. It is not just about attracting people into the area to find a job. They have to have schooling. They have to have housing, which in some of our remote and



HOUSE OF COMMONS

rural areas can be a challenge. It is a challenge that needs to be tackled by everybody coming together to address the issues that there are.

Some people coming to more rural parts of the country also do find it more difficult. One of your previous speakers said she found living in a slightly more rural area more attractive than living in Casablanca. I come from Caithness. Yes, it is probably not for everybody, but I think the challenges are transport and housing. Highlands and Islands Enterprise at the moment is very heavily involved in the roll-out of superfast broadband, which makes it easier for people to live and work in these communities. It is a very complex issue to address.

Q450 Chair: Is there any more that we could do to retain the working-age local population, for example, and encourage people from the rest of the United Kingdom to come? I know we are always looking at this in terms of solutions when it comes to EU nationals, but could you explain what efforts have been made in that respect?

Carroll Buxton: Absolutely. Traditionally, again, speaking for the Highlands and Islands as a region, we lose a significant number of young people every year who go away to study. They go to other parts of Scotland and other parts of the UK to study, particularly at HE level. Over the last number of years, we have developed our own university in the Highlands and Islands, the University of the Highlands and Islands, funnily enough.

Chair: Now we are the second biggest campus or the biggest campus in my constituency.

Carroll Buxton: It is a devolved structure. It offers HE and FE education. It currently has about 40,000 students studying, split between HE and FE. That gives young people the opportunity to stay in the region and study. The UHI and other universities are developing their curriculum offer across the Highlands and Islands.

We offer schemes like graduate placement programmes, which are about trying to attract both young graduates who have left the Highlands and Islands to come back to work with firms in the areas, but also graduates from other parts of the UK and, indeed, other countries.

The quality of opportunity for young people is really important, being able to offer good learning opportunities but also good work opportunities. We have also carried out research with young people in the region about what would make the region more attractive for them to come back to live and work in. There are no surprises. It is about quality of opportunity, particularly jobs, potential for career progression, but issues like availability of affordable housing, transport and connectivity in general do come up again and again.

Q451 Chair: Any observations, Ms Cook?



HOUSE OF COMMONS

Lorraine Cook: In terms of population, we rely on 58% overseas and 42% from the rest of the UK, so we do attract people from the rest of the UK to Scotland.

In terms of the rural element and attracting our young people either back or retaining them, I know Western Isles are doing a bit of work on repopulation. Inverclyde are quite far down the line and are working with Western Isles. It is about working with colleges and universities—what skills gaps are there, matching the young people with the skills and the qualifications required.

We did a piece of work—it was actually for MAC—and it was about teachers on the shortage occupation list and the shortage of teachers in general. We presented a joint response with the Scottish Government and there was a huge rural element for exactly the same reasons: the perceived geographical isolation, how attractive that is to certain people, but also the cost of housing, affordable housing—we were looking at Aberdeenshire—and access to services as well. There is a whole host of barriers in terms of rural and attracting people to rural areas.

Q452 **Chair:** A lot of these things you have mentioned there are in the gift of the Scottish Government, and I know that efforts and initiatives have been made. Is there anything that you could detect that the UK Government, with the range of responsibilities that the UK Government have, could assist in repopulation, keeping people within local areas?

Lorraine Cook: What we were responding to was the call for evidence, though, around teachers and the shortage occupation list. It was quite robust evidence. The majority of local authorities had fed back to us their evidence. The Scottish Government had their data as well. We had a strong evidence base in terms of subjects that we require that there are shortages of in those particular subjects or in the future that there will be shortages. To be honest, the impact was minimal. For example—

Q453 **Chair:** Did that surprise you then?

Lorraine Cook: No, because we have responded to many of these calls for evidence. What was taken was, from my perspective, UK evidence. For example, STEMs: not chemistry—because we were asking for chemistry, which was taken out of the shortage occupation list—but sciences, so that was kept in, but it was a UK evidence base rather than just a Scottish evidence base. Anything that was outwith the rest of the UK evidence did not get on the shortage occupation list.

Q454 **Chair:** Interesting. Ms Buxton, do you have any observations on that?

Carroll Buxton: I think just reiterating what I said earlier. We have found, working with colleagues in the Highlands and Islands on talent attraction issues, it is very much cross-agency. There are a whole host of people that need to be involved in that, and it is about working together to create those conditions—as I say, the transport, the housing, the connectivity, and the opportunity. I do not think there is a simple answer.



I do think as well, though—and we have touched on this at various points during your evidence today—that it is an overused phrase, but one size does not fit all necessarily in many of the aspects that we are dealing with here. When you look at a regional and subregional level, there will be different solutions to similar problems, so flexibility in applying various levers I think is really important across this whole issue.

Chair: I am grateful, thank you.

Q455 **Deidre Brock:** I am quite interested in following up your points about the ageing populations of areas like Shetland and Argyll and Bute and finding what lies behind that. Is that simply young people moving away, leaving their parents and grandparents, or is that older people moving into the area or a failure to attract the migrant workers that generally, as we have found during the evidence sessions, tend to be of working age and bring in their younger families with them? Could you give us your views on a breakdown of that?

Carroll Buxton: I think it is probably a mixture. We do have young people. There is definitely a move of young people out and they do not always come back. It has, as I say, traditionally been to pursue educational opportunities. We also have people that have moved into the area who are in the older age bracket, and that is sometimes a lifestyle choice or people wishing just to stay. My own particular area up in Caithness had quite an influx of people come into the area for the Dounreay nuclear power station, for example, and a lot of those people have stayed in the region. That is a good thing and I think diversity is a good thing, but young people moving away is important. What I would say is that quite a large proportion of migrants into the region have been of that working-age population, which is very positive.

Q456 **Deidre Brock:** Following up on that, I think you say in your written submission that the Highlands and Islands is an exemplar in being able to attract talented people to live, work and study in a rural area. Can you tell us specifically what HIE is doing on the ground about trying to make these areas even more attractive to migrant workers?

Carroll Buxton: A lot of it is about opportunity and it is about supporting the businesses in our region to grow and provide employment opportunities and, as I say, career progression for people within the region and actively promoting the region as a place to live and work. We do that ourselves. We do that with our colleagues in local authorities, Talent Scotland and Scottish Development International, for example.

It is about creating those conditions as well. As an enterprise agency and an economic development agency, we invest in business premises that can attract businesses into the region to create those jobs that people can take up. I mentioned before things like superfast broadband. When the current broadband roll-out started, only 21% of premises in our region had access to fibre-based broadband, and that over the course of the period has increased to 84%. Obviously, 100% is the target, which is



HOUSE OF COMMONS

quite challenging, but investing in that kind of infrastructure just makes the region in general more attractive and in particular more attractive to businesses to grow and expand and create those job opportunities.

Q457 Deidre Brock: Could you tell us a bit about attracting migrant workers to really remote and rural areas and how successful you have been in that and what sort of feedback you are getting from them, if there is any extra assistance or encouragement they perhaps require?

Carroll Buxton: A lot of the attracting of the workforce is down to the individual businesses. We have some who are very, very successful in doing that. In fact, a recent survey suggested that more than a quarter of our businesses employ EU nationals and when you get into larger businesses that proportion of the workforce is higher. A high proportion of those employees are permanent rather than seasonal, although the tourism industry relies quite heavily on seasonal workers. Indeed, the feedback that we get from our business community is that limited access to that labour market is going to be very challenging for them. The Highlands and Islands as a whole has high rates of employment, very low rates of unemployment, so the actual availability of labour within the region is quite tight. I think you reflected on that previously in terms of where there are opportunities for employment for more locally based individuals. That in our region is quite challenging because there is not that big pool of available labour.

Anecdotally, and again this touches on some of the evidence you heard earlier, when it comes to actually sitting some of the life in the UK tests, language tests, that can be very challenging for people in our region because there are a very limited number of places where you can sit those tests. It can involve travelling incredibly long distances and be quite costly at relatively short notice, both to do Life in the UK, language and also the biometric tests that are required to be done. Trying to make that process easier might be something we could look at.

Q458 Deidre Brock: Ms Cook, is there anything?

Lorraine Cook: Sorry, could you repeat the question?

Deidre Brock: Just your thoughts on attracting migrants to these more remote and rural areas and what local authorities in your experience perhaps are doing.

Lorraine Cook: It is about rural areas, but it is not always rural areas that want to attract migration. I will give the example of Inverclyde, because they are doing a huge amount of depopulation work. They are looking at migration in the widest terms. It is the rest of the UK from outside Inverclyde as well and from EU and beyond, but it all comes down to their transport links, so increasing transport links; their housing, affordable housing. They are also looking at settlement grants and resettlement services. They have a resettlement officer. Also promoting the area as well is a huge amount of work that they have been doing.



They have their own website. It is to promote it as an area and also how central it is.

For the rural elements, a lot of the work we have done with teacher shortages was around attracting that skills base and attracting teachers to rural areas. There has been a huge amount of work in terms of promoting areas and also making it realistic of what it is like to live there, the pros and cons. It is using a lot of social media also. We had an example from local authorities that went to Canada and promoted the shortages of teachers there, going outwith the UK. Also connectivity—so there is a huge range of tools we need to encourage people to come to protect those areas.

Q459 Deidre Brock: Local authorities obviously have their part to play in it. Can I ask about the tier 2 system? We have discovered that I think only 6% of tier 2 sponsors are located in Northern Ireland and in Scotland, with significantly more than that in London and the South East. What are your thoughts on why we are under-represented in the number of companies that sponsor those visas?

Lorraine Cook: We asked. With the teacher example, the actual call for evidence was on the points-based system. There is a shortage occupation list, it was outwith the EU. We asked about the EU as well, because we were interested. There were far more EU teachers employed. It was exactly what you were saying, about a real shortage outwith EU. The reason was the complexity of the system. We are also hearing feedback about local authorities going through the sponsorship process and being rejected.

Q460 Deidre Brock: Why?

Lorraine Cook: It sort of just comes up every now and again. There is no clear reason behind that.

Q461 Deidre Brock: Communication from the Home Office is not very good with that, even with local authorities?

Lorraine Cook: Yes. From what we are hearing back from local authorities, the belief is that higher skilled are being prioritised within that sponsorship process. Yes, there are issues.

Q462 Deidre Brock: Do you think there are ways that employers within the more remote rural areas, or areas like Inverclyde that require more of that type of migration, could be encouraged to take on tier 2 sponsorship? How would like to see that process simplified?

Lorraine Cook: Making it a simpler process in general. From what I am hearing back, it is very bureaucratic, complicated and can be costly as well. It is timing as well. We are looking at teachers; they have to start at the beginning of term. By the time they go through the whole process of the required advertising and then the whole sponsorship process, it is too



late, term has started, so there is a time lag as well. It would be to simplify it.

Q463 **Deidre Brock:** You mentioned the shortage occupation list and your experience of dealing with MAC over that. Could you maybe expand a little bit more on that? You had obviously put in a significant amount of work, you had gathered evidence and put it to the Committee. Could you give us your impression of their response?

Lorraine Cook: We have consistently provided evidence to the calls for evidence from MAC in regard to the shortage occupation list. The whole system is to reduce migration. That is the point of the points-based system at the moment—to reduce it to the tens of thousands. The barriers are becoming higher. They are becoming more complex. Social care was on the shortage occupation list. It has been slowly eradicated, so it is more managerial for social care, to the point that it has been eradicated in terms of salary thresholds and qualifications. There has been that constant push up to higher and higher skilled. For us it is not just about high skilled but what is required—the skills that are needed and are valued but do not necessarily fit into that box of particular salary scale or particular qualifications as well. It is a bit like what the National Farmers Union was talking about as well. It is not all about the highly skilled and the top.

Q464 **Deidre Brock:** What form does their response take? How do they get back to you? Do they get back to you or it just does not appear?

Lorraine Cook: No, it is just in the formal reports of what will be on the shortage occupation list.

Q465 **Deidre Brock:** There is no discussion or debate?

Lorraine Cook: They have come up to Scotland and we have spoken to them several times. As I said, for the last call of evidence there was a roundtable discussion. We got a significant amount of local authorities there to get their point across, so there is that in terms of the evidence gathering but no reporting back. There is just the report.

In our most recent response we have talked about Scottish representation in MAC, to get that Scottish perspective or for all devolved areas. For us, Scottish representation is crucial to get that perspective and recognition of our needs.

Deidre Brock: Ms Buxton, is this something you hear a lot of?

Carroll Buxton: Again, just in terms of the shortage occupation list, it is trying to dig into some of those regional and sub-regional differences, because there can be significantly different challenges. Again, in terms of teachers and healthcare, there are some very specific issues within the Highlands and Islands, where it has been very challenging to attract people. Then again, within our sectors like the more primary industries, there are significant issues there. It is actually trying to look at the



HOUSE OF COMMONS

granular level of that need and trying to respond flexibly to it rather than just taking a very high-level view.

Lorraine Cook: There are issues around that as well, because it is Scottish evidence. With the teachers we could gather that evidence. However, as you would have seen, there are regional shortages as well, but it has to be a Scottish evidence base for it to be reported to MAC and go on the shortage occupation list, so there are difficulties there.

Q466 **Tommy Sheppard:** You will be aware that the UK Government and the EU negotiations have discussed a series of principles for EU nationals already in the UK in terms of their status. Are you reassured by that? Are there any concerns you think are not addressed in that provisional agreement?

Carroll Buxton: There does seem to be a general lack of information getting to the right people at the right time. Again, that is anecdotal. People seem to be unsure sometimes about what the actual arrangements are going to be. We heard that this morning from some of your earlier witnesses. In terms of specifics, I am not sure if you have more detail?

Lorraine Cook: I do agree with Maciej and what he said: that this is not set in stone yet. In terms of family migration, we welcome that. Also in terms of simplifying the whole process, we would welcome that as well. I think the example has been given of it being as simple as getting your driving licence and it would be online. The simplification of the settlement process would be welcomed as well, and also the cost. In comparison to somebody who has come in from outwith the EU, it is a phenomenal cost and there is also the complexity of the visa system. We will see.

Q467 **Tommy Sheppard:** Is there anything else you would like to see in the agreement?

Lorraine Cook: Our concern is very much for those who come in after the particular date and the complexity around that. We have done a lot of work on no recourse to public funds and all the issues, complexity and bureaucracy around that. It is also for service providers to understand what people are entitled to, what their rights and entitlements are. There are huge concerns around that, also destitution and no recourse to public funds after the settlement.

Q468 **Tommy Sheppard:** After Brexit, can you say something about what type of immigration arrangements you would like to see in place for EU nationals?

Lorraine Cook: We said that free movement of people has worked for Scotland. We would like its continuation. We have benefitted from that. There is also a simplicity to it. As I was saying, for people coming through visas and the points-based system there is a complexity and bureaucracy around that. There is also difficulty for people who fall through the cracks within that. Also, as I was saying, there is huge complexity around no



recourse to public funds and understanding people's rights and entitlements. We have written guidance on it. We are going to update that guidance but there is a huge amount of work to actually get your head around all the different categories, if you like, around rights and entitlements of different people on different visa systems, with families, without families, with dependants. We would like a simple system. I would not say the points-based system is the perfect example, to be honest. With the points-based system, there is a heavy reliance on highly skilled. In terms of Brexit, we are looking at highly-skilled EU nationals but we are also looking at a less-skilled workforce such as health and social care and seasonal agricultural works. There are a whole lot of sectors that are effectively cut out by the points-based system.

Carroll Buxton: In terms of meeting Scotland's ambitions in terms of economic growth, and inclusive growth that is across all parts of Scotland, it is very important that whatever system is put in place reflects some of the demographic and skills challenges that we have and that we are going to be unable to meet in terms of our own natural population growth. We do need to really look at that data and come up with a system that supports delivering that.

Q469 **Chair:** When we visited the Highlands last time it was their population demography inquiry. We had a Mr Brain who came in front of our session with the very baffling case of this attempt to remove Mr Brain from his business. I think it was Lochaber where he and his wife had a business. These decisions baffled us. I do not know what you make of some of these decisions. Particularly here, where it is almost contrary to what the Highlands and Islands require in terms of an immigration policy and we get to the situation where somebody, who is economically and socially useful, has been deported. I do not know if you have any observations about how these sorts of things work out? Mr Brain is not the only example we have been confronted with in the past few years.

Carroll Buxton: I could not comment on a specific case, but we do have a requirement for skills and particularly working-age population within the Highlands and Islands. Again, it was really encouraging to hear from people earlier this morning that Scotland is generally seen as a very welcoming place. We want to continue to do that if we are going to achieve our economic growth ambitions.

Q470 **Chair:** Lastly, we are looking at what would be the best model for Scotland and an immigration framework in light of what we are experiencing with leaving the European Union. A number of people have suggested to us that there would be nothing wrong with a bespoke immigration arrangement for Scotland. We have looked at examples across the world where there are some national immigration policies in place. It might be an unfair question, given you are both from the public sector, but have you any particular views? If there was a bespoke immigration arrangement, what sort of features should it have and what do you think would be most useful in terms of our demographic and



HOUSE OF COMMONS

economic requirements? There is a small question for you, Ms Cook.

Lorraine Cook: We said in our evidence that we need flexibility. We need a flexible immigration system that will look at our particular needs, which are our demographics and also our skills shortages and skills gaps. If we can somehow build that flexibility into whatever the immigration system is going to be after Brexit, that would be incredibly useful.

Carroll Buxton: At the risk of repeating myself, it is that flexibility and trying to look at a more granular level than just a UK or Scottish level. I know you have been looking at global examples of different immigration systems that can work on a regional level.

Q471 **Chair:** Are we starting to repopulate our rural areas? At the last inquiry there was very little evidence that showed we were making progress in bringing people back to some of our more remote areas in Scotland. They are some of the most beautiful areas in all of Europe, why are we not getting people coming back? I know you mentioned broadband, and that is one of the issues we are looking at in this Committee. We share your view that if we get that right we could maybe start to address a number of the issues about locating people there. Are we making progress? What more do we need to do? Last questions.

Carroll Buxton: We are. Within our submission we said that the Highlands and Islands, for example, have exceeded population forecasts over the last wee while. Our population has grown in many areas, albeit not hugely and maybe not as fast as other areas. However, it was certainly very much in decline at one point and it is going in the right direction. Yes, we are making progress. It is all about being able to offer people the quality of opportunity and that whole basket of things that you need to make a region attractive, which includes housing, good connectivity and the cost of living as well. We have undertaken some work in the past that does recognise that it can be costly to live in a rural area. We need to think of innovative ways of addressing that to make it more equitable.

Lorraine Cook: The more you look into this area, the more examples you find of very creative ways of attracting people to particular areas and there is a huge amount of work. What is needed is that flexibility to encourage and allow people into our country so we can then attract them to different areas.

Chair: I am grateful to both of you. That was very, very interesting. Thank you coming down to Kirkcaldy and giving us your evidence this morning. Again, if there is anything that you observe, please, get back in touch with the Committee. Thanks for this morning and thanks to everybody else who has participated and to everyone who turned up today to listen to the work of this Committee.