OFFICIAL REPORT
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Economy and Fair Work Committee

Wednesday 14 January 2026

Session 6

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ECONOMY AND FAIR WORK COMMITTEE
2nd Meeting 2026, Session 6

CONVENER

*Daniel Johnson (Edinburgh Southern) (Lab)

DEPUTY CONVENER

*Michelle Thomson (Falkirk East) (SNP)

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

*Sarah Boyack (Lothian) (Lab)
*Willie Coffey (Kilmarnock and Irvine Valley) (SNP)
*Murdo Fraser (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
*Stephen Kerr (Central Scotland) (Con)
*Gordon MacDonald (Edinburgh Pentlands) (SNP)
*Lorna Slater (Lothian) (Green)
*Kevin Stewart (Aberdeen Central) (SNP)

*attended

THE FOLLOWING ALSO PARTICIPATED:

Rhoda Grant (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)
Claire Greer (GMB Scotland)
Richard Leonard (Central Scotland) (Lab)
Dougie Maguire (Unite the Union)
Ivan McKee (Minister for Public Finance)
Ryan Morrison (Scottish Trades Union Congress)
Paul Sweeney (Glasgow) (Lab)

CLERK TO THE COMMITTEE

Anne Peat

LOCATION

The James Clerk Maxwell Room (CR4)

Scottish Parliament

Economy and Fair Work Committee

Wednesday 14 January 2026

[The Convener opened the meeting at 09:00]

Draft Climate Change Plan

The Convener (Daniel Johnson): Good morning, and welcome to the second meeting in 2026 of the Economy and Fair Work Committee. This morning we will continue our scrutiny of the Scottish Government's draft climate change plan, and then we will commence our stage 2 deliberations on the Community Wealth Building (Scotland) Bill.

Laurie Macfarlane, who had been due to join the panel of witnesses this morning, has had to give his apologies, and Claire Greer from GMB Scotland has been held up but should join us. However, I am pleased to say that we are joined by Dougie Maguire, lead officer for the passenger sector in Scotland, from Unite the Union, and Ryan Morrison, just transition officer, from the Scottish Trades Union Congress.

I will open up the questions by handing the floor to Lorna Slater.

Lorna Slater (Lothian) (Green): I thank the witnesses for coming to the committee this morning—it is lovely to see you. I am a member of Unite the Union, and it is always good to have the unions before the committee.

My first question is about how the transition to a net zero economy will change the shape of our economy. I have been reading that, globally, investment in clean energy is double the current investment in fossil fuels. What does that mean for economic success in Scotland as we transition? How does the climate change plan affect our competitiveness, and how does it compare with what other countries are doing? Is it how we will move forward and improve our economy, or are we disadvantaging ourselves? What are the opportunities and how do we make sure that we seize them?

Ryan Morrison (Scottish Trades Union Congress): The changes to the economy will be wide ranging. There are interesting specifics to focus on, in particular in the energy sector, and the climate change plan and a lot of the discussion of the just transition do so. Some of our main concerns in that regard, which we feel are not fully appreciated, or are not having action taken on them, are about the level of investment, the return in jobs and the local benefit from renewable energy sources compared with oil, gas and nuclear. Some of the figures that we published recently in our analysis of the Office for National Statistics low carbon and renewable energy economy figures show significantly lower job returns per million pounds of turnover in offshore and onshore wind compared with those in oil and gas as well as with those in other forms of renewable energy in other parts of the low-carbon economy.

Focus on the manufacturing side is needed, as we are not in the right place to take advantage of the opportunities. The climate change plan talks about the position that Scotland is in to capitalise on emerging opportunities—we would probably disagree about whether we are in such a position. Scotland is in a good position to develop renewable energy capacity and build a transition to alternative energy sources, but we would probably disagree that we are in a good position for a just transition in that respect. I think that that is what workers are feeling and experiencing. Dougie Maguire can probably speak to that more directly.

Dougie Maguire (Unite the Union): I am happy to give the committee a worker's perspective. In addition to responsibility in relation to passenger transport in Scotland, we have an overview of the oil and gas and energy sectors. I cannot go into much detail, but the feedback that we have had consistently over the past 18 months to two years, in particular from oil and gas sector workers, is that they absolutely support the drive to green energy through harnessing wind and securing the gigabytes that are required to deliver it for the offshore side.

It is a fantastic vision, but the difficulty is that, as Ryan Morrison mentioned—this fact comes up in every conversation—at the moment, there are no jobs to transition to. Government policy and regulation have a major impact across Scotland; for example, in the past 12 to 18 months, 13,000 jobs have been lost in the oil and gas sector. That has seriously affected workers from the north-east of Scotland down to the north-east of England, because oil and gas sector workers come from right across the country.

Many of those workers have taken advantage of the training that is available, but very few of them have managed to transition into green jobs. Worse than that, in my opinion, is the fact that, last year, SSE, which is a major player in the offshore wind sector, made 450 highly skilled workers redundant because the regulation had not resulted in SSE's objectives for 2025-26 being achieved. Yesterday, I saw that it is advertising for 600 trainee technicians, so those skilled workers have been lost. Wherever they lived, those communities have lost that income, as people have had to move abroad to find similar work. We find that many

people in the oil and gas sector end up plying their trade in the Scandinavian countries, Africa or the middle east. That situation comes on the back of the on-going issues that we have with Mossmorran and what has emanated from the disastrous closure of the last oil refinery in Scotland.

I do not think that anyone with any common sense would argue with the position that we have opportunities in Scotland and that the drive to green energy is absolutely imperative, but that is not matched up—I do not think that we are anywhere near being able to deliver the number of jobs that are required to offset the jobs that are being lost, in particular in oil and gas, and neither do my members.

We are also finding problems in the manufacturing sector because of the contraction across the world due to America's tariffs. Employers are having issues, and some are trying to move manufacturing to other countries. Recently, we were involved in a bit of a battle with a company in Glenrothes that is trying to implement fire and rehire, because it could have its work done cheaper elsewhere.

I do not know how we arrive at where everybody wants to be, but it is clear that the biggest issue for workers, and the big problem that we all have, is that it seems to be jam tomorrow—it is not happening quickly enough to fill the gap. Until we get to that point, how do we manage to create a more equal society? That is the issue, as I see it.

Lorna Slater: We heard from witnesses last week that they felt that the plan was more of an emissions reduction plan than a climate change plan, because it did not incorporate things such as resilience building and adaptability—which goes back to what Dougie Maguire was saying about what we do in the meantime, until jam tomorrow arrives. I am curious to hear your thoughts on the credibility of the plan as a climate change plan and what it means for the people you represent.

Dougie Maguire: I agree with that comment. There is a pretty simple analogy for me—I will speak about passenger transport. The public and our members who work in the bus industry welcome the fact that new electric buses have been arriving at speed. They seem to be working, they seem to be comfortable and they seem to be doing the job, and they will mean that there will be a reduction in emissions. The issue for us is that those buses are built overseas, not in Scotland, which will not help our future economy. Secondly, although we are trying to reduce emissions in the passenger transport industry and from heavy goods vehicles, that is only one part of the issue, is it not?

Until we come to a fairer position in society where we provide communities with the transport that they need, when they need it, at an affordable price, there will still be—at least for the next five to six years—higher-emission vehicles travelling on the roads.

For me, the simple issue is that, while we are concentrating on passenger transport, HGVs, ferries and airports, the absolute boom in white vans running about every street in every town and city in Scotland delivering parcels is probably creating more emissions than the rest of the industry put together. We have completely skewed the economy. Town centres are no longer the place to go, but they are where the majority of bus stations are, despite the fact that the majority of people who still go out shopping go to retail parks, which do not have the same bus services or facilities. I am not having a go at people who are trying to make a living delivering goods in a white van, but the truth of the matter is that there has been an explosion in that activity. Have we ever quantified the emissions that that produces? That is probably more of a question than an answer—sorry about that.

Ryan Morrison: Lorna Slater mentioned the climate change plan being seen as more of an emissions reduction plan. We have done a lot of engagement on the Scottish national adaptation plan—SNAP3—in the past year. What it covers is probably not particularly well covered in the climate change plan, but maybe that is an appropriate distinction between SNAP and the CCP.

We have concerns on that point. We have seen significant issues during recent severe weather and have had contact from trade union members about their experiences in storm Éowyn and the recent snowstorms, in particular in Aberdeenshire. We find that workers are often poorly protected in extreme weather events. Employment law and workers' rights are not very clear on the issue, so it is not clear to workers whether they are able to miss work or not travel when it is dangerous and there are red weather warnings, or whether doing so would lead to deductions in pay, for instance. We know of examples of workers being told that they have to travel or they will lose pay. That puts them in a situation where, even during a red weather warning, they need to decide either to travel, even though the expert advice is that there is a severe risk to life, or to forgo their pay. That is just not a viable choice for people to have to make.

We are keen to work to improve that situation. We have been trying to build on the fair work charter for severe weather that was agreed after the beast from the east; we think that it could probably be updated to better reflect the expectation that severe weather will become more frequent and perhaps more severe. That issue is not reflected in the climate change plan, which, to

me, looks more like an emissions reduction plan than something that addresses wider issues such as adaptation or resilience.

In the second half of your question you mentioned credibility, Ms Slater. Dougie Maguire, Claire Greer and I will inevitably come back to that issue, because I do not think that we are in a particularly strong position on credibility with trade union members when it comes to these policies and the general just transition agenda, for the reasons that Dougie has outlined. A lot of workers feel nervous about the conversation and do not feel confident when they read the plan. I would not feel confident if I were a worker in one of these sectors reading the plan. I do not think that the plan offers the level of security that workers would expect in relation to their jobs and the future of their jobs as part of a just transition.

Lorna Slater: Thank you.

The Convener: I will bring in Murdo Fraser.

Murdo Fraser (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con): Good morning. I would like to follow up Lorna Slater's questions and ask more about the costs in the plan, and costs to the wider economy.

We have seen an element of deindustrialisation in Scotland in the past short time, with Grangemouth and Mossmorran closing. Many of the things that we used to produce in Scotland are no longer produced here, because of high energy costs. We are still using those things, but we are importing them from other countries, so all we have done is export our carbon emissions elsewhere. That makes us look good because it reduces our emissions, but it does not deliver any net benefit in terms of reducing CO_2 emissions worldwide, and it means that we lose the jobs that are here.

I have just been looking at prices in the contracts for difference allocation round 7. For offshore wind, the latest price is £90 per MWh.

Of course, that does not include the cost of building the new transmission or the cost of the storage back-up that is required for wind. Compared with that £90 per MWh figure, gas is priced at just under £55 per MWh. If we are trying to decarbonise, we need to move away from gas, but what does that mean? Is there a real concern that we will lose our industrial capacity because we are going for higher-priced energy?

09:15

Ryan Morrison: I am happy to speak to some aspects of that. The deindustrialisation that we have noted has been quite a consistent theme over the past few decades, in particular with manufacturing jobs being lost to overseas. From our perspective, there is a range of reasons for that, most of which come back to the way in which we view the manufacturing sector and how we have managed these industries.

We see ownership as a fairly key component. I do not think that we should be waiting for decisions to be made overseas by particular companies when we could have a greater stake in those sectors and greater control over them. Climate change is going to result in a significant industrial and economic transformation—

Murdo Fraser: Can I interrupt you just for a second? Regardless of who owns the companies, they are going to face the same challenges with energy costs, are they not?

Ryan Morrison: Yes, and we have had conversations with some of the sectors included in the climate change plan—that is, energy-intensive industries such as glass works and cement works. You mentioned electricity prices; they are a massive issue, and they make those industries extremely uncompetitive, not just domestically but in comparison with European counterparts. Our electricity use, by industry in particular, is higher.

It is something for those companies to look at. The message in the plan is that they should be looking to pursue electrification; we support that as part of the general climate change agenda, but it is important that we talk about the pricing issue and whether it has been adequately resolved, because there is a risk that those companies become uncompetitive.

Murdo Fraser: What is your view on the costs set out in the plan and how it is all to be paid for? Do you think that the plan deals with that sufficiently?

Ryan Morrison: I cannot say that I have gone through the plan with a fine-toothed comb, but it does talk about the balance of net costs and the potential costs of climate inaction, which is an interesting comparison to make.

What I think is interesting on the finance side is the commentary on the net benefits to households, and the section that outlines where and in which sectors those benefits are most likely to come from. A really significant proportion of them will come from the transition to electric vehicles. I would say that, from a just transition perspective, we would have some concerns if the primary economic benefit is to come from that transition. As Dougie Maguire has mentioned, we are interested in the expansion of public transport, and buses in particular, given that they are used predominantly by lower-income households. Moreover, who will have access to the brand-new electric vehicles that might be coming on stream?

There is not sufficient detail in the plan on who will benefit from this transition. From what it says, it appears that the net costs will be factored into the wider cost of climate inaction.

Murdo Fraser: Thank you.

The Convener: I have a brief supplementary. You mentioned glass making and cement works. It is my understanding that this is a question not just of the price of electricity, but of the fundamental technology for electric heating. The fact is that, in its current state, the technology is not sufficient to provide enough heat for those processes. Has there been sufficient effort to look at the fundamental technology, especially for those high-heat processes for which, right now, we do not have any practical, let alone cost-effective, alternatives? Do we need effort to be put into research and development, and does that need to be part of the plan?

Ryan Morrison: Yes, certainly, but one of the reasons for that situation might be that the industrial electricity price is such a significant barrier at this point in time that it is not worth considering until we know for certain that those prices are going to change.

Even if we were to look beyond electrification to other energy sources such as hydrogen—under certain plans, we might be looking at using, say, green hydrogen—we still come back to the same issue of the cost of electricity, in particular for industrial use. Some interesting work could be done on power purchase agreements and more localised purchase of electricity, which is something that the major industrial energy users might consider, in particular with the growth of offshore wind electricity generation.

The question for our energy-intensive industries is one not just of energy sourcing but of the raw materials and feedstocks, and I do not think that that conversation is happening in a particularly comprehensive way anywhere. That is of significant concern to us; after all, the sector is also included in the green industrial strategy. It is not clear to us, from a just transition perspective, whether the workers would have confidence in how the sector is being described or discussed within the plan.

The Convener: That was helpful. I call Sarah Boyack.

Sarah Boyack (Lothian) (Lab): As a member of the Unison and Community trade unions, I want to note that is good to have you in front of us today.

There is a real issue around who pays for what and when, and you have talked about job losses and people not having opportunities. How can we ramp up the potential opportunities across every community? You talked about energy, too. I have seen a comment on the need for regional just transition planning, so that people are involved across the country and know where the new jobs are. What is your thinking on that? You mentioned the manufacturing opportunities in new transport infrastructure and sorting out people's homes to make them energy efficient. How do we ensure that there are jobs that go with those opportunities, now and in the future?

Dougie Maguire: In relation to the whole conversation and plan—which I believe is a climate reduction plan more than it is anything else—we have been in a chicken-and-egg situation for long enough. I say that because, as Ryan Morrison explained, if energy is too costly, things will not be manufactured here and the work goes abroad. The price has to be right.

Communities are clearly struggling. As for who pays for what and when, it is pretty clear to the general population of Scotland that we are paying for electricity prices at the moment, through our electricity bills. The contracts for difference programme means that, despite the fact that the megawatt numbers will not get to where they should be up in the north and up the east coast for years—probably not until well after 2030—whether or not the turbines are operating, the grid providers make money. I have seen a summary that says that that will potentially increase private consumers' bills by about 20 per cent. On who pays for what and when, I think that we are all paying for it at this moment in time.

We have no sorted oot the manufacturing side of this for two decades, as Ryan said. It seems that we manufacture everything abroad, and everything to do with green energy is also being manufactured abroad at the moment. From a worker's perspective, our part in manufacturing is in putting stuff together when it arrives, which gives no one much confidence that we will have highly paid, well-skilled jobs that are covered by collective agreements for our members.

I think that the plan is a vision, but there is not enough detail on how we get there. I genuinely believe, and Unite the Union believes, that we need a competent industrial strategy that delivers real jobs in a graduated manner that works hand in glove with the green energy sector in making the transition, but we seem to be just running towards the transition and leaving workers and communities behind.

Sorry, that was a bit convoluted, but I was speaking off the top of my head.

Ryan Morrison: I refer back to the ONS analysis that we carried out, which not only focused on the race to benefit from our renewal energy potential but looked at some of the sectors in the low-carbon renewables economy that have

had fairly decent performance with jobs, including low-carbon transport and infrastructure, energy-efficient products such as energy-efficient lighting, and, last year, renewable heat, which had a fairly substantial increase.

There is a distinction to be made, which we would be looking for when we are considering the just transition in the context of the climate change plan and which involves taking the planning for how we meet our emissions reduction targets to a much more granular level. Effectively, we need to know what we have now that needs to be protected and transitioned, what doing that will look like and how intensive the support will need to be, based on the expected level of change. Where there are emerging opportunities, we need to consider how we secure the job opportunities that might come from them. When it comes to offshore wind, that looks much more like manufacturing than operation and maintenance. However, the second part of that is about how we can benefit from the potential wealth generation of those emerging opportunities, which takes us back to the question of ownership.

With ScotWind, the Irish investment bank has stakes, as do a company comprising 94 towns and municipalities in Belgium, for example, and a company that is owned by the German region of Baden-Württemberg. Those companies stand to benefit from the income that they expect to make from the ScotWind round. Scotland does not have a share in those projects so, as well as not seeing the jobs—which will predominantly be in manufacturing—the economic benefits and wealth generation of the projects are likely to bypass us. The plan does not do that level of detail or analysis on just transition planning, but that is what we want to see.

Similarly, with transport, the plan mentions the potential financial savings from the transition to electric vehicles, and it very briefly touches on the reason for that, which is because of the reduction in maintenance and repairs that is expected as a result of using electric vehicles rather than combustion engines. However, the plan does not go into more detail on what that means for people who work in garages—the mechanics who predominantly make up the sector—or what it means for the supply chain that supplies the components and parts that are needed. There is a statement that electric vehicles will lead to financial savings, but there is none of the analysis that would get us into just transition planning.

We need that distinction across the board on those issues and for each of the sectors in order to feel confident that we are going to ramp up the benefits. Right now, that is not clear.

Sarah Boyack: My next question develops that point. To what extent are workers and unions able to influence the discussion to deliver the transition to net zero? Last night, at a meeting of the cross-party group on renewable energy and energy efficiency and the CPG on islands, we focused on community-owned projects and community benefits. We heard that, if you frame it as decarbonisation, people are not interested, so we need to talk about jobs, lowering bills and investing in communities.

You have just talked about ownership. Can we do more to get the benefits that other countries are getting through renewable energy companies in Scotland? How are you involved? Is it about municipal ownership or planning changes? What are your thoughts on how to involve workers across the country in delivering this so that they benefit?

Who wants to come in on that?

Ryan Morrison: The other witnesses are better placed than I am to talk about the direct workers' experience in some sectors.

First, I will touch on the ownership question. There has been a fair bit of attention on community ownership, but we are also interested in national and municipal ownership projects. The climate change plan has a case study on the Orkney offshore wind farm, which is expected to return significant profits to the local authority to use for other services or potentially to expand its energy ownership of other projects. That is listed as a case study, but we do not see any policy that would enable it to be expanded elsewhere. In 2024, less than 1 per cent of the new renewable energy capacity that was added in Scotland had an element of community or local ownership. That is a significant issue if we are looking to build on who is benefiting from renewable energy.

The returns are very different when there is community ownership as opposed to community benefit funds, not least because the voluntary target of £5,000 per megawatt in community benefits has not been met. Other questions are emerging on things such as battery storage, which are not necessarily tied into the same voluntary practice of community benefits. Added to that is the lack of jobs involved in those types of projects. There will be jobs in construction but, from looking at planning applications for some of those very large battery storage sites, it seems that there might not even be one full-time equivalent job for operation and maintenance. There will probably be one remote worker covering multiple sites across Scotland and potentially across the United Kingdom.

If we are not tying in community benefits with those projects and there are no jobs, and given

that those projects sometimes have leases for up to 30 years that have already been awarded, that is another significant issue.

Sarah Boyack: Dougie, do you want to come in on that? How do you get involved so that your members get what they need?

Dougie Maguire: Your point was well made. The majority of the people we speak to are absolutely concentrated on keeping the job that they have, rather than wondering how they can benefit from something that is not in their area or sphere whatsoever. It is a battle out there, is it not?

I have seen some evidence recently that community benefits are being talked about in Scotland now, particularly in the Highland area, and there is some good stuff in Lanarkshire as well. When I look around the cities in Scotland, it seems to me that there is not much emphasis from city councils or local communities on trying to engage in the same manner with community ownership of green energy. There seems to be this idea that you have to be near a wind farm to benefit from that. I suppose that the answer is that the conversation is not one that is taking place within the normal workplaces that I deal with.

09:30

Sarah Boyack: That is really helpful, thanks. I will hand back to you, convener.

The Convener: I have a brief supplementary question. There is a question about whether workers are being engaged at the workplace level. There is also a question about whether the trade unions and the workforce are being engaged at the macro level on skills planning. Ryan Morrison alluded to car mechanics, and I have spoken to people at some sites who say that they could use the skills that car mechanics have in different ways and in different industries. However, that requires to be thought through to identify those opportunities and proactively plan when those changes happen. Is there sufficient focus on that dialogue between trade unions, Government and employers about how those transitions can work? Does the plan elaborate on that sufficiently, and, if not, what more would you like to see on that dialogue and detailed planning between trade unions, Government and employers?

Ryan Morrison: I do not think that it is structurally embedded in how the plan is being approached and how some of those policies are developed. Initiatives have been set up off the back of demands from trade unions, such as the offshore training passport. Through their development, they have changed slightly and morphed into something that the workers and trade unions involved have not necessarily been asking for, and they have not necessarily addressed the full pathway that would be needed.

With the offshore skills passport, we know from the experience of workers in the offshore sector that they find that they can log their qualifications and have a look at alternative qualifications that they might get, but they are still expected to pay for that training and those qualifications and they might still have to duplicate their training and qualifications even where there is significant overlap between offshore wind and oil and gas, for example. Also, once they complete the process, they are looking for work in that sector that they cannot find. The question is therefore whether we are creating a full pathway for those workers that starts with recognising the skills that they have in the job that they are in, understands the timeline of the changes that are expected for them, supports them to reskill and then opens up opportunities for them on the other side.

There are pockets where that has been done better. For example, through Unite's and GMB's engagement on Grangemouth, there is a job prioritisation scheme; we would say that that is positive. At Alexander Dennis, there was an intervention to support furlough and to support the company to try to find new orders. Those are examples of things that have come from trade unions as part of trying to support those workers to transition. They are not, however, reflected in the climate change plan, in the green industrial strategy and in the just transition plans that were prepared for different sectors last year. We would quite like to see that type of initiative considered as part of those plans. How can they be part of an active industrial strategy that supports workers, rather than piecemeal responses that react to specific issues?

The Convener: I should probably have reminded the committee of my entry in the register of members' interests, as I am a member of Community and of the Union of Shop, Distributive and Allied Workers.

Would Dougie Maguire or Claire Greer like to say anything about the proactive involvement of trade unions in planning for skills transitions?

Dougie Maguire: To add to what Ryan Morrison said, we spent years actively engaging with oil and wind companies to try to get the offshore skills passport developed. Unfortunately, although it is better than nothing, duplication is still required with a skills passport. For instance, an offshore survival certificate is obviously needed for working on an oil rig, but the same certificate will not be accepted by the wind companies—you have to go and do a different type of survival training.

The Convener: Is that still an issue?

Dougie Maguire: Yes, it is.

The Convener: The point has been raised for a long time.

Dougie Maguire: There is no doubt that the skills passport was absolutely a step in the right direction. Skills passports probably need to be developed for the majority of skilled workers across Scotland. However, it comes back to the oil and gas, Grangemouth and Mossmorran problem: although workers might have skills passports or training made available to them—and, often, paid for—the jobs are not there. That is the issue. We are training people now whose training certificate's lifespan—if it has one, and such things are normally there when it comes to skills training—will run out by the time that the jobs are available. People will therefore have to go through the training again.

Of course it is credible and worthwhile to reskill and retrain workers—we have always argued for that—but whether they are at Grangemouth or Mossmorran, in oil and gas or anywhere else, the workers that we speak to all say the same thing. They say that they have done what was asked of them and got themselves retrained, reskilled or whatever. However, they cannot get a job, because the jobs are not there, and if they do get a job, it pays half of what they were earning previously. The jobs do not need the same high-quality skill set. People with high-level skill sets need to use their skills—we need to use their skills—otherwise, it is a complete waste of talent.

Claire Greer (GMB Scotland): I totally agree with what has been said. One of the problems of getting people to engage in things such as the skills passport is that there are so many initiatives. At one of the last meetings that we were at, it was said that there were about 80 initiatives to get people from the oil and gas industry to retrain in renewables. When so many things are on the table, their integrity is diluted. As Dougie Maguire said, by the time people have completed one of those training programmes or skills passports, it is outdated, because the jobs are not there to move into. That is a real problem.

You spoke about communities. The people who live in those communities are the people who work in the oil and gas industry or the nuclear industry. They do not see a way out—they do not see a pathway or where they are going to go to next. Their skills have been wasted. They either move abroad to other jobs or they go down south to—dare I say it?—Hinkley Point. As I have said in this room before, that is not through design; it is through fault, because of the amount of delay that has gone on. That is the only reason: there are jobs at Hinkley Point at the moment.

We need to make sure that a plan is in place. If you do not have the workers on board, you will not have the communities on board and you will not get the revenue income. It is a complete failure right across the board. We need to make sure that what we have in place for them works and is understood by the people who will take part in it. There also needs to be a route out at the end; at the moment, it just seems to involve numerous incentives and numerous organisations coming in and saying, "Here is what we can do for you" despite there being no jobs at the end of that. There is no clear path.

The Convener: Kevin Stewart has a supplementary question on something that has just been said.

Kevin Stewart (Aberdeen Central) (SNP): I declare an interest as a member of Unison.

The climate change plan has to be delivered by not only Government but others; it is all about delivery and delivering for people. Dougie Maguire mentioned inaction from local authorities when it comes to grasping community benefit. However, there is probably also inaction when it comes to following the likes of Baden-Württemberg in investing in the future and using the likes of local government pension schemes to boost manufacturing for jobs for the future—which, certainly, I want, coming as I do from the north-east of Scotland, where an unjust transition will hit hardest.

Should we be more open than we have been, thus far, to investment from local authorities, particularly from their pension schemes, in order to deliver?

Dougie, since I mentioned you, please go first.

Dougie Maguire: Absolutely. I am no gonnae say we should be using local government workers' pension schemes to fund anything. That is completely outwith my gift.

I take the point you are making, which I think is valid. Why are we no using the best examples from across the world of how to gain a stake in the green energy vision? How can we use the benefits of that to ensure that we are working in tandem and delivering quality jobs at the same time as reducing carbon emissions? That has to go hand in glove, does it not?

I am no an expert on pensions or pension schemes.

Kevin Stewart: I will give you an example, Dougie. Not so long ago, I heard that one local authority scheme in Scotland had made an investment in offshore wind in Vietnam and in the manufacturing base there. It would surely be far better, and would likely give a more guaranteed

return, if that money had been used to invest and create jobs in Scotland instead of elsewhere around the globe.

Dougie Maguire: That is a hypothetical question for me, but it may be that the investment is not available in Scotland. It is a case of, "Build it and they will come." I would suggest that the only way forward is through this country finding ways to make the maximum impact on communities and oor ain economy by reducing carbon emissions at the same time as manufacturing goods and looking at the new skills required for that. I have no doubt that there will be an explosion of work, but it will no be any time soon. That is the problem.

I am particularly interested in the Highland area, and we have had a number of proactive conversations wi the chief executive officer of the green freeport in Moray. The vision and the plan look good, but, as far as I am aware, not one company has committed to coming in and building anything in that area. Highland Council and SSE are spending money building social housing and workers' villages, but there is no work. How do we get there?

When it comes to pension schemes and other funds, we really need to start thinking about how we fund. That is what is missing from the whole document. There are some examples of money that is already available, but where do we find the money and how do we use it?

Kevin Stewart: I have just given one alternative.

Ryan, what do you think?

Ryan Morrison: When the information is published each year by the Energy Saving Trust, we look at the number of renewable energy installations owned by local authorities. There is quite a broad range of ownership: some local authorities have 20, 30 or 40 installations, but South Lanarkshire, Stirling and Aberdeenshire are sitting at the higher end of the list, with several thousand. We have tried to build an understanding of why and how that is happening.

In South Lanarkshire's case, the local authority made a decision to try to fit photovoltaic solar panels on council buildings. The initial approach was to look at one project to try to understand the financial business case. Once that had been paid back and the repayment period—which I think was about four or five years—was clear, the council decided to reinvest some of those savings and to scope out all the buildings that had the potential for solar PV. The authority has upskilled its building services team to be able to fit and maintain the solar panels. Some of those staff are apprentices, but a couple have been involved in the local authority for a number of decades. The authority is now seeing the benefit of those savings, which can be reinvested in other services.

We have not seen that being particularly well reflected in Scottish Government planning, so we have tried to feed back that we think there are good initiatives that could be supported and that there is no reason why local authorities could not be on a more equal playing field regarding the number of installations. We think the issue is that not all councils are aware that they could, or should, consider that or that it might pay back. It is a risk for councils, but the experience of South Lanarkshire has been that it paid back fairly quickly and the council is confident about moving forward with that.

09:45

In terms of the pension funds, my position is similar to that of Dougie Maguire—I am not going to try to suggest what local authority pensions should be investing in. However, I think that there are other sources of funding that we could be considering that are meant to be supporting a just transition. The Scottish National Investment Bank is a fairly obvious one. A number of years ago, one of the first investments that the bank made was in the Iona wind partnership, which is effectively an asset management firm, and that investment helped to close the gap for the partnership in terms of securing new projects in Scotland. It is difficult to understand why that money should not be used to support local authorities to become part owners of offshore wind projects instead of going towards asset management firms overseas.

Claire Greer: Again, I am not going to comment on what we should do with local authority pension funds. What I will say is that I have spent a lot of time in Shetland over the past 12 months and, if you want to see a perfect example of an industry being decimated, Shetland is at the forefront of that. In the time that I have spent there, directors of companies have attended visits with us and CEOs of companies have been standing there, investment in hand—for some of them it was £80 million; for others, it was £40 million. They were ready to invest immediately in Sullom Voe; they were ready to invest in Shetland, within Scotland. At the same time, our Government was celebrating a £28 million trade deal that had been made across the water when we could be doing this in wir own country. We have got people ready to invest, but they are not doing it because they do not have trust in what is going on in our energy sector in Scotland and also because they require there to be an energy mix. They are not looking for 100 per cent renewables; they are looking to invest that money into renewables, but only if oil and gas are in the mix as well, which is necessary to keep

us going, although they seem to be getting shut down entirely.

You are asking where else that money could come from—there are many avenues that it can come from. That is just one, which I know about from visits to Shetland. You are asking about the local authorities—the leaders of Shetland Islands Council were there at those meetings. They were welcoming those people on to their island, they were asking how the investment would work on the island, their ears were open and they were listening to what was being said. Unfortunately, once it leaves the island, those decisions are being taken out of their hands, and that is where the problems lie. We need to listen to our communities, we need to listen to the local authorities, and we need to open wir eyes to what else is out there and where else the money can come from.

Kevin Stewart: You are suggesting that there needs to be a logical balance between still investing in oil and gas and moving to the green technologies, in order to sustain jobs for the future and to create a just transition.

Claire Greer: One hundred per cent. When we look at the just transition, the focus is on looking after what we already have and then, into the future, ensuring that there are jobs and a place for people to go. At the moment, there are not. We are talking about closing down industries—closing down sectors—in the name of getting to net zero as quickly as possible. We can have that badge of honour in this country, but what is it going to leave? Where are wir people gonnae work? What is going to happen to wir communities? Where are we going to go for energy security?

We need the investment just now, and we need to make sure that, rather than a race to net zero, we have a race to be secure in our own energy in wir own country. To do that, we need to look after what we have. We cannot just keep saying, "Where can we go that's new?" We need to look at what we have already done. We have world-leading skills and trades in energy; we have world-leading health and safety. We are looking at closing down all of our nuclear, and Grangemouth is hanging on by the skin of its teeth. We are looking at closing down oil and gas. We need to look at the bigger picture, see what other countries are doing and just take a step back and ask, "Are we doing the right thing for the people of Scotland?" I do not think that we are.

Kevin Stewart: Thank you.

Willie Coffey (Kilmarnock and Irvine Valley) (SNP): My question is a follow-up to what Sarah Boyack was asking about earlier. It is about your view on whether workers and the trade unions are playing a strategic partnership role in this journey that we are on. I am beginning to get the answer, I think, from your comments. Do you feel that you are being carried along in the slipstream of this and abandoned along the way, or do you feel that you are a key partner in shaping and developing public policy on this journey? Could you offer any examples from Europe or elsewhere? Ryan, you mentioned a few places, such as Ireland, Germany, Belgium and so on, where perhaps workers play a more central role in the development of public policy on this whole journey.

Ryan Morrison: I am happy to start.

We have been invited to engage in a number of different areas. For example, last year we were asked to support policy development with regard to the just transition plan, and we did so by ensuring that workers from those sectors, and the trade union officials representing trade union members in those sectors, were front and centre of those discussions. We had the opportunity to facilitate that, but whether what was said, and the conclusions of those meetings, were reflected in the policy outcome is perhaps where we would find some disagreement. We do not feel strongly that what workers have been saying has been reflected in the just transition plan, the green industrial strategy or the climate change plan.

I do not think that it is some insurmountable issue that we could do better in a lot of these spaces. There are other areas where it is not necessarily in the development of policies that the key decisions are being made. Recently, there was a focus on the Scottish offshore wind energy council, which, as far as we can see, is making some fairly significant decisions about how that sector should be developed and what the economic benefits will look like. However, there is no trade union involvement in that council, and we have asked for better representation on it. It has working groups covering skills and other issues, and it is important that we have a tripartite view of those discussions. Similarly, trade unions were not necessarily involved as a delivery partner in the onshore wind sector deal—it was between industry and Government. That approach is reflected in the policies that are chosen, because we are not seeing workers or communities getting the right return from the wealth that they can generate from it.

Willie Coffey: Dougie, do you feel the same? Do workers play an active role in shaping and developing policy, or do you just respond to it?

Dougie Maguire: Personally, I feel that we are just responding to it. I know that the workers in the sectors that we are talking about are really concerned, because they are currently covered by collective agreements that give them some kind of comfort. As Ryan Morrison has said, those

agreements arenae forthcoming in the new green energy sectors. It is no because we have not tried to engage with companies; it has just been very difficult, and they have been very reticent. One of my colleagues in Aberdeen recently suggested that the offshore oil and gas agreement that we operate wi all the trade unions in Scotland and the employers should be extended to cover wind, and the suggestion was rebuffed by the wind companies.

We arenae in any way partners. Of course we want to have a seat at the table, but, to be fair, we are no representing that many workers in that industry, because it is a difficult industry and there are no the same numbers of people involved. A wind farm does not need a lot of people to look after it, whereas one oil rig could have 500, 600 or 700 workers on it. That is the issue. I keep coming back to it, but the issue is that massive gap.

Unfortunately, none of what I am witnessing today in relation to trying to reduce carbon emissions and the impact on communities and workers is new. I have been here before; deindustrialisation took place a long time ago in Scotland. I live in a mining community where the pits shut and there were nae jobs to go to. I then lived through the oil boom—or the supposed oil boom. I had on my doorstep an oil rig yard that made one of the first oil rigs in Scotland, and it closed down. It was called Redpath Dorman Long; it became Burntisland Fabrications—or BiFab—then Harland & Wolff, and it is now Navantia, but there were huge gaps in between.

I know that I am no answering the question, but I am coming back to whether we feel that we are strategic partners. We are no; we are reactive to decisions that are being made. Sometimes they are made outside this country, and sometimes they are impacted heavily by UK Government regulation or policy, which we do have an input to.

We are all dealing with the same problem, which is to arrive at a destination where people and communities are looked after while also reducing carbon emissions, but we have no been provided with the detail o a plan for how we will arrive at that destination. The journey is actually more important than the destination, so perhaps the destination needs to come a wee bit further down the road until we have planned out the journey.

Willie Coffey: Is there time to ask Claire Greer for her view on that?

The Convener: In the interests of time, I need to bring in Stephen Kerr, but I know that his question is in a related area. I will get Stephen Kerr to ask his question, and Claire Greer can respond to both.

Stephen Kerr (Central Scotland) (Con): To be fair, convener, many of the questions that I had in mind have, thankfully, already been asked.

It would be good to hear witnesses' response to the idea that, under the Climate Change (Emissions Reduction Targets) (Scotland) Act 2024, the climate change plan is supposed to deal in some detail with issues relating to skills, training and employment. What I am hearing from you is something approaching dissatisfaction about the fact that we are going from employment in high-skilled, high-paid jobs but there is no clear idea about what we are transitioning to. Does the climate change plan approach the issue of skills and jobs to an appropriate level of detail? I see that Claire Greer is shaking her head already, so I will come straight to her.

Claire Greer: I apologise—I have given you my answer in advance. The short answer is no, but I will expand on that. We are calling it a plan, but it seems more of a very good idea of where we could be if we lived in a perfect world and we had only renewable energy and renewable energy jobs. For it to be a plan, it needs to begin with where we are now. There is no mention of where we are now, and there is no mention of where industries are now. In fact, I think that the sectoral contributions at the end are the first time that the current oil and gas sector is mentioned. It is nowhere else in the plan.

I have a real problem with it being called a plan, first of all because I do not think that it is; I think that it is a very well-written proposal. I do not think that it reflects where we are, what we need to do or where we will end up in five, 10 or 15 years. We have to take into account where we want to be. I know that I have said this before, but it is not just a badge of honour for net zero. Where do we want our country to be? Do we want to be self-sufficient? Do we want energy security? Do we want investment in jobs? If we do, this is absolutely the way to do it. If we get this wrong, we will be destroying what has been built up for years in Scotland.

We talk about our resources in Scotland. Let us look at the resources that we have now and how they can be worked on. If we talk about carbon capture, let us talk about how we can utilise our resources. However, we should also bring in the new guns, such as the renewables. That is fine. There is a place for everybody, but there has to be a mixed energy supply in Scotland to make sure that we are looking after the people, our industry and our security as a country.

Stephen Kerr: What does that mean in terms of energy sources? You say that there should be a mixed basket, and a number of fleeting comments have been made about nuclear energy, for

example. What does the transition from a race to net zero to a race to energy security, which you said was your objective, look like in relation to a climate change plan?

Claire Greer: In its simplest form, if we go from the top of the country to the bottom of the country, we have to go through the full supply chain, including manufacturing. I listened to the meeting last week, where a lot was said about glass works, cement works and chlorine. We have to include all those people in the plan. They are the people who keep our economy going and those are the sectors that offer good, well-paid jobs.

We go from the top to the bottom and ask, "What do we already have? What can we utilise?" We have a gas distribution network in this country that is second to none. It has been updated and reinvigorated over the past five or six years. It is ready to go; it is ready for us to see what else we can use it for, and to see about hydrogen, or nuclear, in the energy mix.

Let us not get stuck on renewables. We absolutely need to use them, and we absolutely need to reduce our emissions and ensure that we do the best that we can on that as a country, but we need to look after the country and the people who work and live in it as well. Otherwise, what is the point in the whole game?

We need to look at our resources from top to bottom. Let us all work together. Let us not get greedy about what renewables companies can get with as few staff and jobs as possible while making as much revenue as they can. Let us look at what keeps our country going and what works.

10:00

Stephen Kerr: From the way you describe it, it sounds like you feel that in our current approach—I do not want to put words in your mouth—we are on a path of self-harm.

Claire Greer: One hundred per cent.

Stephen Kerr: Dougie, I go back to my original point about the issue of skills and jobs in the plan. Is there any substance there that is worth commenting on?

Dougie Maguire: There is no substance there, but I am happy to comment on it.

Stephen Kerr: Please do. [*Laughter.*] I was counting on that, actually.

Dougie Maguire: I will quickly amplify what has just been said. The Westminster Scottish Affairs Committee has reached a similar conclusion to ours, which is that we are throwing away and wasting a natural resource that is not finished, and that is oil and gas. The committee has recommended that we should decelerate the decline and that the UK Government should not be making any decisions that dinnae dae that.

To come back to the point about training and jobs, I have to say again that I think that a lot of people are making a lot of money out of training and we are not finding any jobs at the end of it. Why would we no divert that money tae somewhere else, which would obviously be job creation? I take and agree with the point that we need a mix of all energy sources at this time, whether they be new or old, because to do otherwise in a really difficult, volatile world is, I would suggest, absolutely crazy. We are on a really difficult planet at this moment in time. The truth of the matter is that the majority of our resources are owned by other Governments, other countries or other countries' banks, and any one of them could decide to switch off our access or hike the prices, and cause chaos in Scotland and the UK. I think that we are playing fast and loose, not just with people's jobs and futures, but with the security of the country.

We have an opportunity today to make all-encompassing the move to new industries, new jobs and a better world, but we cannae throw away the natural resources that we currently use and need—oil and gas. We cannae throw away any mair opportunities as we did with Grangemouth and Mossmorran. A huge amount of public money is being spent supporting those workplaces, and we are not getting the return that we deserve and have paid for, to be fair.

Stephen Kerr: You could add Torness to that list.

Dougie Maguire: You could—yes.

Stephen Kerr: You do not substantially disagree with Claire Greer on anything that she said; would you say that you are in the same place?

Dougie Maguire: Absolutely.

Stephen Kerr: I do not know whether I have time for another question.

The Convener: If it is brief. I would like to move on.

Stephen Kerr: When you were talking about the freeports, you said that you could foresee an explosion of work. Do you have a vision for onshore manufacturing and all of that? We currently do not have anything to look at.

Dougie Maguire: I got really excited about 18 months ago, up in Inverness, speaking to the people from the green port. It was a really exciting meeting. We were looking at the future—at building social housing and at people getting high-paid, quality jobs in the local area, so they would

not have to move away; people having to move away to get good work has always been a problem in Inverness and the Highlands.

Stephen Kerr: It is Scotland's problem.

Dougie Maguire: Well, it is. You kind of buy into that vision, which looks exciting, but now we are 18 months further down the line and there is no spade in the ground in relation to manufacturing happening. You just think, "When is this gonnae happen? When is it coming?"

I am just worried that this draft climate change plan might be putting constraints on the future at the expense of current jobs and the current energy supply. That worries me, because we really need to think about how we are gonnae get to where we need to go and how we take everybody wi us, not just a select few.

Stephen Kerr: Ryan, we have very little time, but do you want to say anything additional?

Ryan Morrison: Yes, I want to comment on the principles in the Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009 and what we would expect to see in the climate change plan more directly. The section in the 2009 act on the climate change plan says that it should be expected to include projections on how policies and proposals will impact employment, particularly when employment is affected in significant regions.

Stephen Kerr: Yes. That is in that act.

Ryan Morrison: Indeed. The plan takes a very broad-brush approach to that, and what you might see is, for example, an overview of how employment might change across a whole sector, with a specific region pulled out as an issue. With energy supply, for example, there is an obvious focus on Aberdeen and the north-east, but we would have expected far more granular detail on what, with the transition to electric vehicles that I have already mentioned, will happen to those who currently work in car repair, mechanics in garages and so on.

That is the level of detail that we are looking for, and it is the level of detail that workers need in order to feel confident about what is happening. It is not how the requirement in the 2009 act has been interpreted, but, if we are talking about a just transition, that is the level of detail that we need to see. In fact, I think that one of the issues here is that we do not have that detail, and it would be useful if people could begin preparing it so that we can have a better look across the economy at how the different policy interventions will affect employment in the regions and have some understanding of the new opportunities that Dougie Maguire has talked about.

There are pockets of things happening. A positive example is XLCC in Hunterston and its early recognition agreement with the GMB, and there is also Sumitomo, which is involved in cable manufacture in Cromarty. Those are examples of jobs being created, and there has been public support for them; however, we are not necessarily sure about the job profile itself. Will it match that of the jobs that we are losing elsewhere in the economy? Are those opportunities going to be opened up to those people? Do we have the support and engagement of the private sector, and will it work with us on that? That is not clear, and it is that level of detail that we understood would be provided under the principles of the 2009 act.

Stephen Kerr: It sounds as though you are saying that we lack an industrial strategy.

Ryan Morrison: Yes.

Stephen Kerr: Okay.

The Convener: Very good. The deputy convener assures me that she has one very brief final question.

Michelle Thomson (Falkirk East) (SNP): I suspect that the answer to it might be quite brief. I just want to pick up on a point that my colleague Murdo Fraser made earlier. We have talked a lot about the how when it comes to the plan, but the money aspect is very relevant to that. I just wanted to check, given your areas of knowledge, how much you have reflected on the restrictions of the fiscal framework on the Scottish Government and the fact that it has a fixed budget. Of course, the limits are set in the medium-term financial strategy as a function of that fiscal framework. In your reflections on the availability of funding to deliver all this, how familiar are you with the fiscal sustainability perspective that is produced by the Scottish Fiscal Commission?

You nodded, Ryan, so you can go first.

Ryan Morrison: There are restrictions on devolved Administration and we are not going to suggest that there are not, but I have already touched on certain elements where money could be better spent to generate income and revenue. I have highlighted the example of the Scottish National Investment Bank providing money to the Iona Wind Partnership, which is managed by a private asset management firm, instead of enabling local authorities and other public bodies to get involved in that process and generate income themselves. That is an example of money being spent away, rather than in, and instead of building on the potential that is there.

Similarly, Great British Energy has prioritised public buildings for a lot of its investment—

Michelle Thomson: But that is a different thing. My specific question, which is for all of you, is this: how much do you understand the limitations of the fiscal framework? Having more efficient spend would be a bite of the cherry against the funding requirements set out by the Scottish Fiscal Commission. Have any of you read that report?

Ryan Morrison: No.

Michelle Thomson: Okay. I am not having a go at you. The point that I am trying to make, whether or not it is fair, is that people are not really across the detail of the limitations on Scottish Government spend, whether that is its own spend or spend that has been crowded in, as a function of the fiscal framework and a fixed budget. All the detail of the numbers are set out in the report that I have referred to. My contention is that that is not understood enough, and it is important that we increase that knowledge and understanding.

I should also say that I am aware of the time, convener.

Ryan Morrison: I have not read the report, but my answer is still relevant in the context. Money is moving overseas that could be retained—

Michelle Thomson: But how can it be retained?

Ryan Morrison: Through better ownership shares and equity control.

Michelle Thomson: But what if you do not have the power to do that? That is exactly the point that I am making.

Ryan Morrison: I suppose that that has been the conversation, particularly with regard to energy. The Scottish Government has been saying for a long time now that it does not have the power to take on large-scale energy ownership, but I would note that, last year, as part of its relationship with GB Energy and through the Scottish National Investment Bank, it took an ownership share of the Pentland floating wind farm. So, the power is there.

Michelle Thomson: But that is the Scottish National Investment Bank. I do not want to get into a spat over this.

Ryan Morrison: Sure, but I just want to make a very specific point that goes a bit beyond the specifics of this conversation. The STUC has prepared papers on how we should approach taxation in Scotland and how we could do a better job of ensuring that those with the broadest shoulders contribute more so that we are better able to fund public services and the Government's priorities towards just transition—

Michelle Thomson: But even that, in terms of scale, would not come anywhere near the quantum of spending needed—but anyway.

Ryan Morrison: I appreciate the point.

The Convener: I think that what we are demonstrating is that, when it comes to a just transition and the impact on workers, there is a huge amount that we need to focus on.

Michelle Thomson: Like the cost.

The Convener: Yes, the cost.

I just want to thank all of our witnesses for their interesting contributions, which will be very useful to our work. I just wish that we had more than an hour to cover everything.

I suspend the meeting for two minutes so that we can change the witnesses over and adjust the layout of the room.

10:10

Meeting suspended.

10:14

On resuming—

Community Wealth Building (Scotland) Bill: Stage 2

The Convener: Item 2 is stage 2 consideration of the Community Wealth Building (Scotland) Bill. I will briefly explain the procedure that we will follow during today's proceedings for anyone watching. Members should have with them a copy of the bill, the marshalled list and the groupings. Those documents are available on the bill's web page on the Scottish Parliament's website for anyone observing.

I will call each amendment individually, in the order of the marshalled list. The member who lodged the amendment should either move it or say that they have not moved it when it is called. If the member who lodged the amendment does not move it, any other member present may do so.

The groupings set out the amendments in the order in which they will be debated. There will be one debate on each group of amendments. In each debate, I will call the member who lodged the first amendment in the group to move and speak to that amendment and to speak to all other amendments in the group. I will then call other members with amendments in the group to speak to, but not move, their amendments and to speak to other amendments in the group if they wish to do so.

At my discretion, I will call any other members who wish to speak in the debate. Members who wish to speak should indicate by catching either my or the clerk's attention. I will then call the minister if he has not already spoken in the debate. Finally, I will call the member who moved the first amendment in the group to wind up and either press the amendment or seek to withdraw it.

10:15

If the amendment is pressed, I will put the question on the amendment. If a member wishes to withdraw an amendment after it has been moved and debated, I will ask whether any member present objects. If there is an objection, I will immediately put the question on the amendment. Later amendments to the group are not debated again when they are reached. If they are moved, I will put the question on them straight away.

If there is a division, only committee members are entitled to vote. Voting is by show of hands. It is important that members keep their hands raised clearly until the clerk has recorded their names. If there is a tie, I must exercise a casting vote.

The committee is also required to consider and decide on each section of the schedule to the bill and the long title. I will put the question on each of those provisions at the appropriate point.

Section 1—Community wealth building statement

The Convener: Amendment 30, in the name of Lorna Slater, is grouped with amendments 70 to 73, 40, 21, 74, 32, 79 and 117. If amendment 70 is agreed to, I cannot call amendments 71 and 72. Amendments 21 and 74 are direct alternatives—they can both be moved and decided on—and the text of whichever is the last agreed to is what will appear in the bill.

I ask Lorna Slater to move amendment 30 and to speak to all the amendments in the group.

Lorna Slater: My amendments in the group are intended to make the Community Wealth Building (Scotland) Bill more robust and to ensure that it adheres coherently to the principles of community wealth building.

By structuring the statement's objectives around the community wealth building pillars and connecting it to the national performance framework, amendments 30 and 32 intend that the bill will hardwire community wealth building into Scotland's broader economic, social and environmental architecture.

I have a particular interest in amendment 70. A bill with a single purpose is much clearer and easier to implement than one with two possibly conflicting purposes. The goal of pursuing economic growth is to maximise gross domestic product, which is very much at odds with the goal of reducing inequality and supporting the little local guy against big corporations.

No witness at the Economy and Fair Work Committee identified economic growth as a useful metric for measuring community wealth building, so I argue that it has no place in the bill. We are trying to grow something entirely different here—resilience and local wealth. We are not just trying to maximise GDP, so why reference something that can be measured only in GDP? We know that GDP is not an effective measure of community wealth building. If we measure the wrong thing, we get the wrong outcomes, so why not remove it from the bill altogether and remove the confusion?

In amendment 40, I am explicitly picking out the development of community-owned renewable energy, given the size and importance of that sector to communities across Scotland, not to mention the opportunities that it offers.

Amendment 21 would change "may" to "must" to ensure consistency and impact across Scotland.

On amendment 79, not all local authorities currently even comply with their statutory duty on common good land and assets registers. Without a deadline for that compliance, they have just failed utterly. They have had 10 years to do this, and it is time to press them on it.

On Sarah Boyack's amendment 73, individuals also need to build wealth, not just businesses and organisations. When individuals own shares in a local enterprise or take dividends from a community energy project, they are sharing in the wealth, which I think is right. Unfortunately, I cannot therefore support Sarah Boyack's amendment 73.

I move amendment 30.

The Minister for Public Finance (Ivan McKee): I start by confirming that the Government will support Lorna Slater's amendment 21, which makes the list of measures in section 1(3) mandatory rather than discretionary. It is right that a core compulsory suite of measures is covered in a community wealth building ministerial statement. However, a fit-for-purpose core set was included in the bill at introduction, subject to some small modifications, which are the subject of my amendments in the next group.

My amendment in this group, amendment 71, seeks to make it clear that, although community wealth building is an economic policy that can make a contribution to growth, the form of growth that we seek is sustainable and inclusive.

I know that Lorna Slater lodged amendment 70 to remove section 1(2)(b) from the bill entirely, but I consider the pursuit of growth to be critical for Scotland's economic future and a core objective of the bill, and I do not think that the bill mentions GDP per se. I hope that the member will withdraw her amendment and support the amendment in my name to clarify the nature of the growth that is sought. I urge all members to support my amendment 71.

The Government will support Sarah Boyack's amendment 72, although there is room for debate about whether any particular economic growth is or is not in line with the United Nations resolution referenced in the Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009, to which the amendment refers. The community wealth building statement can encompass that, even if the UN goals are due to be reviewed in 2030. I urge members to support amendment 72 and the associated amendment 117.

The Government position on all other amendments in the group is not to support them. I will take each in turn briefly. Amendment 30 is not required, chiefly as the pillars of community wealth building are already reflected, albeit not specifically referred to, in section 1(3) of the bill as introduced. I also have concerns that there may not be universal agreement about what the five pillars of community wealth building comprise, and that using such high-level concepts in legislation without defining them could create uncertainty. Their implementation can best be taken forward in guidance.

On amendment 73, in Sarah Boyack's name, highlighting community organisations and local businesses as the intended beneficiaries of community wealth building activity is too narrow. The amendment would restrict the measures that ministers could take in the community wealth building statement to those supporting the generation, circulation and retention of wealth only by community organisations and local businesses, not more broadly. Therefore, the amendment does not attract Government support.

Although I understand that Sarah Boyack's amendment 74 has the same intention as Lorna Slater's amendment 21, I ask the member to withdraw amendment 74 and support amendment 21. In essence, it comes down to the word "must" being stronger and less ambiguous than "should" in this context.

Regarding amendment 40, in Lorna Slater's name, the Government's position is that such activity in the energy policy context is best taken forward in guidance. The Government wants to avoid a lengthy prescriptive list of mandatory measures in the bill that must feature in a ministerial statement, and the current drafting offers flexibility for those matters to be included without being specifically mentioned in the bill.

The Government does not support Lorna Slater's amendment 32, as the actions set out in the statement will need time to evidence support of the delivery of national planning framework outcomes. Describing in the statement the relevant indicators of success for community wealth building is an approach that any Government should consider. However, in my view, it is not appropriate for primary legislation to oblige future Administrations to abide by an overly exacting list of mandatory demands as to how they should approach the preparation of the statement.

Finally, on amendment 79, in the name of Lorna Slater, local authorities are already under a statutory duty in section 102 of the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 to establish and maintain a register of property held by the authority as part of the common good. That duty has been in force since June 2018. If local authorities are not complying with a statutory duty within a reasonable timescale, I am not clear that including provision in a statement will be effective in bringing them into compliance. To the extent

that there is an issue with non-compliance by local authorities, the community wealth building statements proposed by this bill are not, in my view, the place to address that.

I will make one or two more general points, if I may, convener. It is clear that there is widespread support for the bill among stakeholders, but it is important that we give community wealth building the best chance to succeed. That requires a clear focus and requires the bill to create a consistent platform for implementation. It is therefore important to avoid unnecessary administration burdens on public bodies, local authorities and others. The guidance in that regard—you will be aware of the work that we have done on that—is important.

The Convener: I call Sarah Boyack to speak to amendment 72 and any other amendments in the group.

Sarah Boyack: I have four amendments in the group, which were crafted with the assistance of Community Land Scotland. The amendments aim to strengthen the bill by ensuring that its general principles prioritise community organisations' and local businesses' retention of the wealth that is generated.

My amendment 72 would ensure that the general aims and outcomes of the bill are in

"line with the United Nations sustainable development goals".

That is absolutely critical. The amended wording would mirror the language of the national performance framework, recognising that financial wealth cannot be separated from social, cultural, environmental and community wealth. I welcome the minister's support for my amendment 72.

My amendments 73 and 74 would insert stronger wording to ensure that the measures truly promote opportunity, development and equality—which are crucial and should not be options—for community organisations. My amendment 117 would ensure that the UN sustainable development goals are properly defined and included in the legislation.

I hope that we will have constructive discussions. Some amendments present slight variations in wording options, such as among "must", "should" and "may". Even if it is not possible for all our amendments to be agreed to, I hope that, when we get to the votes, we will strengthen the bill.

The Convener: Murdo Fraser would like to come in.

Murdo Fraser: The convener will be pleased to know that I do not intend to comment on every amendment in the group or in subsequent groups. However, I will briefly share some general thoughts on the Conservatives' approach to the bill.

We very much support the concept of community wealth building, and we support the bill in principle. I was a little dismayed to see so many amendments, many of which deal with matters that, in my view, are extraneous and should not form part of the bill at all.

In my view, as community wealth building plans are to be determined by other bodies—public bodies or, in some cases, local authorities—we should not try to tie their hands, particularly not those of local authorities, by setting very prescriptive rules centrally about what they can or should not do. That should be a matter for local determination and local decision making. On that basis, there are a number of amendments that we will discuss later that the Conservatives will not support, because we do not think that the Scottish Parliament should be telling local authorities how they should set out the community wealth building plans.

I associate myself with the minister's closing comments about the need for focus, which could get lost if we accept too many amendments that would restrict the flexibility of bodies, including local councils, in drawing up their plans while taking into account the views of stakeholders whom the plans have to relate to. That is our general approach.

I will comment briefly on a couple of the amendments. Lorna Slater will not be hugely surprised to hear that we will not support her amendment 70, which seeks to remove the reference to economic growth. In our view, economic growth is absolutely essential if we are to deliver the successful Scotland that we all want. We therefore want to see that wording retained. I am a bit disappointed with the minister for feeling that he has to qualify the term "economic growth" through amendment 71. That is probably unnecessary, and we will not support that amendment.

The Convener: I will also briefly comment on the group.

I associate myself with members' comments in support for the general principles of the bill and about the need for a bill that provides a useful and practical framework for the organisations that will be tasked with developing community wealth building plans.

I will comment briefly on amendment 70. I associate myself with the minister's comments. I do not think that "economic growth" is such a narrowly drawn term; it can be interpreted in different ways. In my view, it is about ensuring that

we have an economy that develops. Growth can be measured in a number of ways, including in terms of productivity, individual income and the progression of equality and equity in local economies. All those things can be encompassed within a concept of economic growth and are the types of economic growth that we want in our communities and that we want to ensure are developed through community wealth building.

I invite Lorna Slater to wind up and to press or withdraw amendment 30.

Lorna Slater: I have no additional remarks, convener. I will press amendment 30.

The Convener: The question is, that amendment 30 be agreed to. Are we agreed?

Members: No.

The Convener: There will be a division.

For

Boyack, Sarah (Lothian) (Lab)
Johnson, Daniel (Edinburgh Southern) (Lab)
Slater, Lorna (Lothian) (Green)

Against

Coffey, Willie (Kilmarnock and Irvine Valley) (SNP)
Fraser, Murdo (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
Kerr, Stephen (Central Scotland) (Con)
MacDonald, Gordon (Edinburgh Pentlands) (SNP)
Stewart, Kevin (Aberdeen Central) (SNP)
Thomson, Michelle (Falkirk East) (SNP)

The Convener: The result of the division is: For 3, Against 6, Abstentions 0.

Amendment 30 disagreed to.

10:30

The Convener: I remind members that if amendment 70 is agreed to, I cannot call amendments 71 and 72 due to pre-emption.

Amendment 70 moved—[Lorna Slater].

The Convener: The question is, that amendment 70 be agreed to. Are we agreed?

Members: No.

The Convener: There will be a division.

For

Slater, Lorna (Lothian) (Green)

Against

Boyack, Sarah (Lothian) (Lab)
Coffey, Willie (Kilmarnock and Irvine Valley) (SNP)
Fraser, Murdo (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
Johnson, Daniel (Edinburgh Southern) (Lab)
Kerr, Stephen (Central Scotland) (Con)
MacDonald, Gordon (Edinburgh Pentlands) (SNP)
Stewart, Kevin (Aberdeen Central) (SNP)
Thomson, Michelle (Falkirk East) (SNP)

The Convener: The result of the division is: For 1, Against 8, Abstentions 0.

Amendment 70 disagreed to.

Amendment 71 moved—[Ivan McKee].

The Convener: The question is, that amendment 71 be agreed to. Are we agreed?

Members: No.

The Convener: There will be a division.

For

Boyack, Sarah (Lothian) (Lab)
Coffey, Willie (Kilmarnock and Irvine Valley) (SNP)
Johnson, Daniel (Edinburgh Southern) (Lab)
MacDonald, Gordon (Edinburgh Pentlands) (SNP)
Stewart, Kevin (Aberdeen Central) (SNP)
Thomson, Michelle (Falkirk East) (SNP)

Against

Fraser, Murdo (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
Kerr, Stephen (Central Scotland) (Con)
Slater, Lorna (Lothian) (Green)

The Convener: The result of the division is: For 6, Against 3, Abstentions 0.

Amendment 71 agreed to.

Amendment 72 moved—[Sarah Boyack].

The Convener: The question is, that amendment 72 be agreed to. Are we agreed?

Members: No.

The Convener: There will be a division.

For

Boyack, Sarah (Lothian) (Lab)
Coffey, Willie (Kilmarnock and Irvine Valley) (SNP)
Johnson, Daniel (Edinburgh Southern) (Lab)
MacDonald, Gordon (Edinburgh Pentlands) (SNP)
Slater, Lorna (Lothian) (Green)
Stewart, Kevin (Aberdeen Central) (SNP)
Thomson, Michelle (Falkirk East) (SNP)

Against

Fraser, Murdo (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
Kerr, Stephen (Central Scotland) (Con)

The Convener: The result of the division is: For 7, Against 2, Abstentions 0.

Amendment 72 agreed to.

Amendment 73 moved—[Sarah Boyack].

The Convener: The question is, that amendment 73 be agreed to. Are we agreed?

Members: No.

The Convener: There will be a division.

For

Boyack, Sarah (Lothian) (Lab)
Johnson, Daniel (Edinburgh Southern) (Lab)

Against

Coffey, Willie (Kilmarnock and Irvine Valley) (SNP)
Fraser, Murdo (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
Kerr, Stephen (Central Scotland) (Con)
MacDonald, Gordon (Edinburgh Pentlands) (SNP)
Slater, Lorna (Lothian) (Green)
Stewart, Kevin (Aberdeen Central) (SNP)
Thomson, Michelle (Falkirk East) (SNP)

The Convener: The result of the division is: For 2, Against 7, Abstentions 0.

Amendment 73 disagreed to.

Amendment 40 moved—[Lorna Slater].

The Convener: The question is, that amendment 40 be agreed to. Are we agreed?

Members: No.

The Convener: There will be a division.

For

Boyack, Sarah (Lothian) (Lab)
Johnson, Daniel (Edinburgh Southern) (Lab)
Slater, Lorna (Lothian) (Green)

Against

Coffey, Willie (Kilmarnock and Irvine Valley) (SNP)
Fraser, Murdo (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
Kerr, Stephen (Central Scotland) (Con)
MacDonald, Gordon (Edinburgh Pentlands) (SNP)
Stewart, Kevin (Aberdeen Central) (SNP)
Thomson, Michelle (Falkirk East) (SNP)

The Convener: The result of the division is: For 3, Against 6, Abstentions 0.

Amendment 40 disagreed to.

The Convener: We move to the next group of amendments. Amendment 46, in the name of Richard Leonard, is grouped with amendments 47 to 50, 41, 119, 1 to 3, 31, 75, 76, 4, 22, 42, 43, 77, 78, 120, 51, 80, 121, 81, 58, 59, 36, 44, 126, 13 to 15, 37, 86 to 88, 16, 24, 45, 89, 90 and 127.

I invite Richard Leonard to speak to and move amendment 46.

Richard Leonard (Central Scotland) (Lab): Thank you very much, convener.

What these amendments attempt to do is to promote and realise the potential of employee ownership in the economy. Instead of being quite so reliant on foreign direct investment, and instead of continuing to become more and more of a branch plant economy, we need to look at ways in which we can reintroduce more local and democratic forms of control. Employee ownership has been shown to be good for the retention and creation of jobs, and good for local and inclusive economic development, and it also cultivates longer-term thinking.

I have been an advocate of a Marcora-style law for some time. The Marcora law dates back to 1985, after Giovanni Marcora—a right-wing Italian politician, actually—introduced a statutory right for workers in Italy to be able to buy an enterprise that they worked in if it was facing closure or bankruptcy. It has since been amended to give those workers a preferential right—a right of first refusal—and it commutes their redundancy payments and three years' worth of future unemployment benefits to help give them the capital to make the conversion. In turn, that is matched by the state on a one-to-one lira—and, more recently, euro—basis, and there is also support from co-operative federation funds.

Amendment 49 is an attempt to fashion that Marcora idea within our legislative competence here. In so doing, it would broaden the statutory right, so that it could apply not just in circumstances of bankruptcy or closure, but in the event of a business being up for sale; if the owner was, perhaps, looking for a succession plan, or if the business was the subject of a takeover or faced downsizing. In those circumstances, there would be a right for workers to make a bid to take the enterprise over. For me, this captures the spirit of the Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003 and the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 and brings them into the arena of industrial reform.

Murdo Fraser: Richard Leonard makes a really interesting case, but does he think that his proposal really fits into this bill, which is about something somewhat different—that is, the preparation of community wealth building plans?

Richard Leonard: Yes, I think that it is absolutely central to the bill, because it is about retaining wealth in a local area and looking at ways in which we can wealth build in a community. What I am describing is a community of interest as manifested in the workforce. I also think that the proposal is in keeping with a long-standing tradition in Scotland that goes back not just to Robert Owen and New Lanark, but—and I say this to Mr Coffey—to 1761 and the Fenwick Weavers Society, which was the first co-operative society ever created.

Amendments 46 and 50 would add some practical measures that are within competence for inclusion in the community wealth building statement. Amendment 46 is a recognition that, while statutory redundancy payments and the regime that governs them are reserved, under Scots law, contract law is devolved. Again borrowing from the example of the Marcora law, which is long standing, I have sought to look at ways in which we can, within our competence, use equivalent measures. We have come up with the idea that any statutory redundancy—that is, contractual redundancy that is maybe written into

an employee handbook or is in some written contractual form—could be called on to be brought forward to be commuted.

Stephen Kerr: The member wants to have something in the bill that includes reference to ministers "encouraging businesses". How exactly would we frame a statutory responsibility on a minister when using words such as "encouraging"?

Richard Leonard: We start from where we are. I would like to have seen a much more ambitious bill in the first place, but this is largely a framework bill that is about laying down markers, and that is about encouraging rather than necessarily directly acting. What I am proposing with the amendments is that the measures are included in the ministerial plan and any future ministerial statement, and that the issue is addressed at that level.

Stephen Kerr: Does the member accept that encouraging is a form of action, though?

Richard Leonard: I will talk about encouraging in another context shortly, and that might be a better way of showing exactly what I mean, and a recognition of where some of the limitations are.

Amendment 50 is an attempt to bring up the idea that, in the context of an employee-owned conversion, there could be a financing member that is external to the enterprise. Again, the committee will be very familiar with the work that Scottish Enterprise and other enterprise agencies do in trying to pitch to business angels and other external financial sources to help invest in the Scottish economy.

Amendment 47, which also relates to the ministerial statement, raises the important issue, again in the context of community wealth building, of challenging outsourcing. That is to understand that a founding principle of community wealth building is to stop leakage and to build greater self-sufficiency in a local economy. In my view, we should be encouraging insourcing and not outsourcing of public services. We have seen good examples of that in recent years. The most recent Audit Scotland report on the national health service has shown evidence of the extent to which bank and agency nursing has been reduced, and more of those services are now provided in-house. More widely than that, Mr Coffey will be familiar with HMP Kilmarnock, which was outsourced and has now been insourced, and of Cumnock community hospital, which was outsourced and is now insourced. In Lanarkshire, where Serco had the contract at Wishaw general hospital, that has now been insourced. On the railways, where Abellio and Serco had the contracts, those have now been insourced. So, what I am talking about in the amendment is perfectly consistent with the positions that have been taken in this session of Parliament.

With your indulgence, convener, I am also bound to draw on a recent STUC-commissioned report into outsourcing, which pointed out that the outsourcing of social care and soft facilities, which are often the services that are outsourced, in effect means that women's jobs are much more likely to be outsourced than men's jobs. That is a consideration.

Paragraph 9.3 of the STUC report addresses the five pillars of community wealth building. It says:

"Each of these elements"

of community wealth building

"is undermined by the outsourcing of public services. Smaller economic delivery units are most likely to re-spend money earned from providing services at a local level; the smallest economic unit of delivery is directly employed staff, and the shortest supply chain is direct provision."

10:45

I turn to my amendment 48, which is also on the proposed ministerial statement. Democratic forms of ownership and financial services are, again, part and parcel of what we should be encouraging in community wealth building legislation that is passed by this Parliament. Mutually owned banks and building societies, credit unions and municipal banks should be part and parcel of the mosaic of community wealth building, which we should be considering the promotion of. I recognise that it was a feature of the committee's stage 1 report, in paragraphs 114 to 124, which said:

"Finance is one of the five pillars of CWB",

and I reflect on the fact that the deputy convener referred to that in her speech during the stage 1 debate.

I have dealt with amendments 49 and 50.

Amendment 51 is, again, on the ministerial statement ask, and it calls on Scottish Enterprise, Highlands and Islands Enterprise, South of Scotland Enterprise and the Scottish National Investment Bank to

"encourage and support … employee-owned businesses."

I reflect on the fact that the chair of the Scottish National Investment Bank, Willie Watt, at a meeting of the Public Audit Committee, told me:

"employee ownership is to be encouraged, because it is good from the point of view of aligning the workforce with the success of the organisation and its long-term nature. I have long been a supporter of employee ownership."—[*Official Report, Public Audit Committee*, 25 June 2025; c 35.]

What I am doing through amendment 51 is literally reflecting that view. I am also amplifying one of the

principal conclusions of the Scottish Government's review that looked into inclusive and democratic business models. Chaired by Neil McInroy, the review was launched in September 2024, and, in recommendation 11, it called for the Scottish Government to

"Grow the role of the Scottish National Investment Bank … to intentionally and specifically support"

inclusive democratic business models.

I will finish with amendments 58 and 59, which go back to insourcing rather than outsourcing municipal banks, mutual banks and building societies, and credit unions, but which, in this context, address local community wealth building partnerships.

I move amendment 46.

Lorna Slater: Like other colleagues, I have lodged amendments in this group to add detail to the measures that are to be taken. Through the amendments, I explicitly call out fair work, community transport, support for co-operatives and community energy. In the interest of time, I will highlight only a few of the amendments.

On my amendments 2 and 14, it looks as though the minister has lodged amendments 75 and 87 to cover the same ground, so I am content not to move those amendments.

Amendment 36 seeks to clarify that commissioning and procurement are separate but related activities to ensure that local authorities are fully able to include commissioning in their wealth building planning.

Amendments 31 and 37 relate to when local authorities and public bodies dispose of land and other assets, and it seeks to ensure that they must think of something other than getting the most money. They must also consider how the asset fits into the community's vision for itself and the common good. That is vital to local authorities being able to implement each community's vision for itself.

Amendments 4 and 16 seek to include the consideration of local climate resilience and mitigation in community wealth building, for example through distributed or local power generation to ease local generation in the case of storm damage to the grid; or through flood protections for the community and of community land.

Amendment 22 seeks to recognise the importance of constructive and collaborative joint venture opportunities between communities and public bodies. If the amendment were agreed to, that would be an important step to formalising those relationships and creating new opportunities, but I am interested to hear what colleagues have to say on the amendment, and I will then consider whether to move it.

On amendment 43, I say to the minister that I am not sure that legislation is needed for the Scottish Government to work with the UK Government, and I would like to hear the Scottish Government commit to undertaking such work. If the minister is able to commit to that, I will not move amendment 43.

I am content with and will support many of the amendments from my colleagues in this group, but there are a few that I find problematic and cannot support. In the interest of time, I will highlight just a few of those, in the hope that we can revisit them at stage 3.

The first half of Richard Leonard's amendment 50 is fine, but I cannot support the second half. My understanding is that the whole point of the Scottish National Investment Bank is its independence and freedom from Government interference in its investment decisions. It is right that that is so. Any attempt through legislation to get the Scottish Government to lean on the bank would undermine its independence, and I will not support any amendments that seek to do that. The only exception to that will be Richard Leonard's amendment 51, which is sufficiently vague not to undermine the bank in that way. [*Laughter*.]

Richard Leonard: If that is the case, I will not move it.

Lorna Slater: On the Government's amendments 76 and 88, I would like members to pay close attention, as I am particularly worried. My concern is that their phrasing may cover external and foreign investment, which is exactly the opposite of community wealth building, the whole point of which is for communities of Scottish people to acquire assets and build wealth, not to bring in external people who will invest and acquire assets for themselves. On the face of it, those amendments appear to totally undermine the purpose of the bill, and I strongly request that the Scottish Government does not move them but reconsiders the wording before stage 3; otherwise, it risks undermining the bill altogether.

I agree with the idea in Paul Sweeney's amendment 119, but I am not sure that he has put it into the right part of the bill, so I will not support the amendment.

On amendment 120, I am unclear about what Paul Sweeney proposes. Is it that ministers lean on credit unions to make potentially bad loans? That would not make sense. I would support an amendment that supported new credit unions, the expansion of credit unions or the engagement of community groups with credit unions, but I cannot support amendment 120 as worded.

Paul Sweeney (Glasgow) (Lab): I appreciate the opportunity to speak to the amendments in the group. Their general context in the bill is that Scotland has one of the most foreign-owned economies in the world and is one of only a handful of such countries that is rich and developed but is not a microstate or an outright tax haven.

Although we do not often speak about the balance of payments or the capital and financial accounts in our economy, a good indicator is a comparison of Scotland's gross domestic product with its gross national income. At the start of this parliamentary session, £36.5 billion was extracted from Scotland, largely in the form of profits and dividends to foreign companies and shareholders, while only £26.4 billion flowed into Scotland, largely as foreign investment income. That created a net outward flow of £10.1 billion in 2020-21. The need for measures in the bill to retain more wealth under domestic ownership is important, and my amendments seek to do that in meaningful and practical ways.

Amendment 119 seeks to broaden the bill slightly by adding the purchasing of community shares as an optional measure to fulfil the goal of reducing inequality and supporting economic growth.

Amendment 120 would add credit unions simply by mentioning them as bodies that can be supported and promoted. When we consider community groups, it is vital that credit unions, which underpin so many financial transactions, particularly in working-class areas of Scotland, are encouraged to flourish, and they should be explicitly mentioned in the bill.

Amendment 80 seeks to encourage steps by the Scottish ministers to encourage and support the Scottish National Investment Bank to develop a community wealth fund; to work with relevant public bodies and community organisations to provide financing for community wealth building projects; and to advise on the strategic use of community benefit payments, including from a change of land use, renewable energy projects and seed funding for community-led wealth building projects.

Securing funding for community wealth building activities is essential to ensuring that local communities and other organisations can take full advantage of the economic transformation that those activities provide. Simply grant funding them is not sufficient. Patient finance is important. The creation of a community wealth fund has been the subject of much discussion over the past couple of years, with detailed proposals for such a fund being put forward by the Scottish community coalition on energy. Those proposals would allow for the strategic and democratic use of additional payments from major renewable energy and infrastructure projects, most of which are in foreign ownership, and major land use change projects to seed fund community wealth building projects around the country.

Amendment 80 aligns with Sarah Boyack's amendments 78 and 90, which set out that the community wealth building guidance, action plans and statement that the bill will introduce should refer to the community wealth fund. Amendment 80 would mandate a role for the Scottish National Investment Bank in providing finance for community wealth building activities, including the community wealth fund. In that context, it should be noted that one of the bank's three missions is about place, and account should be taken of the transformational potential of expanding access to finance that is generally not currently provided by commercial banks.

As the committee noted at stage 1, the Scottish National Investment Bank should have a prominent role in supporting economic development. It should play a key role as a public sector leader and a source of potential patient capital and underwriting for community wealth building. Amendment 80 would set out in the bill the bank's important role in that regard.

In seeking to provide that the Scottish National Investment Bank must encourage community wealth building, amendment 121 would allow for a more holistic approach to be taken to economic growth, and it would put investment—sustained investment through ownership, rather than one-off windfalls—at the heart of community wealth building.

Amendment 126 seeks to add the purchasing of community shares as an optional measure to fulfil the goal of reducing inequality and supporting economic growth as part of the community wealth building plan, which is the norm in many other European countries.

Amendment 127 seeks to encourage credit unions, as organisations that have members who would benefit from community wealth building plans, to be part of that ecosystem.

Ivan McKee: This is a large group of amendments, so I will try to be brief. I will begin by talking to the five amendments in my name, and I will then comment on those that other members have lodged.

Amendments 75 and 87 will ensure that supported businesses are listed in the bill, alongside employee-owned businesses, co-operatives and social enterprises. Supported businesses are important to many disabled workers who want to access work, and amendments 75 and 87 will ensure that promoting

supported businesses can feature in the statement and the local community wealth building action plans. The Scottish Government intends to support amendment 21, in the name of Lorna Slater, which is in a different group, and, under amendment 75, commentary on supported businesses will have to feature in the ministerial statement.

The intention of amendments 76 and 88 is to ensure, by referring to the promotion of access to investment opportunities, that the financial pillar of community wealth building is represented in the list of measures that may feature in the statement and local action plans.

Amendment 81 will future proof the ministerial statement. Giving the Scottish ministers, through regulation, the power to modify the list of measures that feature in the ministerial statement is prudent, especially if amendment 21 is supported. Furthermore, it is right that any regulation of that nature should be subject to the affirmative procedure.

I urge members to support those five amendments in my name.

Although I appreciate the motivation for all the other amendments in the group, which have been lodged by colleagues, and while my door is open to further discussion prior to stage 3, I confirm that the Government's position is to resist all amendments in the group, apart from Lorna Slater's amendments 3, 4, 36, 15 and 16, Richard Leonard's amendment 51 and Rhoda Grant's amendment 86. I urge members to support those amendments, but not the others in the group.

I will quickly set out the rationale for the Government's position with reference to the amendments that have been lodged by colleagues. I see merit in exploring through further policy dialogue the proposals that Richard Leonard has made in his amendments—other than those in amendment 51, which we support. I think that more consultation is required with stakeholders, including the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities, as well as further consideration from a legal and cost standpoint, before a proposition for primary legislation can be framed. As I have indicated in my conversations with Mr Leonard, I am sympathetic to the concepts in the Marcora approach and the Italian legislation, but a significant part of that would impinge on reserved legislation with regard to corporate law and employment law, and that would need to be considered.

Co-operatives are already in the bill. Section 1(3)(f) explicitly mentions

"supporting the development of … co-operatives".

11:00

I understand Richard Leonard's intentions on insourcing, but the unintended consequence of setting out a preference for insourcing over outsourcing is that it would prevent the very businesses that we are trying to support locally from gaining contracts with public enterprises via public procurement. The work of the economic democracy group, which was formed following a recommendation in the Scottish Government-commissioned independent review on developing Scotland's inclusive and democratic businesses, should include consideration of Richard Leonard's proposals alongside all recommendations made in that review.

I appreciate Lorna Slater's strong interest in the bill and the work that she has done on a range of amendments. However, the Government's position is to resist all members' amendments in this group except those that I have already indicated support for. Although I have sympathy with some of the policy ideas that drive many of the amendments, they need further consultation and, in some cases, detailed consideration of extant law.

As I have said, I want to keep the bill focused on economic development, and specifically on the creation of a new local format for local economic development actions. Other policy areas feed into the development of a successful economy, but I do not want to overburden future community wealth building ministerial statements with mandatory requirements to include matters that stray across too wide a range of Government policies. In keeping with all the stage 2 amendments that Opposition members have lodged, I expect my officials to feature the ideas that have driven them in future community wealth building policy development, including in the preparation of guidance, which, as I have indicated, is already under way.

For similar reasons, the Government's position is to resist the amendments in Paul Sweeney's name in the group. As I have set out, they need more policy development and stakeholder dialogue, as well as work on resultant costs. Again, I am interested in the themes that are raised by the amendments, and I look forward to having further policy dialogue in the next parliamentary session. However, it is too early to commit such proposals to primary legislation without that work being done.

Sarah Boyack's amendments focus on promoting the creation of a community wealth fund on the part of the Scottish ministers and on local community wealth building partnerships. That is a complex area of work that requires more design, thinking and dialogue, which I am happy to engage with the member on.

The Convener: I invite Sarah Boyack to speak to amendment 78 and other amendments in the group.

Sarah Boyack: I have two amendments in the group, which would ensure that

"promoting the creation of a Community Wealth Fund and the strategic use of community benefit payments from land use change and renewable energy projects"

to

"support the development of community-led projects"

was prioritised and included in the bill.

By embedding the promotion of such a fund in the bill, we would create a pathway for communities to benefit directly from the economic activity that takes place around them, not as an afterthought but as a core principle. That approach would ensure that the wealth that was generated from our natural assets and the transition to renewables was recycled back into local priorities, so that it supported projects that communities design, lead and control.

Last night, the cross-party group on islands and the cross-party group on renewable energy and energy efficiency held a joint meeting. We heard directly about the huge benefits to local communities of co-operative, community-owned and municipally owned renewables and heat projects investing in Scotland. Rather than wealth being exported, the communities directly benefit and shape the benefits. The statistic that was used last night was that less than 1 per cent of the wind energy that is produced in Scotland is from community-owned facilities. We need to make the most of that huge opportunity.

Richard Leonard's amendments are really important. Amendments 50 and 51 make particularly important points. The importance of Co-operative Development Scotland and the Scottish National Investment Bank needs to be higher up our agenda. Both could and should play an important role, which should be reflected in legislation.

Amendment 51, which sets out that ministers must encourage Scottish Enterprise, South of Scotland Enterprise and Highlands and Islands Enterprise to practically support employee-owned companies, is crucial, because we need to ensure that such opportunities are available.

I am keen to support Lorna Slater's amendments 41 to 45 on procurement so that local community co-operatives and social enterprises can benefit from the transition to renewables. Paul Sweeney's amendment 119 seeks to empower and support communities through credit unions and community wealth funds.

There are many good amendments in the group. I take the minister's point that we cannot use them all, but the ambition behind the amendments that I have mentioned is critical, and they should be included in the bill. A community wealth fund and the strategic use of community benefit payments will be crucial and will create many opportunities.

Stephen Kerr: Are you creating a lengthy wish list of things that you would like to see happening, when the bill is not intended to be used for that purpose? We share and support the core concepts of community wealth building, but would making a huge list with many different dimensions and aspects encumber the bill and take it in a direction that is quite different from the intention when it was drafted?

Sarah Boyack: Respectfully, I disagree with your point. If you were to come back to the Parliament in five years to see what difference the legislation had made, you would see that the bill could not deliver the transformation that it aspires to without these amendments. We all support the aspiration, but it is about delivery, which is a key lesson for the Parliament. This is not just about warm words—it is about ensuring that organisations are able and supported to deliver the changes and to meet the bill's ambition.

Rhoda Grant (Highlands and Islands) (Lab): Amendment 86 would add to the list of measures that may be used by a community wealth building partnership to facilitate and support the

"generation, circulation and retention of wealth"

in the local economy. It explicitly recognises common good property as a strategic asset for community wealth building. The amendment seeks to ensure that relevant public bodies use common good property as part of their action plans to deliver community wealth building.

The Scottish Land Commission has explained that common good property is regulated by the Common Good Act 1491, which is still in force today. It provides the legal status for common good assets and created an obligation that they would be managed for the benefit of the citizens of what was then the burgh. Historically, common good property was given to the people of the relevant burgh. Over time, that property has largely been subsumed into local authorities. The Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 introduced responsibilities for local authorities on the registration, use and disposal of common good assets. However, the way in which that has been interpreted varies widely between local authorities.

Reform of common good legislation must be addressed in the next session of the Parliament, but it would be a missed opportunity if the bill did not acknowledge the important role of those assets

in generating local wealth. It would also help to add transparency on which common good assets are owned by local authorities and how they could be better used to promote local wealth building, not least through transfer to community ownership in some instances.

I welcome the Government's support for amendment 86 and urge the committee to support it. It was lodged with the help of Community Land Scotland to ensure that local authorities consider those assets proactively and that they unlock their potential for social justice, sustainability and local prosperity.

The Convener: As no other members wish to speak, I invite Richard Leonard to wind up and to press or withdraw amendment 46.

Richard Leonard: Thank heavens for small mercies. I thank the minister for accepting amendment 51, although I realise that it is subject to the committee's views. I also thank him for his dialogue and for his offer of continuing dialogue between stages 2 and 3, which I will certainly take up. I welcome his open approach.

The minister's suggestion that some of my amendments are better addressed to the economic democracy group would be all well and good if the economic democracy group had been established and was meeting, but it is my understanding that it is not. That is an interesting theoretical suggestion from the minister, but not one that we can actively take up.

On the issue of insourcing, I do not see that purely as an issue of procurement, although I have an amendment on procurement later, which will be considered by the committee at stage 2. If you look at the examples that I gave, I do not think that HMP Kilmarnock was subject to some kind of franchising or procurement exercise when it was decided to bring the prison back in-house. ScotRail and the Caledonian Sleeper service are other examples that the minister's own Government has been prepared to implement. I recognise the point that the minister made in the stage 1 debate, about what procurement looks like, but I think that we should also be looking at insourcing versus outsourcing, not just in a procurement context. As I said, I have an amendment on procurement to come.

The final thing that I would say to the minister and committee members is that, if they have not already done so, they should visit some employee-owned businesses, such as, for Mr Fraser, Carlton Bingo in Dunfermline, which I went to. Carlton Bingo has bingo halls in Stirling and other places. Sarah Boyack and Lorna Slater would be interested in Jerba Campervans in the Lothians. For Mr Kerr, there is Clansman Dynamics in East Kilbride, which is part of the Central Scotland region. I am sure that the deputy convener, as well as Mr Kerr and I, will have an interest in Your Equipment Solutions in Falkirk. Then there is Auchrannie Resort in Arran. I look to Mr Coffey for that—although it is not in his constituency, it is employee owned and an important part of that regional economy. Let me finish with Mr Stewart. I can recommend the Krakatoa music bar venue on the quayside in Aberdeen as a fine example of an employee-owned business that really includes its workforce. Those are wonderful, pioneering businesses.

Yesterday, in the budget debate, the Cabinet Secretary for Finance and Local Government said:

> "Scotland is a country of innovators and wealth creators."—[*Official Report*, 13 January 2026; c 16.]

I think that those are great examples of innovation and wealth creation. I can think of no finer examples than those, and we should be using the bill to encourage the development and advancement of that part of our economy.

The Convener: I notice that you missed my constituency. Edinburgh Bicycle Co-operative is a fine example of employee ownership.

The question is, that amendment 46 be agreed to. Are we agreed?

Members: No.

The Convener: There will be a division.

For

Boyack, Sarah (Lothian) (Lab)
Johnson, Daniel (Edinburgh Southern) (Lab)
Slater, Lorna (Lothian) (Green)

Against

Coffey, Willie (Kilmarnock and Irvine Valley) (SNP)
Fraser, Murdo (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
Kerr, Stephen (Central Scotland) (Con)
MacDonald, Gordon (Edinburgh Pentlands) (SNP)
Stewart, Kevin (Aberdeen Central) (SNP)
Thomson, Michelle (Falkirk East) (SNP)

The Convener: The result of the division is: For 3, Against 6, Abstentions 0.

Amendment 46 disagreed to.

Amendment 47 moved—[Richard Leonard].

The Convener: The question is, that amendment 47 be agreed to. Are we agreed?

Members: No.

The Convener: There will be a division.

For

Boyack, Sarah (Lothian) (Lab)
Johnson, Daniel (Edinburgh Southern) (Lab)
Slater, Lorna (Lothian) (Green)

Against

Coffey, Willie (Kilmarnock and Irvine Valley) (SNP)
Fraser, Murdo (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
Kerr, Stephen (Central Scotland) (Con)
MacDonald, Gordon (Edinburgh Pentlands) (SNP)
Stewart, Kevin (Aberdeen Central) (SNP)
Thomson, Michelle (Falkirk East) (SNP)

The Convener: The result of the division is: For 3, Against 6, Abstentions 0.

Amendment 47 disagreed to.

Amendment 48 moved—[Richard Leonard].

The Convener: The question is, that amendment 48 be agreed to. Are we agreed?

Members: No.

The Convener: There will be a division.

For

Boyack, Sarah (Lothian) (Lab)
Johnson, Daniel (Edinburgh Southern) (Lab)
Slater, Lorna (Lothian) (Green)

Against

Coffey, Willie (Kilmarnock and Irvine Valley) (SNP)
Fraser, Murdo (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
Kerr, Stephen (Central Scotland) (Con)
MacDonald, Gordon (Edinburgh Pentlands) (SNP)
Stewart, Kevin (Aberdeen Central) (SNP)
Thomson, Michelle (Falkirk East) (SNP)

The Convener: The result of the division is: For 3, Against 6, Abstentions 0.

Amendment 48 disagreed to.

11:15

Amendment 49 moved—[Richard Leonard].

The Convener: The question is, that amendment 49 be agreed to. Are we agreed?

Members: No.

The Convener: There will be a division.

For

Boyack, Sarah (Lothian) (Lab)
Johnson, Daniel (Edinburgh Southern) (Lab)
Slater, Lorna (Lothian) (Green)

Against

Coffey, Willie (Kilmarnock and Irvine Valley) (SNP)
Fraser, Murdo (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
Kerr, Stephen (Central Scotland) (Con)
MacDonald, Gordon (Edinburgh Pentlands) (SNP)
Stewart, Kevin (Aberdeen Central) (SNP)
Thomson, Michelle (Falkirk East) (SNP)

The Convener: The result of the division is: For 3, Against 6, Abstentions 0.

Amendment 49 disagreed to.

Amendment 50 moved—[Richard Leonard].

The Convener: The question is, that amendment 50 be agreed to. Are we agreed?

Members: No.

The Convener: There will be a division.

For

Boyack, Sarah (Lothian) (Lab)
Johnson, Daniel (Edinburgh Southern) (Lab)

Against

Coffey, Willie (Kilmarnock and Irvine Valley) (SNP)
Fraser, Murdo (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
Kerr, Stephen (Central Scotland) (Con)
MacDonald, Gordon (Edinburgh Pentlands) (SNP)
Slater, Lorna (Lothian) (Green)
Stewart, Kevin (Aberdeen Central) (SNP)
Thomson, Michelle (Falkirk East) (SNP)

The Convener: The result of the division is: For 2, Against 7, Abstentions 0.

Amendment 50 disagreed to.

The Convener: Amendment 21, in the name of Lorna Slater, has already been debated with amendment 30. I remind members that amendments 21 and 74 are direct alternatives, so they can both be moved and decided on. The text of whichever is the last amendment to be agreed to will appear in the bill.

Amendment 21 moved—[Lorna Slater]—and agreed to.

Amendment 74 not moved.

Amendment 41 moved—[Lorna Slater].

The Convener: The question is, that amendment 41 be agreed to. Are we agreed?

Members: No.

The Convener: There will be a division.

For

Boyack, Sarah (Lothian) (Lab)
Johnson, Daniel (Edinburgh Southern) (Lab)
Slater, Lorna (Lothian) (Green)

Against

Coffey, Willie (Kilmarnock and Irvine Valley) (SNP)
Fraser, Murdo (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
Kerr, Stephen (Central Scotland) (Con)
MacDonald, Gordon (Edinburgh Pentlands) (SNP)
Stewart, Kevin (Aberdeen Central) (SNP)
Thomson, Michelle (Falkirk East) (SNP)

The Convener: The result of the division is: For 3, Against 6, Abstentions 0.

Amendment 41 disagreed to.

Amendment 119 moved—[Paul Sweeney].

The Convener: The question is, that amendment 119 be agreed to. Are we agreed?

Members: No.

The Convener: There will be a division.

For

Boyack, Sarah (Lothian) (Lab)
Johnson, Daniel (Edinburgh Southern) (Lab)

Against

Coffey, Willie (Kilmarnock and Irvine Valley) (SNP)
Fraser, Murdo (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
Kerr, Stephen (Central Scotland) (Con)
MacDonald, Gordon (Edinburgh Pentlands) (SNP)
Slater, Lorna (Lothian) (Green)
Stewart, Kevin (Aberdeen Central) (SNP)
Thomson, Michelle (Falkirk East) (SNP)

The Convener: The result of the division is: For 2, Against 7, Abstentions 0.

Amendment 119 disagreed to.

Amendment 1 moved—[Lorna Slater].

The Convener: The question is, that amendment 1 be agreed to. Are we agreed?

Members: No.

The Convener: There will be a division.

For

Boyack, Sarah (Lothian) (Lab)
Johnson, Daniel (Edinburgh Southern) (Lab)
Slater, Lorna (Lothian) (Green)

Against

Coffey, Willie (Kilmarnock and Irvine Valley) (SNP)
Fraser, Murdo (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
Kerr, Stephen (Central Scotland) (Con)
MacDonald, Gordon (Edinburgh Pentlands) (SNP)
Stewart, Kevin (Aberdeen Central) (SNP)
Thomson, Michelle (Falkirk East) (SNP)

The Convener: The result of the division is: For 3, Against 6, Abstentions 0.

Amendment 1 disagreed to.

Amendment 2 not moved.

Amendment 3 moved—[Lorna Slater].

The Convener: The question is, that amendment 3 be agreed to. Are we agreed?

Members: No.

The Convener: There will be a division.

For

Boyack, Sarah (Lothian) (Lab)
Coffey, Willie (Kilmarnock and Irvine Valley) (SNP)
Johnson, Daniel (Edinburgh Southern) (Lab)
MacDonald, Gordon (Edinburgh Pentlands) (SNP)
Slater, Lorna (Lothian) (Green)
Stewart, Kevin (Aberdeen Central) (SNP)
Thomson, Michelle (Falkirk East) (SNP)

Against

Fraser, Murdo (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
Kerr, Stephen (Central Scotland) (Con)

The Convener: The result of the division is: For 7, Against 2, Abstentions 0.

Amendment 3 agreed to.

Amendment 31 moved—[Lorna Slater].

The Convener: The question is, that amendment 31 be agreed to. Are we agreed?

Members: No.

The Convener: There will be a division.

For

Boyack, Sarah (Lothian) (Lab)
Johnson, Daniel (Edinburgh Southern) (Lab)
Slater, Lorna (Lothian) (Green)

Against

Coffey, Willie (Kilmarnock and Irvine Valley) (SNP)
Fraser, Murdo (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
Kerr, Stephen (Central Scotland) (Con)
MacDonald, Gordon (Edinburgh Pentlands) (SNP)
Stewart, Kevin (Aberdeen Central) (SNP)
Thomson, Michelle (Falkirk East) (SNP)

The Convener: The result of the division is: For 3, Against 6, Abstentions 0.

Amendment 31 disagreed to.

Amendment 75 moved—[Ivan McKee]—and agreed to.

Amendment 76 moved—[Ivan McKee].

The Convener: The question is, that amendment 76 be agreed to. Are we agreed?

Members: No.

The Convener: There will be a division.

For

Boyack, Sarah (Lothian) (Lab)
Coffey, Willie (Kilmarnock and Irvine Valley) (SNP)
Fraser, Murdo (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
Johnson, Daniel (Edinburgh Southern) (Lab)
Kerr, Stephen (Central Scotland) (Con)
MacDonald, Gordon (Edinburgh Pentlands) (SNP)
Stewart, Kevin (Aberdeen Central) (SNP)
Thomson, Michelle (Falkirk East) (SNP)

Against

Slater, Lorna (Lothian) (Green)

The Convener: The result of the division is: For 8, Against 1, Abstentions 0.

Amendment 76 agreed to.

Amendment 4 moved—[Lorna Slater].

The Convener: The question is, that amendment 4 be agreed to. Are we agreed?

Members: No.

The Convener: There will be a division.

For

Baker, Claire (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab)
Boyack, Sarah (Lothian) (Lab)
Coffey, Willie (Kilmarnock and Irvine Valley) (SNP)
Johnson, Daniel (Edinburgh Southern) (Lab)
MacDonald, Gordon (Edinburgh Pentlands) (SNP)
Stewart, Kevin (Aberdeen Central) (SNP)
Thomson, Michelle (Falkirk East) (SNP)

Against

Fraser, Murdo (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
Kerr, Stephen (Central Scotland) (Con)

The Convener: The result of the division is: For 7, Against 2, Abstentions 0.

Amendment 4 agreed to.

Amendment 22 not moved.

Amendment 42 moved—[Lorna Slater].

The Convener: The question is, that amendment 42 be agreed to. Are we agreed?

Members: No.

The Convener: There will be a division.

For

Boyack, Sarah (Lothian) (Lab)
Johnson, Daniel (Edinburgh Southern) (Lab)
Slater, Lorna (Lothian) (Green)

Against

Coffey, Willie (Kilmarnock and Irvine Valley) (SNP)
Fraser, Murdo (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
Kerr, Stephen (Central Scotland) (Con)
MacDonald, Gordon (Edinburgh Pentlands) (SNP)
Stewart, Kevin (Aberdeen Central) (SNP)
Thomson, Michelle (Falkirk East) (SNP)

The Convener: The result of the division is: For 3, Against 6, Abstentions 0.

Amendment 42 disagreed to.

Amendment 43 not moved.

Amendment 77 moved—[Lorna Slater].

The Convener: The question is, that amendment 77 be agreed to. Are we agreed?

Members: No.

The Convener: There will be a division.

For

Boyack, Sarah (Lothian) (Lab)
Johnson, Daniel (Edinburgh Southern) (Lab)
Slater, Lorna (Lothian) (Green)

Against

Coffey, Willie (Kilmarnock and Irvine Valley) (SNP)
Fraser, Murdo (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
Kerr, Stephen (Central Scotland) (Con)
MacDonald, Gordon (Edinburgh Pentlands) (SNP)
Stewart, Kevin (Aberdeen Central) (SNP)
Thomson, Michelle (Falkirk East) (SNP)

The Convener: The result of the division is: For 3, Against 6, Abstentions 0.

Amendment 77 disagreed to.

Amendment 78 moved—[Sarah Boyack].

The Convener: The question is, that amendment 78 be agreed to. Are we agreed?

Members: No.

The Convener: There will be a division.

For

Boyack, Sarah (Lothian) (Lab)
Johnson, Daniel (Edinburgh Southern) (Lab)
Slater, Lorna (Lothian) (Green)

Against

Coffey, Willie (Kilmarnock and Irvine Valley) (SNP)
Fraser, Murdo (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
Kerr, Stephen (Central Scotland) (Con)
MacDonald, Gordon (Edinburgh Pentlands) (SNP)
Stewart, Kevin (Aberdeen Central) (SNP)
Thomson, Michelle (Falkirk East) (SNP)

The Convener: The result of the division is: For 3, Against 6, Abstentions 0.

Amendment 78 disagreed to.

Amendment 120 moved—[Paul Sweeney].

The Convener: The question is, that amendment 120 be agreed to. Are we agreed?

Members: No.

The Convener: There will be a division.

For

Boyack, Sarah (Lothian) (Lab)
Johnson, Daniel (Edinburgh Southern) (Lab)

Against

Coffey, Willie (Kilmarnock and Irvine Valley) (SNP)
Fraser, Murdo (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
Kerr, Stephen (Central Scotland) (Con)
MacDonald, Gordon (Edinburgh Pentlands) (SNP)
Slater, Lorna (Lothian) (Green)
Stewart, Kevin (Aberdeen Central) (SNP)
Thomson, Michelle (Falkirk East) (SNP)

The Convener: The result of the division is: For 2, Against 7, Abstentions 0.

Amendment 120 disagreed to.

Amendment 32 moved—[Lorna Slater].

The Convener: The question is, that amendment 32 be agreed to. Are we agreed?

Members: No.

The Convener: There will be a division.

For

Boyack, Sarah (Lothian) (Lab)
Johnson, Daniel (Edinburgh Southern) (Lab)
Slater, Lorna (Lothian) (Green)

Against

Coffey, Willie (Kilmarnock and Irvine Valley) (SNP)
Fraser, Murdo (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
Kerr, Stephen (Central Scotland) (Con)
MacDonald, Gordon (Edinburgh Pentlands) (SNP)
Stewart, Kevin (Aberdeen Central) (SNP)
Thomson, Michelle (Falkirk East) (SNP)

The Convener: The result of the division is: For 3, Against 6, Abstentions 0.

Amendment 32 disagreed to.

The Convener: Amendment 33, in the name of Lorna Slater, is grouped with amendments 35, 54, 82, 83, 55 and 56.

Lorna Slater: Amendments 33 and 35, which seek to set standards for monitoring and data logging, including against agreed national metrics, would help put into place proper measurement of the progress on community wealth building, and would also give us the data to understand the starting points and disparity between Scottish regions.

I support amendment 82, in the name of Sarah Boyack, on reporting on impact. However, I am not convinced of the value of an independent review on top of all the reporting measures, so I will not support amendment 83.

On amendment 54, I think that Richard Leonard has the right idea, but surely the reference to "details" in the amendment would undermine commercial confidentiality. After all, co-operatives are still commercial enterprises and have the same confidentiality needs as other businesses. I hope that the member will consider revisiting and altering the amendment for stage 3.

As for amendments 55 and 56, again in the name of Richard Leonard, I do not think that annual reviews are a good use of resources. You would just have finished one report and then would have to start another, and that would impede progress.

I move amendment 33.

11:30

The Convener: I call Richard Leonard to speak to amendment 54 and other amendments in the group.

Richard Leonard: The review group's report, which was published in September 2024 and to which we have already referred this morning, had the full title of "Developing Scotland's Economy: Increasing The Role Of Inclusive And Democratic Business Models". In its opening pages, it said about inclusive and democratic business models that

> "Around the world, they are not considered a 'sideline' to the mainstream economy, but a vital, growing and essential part of economic success."

To achieve the goal of mainstreaming such models and making them successful, we must collect data and measure what is happening. My amendment 54 picks up from the review group's findings—namely, recommendation 3, which states:

> "Investment in data and evidence on IDBMs is required to support policy and service design."

That is the main point that I wanted to make on this group of amendments. More generally, I think that there need to be transparency, openness and data sharing, so that we can make informed public policy choices.

Sarah Boyack: I have two amendments in the group, which are both aimed at strengthening accountability in the community wealth building statement process.

Amendment 82 would ensure that the annual statement reports on not just the actions that are taken but their impact in delivering the aims that are set out in section 1(2). That would shift the focus from activity to outcomes so that we can see whether community wealth building is genuinely making a difference on the ground. I welcome Lorna Slater's support for that amendment.

Amendment 83 would require ministers to set out how they have responded to any recommendations from the independent review, and, if they have not acted on them, to explain why. That would prevent recommendations from being ignored and ensure a clear line of accountability between independent scrutiny and Government action.

Together, those amendments would make the reporting process more transparent, more meaningful and more responsive to evidence. Richard Leonard's points about transparency and inclusivity are also important. The amendments in this group are about strengthening the legislation, and I hope that colleagues can support them today.

Ivan McKee: The Government's position is to resist all amendments in this group except amendment 82. I ask members who have lodged the remaining amendments to withdraw them, and I will briefly explain why.

With regard to amendment 82, in the name of Sarah Boyack, the provision in the bill as it stands is proportionate in respect of progress reporting. However, reporting on the impact of the

community wealth building statement and the measures that are contained in it, in the way that is suggested by the amendment, might complement the bill, so I am content to support that amendment.

Sarah Boyack has lodged amendment 108, which would oblige the Scottish ministers to commission an independent review of the impact of the measures in the statement, and her amendment 83 relates to reporting on the steps taken in response to such a review. The Government's position is that it should be accountable to Parliament and that primary legislation is not required for a future Administration to commission an independent review. Our position is therefore not to support amendment 108 in group 9 or amendment 83 in this group, to which it is linked.

On amendments 33 and 35, regarding the use of metrics, substantial dialogue would be needed with COSLA and others before the inclusion of commentary on metrics in the guidance. The guidance that must be prepared under section 9 will be developed alongside the ministerial statement, and that guidance is the appropriate place to set out advice on monitoring progress. That is particularly important at the local level, where economic structures vary significantly between communities. At the national level, community wealth building connects to many other policy areas, so guidance will ensure coherence and alignment across those links. Work on measurement at large should be conducted as part of the guidance work strand. That will inform the approach of ministers as to what could be in a national statement about targets and objectives.

Amendment 54, in Richard Leonard's name, specifically highlights reporting on businesses that are operating with inclusive and democratic business models. That issue may well feature in reports on progress that are required under section 4. However, the amendment is too specific in obliging reporting on certain types of businesses only.

The Government does not support Richard Leonard's amendments 55 and 56, which seek a move to a yearly reporting cycle instead of five-yearly reporting. Such a short reporting interval is not desirable in a policy context where change in outcome terms needs to be measured and observed over a longer timescale.

I therefore urge members not to press or move those amendments, and, if they are pressed or moved, not to support them.

The Convener: I invite Lorna Slater to wind up and to press or withdraw amendment 33.

Lorna Slater: I have no further remarks to make, other than to press amendment 33.

The Deputy Convener: The question is, that amendment 33 be agreed to. Are we agreed?

Members: No.

The Deputy Convener: There will be a division.

For

Boyack, Sarah (Lothian) (Lab)
Johnson, Daniel (Edinburgh Southern) (Lab)
Slater, Lorna (Lothian) (Green)

Against

Coffey, Willie (Kilmarnock and Irvine Valley) (SNP)
Fraser, Murdo (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
Kerr, Stephen (Central Scotland) (Con)
MacDonald, Gordon (Edinburgh Pentlands) (SNP)
Stewart, Kevin (Aberdeen Central) (SNP)
Thomson, Michelle (Falkirk East) (SNP)

The Deputy Convener: The result of the division is: For 3, Against 6, Abstentions 0.

Amendment 33 disagreed to.

Amendment 51 moved—[Richard Leonard].

The Deputy Convener: The question is, that amendment 51 be agreed to. Are we agreed?

Members: No.

The Deputy Convener: There will be a division.

For

Boyack, Sarah (Lothian) (Lab)
Coffey, Willie (Kilmarnock and Irvine Valley) (SNP)
Johnson, Daniel (Edinburgh Southern) (Lab)
MacDonald, Gordon (Edinburgh Pentlands) (SNP)
Slater, Lorna (Lothian) (Green)
Stewart, Kevin (Aberdeen Central) (SNP)
Thomson, Michelle (Falkirk East) (SNP)

Against

Fraser, Murdo (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
Kerr, Stephen (Central Scotland) (Con)

The Deputy Convener: The result of the division is: For 7, Against 2, Abstentions 0.

Amendment 51 agreed to.

Amendment 79 moved—[Lorna Slater].

The Deputy Convener: The question is, that amendment 79 be agreed to. Are we agreed?

Members: No.

The Deputy Convener: There will be a division.

For

Boyack, Sarah (Lothian) (Lab)
Johnson, Daniel (Edinburgh Southern) (Lab)
Slater, Lorna (Lothian) (Green)

Against

Coffey, Willie (Kilmarnock and Irvine Valley) (SNP)

Fraser, Murdo (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
Kerr, Stephen (Central Scotland) (Con)
MacDonald, Gordon (Edinburgh Pentlands) (SNP)
Stewart, Kevin (Aberdeen Central) (SNP)
Thomson, Michelle (Falkirk East) (SNP)

The Deputy Convener: The result of the division is: For 3, Against 6, Abstentions 0.

Amendment 79 disagreed to.

Amendment 80 moved—[Paul Sweeney].

The Deputy Convener: The question is, that amendment 80 be agreed to. Are we agreed?

Members: No.

The Deputy Convener: There will be a division.

For

Boyack, Sarah (Lothian) (Lab)
Johnson, Daniel (Edinburgh Southern) (Lab)

Against

Coffey, Willie (Kilmarnock and Irvine Valley) (SNP)
Fraser, Murdo (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
Kerr, Stephen (Central Scotland) (Con)
MacDonald, Gordon (Edinburgh Pentlands) (SNP)
Slater, Lorna (Lothian) (Green)
Stewart, Kevin (Aberdeen Central) (SNP)
Thomson, Michelle (Falkirk East) (SNP)

The Deputy Convener: The result of the division is: For 2, Against 7, Abstentions 0.

Amendment 80 disagreed to.

Amendment 121 moved—[Paul Sweeney].

The Deputy Convener: The question is, that amendment 121 be agreed to. Are we agreed?

Members: No.

The Deputy Convener: There will be a division.

For

Boyack, Sarah (Lothian) (Lab)
Johnson, Daniel (Edinburgh Southern) (Lab)

Against

Coffey, Willie (Kilmarnock and Irvine Valley) (SNP)
Fraser, Murdo (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
Kerr, Stephen (Central Scotland) (Con)
MacDonald, Gordon (Edinburgh Pentlands) (SNP)
Slater, Lorna (Lothian) (Green)
Stewart, Kevin (Aberdeen Central) (SNP)
Thomson, Michelle (Falkirk East) (SNP)

The Deputy Convener: The result of the division is: For 2, Against 7, Abstentions 0.

Amendment 121 disagreed to.

The Deputy Convener: Amendment 122, in the name of Paul Sweeney, is grouped with amendments 123, 23, 5, 52, 34 and 53.

Paul Sweeney: Amendment 122 seeks to insert a requirement for the Scottish ministers to respond to the "Developing Scotland's Economy" report. That would be an important measure, as it would add democratic business models to the heart of the bill by making it a requirement for the Scottish ministers to respond to the report, which explores inclusive and democratic business models, and then to actively consider how that should be integrated into the community wealth building statements.

Amendment 123 gives the Scottish ministers the opportunity to include community share and bond models as a way of allowing community benefit societies or co-operatives to issue shares and fundraising assets. That creates the option for more democratic and inclusive business models, allowing for greater diversification of Scotland's community wealth.

I move amendment 122.

The Convener: I invite Lorna Slater to speak to amendment 23 and other amendments in the group.

Lorna Slater: Amendment 23 brings consideration of just transition principles into the bill. Amendment 34 is a proposal to integrate the five community wealth building pillars into the bill in a slightly different way than my previous amendments 30 and 32. By structuring the statement's objectives around the five community wealth building pillars and connecting them to the national performance framework outcomes, the bill can hardwire community wealth building into Scotland's broader economic, social and environmental architecture.

On Murdo Fraser's amendment 5, the member and I have both proposed amendments that include businesses to varying degrees, so I think that we all spotted the same gap. Perhaps the minister has proposed amendments on that as well. However, I prefer my approach, so I will not be supporting Murdo Fraser's amendment on this occasion.

Amendment 53, from Richard Leonard, again, has too frequent reporting and is not a good use of resources. Amendment 123, from Paul Sweeney, is a bit awkwardly worded and specific. Again, I think that Paul Sweeney is on the right track, but perhaps he should reconsider the wording before stage 3.

The Convener: I invite Murdo Fraser to speak to amendment 5 and other amendments in the group.

Murdo Fraser: I am delighted that Lorna Slater and I are in the same space on this at least. My amendment 5 states that, in preparing the community wealth building statement, ministers

are required to consult with businesses that might be affected by that. In line with my earlier comments, I have taken a very modest approach to amendments to the bill and have lodged only four amendments. Later, we will come to a similar amendment of mine on the preparation of community wealth building plans, which includes a requirement to consult with businesses. In order to be consistent, I wanted to lodge this amendment so that ministers, when preparing the draft statement, will also consult with businesses, given that they are likely to be impacted by what is in that statement from the Scottish ministers.

The Convener: I invite Richard Leonard to speak to amendment 52 and other amendments in the group.

Richard Leonard: Amendment 52 simply seeks to insert into the legislation Co-operative Development Scotland, which was established in 2006. It has, in my view, been cut to the bone. It has been allowed to wither on the vine. It is woefully underresourced, although I have not had a chance to look at yesterday's budget announcement. The long-term position is that it has been allowed to become marginalised.

Somebody said to me that there is one part-time member of staff working on employee ownership and one member of staff working on co-operative development. For Co-operative Development Scotland, that is a clear indication of massive underresourcing. It still appears on the enterprise agencies' websites as the arm of the enterprise agencies for co-operative development. It is still on the Scottish Enterprise website, advertising one-to-one sessions with specialist advisers for those interested in converting to co-operative and employee ownership. For that reason, I think it should be explicitly included in the bill.

My second amendment in this group, amendment 53, revisits the suggestion from the Government that we review statements and plans only once every five years. I am quite interested in five-year plans when it comes to economic development—[*Laughter*.]—but I reflect on the fact that an interval of five years could mean that a statement is not made within a session of Parliament.

I am concerned, from listening to what Lorna Slater said, that perhaps she thinks that an annual return to such things, which is my Chartist instinct, is too frequent, but I put it to her and to others who take that view that every five years is far too big an interval. For that reason, my amendment asks the committee to consider a statement being produced every year.

The Convener: No other members have indicated that they wish to speak, so I invite the minister to respond on behalf of the Government.

Ivan McKee: The Government's position is to resist all amendments in the group, except for amendments 23 and 34, in Lorna Slater's name.

With regard to amendment 23, ministers are already obliged to

"have regard to the just transition principles set out in section 35C of the Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009",

so the amendment is not essential, but, in order to strengthen the obligation in an economic policy context, we are, on balance, able to support it.

11:45

With regard to amendment 122, the economic democracy group is already looking at all recommendations made in the independent report "Developing Scotland's Economy: Increasing The Role Of Inclusive And Democratic Business Models". I therefore see no need for the amendment, because the work of that group can feed into the first community wealth building statement.

In response to Richard Leonard's earlier comments about the group not meeting, I understand that the group met last year. The group falls under the business minister's portfolio and is chaired by senior officials. My officials are very happy to engage with Mr Leonard to advise him about the group's status.

On amendment 123, the matter of using community share and bond models involves a level of detail that is best suited to the guidance. The bill intends to provide a framework for the preparation of a statement and action plans, not to prescribe consideration of specific financial mechanisms.

Sarah Boyack: I totally take that point, but, even if the minister does not support that change to the legislation, would he commit to looking at the economic models, so that they are not left behind and missed out?

Ivan McKee: I am happy to look at them and consider them.

The Government supports amendment 34, which is in a similar vein to amendment 5, in Murdo Fraser's name, except that Lorna Slater's amendment focuses on consulting

"local authorities, community organisations, and social enterprises."

Regarding amendment 35, it is critical that businesses are consulted on any draft community wealth building statement. Any responsible Government would talk to businesses in that context. The bill already states:

"Ministers must … consult with such persons as they consider appropriate."

I am also concerned that the way that the amendment is worded might require ministers to consult each and every business that is potentially affected, which would not be practical. However, I am happy to discuss the matter with Lorna Slater before stage 3, perhaps building on the content of amendment 34 to arrive at a more comprehensive and workable list of key consultees.

Amendment 52 is in a similar vein. Again, a specific obligation to consult Co-operative Development Scotland when preparing the community wealth building statement is not required, because it forms part of Scottish Enterprise, which, along with many other bodies and partners, will be consulted on a draft statement. A future Administration should be allowed to choose how to conduct an inclusive consultation exercise. However, as I said, I am happy to discuss the matter with colleagues before stage 3.

The Government does not support amendment 53. Moving from a five-year cycle of revision of the statement to a one-year cycle does not allow enough time for progress to be monitored and for new measures to be formulated. It would trap the Government in a perpetual cycle of continually revising the statement. Should five years prove too long, ministers are obliged to keep the statement under review and they can revise it at any point.

I urge members not to move the amendments in this group. If they do, I urge members not to support them, with the exception of amendments 23 and 34.

The Convener: I ask Paul Sweeney to wind up and to press or withdraw amendment 122.

Paul Sweeney: I am open to discussing these matters with the minister further, but I do not think that it is entirely onerous for the Government to have to cross-reference how a report that it commissioned interfaces with the bill. It is a relatively minor piece of work, but it demonstrates confidence that there is coherence in the Government's approach, so there are no real issues with amendment 122.

Regarding amendment 123, given the context of the slow decline of Co-operative Development Scotland and the enterprise agencies, which has been reported, it is really important that it is explicitly put in the bill that community benefit societies and co-operatives should be developed in a clear, practical way, including through the issuing of equity and share capital to allow them to fundraise for community ownership, if necessary. It is a really useful exercise, and the Government should think about how it mandates Co-operative Development Scotland, which has been on a downward trajectory in the past few years, and how it rejuvenates the organisation within Scottish Enterprise. It is a useful test to see where the Government will take CDS in the future. With that in mind, I am minded to press amendment 122 and to move amendment 123 at this stage.

The Convener: The question is, that amendment 122 be agreed to. Are we agreed?

Members: No.

The Convener: There will be a division.

For

Boyack, Sarah (Lothian) (Lab)
Johnson, Daniel (Edinburgh Southern) (Lab)
Slater, Lorna (Lothian) (Green)

Against

Coffey, Willie (Kilmarnock and Irvine Valley) (SNP)
Fraser, Murdo (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
Kerr, Stephen (Central Scotland) (Con)
MacDonald, Gordon (Edinburgh Pentlands) (SNP)
Stewart, Kevin (Aberdeen Central) (SNP)
Thomson, Michelle (Falkirk East) (SNP)

The Convener: The result of the division is: For 3, Against 6, Abstentions 0.

Amendment 122 disagreed to.

Amendment 123 moved—[Paul Sweeney].

The Convener: The question is, that amendment 123 be agreed to. Are we agreed?

Members: No.

The Convener: There will be a division.

For

Boyack, Sarah (Lothian) (Lab)
Johnson, Daniel (Edinburgh Southern) (Lab)

Against

Coffey, Willie (Kilmarnock and Irvine Valley) (SNP)
Fraser, Murdo (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
Kerr, Stephen (Central Scotland) (Con)
MacDonald, Gordon (Edinburgh Pentlands) (SNP)
Slater, Lorna (Lothian) (Green)
Stewart, Kevin (Aberdeen Central) (SNP)
Thomson, Michelle (Falkirk East) (SNP)

The Convener: The result of the division is: For 2, Against 7, Abstentions 0.

Amendment 123 disagreed to.

Amendment 23 moved—[Lorna Slater].

The Convener: The question is, that amendment 23 be agreed to. Are we agreed?

Members: No.

The Convener: There will be a division.

For

Boyack, Sarah (Lothian) (Lab)
Coffey, Willie (Kilmarnock and Irvine Valley) (SNP)
Johnson, Daniel (Edinburgh Southern) (Lab)

MacDonald, Gordon (Edinburgh Pentlands) (SNP)
Slater, Lorna (Lothian) (Green)
Stewart, Kevin (Aberdeen Central) (SNP)
Thomson, Michelle (Falkirk East) (SNP)

Against

Fraser, Murdo (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
Kerr, Stephen (Central Scotland) (Con)

The Convener: The result of the division is: For 7, Against 2, Abstentions 0.

Amendment 23 agreed to.

Amendment 5 moved—[Murdo Fraser].

The Convener: The question is, that amendment 5 be agreed to. Are we agreed?

Members: No.

The Convener: There will be a division.

For

Boyack, Sarah (Lothian) (Lab)
Fraser, Murdo (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
Johnson, Daniel (Edinburgh Southern) (Lab)
Kerr, Stephen (Central Scotland) (Con)

Against

Coffey, Willie (Kilmarnock and Irvine Valley) (SNP)
MacDonald, Gordon (Edinburgh Pentlands) (SNP)
Slater, Lorna (Lothian) (Green)
Stewart, Kevin (Aberdeen Central) (SNP)
Thomson, Michelle (Falkirk East) (SNP)

The Convener: Please raise your hands if there are any amendments—sorry, abstentions. I think that I will have to write that at the top of my page.

The result of the division is: For 4, Against 5, Abstentions 0.

Amendment 5 disagreed to.

The Convener: I intend to carry on until we reach the next grouping and then take a short suspension, to provide a bit of relief and perhaps help me with my diction.

Amendment 52 moved—[Richard Leonard].

The Convener: The question is, that amendment 52 be agreed to. Are we agreed?

Members: No.

The Convener: There will be a division.

For

Boyack, Sarah (Lothian) (Lab)
Johnson, Daniel (Edinburgh Southern) (Lab)
Slater, Lorna (Lothian) (Green)

Against

Coffey, Willie (Kilmarnock and Irvine Valley) (SNP)
Fraser, Murdo (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
Kerr, Stephen (Central Scotland) (Con)
MacDonald, Gordon (Edinburgh Pentlands) (SNP)
Stewart, Kevin (Aberdeen Central) (SNP)
Thomson, Michelle (Falkirk East) (SNP)

The Convener: The result of the division is: For 3, Against 6, Abstentions 0.

Amendment 52 disagreed to.

Amendment 34 moved—[Lorna Slater].

The Convener: The question is, that amendment 34 be agreed to. Are we agreed?

Members: No.

The Convener: There will be a division.

For

Boyack, Sarah (Lothian) (Lab)
Coffey, Willie (Kilmarnock and Irvine Valley) (SNP)
Johnson, Daniel (Edinburgh Southern) (Lab)
MacDonald, Gordon (Edinburgh Pentlands) (SNP)
Slater, Lorna (Lothian) (Green)
Stewart, Kevin (Aberdeen Central) (SNP)
Thomson, Michelle (Falkirk East) (SNP)

Against

Fraser, Murdo (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
Kerr, Stephen (Central Scotland) (Con)

The Convener: The result of the division is: For 7, Against 2, Abstentions 0.

Amendment 34 agreed to.

Amendment 81 moved—[Ivan McKee]—and agreed to.

Section 1, as amended, agreed to.

11:55

Meeting suspended.

12:05

On resuming—

After section 1

The Convener: We move to group 5. Amendment 6, in the name of Lorna Slater, is grouped with amendments 124 and 102.

Lorna Slater: One of my concerns is that the community wealth building statement should not become something that the Scottish Government can just publish and ignore, so amendment 6 seeks to compel ministers to take action in line with their statement. The form of words is based on that in the Circular Economy (Scotland) Act 2024, so I believe that the approach is sound.

I would like to understand from the minister what his preferred approach is to ensure that the statement is more than just a bit of paper on the shelf, and, if he does not prefer my proposed approach, how it will connect with policy and other legislation in an integrated way.

Paul Sweeney's amendments in this group highlight the same point, so the Government will need to address it—if not at stage 2, then at stage 3.

I move amendment 6.

Paul Sweeney: As Lorna Slater said, the amendments in this group have a similar purpose. Amendment 124 would remove the possibility that the community wealth building statement might contain actions that are not acted on, and would instead require the Scottish ministers to implement the measures in the statement. It is key that action, and not just the duplication of paperwork, is the ultimate outcome of the bill.

Amendment 102 seeks to ensure that the community wealth building action plans are binding, enabling meaningful and progressive action towards outcomes. If the phrase

"so far as reasonably practicable"

is kept in the bill, relevant public bodies will have an enormous loophole to avoid following through on action plans. The ability of the community wealth building partners to deliver the action plan should be assessed and dealt with during a review or monitoring, rather than the bill providing a general loophole. I hope that that loophole can be closed at this stage.

The Convener: No other member has indicated that they wish to speak, so I invite the minister to respond on behalf of the Government.

Ivan McKee: The Government position is not to support any of the amendments in this group. Amendment 6, in the name of Lorna Slater, would impose a legal obligation on the Scottish Government to consider the contents and relevance of its published community wealth building statement when making any other Government policy, including proposals for legislation. Seeking a productive synergy between linked Government policy should be a staple for any Administration, and I do not think that we need an obligation to undertake such activity to be set out in primary legislation. We should also bear in mind the principle of parliamentary accountability, wherein the reporting requirement lies.

Amendment 124, from Paul Sweeney, would impose a legal obligation on ministers to implement their community wealth building statement. The statement is a list of measures that the Scottish ministers are taking or intending to take, so I see no necessity to compel the Scottish ministers to be legally obliged to implement the measures. There will also, rightly, be scrutiny by Parliament through the mechanisms of laying the statement and the reports on progress before it.

Amendment 102 from Paul Sweeney would amend section 8 of the bill to remove the words

"so far as reasonably practicable"

from the provision. The revised provision would state:

"community wealth building partners must implement the measures set out"

in their action plan. That would obligate local authorities and the relevant public bodies to implement actions as set out in the plan, even if they prove to be impractical or impossible to deliver for any reason. My concern is that that would reduce flexibility and might actually inhibit the ambition of community wealth building partnerships.

The Convener: I ask Lorna Slater to wind up and to press or withdraw her amendment.

Lorna Slater: I have no further remarks, convener. I press amendment 6.

The Convener: The question is, that amendment 6 be agreed to. Are we agreed?

Members: No.

The Convener: There will be a division.

For

Boyack, Sarah (Lothian) (Lab)
Johnson, Daniel (Edinburgh Southern) (Lab)
Slater, Lorna (Lothian) (Green)

Against

Coffey, Willie (Kilmarnock and Irvine Valley) (SNP)
MacDonald, Gordon (Edinburgh Pentlands) (SNP)
Stewart, Kevin (Aberdeen Central) (SNP)
Thomson, Michelle (Falkirk East) (SNP)

Abstentions

Fraser, Murdo (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
Kerr, Stephen (Central Scotland) (Con)

The Convener: The result of the division is: For 3, Against 4, Abstentions 2.

Amendment 6 disagreed to.

Section 2—Publication and laying of statement

The Convener: Amendment 7, in the name of Lorna Slater, is grouped with amendments 8 to 12 and 19.

Lorna Slater: Too often, when public bodies publish data, they do so in a format that does not lend itself to analysis, such as scanned hard copies or PDFs. These amendments seek to ensure that all data must be published in a suitable format for analysis.

There are two different types of amendments in the group. One explicitly calls for a standardised machine-readable format and the other gives the

Scottish ministers the option to specify by regulation the format of data that is to be published. Those are two slightly different approaches but both are intended to ensure that any data that is produced can be analysed in a straightforward way.

I move amendment 7.

Ivan McKee: Although their intention of promoting accessibility is understandable, the amendments requiring standardised machine-readable formats for the various statements and reports are not necessary. The Scottish ministers and local authorities are already required to make the documents and websites accessible via other legislation. It is not just a question of the amendments being unnecessary—there is a further dimension in that including them would risk the primary legislation becoming dated. Technology evolves at such a pace that I would be concerned that multiple future amendments would be required for the legislation to keep pace. We should—

Lorna Slater: Will the minister give way?

Ivan McKee: Yes.

Lorna Slater: Amendment 8 says:

"The Scottish Ministers may by regulations specify further details about the format".

The related amendments in the group say something similar. Therefore, I am not seeking for the bill to specify what the format should be. I would be allowing ministers to adjust that as we go forward. Is that not acceptable?

Ivan McKee: I take the point, but I think that my earlier point stands. That requirement is already laid down in other legislation, which means that there is no need for it in the bill and, on the principle of not adding extra provisions to the bill that are covered elsewhere, I still urge members to vote against the amendments.

I would be happy to instruct my officials to include the topic of accessibility and format standardisation in the guidance development discussions, and to include representations from the relevant bodies and other organisations, such as COSLA, public bodies and the third and business sectors.

The Convener: I invite Lorna Slater to wind up and indicate whether she wishes to press or withdraw amendment 7.

Lorna Slater: I have no further remarks, convener, but I will withdraw amendment 7.

Amendment 7, by agreement, withdrawn.

Amendment 8 moved—[Lorna Slater].

The Convener: The question is, that amendment 8 be agreed to. Are we agreed?

Members: No.

The Convener: There will be a division.

For

Boyack, Sarah (Lothian) (Lab)
Fraser, Murdo (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
Johnson, Daniel (Edinburgh Southern) (Lab)
Kerr, Stephen (Central Scotland) (Con)
Slater, Lorna (Lothian) (Green)

Against

Coffey, Willie (Kilmarnock and Irvine Valley) (SNP)
MacDonald, Gordon (Edinburgh Pentlands) (SNP)
Stewart, Kevin (Aberdeen Central) (SNP)
Thomson, Michelle (Falkirk East) (SNP)

The Convener: The result of the division is: For 5, Against 4, Abstentions 0.

Amendment 8 agreed to.

Section 2, as amended, agreed to.

After section 2

Amendment 124 moved—[Paul Sweeney].

The Convener: The question is, that amendment 124 be agreed to. Are we agreed?

Members: No.

The Convener: There will be a division.

For

Boyack, Sarah (Lothian) (Lab)
Fraser, Murdo (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
Johnson, Daniel (Edinburgh Southern) (Lab)
Kerr, Stephen (Central Scotland) (Con)

Against

Coffey, Willie (Kilmarnock and Irvine Valley) (SNP)
MacDonald, Gordon (Edinburgh Pentlands) (SNP)
Slater, Lorna (Lothian) (Green)
Stewart, Kevin (Aberdeen Central) (SNP)
Thomson, Michelle (Falkirk East) (SNP)

The Convener: The result of the division is: For 4, Against 5, Abstentions 0.

Amendment 124 disagreed to.

12:15

Section 3—Review and revision of statement

Amendment 53 moved—[Richard Leonard].

The Convener: The question is, that amendment 53 be agreed to. Are we agreed?

Members: No.

The Convener: There will be a division.

For

Boyack, Sarah (Lothian) (Lab)

Johnson, Daniel (Edinburgh Southern) (Lab)

Against

Coffey, Willie (Kilmarnock and Irvine Valley) (SNP)
Fraser, Murdo (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
Kerr, Stephen (Central Scotland) (Con)
MacDonald, Gordon (Edinburgh Pentlands) (SNP)
Slater, Lorna (Lothian) (Green)
Stewart, Kevin (Aberdeen Central) (SNP)
Thomson, Michelle (Falkirk East) (SNP)

The Convener: The result of the division is: For 2, Against 7, Abstentions 0.

Amendment 53 disagreed to.

Section 3 agreed to.

Section 4—Reporting on statement

Amendment 35 not moved.

Amendment 54 moved—[Richard Leonard].

The Convener: The question is, that amendment 54 be agreed to. Are we agreed?

Members: No.

The Convener: There will be a division.

For

Boyack, Sarah (Lothian) (Lab)
Johnson, Daniel (Edinburgh Southern) (Lab)

Against

Coffey, Willie (Kilmarnock and Irvine Valley) (SNP)
Fraser, Murdo (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
Kerr, Stephen (Central Scotland) (Con)
MacDonald, Gordon (Edinburgh Pentlands) (SNP)
Slater, Lorna (Lothian) (Green)
Stewart, Kevin (Aberdeen Central) (SNP)
Thomson, Michelle (Falkirk East) (SNP)

The Convener: The result of the division is: For 2, Against 7, Abstentions 0.

Amendment 54 disagreed to.

Amendment 82 moved—[Sarah Boyack]—and agreed to.

Amendment 83 moved—[Sarah Boyack].

The Convener: The question is, that amendment 83 be agreed to. Are we agreed?

Members: No.

The Convener: There will be a division.

For

Boyack, Sarah (Lothian) (Lab)
Johnson, Daniel (Edinburgh Southern) (Lab)

Against

Coffey, Willie (Kilmarnock and Irvine Valley) (SNP)
Fraser, Murdo (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
Kerr, Stephen (Central Scotland) (Con)
MacDonald, Gordon (Edinburgh Pentlands) (SNP)
Slater, Lorna (Lothian) (Green)
Stewart, Kevin (Aberdeen Central) (SNP)
Thomson, Michelle (Falkirk East) (SNP)

The Convener: The result of the division is: For 2, Against 7, Abstentions 0.

Amendment 83 disagreed to.

Amendment 9 not moved.

Amendment 10 moved—[Lorna Slater].

The Convener: The question is, that amendment 10 be agreed to. Are we agreed?

Members: No.

The Convener: There will be a division.

For

Boyack, Sarah (Lothian) (Lab)
Fraser, Murdo (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
Johnson, Daniel (Edinburgh Southern) (Lab)
Kerr, Stephen (Central Scotland) (Con)
Slater, Lorna (Lothian) (Green)

Against

Coffey, Willie (Kilmarnock and Irvine Valley) (SNP)
MacDonald, Gordon (Edinburgh Pentlands) (SNP)
Stewart, Kevin (Aberdeen Central) (SNP)
Thomson, Michelle (Falkirk East) (SNP)

The Convener: The result of the division is: For 5, Against 4, Abstentions 0.

Amendment 10 agreed to.

Amendment 55 moved—[Richard Leonard].

The Convener: The question is, that amendment 55 be agreed to. Are we agreed?

Members: No.

The Convener: There will be a division.

For

Boyack, Sarah (Lothian) (Lab)
Johnson, Daniel (Edinburgh Southern) (Lab)

Against

Coffey, Willie (Kilmarnock and Irvine Valley) (SNP)
Fraser, Murdo (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
Kerr, Stephen (Central Scotland) (Con)
MacDonald, Gordon (Edinburgh Pentlands) (SNP)
Slater, Lorna (Lothian) (Green)
Stewart, Kevin (Aberdeen Central) (SNP)
Thomson, Michelle (Falkirk East) (SNP)

The Convener: The result of the division is: For 2, Against 7, Abstentions 0.

Amendment 55 disagreed to.

Amendment 56 moved—[Richard Leonard].

The Convener: The question is, that amendment 56 be agreed to. Are we agreed?

Members: No.

The Convener: There will be a division.

For

Boyack, Sarah (Lothian) (Lab)
Johnson, Daniel (Edinburgh Southern) (Lab)

Against

Coffey, Willie (Kilmarnock and Irvine Valley) (SNP)
Fraser, Murdo (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
Kerr, Stephen (Central Scotland) (Con)
MacDonald, Gordon (Edinburgh Pentlands) (SNP)
Slater, Lorna (Lothian) (Green)
Stewart, Kevin (Aberdeen Central) (SNP)
Thomson, Michelle (Falkirk East) (SNP)

The Convener: The result of the division is: For 2, Against 7, Abstentions 0.

Amendment 56 disagreed to.

Section 4, as amended, agreed to.

Section 5—Community wealth building action plan

The Convener: Amendment 84, in the name of Ivan McKee, is grouped with amendments 125, 128, 18, 61, 91, 129, 38, 92, 93, 65, and 100.

Ivan McKee: I encourage members to support all four amendments in my name in the group, as well as amendment 128, in the name of Lorna Slater. Amendment 84 is a small adjustment to make it clear that local authorities and their relevant partners must develop a community wealth building action plan together, as opposed to producing one each. The latter unintended interpretation was highlighted during stage 1.

Amendments 92 and 93 are linked. Amendment 92 seeks to ensure that there is inclusive development of local action plans by adding specific requirements to consult representatives of the community, businesses and the third sector. Amendment 93 ensures that local authorities are transparent about how they consult during the preparation period and how they factor in views that have been received in framing the final document.

Amendment 100, in my name, adjusts the bill to ensure that there is clarity on local authorities' role in publishing a revised action plan. Section 5(2) already makes it clear that the responsibility for that falls to the local authority. However, the wording of section 7(3) also needs to be tightened to make that clear. The Government's position is to resist the rest of the amendments in the group, except amendment 128. Although existing statutory provisions set out how common good assets can be used, I do not think that introducing additional measures via the bill would impact negatively on existing provisions. Therefore, the Government's position is to support amendment 128.

On amendment 18, I agree with the importance of consulting with businesses on community wealth building action plans, but I invite the member to speak to me about that prior to stage 3. I am concerned that obliging local authorities to consult all businesses that are operating in the relevant local area goes too far and represents a significant task. As I say, I would be happy to discuss that further and I hope to find a more workable solution for consulting businesses. In addition, it is worth highlighting amendment 92, in my name, which would require persons who are considered representatives of businesses, amongst other things, to be consulted. Should Murdo Fraser find my amendment satisfactory, perhaps he could consider withdrawing his amendment 18.

I turn to amendments 125 and 129 in Paul Sweeney's name. The Government cannot support amendment 125, as it places too high a focus on one potential collaborative partner, namely credit unions, for community wealth building partnerships. Credit unions are important bodies in the context of community wealth building, but not to the extent that they should be isolated and elevated above others in the way that amendment 125 proposes. Amendment 129, which proposes a specific obligation on local authorities to consult credit unions, cannot be supported by the Government on the same grounds.

Richard Leonard's amendment 61 is similar to amendment 125 in its selective focus, this time on Co-operative Development Scotland, which is part of Scottish Enterprise, the public body that will be obliged to be part of the development of every community wealth building action plan. Therefore, there is no requirement for amendment 61. I urge the member to withdraw it.

Sarah Boyack's amendment 91 reminds me of the huge importance of working with communities to maximise the impact of community wealth building as a policy and a model of local economic development. However, an obligation to consult any community bodies operating in a relevant area when preparing an action plan—in other words, all of them—seems quite onerous in practice. I respectfully ask the member to withdraw the amendment and consider supporting my amendment 92 instead, which would require there to be consultation with such persons that the community wealth building partnership considers as representatives of the interests of the community.

I encourage Lorna Slater to withdraw amendment 38, which adds additional entities that must be consulted by local authorities when preparing an action plan, and support amendment 92. The combination of the proposed consultation requirements, as amended by my proposed

amendments, and statutory guidance can address the issue of adequate consultation.

Finally, on Richard Leonard's amendment 65, the Government cannot support imposing a requirement to update action plans every year. In my view, that is too frequent. Further, that would need to be discussed with COSLA and others prior to committing community wealth building partners to an annual timescale for revising action plans.

Paul Sweeney: Amendments 125 and 129 serve the same purpose and are intentionally designed to reinforce the role of credit unions as part of community wealth building in Scotland. The minister was rather dismissive of their role and their unique position in the Scottish economy. Scotland has an extremely concentrated banking system, with the clearing banks dominating that system.

Credit unions in Scotland demonstrate remarkable reach compared with those in other parts of the UK. They serve almost half a million members in Scotland with £0.75 billion in loans. Given that credit unions penetrate 9 per cent of the population, there is a huge opportunity to build on those unique assets in Scotland. To dismiss or not recognise that exceptional situation is rather unfair, so I hope that the minister will reconsider his position and perhaps look at the matter again, if he is not minded to support my amendments at this stage.

Lorna Slater: Amendment 128 seeks to ensure that local authorities consider the use and disposal of common good land and assets when developing their action plans. As other members, including Rhoda Grant, have highlighted, common good land and assets will be significant in relation to the development of those plans.

I would like members to particularly consider amendment 38, the purpose of which is to ensure that local democratic organisations such as community councils and development trusts, organisations that are already working on community wealth building in the area, and key private companies such as major local employers, are included. A key concern that was flagged by stakeholders in the committee's stage 1 evidence sessions is that existing organisations, such as community development trusts, that are already working on community wealth building and that have substantial local knowledge and experience can be completely excluded from the development of action plans. The development trusts that we heard from specifically asked that they be included, and it seems counterproductive to ignore the experience and expertise that they can bring to the process.

It also seems sensible to include private firms that are substantial local employers or landowners. I think that Murdo Fraser's amendment 18 attempts to do something similar.

I think that Sarah Boyack, through amendment 91, is looking to do something similar to what I am trying to do through amendment 38, but I think that her wording is too broad. My amendment describes democratic community groups, which include community councils, so it is more specific and representative.

I do not disagree with the intention of Paul Sweeney's amendments 125 and 129, but they would be in slightly odd places in the bill, so the matter could perhaps be reconsidered at stage 3.

I think that the annual reporting requirements that are set out in amendment 65 would be too onerous, so I will not support that amendment.

Murdo Fraser: Amendment 18 would require those who prepare community wealth building plans to consult businesses that operate in the area, particularly those that would likely be impacted by any targets, which we will discuss in a later group of amendments.

I listened with interest to what the minister said about the matter, and I have looked at the wording of his amendment 92, which I will support. Amendment 92 talks about the need for consultation with persons who are considered to be

"representative of the interests of … businesses",

which is a slightly different point from the one that I am making in amendment 18.

I will be happy to support amendment 92 and will not move amendment 18, but I would be interested in having discussions with the minister prior to stage 3 to see whether we could agree on some other wording.

Richard Leonard: Amendment 61 is, again, an attempt to include Co-operative Development Scotland in the preparation of community wealth building action plans at a local level. I am concerned that its history, as well as its present and future, appears to have been written off. I think that it is an important part of the tools of economic development in Scotland. I know that it sits inside Scottish Enterprise, so I understand the minister's argument that Scottish Enterprise will be consulted, ergo Co-operative Development Scotland will be consulted, but I am looking for something a little bit firmer than that to guarantee that that will be a dimension of the input from Scottish Enterprise and the enterprise network generally.

Amendment 65 is about having the local plan revised annually. Frankly, if the committee is not prepared to support the Scottish Government coming back to Parliament more than once every

five years, it would be rather unfair to impose an annual regime on local government. I intend not to move amendment 65.

12:30

Sarah Boyack: My amendment 91 simply seeks to strengthen the consultation requirements around the preparation of a community wealth building action plan. As drafted, the bill sets out a list of bodies that a local authority must consult, but my amendment would add a clear requirement to include any community bodies operating in the area covered by the plan, so that there would be no risk of any community groups being ignored.

That is really important, because community wealth building is meant to be rooted in local priorities and experience. Community bodies are often the organisations with the closest understanding of local needs, assets and opportunities. Ensuring that they are explicitly included in the consultation process would help to make the action plan more grounded, more representative and, ultimately, more effective.

The other amendments in the group—they cover transparency, inclusiveness, joint working with local authorities, credit unions, development trusts and businesses—are all important.

I will comment on Richard Leonard's remarks on Co-operative Development Scotland. It is really important that it remains on our profile and is not just subsumed by Scottish Enterprise. If we are going to make community co-operatives work, they must be higher up the agenda.

The Convener: I invite the minister to wind up.

Ivan McKee: I have a few brief comments. I hear Paul Sweeney's points about credit unions. My previous comments were not intended to downplay the critical importance of credit unions; they were more a reflection on how other types of bodies could or should be considered in the same vein when we articulate the legislation. Having said that, I am happy to meet Paul Sweeney and engage on that point in advance of stage 3, to talk through the Government's position.

I thank Murdo Fraser for agreeing not to move his amendment 18, and look forward to engaging with him on that specific point on businesses.

On Sarah Boyack's point about community bodies, there are real concerns about how to define a community body and how to find out how many there are in any given area—there could be many hundreds of them. What would happen if you miss one? I get the intent behind her amendment, but it is an impractical approach to address the issue.

I press amendment 84.

The Convener: The question is, that amendment 84 be agreed to. Are we agreed?

Amendment 84 agreed to.

Amendment 125 moved—[Paul Sweeney].

The Convener: The question is, that amendment 125 be agreed to. Are we agreed?

Members: No.

The Convener: There will be a division.

For

Boyack, Sarah (Lothian) (Lab)
Johnson, Daniel (Edinburgh Southern) (Lab)

Against

Coffey, Willie (Kilmarnock and Irvine Valley) (SNP)
Fraser, Murdo (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
Kerr, Stephen (Central Scotland) (Con)
MacDonald, Gordon (Edinburgh Pentlands) (SNP)
Slater, Lorna (Lothian) (Green)
Stewart, Kevin (Aberdeen Central) (SNP)
Thomson, Michelle (Falkirk East) (SNP)

The Convener: The result of the division is: For 2, Against 7, Abstentions 0.

Amendment 125 disagreed to.

Amendment 11 not moved.

Amendment 12 moved—[Lorna Slater].

The Convener: The question is, that amendment 12 be agreed to. Are we agreed?

Members: No.

The Convener: There will be a division.

For

Boyack, Sarah (Lothian) (Lab)
Fraser, Murdo (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
Johnson, Daniel (Edinburgh Southern) (Lab)
Kerr, Stephen (Central Scotland) (Con)
Slater, Lorna (Lothian) (Green)

Against

Coffey, Willie (Kilmarnock and Irvine Valley) (SNP)
MacDonald, Gordon (Edinburgh Pentlands) (SNP)
Stewart, Kevin (Aberdeen Central) (SNP)
Thomson, Michelle (Falkirk East) (SNP)

The Convener: The result of the division is: For 5, Against 4, Abstentions 0.

Amendment 12 agreed to.

Amendment 58 moved—[Richard Leonard].

The Convener: The question is, that amendment 58 be agreed to. Are we agreed?

Members: No.

The Convener: There will be a division.

For

Boyack, Sarah (Lothian) (Lab)
Johnson, Daniel (Edinburgh Southern) (Lab)
Slater, Lorna (Lothian) (Green)

Against

Coffey, Willie (Kilmarnock and Irvine Valley) (SNP)
Fraser, Murdo (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
Kerr, Stephen (Central Scotland) (Con)
MacDonald, Gordon (Edinburgh Pentlands) (SNP)
Stewart, Kevin (Aberdeen Central) (SNP)
Thomson, Michelle (Falkirk East) (SNP)

The Convener: The result of the division is: For 3, Against 7, Abstentions 0.

Amendment 58 disagreed to.

Amendment 59 moved—[Richard Leonard].

The Convener: The question is, that amendment 59 be agreed to. Are we agreed?

Members: No.

The Convener: There will be a division.

For

Boyack, Sarah (Lothian) (Lab)
Johnson, Daniel (Edinburgh Southern) (Lab)
Slater, Lorna (Lothian) (Green)

Against

Coffey, Willie (Kilmarnock and Irvine Valley) (SNP)
Fraser, Murdo (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
Kerr, Stephen (Central Scotland) (Con)
MacDonald, Gordon (Edinburgh Pentlands) (SNP)
Stewart, Kevin (Aberdeen Central) (SNP)
Thomson, Michelle (Falkirk East) (SNP)

The Convener: The result of the division is: For 3, Against 6, Abstentions 0.

Amendment 59 disagreed to.

The Convener: Given the progress that we have made, I will draw to a close this morning's stage 2 proceedings of the Community Wealth Building (Scotland) Bill. We will resume our proceedings next week.

12:36

Meeting continued in private until 12:57.

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