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Scottish Parliament

Thursday 28 May 2026

[The Presiding Officer opened the meeting at 12:00]

First Minister's Question Time

Party Leaders

The Presiding Officer (Kenneth Gibson): Good afternoon, colleagues. Before we move to party leaders' questions, I remind back-bench members who wish to ask a question to press their request-to-speak button when Alex Cole-Hamilton rises to speak. Please do not start your question with "To ask the First Minister". "First Minister," or some other beginning is fine. Back benchers will have one question, in order to let in as many members as possible, so there will be no supplementary questions for back benchers. We move to leaders' questions.

Scottish National Party (Culture)

1. **Anas Sarwar (Glasgow) (Lab):** This week, Peter Murrell, the former chief executive officer of the Scottish National Party, pled guilty to embezzling more than £400,000 of supporters' hard-earned cash. He will have to answer for his crimes, which will be a matter for the courts.

However, questions remain about the deeper culture that allowed him to commit—and think that he could get away with—his crimes. It is a culture that has been a hallmark of not just how the SNP runs its party but how it governs the country. It is a culture of secrecy and cover-up, in which the public are not told the truth, dissenters are vilified and careers are destroyed; in which protecting the party and the people at its top is more important than the country; and in which there is a sick and twisted belief that the cause is bigger than anything else. Will John Swinney apologise to all those who have been the victims of that dangerous culture?

The First Minister (John Swinney): As I said in answer to the urgent question that I responded to on Tuesday and in my public remarks on Monday, I am appalled at the conduct of Peter Murrell. As the police statement said on Monday, this was a lengthy and extremely complex case due to the scale of criminality over a 12-year period and the lengths to which Peter Murrell went to try to cover his tracks. It was a terrible example of behaviour and a breach of trust in public office, which I unreservedly condemn; I have made that abundantly clear.

Members of my party, who have lost out as a consequence of seeing their donations and contributions not being used for the purposes for which they are intended—I am one of those people, because I am a contributor to the SNP, as are all my colleagues—live with the consequences of those totally unacceptable actions. These issues have been addressed by a lengthy police investigation, and Peter Murrell is now facing the consequences of his actions.

As for the remainder of Mr Sarwar's comments, I simply note that he has peddled all of this for the past five years, unreservedly, aided by his deputy, who is sitting beside him. However, the people of Scotland made their verdict on 7 May, and they returned 58 SNP MSPs to this Parliament and the Labour Party was reduced in its numbers. I think that Mr Sarwar should change his script, because his script is not working.

Anas Sarwar: That arrogant disposition of John Swinney is what has destroyed so many people's lives in his own political party. John Swinney has been at the heart of the SNP for 30 years. He helped to build, enable and defend its culture. I say to members on the SNP benches that many of their colleagues and supporters were victims of that culture and many of those with whom they now sit were part of it or benefited from that culture.

Yes, Peter Murrell is responsible for his crimes, but secrecy and cover-up go far beyond one individual or one case. At the heart of the case is an SNP culture in which secrecy became normal, dissent was dangerous and people learned that speaking out carried a heavy price, all while those at the top of the SNP machine operated without scrutiny.

Yesterday, we called for a parliamentary inquiry, as this is now a matter of public trust and integrity in office. John Swinney now says that he believes in honesty and transparency, so he should prove it. Will he back a parliamentary inquiry?

The First Minister: No, I will not back a parliamentary inquiry on that issue. The reason why I will not back a parliamentary inquiry is that we have just had a police investigation, which has gone on for five years. That police investigation identified criminality as the source of this particular issue; that is now being remedied in the courts. I do not think that there is anything that a parliamentary inquiry can add to a five-year forensic police investigation that has resulted in the successful prosecution of an individual and in his guilty plea.

What I would rather do is concentrate on the priorities of the people of Scotland, as I always do—whether those are reducing waiting times in our hospitals, providing support to first-time buyers or making sure that we expand early learning and

childcare. That is what I am going to do, because I am a First Minister on Scotland's side.

Anas Sarwar: The purpose of a parliamentary inquiry would not be to look into the criminality—that is, of course, for the police to do. It would be to look at the culture, the process of decision making and lessons for the future. It would be to answer the many questions that the public have. That requires light and transparency, not the usual John Swinney and SNP playbook of shutting down or deflecting.

We have seen the dangerous outcomes of that culture: victims who reported the abuse by Patrick Grady threatened with legal and disciplinary action; SNP officials bullied and forced out by a First Minister for trying to reveal Murrell's crimes; female MSPs bugged by SNP staff and then ignored by party leaders; and seven North Lanarkshire councillors forced out of the party for raising concerns about paedophile Jordan Linden. It is a culture that puts victims last, as though they are a threat to the cause.

John Swinney has a choice. Will he back a parliamentary inquiry or will he double down on protecting a culture that he helped to build and that enabled a man that he appointed to embezzle more than £400,000?

The First Minister: That was an astonishing attempt at victim blaming by Anas Sarwar. He should be ashamed of himself and of what he said. There is one person, and one person alone, who is responsible for the embezzlement of my party's funds—and that is Peter Murrell.

When I became leader of the SNP, I promised to my party that there would be open dialogue, debate and scrutiny within our party, and that is precisely what I have delivered. That was just one of the many promises that I gave to the SNP and to the people of Scotland. I also promised that I would unite my party, and I succeeded in doing so, which is why there are 58 of us over here while there are 17 of them over there, on the Labour benches.

As my last word to Mr Sarwar on the subject, I say to him gently that people in glass houses should not throw stones. He knows that the Labour Party is up to its neck in difficulty, whether it is about live criminal cases that involve former members of this Parliament or about Peter Mandelson and his influence over the Labour Government. Anas Sarwar has not got a leg to stand on in taking me to task on those issues.

North Sea Gas Licensing

2. **Malcolm Offord (West Scotland) (Reform):** Today, we are importing 70 per cent of our gas from Norwegian gas fields in the North Sea, over the fence from our own gas fields that we are shutting down. Even the Norwegian energy minister thinks that that is daft. Will the First Minister state categorically that the Scottish Government will support the licensing of our own North Sea gas?

The First Minister (John Swinney): The Scottish Government's position is that if new developments are to be taken forward, they have to pass a climate compatibility assessment to ensure that the extraction of those resources is compatible with our journey to net zero. In that judgment, consideration must also be given to the issues around security of energy supply.

The first part of my answer, in relation to climate compatibility assessments, is that there is a requirement on us to be compatible with the most recent Finch judgment on consenting of oil and gas licences. The second part of my answer, on security of supply, is that we must take into account the much more volatile circumstances that we now face as a consequence of what has happened in the middle east in recent weeks and months. That is the Scottish Government's position. Obviously, the decision making on the issue is a matter for the United Kingdom Government—it must take the decision as to whether those tests can be satisfied as a consequence of any new licences that are issued.

Malcolm Offord: I have to say that that was a pretty mealy-mouthed response from the First Minister, because all that it means is that we will end up being tied up in court action to work out whether those tests have been met. In the meantime, 1,000 jobs a month are being lost in the North Sea.

Can the First Minister give unequivocal support for, for example, new drilling licences for the Jackdaw and Rosebank fields? Given that licensing and planning are under the control of the Scottish Government, it needs to step forward and make that happen for the people of the north-east.

The First Minister: I understand the seriousness of the point that Mr Offord puts to me, but it is not me who is deferring to court action. I am dealing with the realities of living within the rule of law, which, as I have set out to Parliament, matters very much to me in how I conduct myself publicly. The Finch judgment requires climate compatibility assessments to be undertaken, so we cannot wish that requirement away. That is not a mealy-mouthed position; it is a reflection of the legal reality around us.

I say to Mr Offord that I recognise that circumstances and dynamics have changed because of the situation in the middle east. One of our worries about supply is about jet fuel. Of course, jet fuel was manufactured at Grangemouth, which was closed by the Labour

Government, despite Anas Sarwar telling me in an election debate in 2024 that it would be saved by a Labour Government.

We have careful judgments to make on the issue, but the assurance that I give to Parliament today—and, crucially, to oil and gas workers in the north-east of Scotland—is that the Scottish Government will make all the interventions that it can to ensure that we secure the future of those individuals who are affected by the downturn in oil and gas.

Malcolm Offord: During the election, the First Minister promised that his first debate in the chamber would be on the constitution, which would be followed by a request for a section 30 notice, and he has met that promise. During the election, the Labour Government promised that it would reject any application for such a section 30 notice, and it has done that. During the election, the First Minister promised that, if his section 30 notice application was rejected, he had a cunning plan to get a referendum.

The debate on the constitution was on Tuesday, and the First Minister's request was rejected on Wednesday. It is now Thursday. Is it time for the First Minister to reveal his cunning plan, or has Peter Murrell stolen that as well?

The First Minister: The point of substance that Malcolm Offord puts to me is an important one, because it gets to the heart of our democratic politics. I am not going to just kowtow to 10 Downing Street. The people of Scotland have decided, this Parliament has an independence majority, and I will use that independence majority to deliver independence for our country.

Taxation Powers

3. **Gillian Mackay (Central Scotland and Lothians West) (Green):** The Scottish Greens were the only party at the election to say that we need to use our full taxation powers to raise more money, particularly from the wealth of the super-rich.

Today, the Tax Justice Scotland coalition wrote to the First Minister calling for a post-election reality check of Scotland's public finances. In its words,

"if we want a fairer and greener country, we need to invest in it. You can't promise a better Scotland and avoid paying for it."

We know that public sector reform is badly needed, but trade unions in particular are rightly concerned that reform is usually a euphemism for slashing budgets and cutting jobs. Does the First Minister agree with the Scottish Greens and Tax Justice Scotland that we should explore all options for taxing wealth before cutting public sector jobs?

The First Minister (John Swinney): As Gillian Mackay will know from her experience in the previous parliamentary session, any budget proposition involves a combination of tax and spending decisions. In meeting those requirements, the Government considers the opportunities to raise tax and the consequences of raising tax, and the opportunities to undertake public expenditure and the impact that that public expenditure could have.

We will obviously need to have very open discussions. The Deputy First Minister will lead those discussions on behalf of the Government, and Ivan McKee will also be engaged in discussions on how we can secure greater impact from the way in which we undertake public expenditure.

Although I totally respect and understand the concerns of trade unions, we also need to be open to new ways of delivering public services. I have seen some fantastic work being delivered that has cost less but has delivered better outcomes for individuals. At the heart of the work that Ivan McKee is bringing forward is making sure that we improve public services while delivering financial sustainability for the public purse.

Of course, without a majority in the Parliament, the Government will need to work with others to come to common positions. I look forward to taking those discussions forward with many colleagues from across the political spectrum.

Gillian Mackay: I appreciate that response from the First Minister and, in a second, I will come on to an idea about how we can deliver more from the public sector. I am sure that the new Cabinet Secretary for Public Service Reform will have plenty of difficult decisions to make. However, as the First Minister reflected, it is crucial that those decisions are not just about looking for cuts that can be dressed up as efficiencies but are about how we continue to build on the work that the public sector is doing to drive up productivity and wellbeing so that workers feel valued and are able to do their jobs well.

In the previous session, the Scottish Greens secured a pioneering trial of a four-day working week in the public sector, which resulted in a 25 per cent drop in mental health sick days and no loss of service delivery or productivity. Although our finances remain stretched, rolling out a four-day week would help to transform public sector work at no extra cost to the public purse. Will the First Minister commit to expanding the four-day week in the public sector?

The First Minister: I am very happy to consider those issues. It is obviously a bit too early in the parliamentary session for me to give a commitment that is quite as firm as the one that

Gillian Mackay has invited me to make today. However, there is a deadly serious point at the heart of her question, which is that the environment in which public servants work really matters. If that environment is burdened by excessive bureaucracy or by slowness in decision making, that can have a negative effect on individuals in carrying out their responsibilities. Those considerations are at the heart of what Ivan McKee is looking to do, which is to ensure that we utilise the effectiveness of public expenditure to the maximum extent so that public servants are able to fulfil their roles and we can deliver better outcomes for members of the public in Scotland.

Gillian Mackay: If it is a wee bit early for cast-iron commitments, the First Minister might not enjoy my next question.

The Scottish Greens have already shown that we can work constructively and creatively to raise more money for public services. Income tax changes that have been driven by Green MSPs over the past decade mean that our public services are now better off to the tune of £1.8 billion each year. However, we cannot fix Scotland's public finances without fixing how we fund our local councils. For too long, the claim that we need a consensus to replace the council tax has been used as an excuse not to take action. If the First Minister wants to scrap the council tax to fund public services, the Scottish Greens will work with him—that would be a parliamentary majority for change. Will the First Minister work with us to scrap the council tax in this parliamentary session?

The First Minister: As I told the Parliament on Tuesday, I want this to be a bold Parliament. Therefore, there must be reform in this parliamentary session—we simply cannot go on as we are just now. There are legitimate issues regarding the council tax and its fairness, on which I have a great deal of sympathy. Later today, the Deputy First Minister is meeting local authority leaders to start the constructive dialogue that I want to see in place. The Government will be willing to engage with the Scottish Green Party on all issues, including on reform and potential abolition of the council tax. However, we need to have in place reliable means that will support public finances and the delivery of public services. That is the key consideration that will be brought to those discussions by the Scottish Government.

Publication of Information (Lord Advocate)

4. **Russell Findlay (West Scotland) (Con):** The Peter Murrell scandal is not just about the Scottish National Party's toxic internal culture; it goes to the heart of Government and Scotland's justice system. John Swinney and Nicola Sturgeon did not stop Peter Murrell; they enabled him. Sturgeon warned SNP members to stop asking difficult questions and John Swinney assured everyone that the SNP's finances were sound. Their shield of protection gave Murrell a licence to steal. People want to know why Nicola Sturgeon was not in the dock beside her husband. Will John Swinney back our call for the Lord Advocate to publish all the information that relates to the case?

The First Minister (John Swinney): Mr Findlay is an experienced parliamentarian and also an experienced journalist who has looked at many issues of criminality over his career. As the Crown Office pointed out to Mr Findlay yesterday, the Crown does not disclose the rationale for its taking decisions, other than where it pursues prosecutions against individuals. The Crown has undertaken a successful prosecution here, and I pay tribute to the Crown Office and to Police Scotland.

The Crown also made it clear to Mr Findlay yesterday that the Lord Advocate and the Solicitor General—the law officers—had no involvement in this case. They never have an involvement in cases involving political figures, which are all undertaken by independent counsel and experienced Crown counsel within the Crown Office.

That assurance, which was given by the Crown to Mr Findlay yesterday, is designed to explain that the highest standards have been applied to a deep and forensic criminal investigation, which resulted in the prosecution of one person and one person alone.

If Mr Findlay had a shred of decency about him he would express his respect for the judicial system in Scotland and for the justice system in Scotland and leave the professional officers of our police service and our professional prosecutors to do their jobs, which is exactly what they have done.

Russell Findlay: That was the usual desperate deflection from John Swinney. He is trying to shut down scrutiny, and we will not stand for it.

John Swinney says that the SNP is the victim, although there are new reports that taxpayers' money was also stolen. If the SNP is the victim, did it exercise its right in law to seek a review of the Crown Office's prosecution decision? Will John Swinney now follow the money, which bought a camper van, Montblanc pens and a home library? Is he taking legal action to force Peter Murrell to pay compensation or has John Swinney asked the Crown Office to use the proceeds of crime laws to recover luxury stolen goods from Peter Murrell and Nicola Sturgeon?

The First Minister: If there is anything desperate about all of this, it is the desperation of a man who has led the Conservative Party into

oblivion asking me questions about this issue today. That is what Russell Findlay is doing. [*Interruption*.]

The Presiding Officer: Let the First Minister answer, please.

The First Minister: As a matter of fact, in court on Monday, the advocate depute made a verbal motion for confiscation in relation to section 92 of the Proceeds of Crime Act 2002, and the decision on the matter will ultimately be for the court to make. Given that, as the Presiding Officer told us on Tuesday, the proceedings remain live until sentencing, I am unable to say any more beyond that.

The second point that I will make is in relation to the suggestion that there was public money involved in all of this. The only issue that could apply there is in relation to a policy development grant from the Electoral Commission. I want to reassure Parliament that, in order to receive funding, a party needs to apply to the Electoral Commission outlining the work that will be done in the forthcoming year, and to submit an audited report to the Electoral Commission outlining what grant funding has been spent on. It is only on receipt of the audited report that the final payment of the grant is made by the Electoral Commission. That confirms the point that I made to Parliament on Tuesday that it is SNP supporters' money that has been embezzled, and not public money.

The last thing that I will say to Russell Findlay is this: the Scottish National Party has been affected by the loss of the resources as a result of this case, but what the Scottish National Party can rely on now is the most effective arrangements being in place to guarantee that the resources that we use are used to maximum effect. We used them to maximum effect on 7 May, when the SNP won 58 seats in the Parliament and the Conservatives were reduced to a hopeless rump of 12, sitting over there. They may grin all they like, but, for the seventh time in a row in this Parliament, we successfully got rid of the Conservatives, and the people of Scotland can breathe a sigh of relief that the Conservatives are over there redundant as a consequence of the election.

Ferry Services

5. **Alex Cole-Hamilton (Edinburgh North Western) (LD):** During the Easter holidays, at least eight ferries were out of action at the same time. Every Scottish island faced disruption. Those communities are overdue serious compensation, and I hope that the First Minister will finally extend that to the coastal communities that are affected, too. Businesses there are now looking to the summer holidays and wondering what this situation will mean for them.

Last week, technology of the 19th century came to the rescue of passengers of the 21st century when the Waverley paddle steamer stepped in for a stricken Caledonian MacBrayne vessel. John Swinney must have winced with embarrassment at that reality.

Is Scotland's ferry fleet ready for the summer?

The First Minister (John Swinney): I acknowledge that there have been acute challenges in the ferry network over the past few weeks and months.

When I went to the Western Isles during the election campaign—and, by the way, I went there by ferry and came back by ferry; I did not just fly in for a day trip—I listened to people about the issues with ferries. I also confirmed that, if the Scottish National Party Government was re-elected, we would put in place financial assistance to deal with the damage that I acknowledge was undertaken to many communities as a consequence of the disruption during the Easter holidays. I am happy to confirm to Parliament that the Scottish Government will make such a fund available and we are now considering the terms and basis of that. I will reflect on Mr Cole-Hamilton's point about coastal communities.

As to whether the ferry network is equipped for the summer, when I looked at service strength this morning, before I came down to the chamber, I saw that ferry services on most routes are operating appropriately. That has been the case for a number of days. I look at that regularly, because I am keen to ensure that island communities are well served by the ferry network, and I will continue to do that, as will the transport secretary, who is also engaging on all of those questions.

I do think that the ferry network is going to be ready for the summer. It will have to be, because the First Minister is going to be using it to go on his summer holidays.

Alex Cole-Hamilton: I am grateful for that reply, but it is no wonder that the people of the Western Isles sent the First Minister and his party packing. Lots of coastal and island communities are turning away from the SNP because of this issue. Remember that *The New York Times* told its readers that, while our Scottish islands are beautiful,

"Good luck getting on or off."

Scotland's islands are a great option for a summer getaway—they are beautiful—but only if we can get holidaymakers over to their hotels and to cafes and distilleries.

The ferry fleet is more prone than ever before to breakdown and disruption. It is not resilient.

Everyone who lives in those communities knows that all too well. Has the First Minister picked up the phone to ferry operators and Governments elsewhere in the United Kingdom and Europe to find extra vessels to keep those routes operational and our island communities profitable?

The First Minister: Of course we have done that. We have been using the MV Alfred on the Troon to Brodick route, with which the Presiding Officer may well be familiar. We have also purchased the Loch Frisa, which services the route from Oban to Craignure on the Isle of Mull. The MV Isle of Islay is also now in service, and it services the route to Islay. The Glen Sannox is servicing the Castlebay route presently, and we have another vessel coming from the Cemre yard in the summer, another one in the autumn and another in the spring. The Glen Rosa is also to join service. Therefore, there are more vessels coming into the fleet.

The SNP Government has already put nine new vessels into the fleet and we have 11 more coming into the fleet. I assure Mr Cole-Hamilton that CalMac and Northlink Ferries are always working to ensure that we have connections in place.

There is an important message that our islands are open for business. When I was in the Western Isles during the election campaign, I heard frustration from local businesses about the ferry network, but also about some of the amplification of these issues that indicated that it was ever more difficult for people to get to the islands, which is damaging to island communities.

Mr Cole-Hamilton said that island communities were turning their backs on the SNP. While I am on my feet, I cannot resist the temptation to respond. I grieve the loss of my dear friend Dr Alasdair Allan in the Western Isles. He was an absolutely outstanding parliamentarian, and I very much regret the fact that we were unable to hold on to Caithness, Sutherland and Ross, and Skye, Lochaber and Badenoch. However, after 75 years of Liberal representation, the people of Shetland did an absolutely wonderful thing. They sent Hannah Mary Goodlad here for the SNP, and we are delighted to welcome her to the Scottish Parliament.

The Presiding Officer: We now move to questions from back benchers. The leaders' questions have taken some 30 minutes, so I think that folk will now appreciate why I have introduced a back benchers' questions session on a Tuesday.

I ask members to ensure, please, that they have pressed their request-to-speak buttons, because a host of members are already keen to speak. Members have lodged very interesting questions that I am quite keen to take, but some of you have not pressed your buttons. Without further ado, I call Jackie Dunbar.

Energy Price Cap

Jackie Dunbar (Aberdeen Donside) (SNP): This week, it was announced that the energy price cap was going to increase by 13 per cent, which will lead to an estimated bill rise of £221. What assessment has been made of the impact that that will have on poverty and child poverty in Scotland?

The First Minister (John Swinney): The news about the energy price cap is a serious blow to families around the country, because, as we all heard during the election campaign, people are already wrestling with cost of living challenges. The 13 per cent increase in the energy price cap makes that situation ever more challenging for individuals and families.

The Scottish Government will take all the action that we can take, through measures that I set out during the election, relating to, for example, the affordability of travel and the food shop. However, what we need is action from the United Kingdom Government. It promised to reduce energy bills by £300, but energy bills are going to be higher than when Labour came to office. That is just another example of the failure of the Labour Government at Westminster.

There is now a strong and compelling argument for the motion that we will debate this afternoon, which is on the importance of ensuring that the energy-generating potential of Scotland is in Scotland's hands, so that people can benefit from the strength of Scottish energy.

Gillies Report (University of Aberdeen)

Maggie Chapman (North East Scotland) (Green): The First Minister will remember the publication of the Gillies report last year, which contained recommendations about university governance and financial management, including on issues of transparency and staff engagement.

Today, Aberdeen university court is discussing restructuring, job cuts, increasing staff workload and more, yet staff have not been properly engaged, unions have not received the information that is required about fair work and other questions, and the university senate has not been properly consulted. What is the First Minister's view of how the Gillies recommendations are being understood and implemented by institutions, and the fact that public money is being used in ways that will have significant negative impacts on staff and students in Aberdeen and elsewhere? Will the First Minister agree to meet the campus unions as soon as possible?

The First Minister (John Swinney): The points that Maggie Chapman makes are very important,

because the Gillies report found that there were significant issues. The report looked into issues at the University of Dundee, which were of an exceptional character. Nonetheless, the process that is being undertaken by the University of Aberdeen to ensure that it is able to sustain its activities must be carried out in line with the principles that the Government expects and that are contained in the Gillies report.

The University of Aberdeen operates as an arm's-length independent institution, so it is responsible for its own governance. However, ministers would expect the University of Aberdeen—and any university—to take due account of the issues that were set out in the Gillies review and the terms of the availability of funding through the Scottish Funding Council. I encourage the University of Aberdeen to engage constructively with all interested parties to ensure that that is the case.

The Minister for Innovation, Technology and Tertiary Education, Ben Macpherson, would be very happy to meet the trade unions. We will make arrangements for that to happen.

Renewables Industry (Jobs)

Laura Mitchell (Moray) (SNP): This week, the Confederation of British Industry revealed that 105,000 renewables jobs are contributing more than £10 billion to the Scottish economy. Reform would end that industry tomorrow, and the Tories inflicted a tax on Scotland's energy that is costing 1,000 jobs per month. The First Minister knows that Scotland needs oil and gas supply chains and skills to deliver those renewables jobs, so what action is his Government taking to support our offshore industry and the renewables industry to drive forward Scotland's economy?

The First Minister (John Swinney): I thank Laura Mitchell for her question and welcome her to her place in Parliament as the member for Moray. I look forward to her contribution. The issues that she raises in relation to renewable energy and oil and gas are central to the economic interests of her constituency, and I know that she will champion them effectively in this Parliament.

I welcome the CBI report. With the Cabinet Secretary for Economy, Tourism and Transport, I had the opportunity to reflect at the CBI's annual Scottish lunch last Friday on the importance of a collaboration between Government, business, our renewable energy and oil and gas companies, our universities, our local authorities and other players in our economy.

When I opened the renewable energy engineering centre for Hitachi Energy UK yesterday in the city of Glasgow, I had the opportunity to reinforce the message on the importance of creating a sense of common purpose in our economy to ensure that we all take measures that support the oil and gas sector and renewables and ensure that we accelerate the transition to net zero.

We need to see practical measures taken to strengthen the financial viability of oil and gas activity, which comes through the removal of the energy profits levy, which is long overdue, and the acceleration of the steps to consenting around the grid, which is necessary for renewable energy developments. That will help to realise the ambitions that Laura Mitchell sets out, and I give her the assurance that the Scottish Government will argue for all those provisions.

The Presiding Officer: Back benchers have been very well behaved, with short, sharp questions. I would like shorter and sharper responses, to allow more members to come in.

Family C Learning Review Report

Claire Baker (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab): The learning review into the case of family C in Glasgow has recently been published. The report on what was commonly known as the beastie house evidences the multitude of institutional failures that resulted in children enduring a decade of degrading, violent and sexual abuse at the hands of adults who were supposed to be caring for them. The heinous crimes that were committed are truly awful and heartbreaking. That that was able to happen in modern Scotland, where we have a multitude of children's policies and strategies that are supposed to protect children and recognise their rights, is a disgrace.

I recognise that the First Minister has given an apology to a scrum of journalists, but that is not equivalent to giving a statement to Parliament. What does he have to say to victims and to Parliament about those serious failings?

The First Minister (John Swinney): I am grateful to Claire Baker for raising this important issue. I agree with her conclusions and her assessment of the report. What has been disclosed is absolutely terrible reading.

I pay tribute at the outset to the children, who, from my reading of the report, have demonstrated extraordinary strength and tenacity in being able to convey the suffering that they have experienced. I express an unreserved apology to each of the children involved.

It is clear from my reading of the report that there were serious institutional failures in understanding and connecting all the information that was available. I find it difficult to comprehend how that could be the case, because the information was so obvious and so compelling, but it demonstrates an issue that has occurred in a number of cases on

different occasions—the failure of institutions to make connections between information that comes together to therefore necessitate action and intervention. That is just one of the key points of learning that must come out of the report.

The Cabinet Secretary for Education, Culture and Gaelic will meet the City of Glasgow Council to consider the issue, which was discussed at Cabinet on Tuesday. I want to make sure that the lessons that are identified in the report are a source of challenge to all child protection committees in the country, because I agree fundamentally with Claire Baker's point that it is simply beyond comprehension that such experiences could take place in 21st century Scotland with the policy framework that we have in place. We have to honestly face up to the institutional failure that is involved, and I give her the commitment that the Government will do so.

Prison Population

Liam Kerr (North East Scotland) (Con): After the Government releasing more than 1,400 prisoners early, cutting the automatic early release point to less than a third of the sentence, bringing in a presumption against short sentences and all but stopping under-25s from going to prison, Scotland's prison population is, nevertheless, still at record levels. Does the First Minister accept that the knee-jerk, ham-fisted early release scheme has failed? Can he confirm that his Government will not bring forward yet another early release scheme to cover up its failure to tackle Scotland's prison capacity crisis?

The First Minister (John Swinney): Liam Kerr raises a serious issue. The prison population is at a very high level and the level of incarceration is very high. That is partly because of the success of the criminal justice authorities in prosecuting individuals for historical crimes and because of the length of sentences that have been applied. It gives rise to significant issues with prison capacity, which is being addressed directly. The Cabinet Secretary for Justice and I met to discuss the issue yesterday. It will be the source of focused work among partners to ensure that we take all the action that is necessary, so that the prison population can be stabilised and our prisons can operate safely for all concerned.

Evacuation Support (Coalsnaughton)

Keith Brown (Clackmannanshire and Dunblane) (SNP): The First Minister may be aware that, so far, 60 families in my constituency have had to be evacuated at short notice from their homes due to underground movement in the former mining community of Coalsnaughton. The distress and uncertainty that have been caused for my constituents, including their children, cannot be overestimated.

Will the First Minister assure me that the national resilience framework and his Government will spare no effort in assisting my constituents? Will they ensure that the Mining Remediation Authority and the relevant insurance companies will fully and quickly discharge their responsibilities and provide serious support for my constituents as they experience the profound distress of being moved from their homes at short notice?

The First Minister (John Swinney): I am very concerned about the issue that Mr Brown raises. I am familiar with it and I provide him with the assurance that the Government's resilience network is actively supporting Clackmannanshire Council on the question. The Mining Remediation Authority is actively engaged with the partnership in taking forward the support that is required.

I acknowledge the distress, inconvenience and anxiety that the matter has caused to Mr Brown's constituents. I provide him with the assurance that the Government will do all that it can to support the residents concerned, as well as Clackmannanshire Council. If there are any specific areas on which Mr Brown requires assistance from the Government, he knows that we will respond swiftly to any request that he makes of us.

Recall of Members

Graham Simpson (Central Scotland and Lothians West) (Reform): When John Swinney was voted in as First Minister last week, he said:

> "All too often in Parliaments, I have watched members celebrate when bold proposals are blocked, seemingly for political expediency rather than for any substantial concerns."—[*Official Report*, 19 May 2026; c 33.]

The First Minister offered to work across party lines, because that is what people expect. My proposals to introduce a recall system were rejected in the previous session of the Parliament, which was a missed opportunity. The First Minister backs recall in principle. Will he agree to consider how we can best look at it again, either by me bringing my proposals back, by a committee being formed to look at the issue, or through some other option?

The First Minister (John Swinney): As Mr Simpson indicates, in principle, I am in support of a recall provision, and I think that it is necessary for it to be in place. I am open to the mechanism by which that is undertaken. I genuinely consider this to be a rather invidious issue for the Government to bring forward, because it affects the status of members of Parliament. Therefore, I would rather see provisions emerge through parliamentary discussions, as opposed to the initiative of a Government bill, for example. It may be an issue that the corporate body wishes to provide advice about.

Essentially, I give Mr Simpson the assurance that the Government would be supportive of developing such a proposition, if we could agree on the most appropriate mechanism for doing that. I say that simply to respect the fact that I do not think that the Government should be passing judgment about the role of members of Parliament, as I do not think that that would be constitutionally appropriate. If Parliament wished us to consider it, I would be happy to do so.

The Vinery Banff

Karen Adam (Banffshire and Buchan Coast) (SNP): A few weeks ago, the First Minister visited the Vinery in Banff with me and saw the difference that it makes through its offer of a welcome place where people can build confidence, learn new skills, improve wellbeing and sometimes find a route into work. With the loss of its United Kingdom shared prosperity funding, it now faces closure in a matter of days, which would be devastating for hundreds of local people and families. What steps can the First Minister take to engage with the centre and help to safeguard the services that it provides?

The First Minister (John Swinney): Karen Adam is absolutely right. I had a lovely visit with her to the Vinery in Banff and saw at first hand the tremendous positive impact that it has on the lives of individuals by tackling social isolation and helping individuals to overcome some of the mental wellbeing challenges that they are wrestling with.

I would be happy to explore with Ms Adam the steps that the Government could take to try to intervene. The Cabinet Secretary for Social Justice and Housing would be able to engage on that issue, and we will explore what possibilities there are to safeguard the support that is available through the Vinery.

The Presiding Officer: With apologies to those members I was unable to take today, that concludes First Minister's question time. I suspend the meeting until 2.30.

12:46

Meeting suspended.

14:30

On resuming—

Scotland's Energy

The Deputy Presiding Officer (Katy Clark): The next item of business is a debate on motion S7M-00159, in the name of Stephen Gethins, entitled "It's Scotland's energy". I invite members who wish to speak in the debate to press their request-to-speak button.

14:30

The Minister for Europe, External Affairs and Energy (Stephen Gethins): Deputy Presiding Officer, congratulations to you and your colleagues on your appointment. If you will permit me, before I get into the meat of the debate, I thank my predecessor in Dundee City East, Shona Robison, who was not only an outstanding minister, as I am sure the First Minister will agree, but a tireless advocate for Dundee. I know that she will be greatly missed in the Parliament. I also thank my predecessors in this portfolio, Gillian Martin, who is here with me today, and Angus Robertson, not only for their tireless work in the portfolios that I cover but—I am not embarrassed to say—for their guidance and valuable advice in my first days in the post.

I thank colleagues from across the Parliament for their good wishes. I want to say straight off that it is my aim—the First Minister said this about his role, too—to work in a collegiate fashion: to agree where we possibly can and to disagree rigorously. I am sure that there will be opportunities for disagreement, but we must do so agreeably when we cannot agree.

No party or MSP has a monopoly on wisdom—certainly not me—and I very much look forward to working with everybody in this chamber. I am so grateful for the good wishes that I have received from colleagues from other parties. I will not embarrass you, but it has been heartening, and I thank you.

Nobody will mind me saying that, most of all, I thank the people of Dundee City East for their faith in me. I also thank people in Dundee and Angus for the privilege of serving as their member of Parliament. I will miss the parts of the constituency that my colleagues Heather Anderson and Lloyd Melville are now fortunate enough to represent, but I am absolutely determined to get stuck in for Dundee.

Dundee is Scotland's "Yes" city. It is a city that my family once migrated to from Ireland. It is a city that, like the rest of Scotland, is at its best because of its diversity and its outward-looking nature, which enriches our industries and our society. The

city informs my politics, as I know that it does for other colleagues in the Parliament.

Dundee is a city that has been at the heart of Scotland's successes in food and drink, higher education, journalism and, of course, energy, which moves us to the fundamental point of today's debate.

We are debating where decisions should be made. Are they better being made here, in Scotland's Parliament, which is voted on by the people who live and work in Scotland, or at Westminster? Whatever our views, surely Scotland's energy policies should be in Scotland's hands. It is one of the most energy-rich countries in Europe, having won the natural lottery twice—once with hydrocarbons and then with its abundant renewables resources. Yet, despite that—

Murdo Fraser (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con): Will the minister take an intervention?

Stephen Gethins: Do you know what? I will take an intervention, despite this being my first speech—and who better to take one from than Murdo Fraser?

The Deputy Presiding Officer (Katy Clark): I remind Mr Fraser that the convention is that there are no interventions on a first speech. However, the member has indicated that he is happy to take one.

Murdo Fraser: My apologies to you, Presiding Officer, and to the member. He was so confident in his approach that it had entirely slipped my mind that it was his first speech in this chamber.

I very much welcome Stephen Gethins to his place on the front bench as energy minister. I want to ask him about the renewable energy that he is talking about, which Scotland has benefited from and which is funded by subsidies that are currently paid for by 70 million people across the United Kingdom. If he dismantles the UK energy market, as he proposes, will that not mean that those subsidies will need to be paid for by the 5.5 million people living in Scotland? What would that do for bills that are being paid by consumers here?

Stephen Gethins: I have great respect for the member, and I thank him for both his intervention and his welcome. I urge him patience. I merely say this: Scotland is a massive exporter of energy; other markets rely on our energy and have done so for decades.

I am sorry to say so, but that speaks to the isolationist approach that has been taken by the Conservative Party, which turned its back on a Europe that is coming together on energy security. Isolationism is not a policy that our party—or a majority in this Parliament—will endorse. I will come on to that point.

In energy-rich Scotland, we are facing increasing energy bills. Just yesterday, the Labour Government, which had promised to reduce energy bills, put them up. We are a country that produces more energy than it consumes.

Mr Fraser will be delighted by this: for context, our oil and gas industry has sent £400 billion to the Treasury over decades, with very little in return and no long-term planning. Can members imagine that? We have a finite resource, but there is no long-term planning. We are one of the few countries on earth never to have put together a future generations fund. That is why Westminster has failed and why this place deserves to have full control over energy.

Renewables alone deliver 20.8 terawatt hours outside of Scotland annually. To put it into context, that net export is worth £1.7 billion and, if we kept the energy in Scotland, it would be enough to power every home in Scotland for three and a half years. *[Stephen Gethins has corrected this contribution. See end of report.]* That shows the value that it has to the rest of the UK and the whole of Europe when it comes to energy security.

Lower bills where that energy is produced should be part of the solution, but we have been let down. That is why decisions about energy should be made here. Westminster's track record, be it under the Conservatives—or those former Conservatives—or under Labour, means that it no longer deserves to keep that control.

The disconnect between Scotland's energy wealth and the daily reality that households face is not inevitable. We all talk—I have heard some fantastic speeches—about the conversations that have taken place over the past few weeks. It is a consequence of a constitutional arrangement that leaves decisions about Scotland's energy in the hands of Westminster, which is delivering, in this energy-rich part of Europe, energy bills that are among the highest anywhere in Europe. That should be a challenge for all of us in this chamber.

The people of Scotland returned a Government with a clear instruction: deliver the benefits of Scotland's energy wealth to Scottish households, communities and businesses. The First Minister set out that position and the electorate endorsed it.

Let us look more deeply into that. I am sure that members will all recall the polling evidence that came out last month during the election campaign. An Ipsos survey showed that more than three quarters of Scots think that there should be more devolution over energy, and that only 14 per cent think that it should remain under Westminster control, which would be the case under Labour, Reform and Conservative policies.

Michael Marra (North East Scotland) (Lab): Will the minister give way?

Stephen Gethins: I will give way for a second time, because I have great respect for the member.

Michael Marra: I, too, welcome the minister to his position. I consider him a friend and am delighted to see him in his place.

The minister spent the election campaign talking about how independence could deliver taking a third off energy bills in Scotland. Can he tell us how?

Stephen Gethins: I have great respect for the member, and I thank him for his kind words. He is an advocate for the north-east and for Dundee. However, he must understand that, as we sit here exporting electricity while the Treasury in London benefits from it, we could introduce measures such as a social contract or a social tariff to help lower bills for those most in need. That is only one of the things that could be done.

The benefit is not only to Scotland's citizens. I will talk about the rest of my brief. Scotland is a responsible and outward-looking member of the European family of nations. Yesterday, my first meeting as part of my external affairs brief was with the Ukrainian consul general. Back in January, I sat in a bunker for two nights as the Russians bombarded Ukraine's energy infrastructure. In a more dangerous world, Europe needs to move closer together. Parties that have turned their back on Europe ignore that at their—and our—peril. We are rich, and we should be thriving. We are part of Europe's solution to the energy crisis.

Other members will be glad to hear that I saw that for myself in Aberdeen, on my first ministerial visit on Monday. I am grateful to colleagues from across the sector for meeting me. Those businesses matter. Yesterday's Confederation of British Industry report showed that net zero-related industries are worth more than £10 billion, that they account for 5 per cent of Scotland's total economic output and that they provide jobs for more than 100,000 people, as the member for Moray raised at First Minister's question time. Those opportunities, which exist onshore and offshore, are set to grow.

That could be game changing for Scotland, with around £100 billion of global capital expenditure coming down the track. Westminster is holding back that huge potential, not least through the punitive transmission charging charges that it has set, which business cited to me.

The Scottish Government is doing everything that it can within its limited powers. We have provided £150 million of investment, which will attract wider investment and create a funding stack of almost £900 million-worth of projects across Scotland.

Liam Kerr (North East Scotland) (Con): Will the member take an intervention?

Stephen Gethins: I want to make some progress. I am not sure that I got a particularly good response from Mr Fraser.

High energy bills might not matter to the Conservative Party, but they matter to the people of Scotland. Labour came into government promising that bills would be £300 lower, but yesterday another eye-watering increase was announced that will mean that they will be £300 higher. That is not good enough. The future lies in providing clean, sustainable and secure power, strengthening affordability, resilience and competitiveness, and protecting Scottish people and businesses from our energy bills being dictated by international events.

Within the limited powers that we have, we are already reforming the energy consents process to enable us to bring forward more low-cost renewable energy. During the parliamentary session, we will establish a ScotWind health fund. We will also establish a future generations fund for the oil and gas sector, which Labour and the Conservatives failed to establish. We will encourage more community ownership—we are already delivering £15 million for that. We will deliver on the £500 million just transition fund, as well as supporting the Acorn carbon capture and storage project for the north-east. Do the Tory members remember carbon capture and storage?

More immediately, we want updated guidance to be provided to public bodies on community use of public land and an assessment to be undertaken of the potential for installing solar panels in underused spaces. That cannot be done within the current devolution process to enable us to meet our full potential.

That leads me on to oil and gas. Few industries know the price of Westminster failure better than our oil and gas sector. North Sea oil and gas plays a vital role in Scotland's energy system and security mix. That excellent workforce in the north-east has been let down by our wealth being squandered by successive Westminster Governments. There is no future generations fund. Let us look next door at Norway. It has a sovereign wealth fund that is worth £1.6 trillion, which is six times Scotland's gross domestic product. Just think what we could have done with that.

The North Sea is a mature and declining basin, so it is vital that we have a parallel-track approach to the transition, with oil and gas production being managed alongside the increasing deployment of

renewables. However, the transition is being put at risk by the current energy profits levy, which is accelerating the decline of North Sea oil and gas while failing to give the support that is needed to renewables to ensure a just transition. The approach that is taken must be fair for the North Sea. That is why, I am afraid, we cannot back the Greens' amendment. As the First Minister said earlier today, that approach must be evidence led and determined on a case-by-case basis, with climate compatibility and energy security tests being met. When I was in Aberdeen, I heard about the need for a joined-up approach.

I was glad that, on his first ministerial visit, Stephen Flynn went to Grangemouth, which has been so badly let down by Westminster. Climate action and a just transition to net zero will bring benefits across Scotland. We will support the creation of 500 additional jobs in the Grangemouth industrial cluster and, at the same time, we will invest £9 million in support for workers at Mossmorran.

Let me turn to the idea of community benefit. We must reject the Liberal Democrat amendment, because it knocks out the idea of devolving those powers, which the Liberal Democrats were once in favour of. I have great respect for the member for Orkney, Liam McArthur, and look forward to working with him on how we can expand the work that has already been done. However, let us not forget that, last year alone, community benefits delivered £30 million to our communities.

In conclusion—I think that I am reaching my conclusion—a more energy-secure Scotland will see us building renewable energy generation that will lower bills, protect us from international shocks and secure good jobs for those who are currently employed in our offshore sector and who bring so much to our economy.

Scotland has the energy; it does not yet have the power. Our vast resources are among the best in Europe, but the people are not feeling the benefit. Westminster has had its chance and has failed. Today, I am asking members to empower this Parliament to be part of the solution for energy security across Europe and to be part of the solution locally, nationally, internationally and—vitally—in people's homes.

I ask colleagues to back our motion today, and I move,

That the Parliament believes that Scotland's energy should be in Scotland's hands, and calls for all energy powers to be immediately devolved to the Scottish Parliament.

The Deputy Presiding Officer (Katy Clark): I call Daniel Johnson to speak to and move amendment S7M-00159.2.

14:46

Daniel Johnson (Edinburgh Southern) (Lab): I congratulate you, Deputy Presiding Officer, and welcome you to your position.

I begin on a friendly note by welcoming Stephen Gethins to his position. I have known him for a number of years and hope that I will not embarrass him by observing that we first met when we were student politicians. Let us hope that we have raised the standard of debate a little since then. Indeed, I wonder whether this Government will become a tale of two Stephens. We can see why the First Minister appointed Stephen Gethins, because he brings a mature approach and can be collegiate and work on a cross-party basis. I will let others decide what the analysis of the other Stephen might be.

It is important to talk about energy and we need to have a grown-up and rational conversation, because energy is at the heart of our economy and of this country's future prosperity, but the motion does not auger well. "It's Scotland's Energy" might make for a somewhat adequate T-shirt slogan, but it is an incoherent title for a parliamentary motion and an entirely empty basis for policy. I gently point out to Mr Gethins that his speech was rather heavy on rhetoric but rather light on actual analysis.

The reality is that we have seen a huge investment of £150 billion in renewables in Scotland since 2014. Of the 45GW of renewables capacity in this country, 25 per cent is in Scotland, with 80 per cent of the UK's wind generation capacity being in Scotland. That is because of UK policy—driven by contracts for difference and by renewables obligations before that—which has driven investment and lowered costs by those bills being underwritten through strike prices. That has cost the average UK bill payer £39 annually. Is the Scottish National Party saying that that £39 should be spread only across UK bill payers? That would surely be worth hundreds of pounds per person, per year.

The Cabinet Secretary for Justice (Neil Gray): Mr Johnson made a rather pejorative point about the difference between rhetoric and action. I am reminded of promises made by the Labour Party in the run-up to the 2024 general election. It promised to reduce bills by up to £300 but, in fact, prices have risen by £300. Can he explain why we are seeing such a rise when other countries across Europe are investing in lowering fuel duty and bills for residents who are suffering from issues caused by the invasion of Iran? Why is the UK Government not taking the action that is being taken by those in other countries?

Daniel Johnson: The cabinet secretary seems to be enjoying the new rules about interventions. Is he not aware that there have been some major

changes in international circumstances? Average bills had been going down, especially for those on direct debits. Most critically, if he is talking about the lowest cost, I would ask him where in Europe has the lowest electricity cost. It is France, 80 per cent of whose generation comes from nuclear. If we are going to have a serious argument on energy costs, let us have it, but let us have it on the basis of facts, not assertion and dogma, which is what we have from the SNP Scottish Government.

The reality is that, if the SNP is going to assert that independence would lower bills by a third, it needs to explain how that would happen. Where is the excess? Right now, electricity bills are underwritten by taxpayers to the tune of £39 annually. What would happen to contracts for difference under an independent regime or a devolved one? Is the SNP saying that Scottish bill payers would pick up that underwriting? The reality is that the strike price has been above the wholesale electricity price, not below it. The SNP needs to answer those questions if it wants a serious debate on the matter.

We need a serious debate, because there are a number of areas within devolved competence on which we should be seeking to go further and faster. Why has the Scottish Government not been progressing quickly and successfully on upgrades? Consumer Scotland expects the schemes in Scotland to reach just 45 per cent of fuel-poor households, but the figure in England has been 95 per cent.

On transmission and infrastructure charging and upgrades, we have failed to see the support for the planning regime that we need to accelerate progress. The reality is that it takes seven to 10 years for renewables projects to get through the planning system in Scotland. Comparable projects in countries such as Norway take three to four years. Where has been the progress on heat networks? Where is the SNP's promised publicly owned power company? Those are just some of the many questions on matters that are within devolved competence that we need to examine, and we need a debate on them.

It is all well and good to talk about renewables, but we have failed to have a public debate and discourse about what they mean in relation to infrastructure. That is why we now see renewables being used as a political football. We need a candid discussion because, if we are going to have renewables generation, we will require the infrastructure to distribute that power—not least to the rest of the UK, to which we want to sell that electricity. That infrastructure is underwritten and paid for across the United Kingdom.

Those are some of the things that we need to talk about. By all means, let us have a candid and mature debate about the future of our energy economy, but I do not believe that the motion or the Government's proposals are anything more than sloganeering and rhetoric from the SNP.

I move amendment S7M-00159.2, to leave out from second "that" to end and insert:

> "Scotland needs a managed and just transition that relies on an integrated UK energy market, balancing the continuing role of oil and gas alongside the maturity of the North Sea activity and Scotland's climate targets, and supports the examination of all energy technologies, including nuclear, to achieve a sustainable energy mix."

The Deputy Presiding Officer (Katy Clark): I remind members that the convention is that there should be no interventions during a first speech.

14:52

Duncan Massey (North East Scotland) (Reform): I welcome everyone to their new roles, including the ministers and shadow ministers.

I am delighted to rise to give my first speech. I believe that this Parliament and this Government need massive change, so I am encouraged by some of the talk of change that we have heard so far, especially the contributions from the Presiding Officer and his deputies. However, I remain concerned that real change will remain elusive and that this Parliament and, especially, this continuity Government remain out of touch, wholly self-satisfied and in a Marie Antoinette-like bubble. Nowhere is that more apparent than on energy policy. Energy reality simply does not seem to get past the outer walls here.

Scotland, the UK and, indeed, much of Europe face the simple reality that our energy system is not working. We have a fragile and overstretched grid that is struggling to deal with intermittent renewables, unable to cope with growth opportunities such as those from artificial intelligence and, increasingly, at risk of failure. We have a growing reliance on imported energy, particularly via French interconnectors and liquefied natural gas tankers, and we are destroying our own oil and gas industry, despite needing oil and gas for decades.

However, the main area of failure is the cost of our new energy system. We are facing an energy price crisis. Extremely high prices are hurting consumers and, perhaps most obviously, we have the highest industrial energy prices in the world, which are driving deindustrialisation. The damage from that is clear to see. Our primary steel industry across Scotland and the UK has nearly been lost. Industries including chemicals, pharmaceuticals and ceramics have all been hammered.

Across the board, manufacturing is at a huge disadvantage due to high costs. That is more obvious in Scotland, with the closures of the Grangemouth refinery, the Mossmorran plant and the Alexander Dennis bus factory in Falkirk.

Those problems are not caused by temporary gas price spikes; they are caused by net zero policies, particularly the overuse of expensive and intermittent renewables in the system—[*Interruption*.]

The Deputy Presiding Officer (Katy Clark): I remind members that there should be no interruptions during first speeches. I appreciate that the minister took interventions, but there should still be no interruptions.

Duncan Massey: Thank you, Deputy Presiding Officer.

As Professor Dieter Helm of the University of Oxford succinctly put it, renewables are

"not cheap, not home-grown and not secure".

That is where we are.

The costs are being driven by two things. First, the direct costs of renewables are very high. We can see that clearly through CFD prices at the moment. The subsidies are paid by the UK Government, on which Scottish wind is wholly dependent.

For example, in allocation round 7—the most recent funding round of CFD—offshore wind is priced at £95 per megawatt hour and floating wind is priced at £215 per megawatt hour. On some of our older wind farms, such as Beatrice, it is priced at well over £200 per megawatt hour. The prices are all index linked and on long-term contracts, so the prices are fixed to go up for nearly 20 years. We can compare that with the direct cost of gas, which is between £50 and £60 per megawatt hour.

Secondly, the system costs that are imposed by renewables are even higher, and they continue to grow. They are like the submerged part of an iceberg, making up two thirds of the cost of our bills. The reason for that is that, to support intermittent generation, we have to build a vastly larger grid—much greater than that of a conventional system—at huge expense. There is also a huge amount of ire and anger from those in our rural communities, who do not want giant pylons or battery farms across their back gardens.

We also need to maintain 100 per cent back-up. In Scotland and the UK, the back-up comes from gas; in other European countries, it comes from coal. That adds huge cost, complexity and vulnerability. Vulnerability is an increasingly serious concern, with the risks of blackouts rising, as demonstrated by what happened in Spain last summer.

Scotland is going to be especially exposed to those risks. We rely on only two ageing conventional plants—Torness nuclear plant and Peterhead gas plant—and both could close in the early 2030s, which would make Scotland extremely vulnerable to blackouts and likely to be dependent on gas plants that are located in the north of England.

We have to start facing that energy reality. Renewables will definitely be part of the energy mix, but we have to recognise the high costs and limitations of them.

That brings me to our oil and gas sector—a world-leading industry that is being crushed by deliberate policy choices. Despite the massive investment in renewables, the oil and gas industry remains essential. In the UK, 75 per cent of primary energy still comes from oil and gas. Globally, 81 per cent of primary energy comes from oil and gas. We need to acknowledge that, in all scenarios, the UK and Scotland will need oil and gas for decades. It is needed for transport fuels and key chemicals—just about every product in this room requires oil and gas—and it is vital for heating and industrial processes. Paradoxically, the more renewables that we add to the grid, the more flexible gas back-up we need.

We need to maximise our use of oil and gas resources rather than import them from neighbouring Norway or from countries even further afield. We can do that. The North Sea has a strong and vital future, if we choose it. We need to urgently remove the energy profits levy. We need unambiguous support for the Jackdaw and Rosebank oil fields and all new projects. We need unambiguous support for new licences in drilling. That would revitalise our industry.

As my amendment states, I call on the Parliament to be a vocal champion for the North Sea oil and gas industry, to apologise for previous policies that show lack of support for the industry—including the presumption against new development—and to provide unambiguous support for Jackdaw and Rosebank and new drilling, with new planning laws needed if necessary.

The benefits of a stronger UK oil and gas industry are enormous: continued jobs, major tax revenue, greater balance of payments and greater energy security, with, in particular, the opportunity to reduce imports, including greatly reducing or even ending LNG imports.

Let us talk about emissions. UK emissions now account for less than 0.8 per cent of global emissions. Scotland accounts for about 10 per cent of that, at 0.08 per cent—not even a rounding error—and that figure is just going to keep getting smaller and smaller, as large nations such as

India, Indonesia, Pakistan and Nigeria continue to use more energy, especially from gas and coal. The UK is still about the 24th largest oil producer in the world, but it accounts for only about 0.7 per cent of world production—another rounding error in global terms.

Furthermore, the Parliament should note that the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change has quietly removed its RCP—representative concentration pathway—8.5 scenario, once again highlighting that the scientific consensus is that there is not an emergency but a slow, mild warming. It is a problem, for sure, but not something that requires us to commit unilateral economic suicide and decimate every industry in this country.

That brings me to another industry that this Government has tried to destroy—nuclear. Nuclear energy is emission free, 24/7 and reliable, and every industrial country around the world is now moving towards it. It is increasingly seen as vital for new technologies such as data centres, artificial intelligence and robotics. Scotland used to be an absolute world leader in nuclear. We had four large plants across the country, cutting-edge research at Rolls-Royce in East Kilbride and at Dounreay, and world-leading nuclear vessel operations at Faslane. We need to rediscover that, because the world has turned. We need to reindustrialise, because 24/7, cheap, reliable and localised energy is needed for new technologies such as AI, and Scotland needs to be part of that.

It is simple. If we want real economic growth, we need a pragmatic energy policy that focuses on cheap, abundant and reliable energy. We need energy policy that is driven by reality, not wishful thinking, and it must acknowledge that our current failing system has the highest industrial energy costs in the world. We need energy policy that is backed by the broad shoulders of the UK Government. That means maximising our oil and gas resources in the short and medium terms and transitioning to a nuclear-powered system over the long term, with renewables playing a complementary role rather than a dominant one. That is how we will secure cheap energy for everyone and ensure that we can reindustrialise, protect our world-leading oil and gas industry and keep the lights on for Scotland's future.

I move amendment S7M-00159.1, to leave out from second "that" to end and insert:

"Scotland's current net zero-driven energy policies are failing, contributing to deindustrialisation through high energy costs and also increasing grid instability, including with the planned closure of Torness nuclear power station, thus creating a significant risk of blackouts; recognises the continued dependence of renewables on UK Government subsidies; acknowledges Scotland's past leadership in nuclear power; calls for renewed investment in nuclear capacity, further calls on the Scottish Government to recognise the ongoing importance of oil and gas and to fully support the sector in the North Sea, including through unambiguous support for the Jackdaw and Rosebank oil fields and new drilling and licences; calls on the Scottish Government to apologise for its previous lack of support of the industry, including for what it considers has been the presumption against new developments, and considers that, in light of the challenges facing the sector, that energy powers should remain reserved to the UK Government."

The Deputy Presiding Officer (Katy Clark): I call Lorna Slater to speak to and move amendment S7M-00159.3.

15:03

Lorna Slater (Edinburgh Central) (Green): For a change of tone, the Scottish Greens believe that Scotland's energy should be put in Scotland's hands. We have long called for more powers for Scotland, as well as Scottish independence. Scotland urgently needs to respond to the climate emergency, cut the cost of living and ensure our long-term sustainable energy security. It might come as a shock to my colleague, but oil and gas are a finite resource. They are not abundant—it is a declining basin. Every litre of oil and gas that is pulled out of that basin costs more than the litre before, and that is even if we expand investment in oil and gas. It is a declining industry. The cost of energy in Scotland is a challenge.

Liam Kerr: The member does not, however, address the fact that demand is continuing to rise and is not going anywhere. Where do we source the gas and oil to meet the demand?

Lorna Slater: We need to manage that demand. The Scottish Government should have kept its commitment to reduce traffic kilometres by 20 per cent. It should have introduced the heat in buildings bill, which would have reduced energy demand to heat our homes. We can reduce the demand by changing how we use energy. The main problem for our energy in the UK, and for our costs here, is the way that the UK Government links energy, electricity and gas prices, which prevents bill payers from benefiting from the low generating cost of renewable energy. That urgently needs to change to allow for cheap renewable energy that would boost industry and accelerate the decarbonisation of heat and transport.

Duncan Massey: Will the member take an intervention?

Lorna Slater: I am going to make some progress, thank you.

The Deputy Presiding Officer (Katy Clark): It is a matter for the member whether she chooses to take an intervention.

Lorna Slater: In the previous session of Parliament, the Economy and Fair Work

Committee heard over and over again that the cost of energy is the main concern for business and industry. Next winter, the cost of gas and oil to heat homes will be nearly everyone's main concern. We cannot remain tied to the rollercoaster of fossil fuel prices. We need to produce our own clean, sustainable and affordable energy from renewable sources.

Stephen Kerr (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con): Will the member take an intervention?

Lorna Slater: I will take some more interventions in a minute. Let me make progress.

Throwing good money after bad to try to expand North Sea oil and gas drilling just adds carbon to the atmosphere that we have to remove later on, at great expense, or else it will drive up global temperatures, with disastrous consequences for future generations. The world has far more fossil fuel than it can safely burn, and issuing licences to extract fossil fuels from new sources is indefensible.

I congratulate Reform colleagues on finally managing to lodge an amendment to a debate—the third time is the charm—but I am alarmed by the flat-out climate denial and, indeed, reality denial that is contained in the amendment.

Duncan Massey: I will make two points, if I may. The first is that, last year, the UK paid £2.64 billion in CFD subsidies. That is the difference between the market price, which is driven by the expensive gas that the member talks about, and the CFD strike price. That is the reality of it. CFDs are £2.6 billion more expensive.

On her last point, does Lorna Slater acknowledge that the terms "climate emergency" and "climate crisis" are faith-based terms and are not actually supported by the scientific consensus or, indeed, by the IPCC, which is the correct technical authority?

Lorna Slater: I absolutely disagree with Duncan Massey, of course. The climate emergency is backed by climate science globally. To condemn future generations to the future that exists if global warming gets to 3.5°C or 4°C is a horrendous thing to do.

The member does not include in his calculations the cost of re-sequestering the carbon that is emitted. We have been letting the fossil fuel industry off scot free, because we let it pollute our atmosphere and raise carbon emissions, and then we sit in the chamber thinking, "Goodness, how are we going to put in place CCS and other ways to resequester that carbon?" Public money is trying to clean up the pollution that has been generated by private capital.

Stephen Kerr: Will the member take an intervention?

Lorna Slater: No—I need to continue. Sorry.

Just so that we are clear, around £17.5 billion a year is spent in the UK on fossil fuel subsidies on an oil and gas industry that is fully established, unlike renewables, which is still a developing industry. That does not count tax breaks, which are a form of subsidy.

Previous analysis from Global Justice Now revealed that, in 2024 alone, the UK saw fossil fuel companies BP and Shell, which are among those that benefit from all that public support, make a combined total of £26.2 billion in profits. That is more than double the combined total of cuts made to the aid and welfare budgets in 2025. The head of BP in the UK has a base salary of £1.6 million, and her total compensation this year is expected to exceed £11.7 million. The UK handing more public money and tax breaks to those stinking rich polluters, instead of investing in moving us to clean energy that is locally generated from our abundant renewable resources, is unconscionable.

In Scotland, anyway, our energy transition is under way, with excellent progress on moving to renewable electricity generation. We now have the harder challenges of changing how we travel, how we manage our land and how we heat our homes. That is exactly where the SNP Government needs to set out its stall and say how it would meet Scotland's energy needs if it had the powers.

Helen McDade (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Reform): Will the member take an intervention?

Lorna Slater: Let me finish this thought.

Spoilers—Rosebank et al are not climate compatible, so we need a plan. We cannot wait to find out that they are not climate compatible—they are not climate compatible. Will the Scottish Government transition using the strategy that is defined in its own draft energy strategy, or will it continue to sit on the fence?

I will take the intervention.

Helen McDade: I appreciate that. Does Lorna Slater accept that there are children in Scotland who are living in cold homes because of the price of energy? Does she also accept that the contracts for difference subsidy of £2.64 billion that Duncan Massey referred to has played its part in causing our energy prices, which are four times those of the US?

Lorna Slater: I agree with the member that families are suffering in cold homes in Scotland, which is why we need the heat in buildings bill to ensure that everyone in Scotland has a warm, affordable home. I disagree with the point about contracts for difference, because it is important to

invest in renewable energy as it becomes an established industry. It is distressing that the oil and gas industry, which is already an established industry, is still raking in public money, subsidies and tax breaks—it has not needed those for years, because it makes billions in profits. As we move to renewable energy, it makes sense, of course, that we support growing industries. That is how a just transition works.

Stephen Kerr: Will the member give way now?

Lorna Slater: Certainly.

Stephen Kerr: Ms Slater mentioned the evidence that was heard by the Economy and Fair Work Committee. I hope that she would agree that the tone of that evidence was that we are causing the deindustrialisation of Scotland through the imposition of levies and other market interventions on businesses. Hence, businesses are shutting down in Scotland and are offshoring to other parts of the world. We are defeating our own purposes by pursuing the policy prescription that Lorna Slater puts before the Parliament this afternoon.

Lorna Slater: The member makes a few mixed points. He was a member of the committee, and I heard in evidence put before it that businesses are struggling with the costs of energy. Everyone is particularly worried about the spikes in fossil fuel prices because of geopolitical events. We need to move away from that rollercoaster and back to the sustainable energy that we generate in Scotland, which means renewable energy for the long term.

Stephen Kerr: Would the member give way again?

The Deputy Presiding Officer (Katy Clark): I advise the member that she does not have time to take any more interventions.

Lorna Slater: A new report commissioned by the Energy and Climate Intelligence Unit states that net zero industries contribute £10.2 billion in gross value added to the Scottish economy and support more than 150,000 jobs. An estimated 3,000 businesses are now part of the Scottish net zero economy, with 90 per cent being small or medium-sized businesses.

The Scottish Greens want Scotland to lead a renewables revolution, with £600 million of investment in onshore and offshore wind, tidal and solar, including redeploying millions in public funding that has been pledged to unproven greenwashing carbon capture and storage technologies. The Government needs to bring back the heat in buildings bill to decarbonise Scotland's homes and buildings by 2045. With our abundant renewable resources, energy should be cheap in Scotland but, while Westminster holds the power, we cannot make that happen. It is time that we did.

I move amendment S7M-00159.3, to insert at end:

"in order that Scotland can respond to the climate emergency, cut the cost of living and contribute to energy security; recognises that the climate emergency is an urgent priority for Scotland and for the world, and that the re-emergence of climate denial poses a serious threat; accepts that the world has far more fossil fuel than it can afford to burn without disastrous consequences, and considers that issuing licences to extract fossil fuel from new sources would therefore be indefensible; recognises that the way in which the UK Government links electricity and gas prices prevents billpayers from benefiting from the low generating cost of renewable electricity, and that changing this system would accelerate the decarbonisation of heat and transport; believes that putting Scotland's energy in Scotland's hands must include a significant increase in community-owned energy, and further believes that reducing the cost of energy and achieving a rapid and just transition away from fossil fuels will deliver jobs, investment and a strong economy, particularly in rural and island communities."

The Deputy Presiding Officer (Katy Clark): I call Liam Kerr to speak to and move amendment S7M-00159.4.

15:12

Liam Kerr (North East Scotland) (Con): I congratulate Stephen Gethins on his appointment as energy minister and I commiserate with him for having to prosecute such an evidentially lacking and, indeed, threadbare motion. Listening to the debate exposes the perils of reducing nuanced, data-driven policy areas to the narrow nationalist rhetoric of the SNP. The consequences of what the motion calls for would be calamitous, whether that is in regard to energy generation, household bills, the economy or, indeed, the environment.

For example, the Government demands control over renewables generation and continues to bank on intermittent and variable wind power, but it fails to mention that it already has power over, for example, seabed rights for offshore wind projects yet its handling of the ScotWind licences was so botched that, last November, Shell handed back the CampionWind lease, having spent 18 months trying and failing to sell it. In February, Audit Scotland launched a formal investigation into the ScotWind leasing round.

The Government also fails to mention that, without the UK's contracts for difference regime providing crucial stability for high upfront cost projects, it is unlikely that any of Scotland's 3GW of operational offshore wind would have been built, let alone the fact that the ScotWind projects would not even have got off the ground. Then, there are the constraint payments, which in 2025 totalled somewhere between £340 million and £380 million.

It is deeply irresponsible for the minister to propose the motion without addressing issues

such as replication of the CFD regime, ways of meeting those constraint payments or the funding of the transmission and storage updates that are required to integrate Scottish offshore wind, which it is estimated will cost up to £20 billion by 2030.

Stephen Gethins: Does the member think that the £400 billion that has gone to Westminster has been well spent, given that no resource has been given back and no future generations fund has been established? What does he make of the constraint payments that are holding back renewables, an issue that, even in my first week in post, industry has been raising with me persistently? Westminster has failed—does he not agree?

Liam Kerr: I fundamentally disagree. We only need to go and look at the current infrastructure that is out there. That is what the money has bought, because, thankfully, we are part of a wholly integrated United Kingdom. To suggest otherwise is deeply irresponsible, and that irresponsibility is most stark in the Government's position on oil and gas, to which my amendment principally speaks.

The SNP motion says that the Scottish Government wants control over North Sea oil and gas, yet it quietly ignores the Scottish Government's January 2023 energy strategy, which states that the Government has

"a presumption against new exploration for oil and gas."

In other words, while oil and gas remains reserved, a Conservative Government could—and would—reverse Labour's economically, strategically and environmentally disastrous ban on new exploration and production. However, if the SNP got control, its energy strategy makes it clear that it would shut the North Sea. The worst of it is that current domestic production from the North Sea meets around 40 per cent of UK gas demand, and nearly half is brought in from Norway, which is drilling the same basin. In fact, while Labour and the SNP are trying to shut the North Sea and lose taxes and jobs, Norway licensed 70 new blocks in early 2026 and gave companies major tax incentives. We must not let decisions on North Sea energy fall into the SNP's hands.

On the renewables intermittency problem, the minister utterly fails to address questions of baseload. Torness, Scotland's last nuclear station, which generated around 17 per cent of Scotland's electricity in 2024, will shortly be closed. However, this Government has used the powers that it already has to block any new nuclear in Scotland—a decision that this Parliament has heard time and again in recent years is based on misinformation, prejudice and blind ideology.

Finally, it is important that I address the issue of high energy bills, which the minister is right to say are a real challenge and a cause of fear for people. The minister tries to suggest that getting energy powers would reduce those bills, but people need to hear the truth. For example, the way to reduce the constraint payments that are paid when wind farms generate excess power that cannot be transmitted or stored efficiently is through major investment in transmission and storage infrastructure, which would largely be funded through network charges on household gas and electricity bills, which would add around £108 a year to the average household bill. Perhaps, in closing, the Government will address how it would fund those network and storage upgrades were it ever to receive those powers, particularly in the context of the £5 billion black hole legacy left by the previous SNP Government.

I note that the minister is not levelling with people that Scotland's bills have virtually nothing to do with licensing powers and everything to do with terrain, population density, climate, housing stock, rurality and the transmission and grid upgrades.

Of course, one solution to high bills that is entirely within the Government's existing powers would have been to use ScotWind revenues to reduce bills, invest in infrastructure or create a sovereign wealth fund. However, the finance secretary's predecessor, Shona Robison, chose not to do that and instead used that money to plug her own funding gaps in the Scottish budget.

Alan Brown (Kilmarnock and Irvine Valley) (SNP): To go back to the issue of constraint payments, the member will realise that one of the reasons that constraint payments are paid is that the nuclear sector is pumping baseload on to the grid and cannot actually be turned off. Further, I point out that new nuclear will cost about £50 billion—that is the estimated cost of Hinkley Point C. How are £50-billion nuclear power stations going to bring down energy bills?

Liam Kerr: I am afraid that the deep ignorance of the SNP's nuclear policy is exemplified in that intervention. Nobody is proposing to build Hinkley C in Scotland; what we are looking at is small modular reactors—

Alison Thewliss (Glasgow Central) (SNP): They do not exist.

Liam Kerr: They absolutely could be—and, indeed, are being—built.

What Scotland needs is informed, long-term strategic planning. We need a strategy that not only recognises the importance of oil and gas jobs, energy security, the environment, the economy and skills, but acknowledges the need for new

nuclear baseload. The strategy must do so alongside and in partnership with a balanced, managed transition to renewables, and it should detail a serious long-term plan for storage and transmission to genuinely reduce people's bills. Scotland does not need more ill-informed, superficial posturing from an SNP that is obsessed with grievance and manufactured divisions. That is why the SNP motion should be rejected and the Conservative amendment whole-heartedly supported.

I move amendment S7M-00159.4, to leave out from "welcomes" to end and insert:

"recognises the need for bold and ambitious reform in Scotland following the Scottish General Election; acknowledges that the majority of people in Scotland want the Scottish Government to focus on the issues that impact their day-to-day lives; considers that the priority of the Scottish Government should therefore be to improve the NHS and public services, make life more affordable, support communities and high streets, grow a fair and prosperous economy, which tackles inequality, and ensure that every child has the opportunity to succeed; believes that this ambitious future can and should be achieved through the devolved powers of the Parliament and rejects any attempt by the Scottish Government to delay this work by dedicating resources towards returning to divisive arguments of the past."

The Deputy Presiding Officer (Katy Clark): I call Liam McArthur to speak to and move amendment S7M-00159.5.

15:20

Liam McArthur (Orkney Islands) (LD): Thank you, Deputy Presiding Officer. I welcome you to your post and I hope that you find the role as rewarding as I certainly did over the preceding five years.

I also offer my congratulations to the cabinet secretary. I may not have known him for quite as long as some members in the chamber have, but I have known him for a good many years, and I like and respect him enormously. That respect has been diminished only slightly by the motion that he lodged for today, but, on a more positive note, his motion has at least enabled a debate that is timely, certainly on the back of yesterday's energy price cap announcement. We all recognise that it means that bills will rise again, pushing more households into fuel poverty, against the backdrop of an ongoing cost of living crisis.

Although the principal cause of rising energy costs may lie in conflicts far away, the impact on people, business and communities here is real and keenly felt, giving rise to a palpable sense of anger and anxiety. Irrespective of international events, it is also clear that the current system needs reform, whether that is by cutting the link with wholesale gas prices or by implementing a transmission charging regime that is fit for purpose. It will not be easy, of course. Achieving energy security, affordability and sustainability is among the biggest challenges that we now face.

Sadly, the Government's motion seeks to simplify that challenge by framing it merely as a matter of constitution—but, as we have heard, ignoring the implications of fragmenting the energy market, which none of the organisations that provided briefings for the debate was calling for.

A more productive exercise would be to look at the clear and numerous ways in which we can maximise Scotland's energy potential while better protecting households and businesses. One such example, which is reflected in my amendment, is the need to take community benefit far more seriously. Supporting the generation of cheap, clean energy is vital if we are to protect ourselves from the volatility of fossil fuel prices, but communities that host renewable developments deserve to feel that benefit, both in strategic local investment, such as housing, and in measures to bring down bills. That is simply not happening right now.

I see that in my Orkney constituency. The islands have been a pioneer in the energy sector for decades, yet we experience some of the highest fuel poverty levels anywhere. That cannot be right. Addressing that situation will require an overhaul of outdated guidance, as well as engagement with rural and island communities.

Lessons must also be learned from the failures of ScotWind. Having sold off sites at bargain-basement rates, ministers have then refused to transfer that revenue to the communities and local authorities that are most affected.

Helen McDade: Would the member accept that that money going to communities comes from other communities and that the subsidies come to the energy companies through a pool that comes off people's energy bills? We are also discussing how people cannot afford their energy bills. It is nice for communities to get a new football field or a new hall, but the money for them comes through because those companies have so much coming from everybody who pays the bills.

Liam McArthur: As we have already heard, the subsidies going into the energy sector across the board are wide and extensive. My argument is that the communities directly affected by such developments need to see the benefit not just through reduction of bills but through more strategic infrastructure that, to be frank, is not about new football parks or community halls; it is about strategic investment in infrastructure, such as housing, which is in crisis in places such as Orkney.

In the context of today's motion, however, had the UK Government treated the Scottish Government as the latter is treating local councils such those in as Orkney and Shetland, we would have heard some fairly unparliamentary language, even from somebody as measured and diplomatic as the cabinet secretary. A different approach is required in the future—one that ensures that projects attract investment and deliver meaningful benefit locally.

While the Scottish Government calls for more powers, the fact is that it simply has not kept pace with the scale of the change that is required. Even coming forward with an energy strategy was beyond the Government during most of the previous parliamentary session. In the absence of such a strategy, Scottish Renewables has called for clear statements of policy intent so as to give certainty to key sectors, such as marine, as well as to create the conditions for growth. Essential, too, will be modernising grid infrastructure and properly resourcing planning and consenting to support development at pace. We need to see both of Scotland's Governments working collaboratively in Scotland's interests, which Mr Gethins is well suited to doing.

On oil and gas, there should be no debate about the fact that they will remain part of our energy mix for years to come. However, there is no world in which we can continue to rely on the North Sea basin indefinitely. That is not a matter of politics; it is just an immutable fact of geology.

The futures of oil and gas and renewables are intertwined. Polarising policy and debate might have political upsides, but it has few upsides for either sector or for our country. Any transition that ignores the needs of those on whom it will rely most heavily can only fail, and the people and communities at the heart of that transition must be fully involved in the decisions that affect them. That will require the removal of barriers to transition, better targeting of support for training and skills, and investment in the development of genuine job opportunities.

None of that will be easy. All of it will require detailed planning, long-term commitment and collaboration across parties and between Governments, but trying to achieve that while incurring the significant costs, delays and disruptions that would result from dismantling our energy market would be beyond difficult. I urge Parliament to reject the motion and to back the Liberal Democrats' amendment.

I move amendment S7M-00159.5, to leave out from "Scotland's energy" to end and insert:

"local communities which host vital renewables projects deserve proper community benefit that would provide funding for short and long-term investment such as economic development, housing and cutting energy bills; further believes that the Scottish Government's proposed good practice principles, which recommend community benefits be provided at the value of £6,000 per Mega Watt per year, will not meet the expectations of communities; calls for future ScotWind rental income to be transferred to the nearby councils so that those communities can feel the benefit of hosting national projects, and considers that new rules are needed for future ScotWind-style sales to protect the value of Scotland's assets and attract more investment."

The Deputy Presiding Officer (Katy Clark): We move to the open debate. Our first speaker is Jack Middleton, who is also making their first speech in the Parliament.

15:27

Jack Middleton (Aberdeen Central) (SNP): I am grateful for my first opportunity to address members as the newly elected MSP for Aberdeen Central.

My constituency rests between two shining rivers—the Don and the Dee—and absorbs the whole of Aberdeen city centre. My constituency is famed for its silver granite and golden beaches, and I am proud to call it my home. It is where I was born, and it is where my family has lived for generations.

So, too, is Aberdeen home to many famous sons and daughters—the Ballon d'Or-winning footballer Denis Law; the multi-Grammy-award-winning singer Annie Lennox; the socialist revolutionary Bob Cooney; and, of course, the self-titled king of Aberdeen himself, Kevin Stewart. [*Laughter*.] By serving his constituents with dedication and passion for 15 years, Kevin ultimately laid the groundwork for what was a resounding election victory for the SNP in Aberdeen Central. Speaking both as an Aberdonian and as a friend of his, I hope that members will join me in thanking Kevin for what he achieved in the Parliament and in wishing him the very best for the future.

There is much to be proud of in Aberdeen Central, but, in the energy capital of Europe, far too many of my constituents live in deprivation. Too many cannot afford to feed themselves, feed their kids or even turn their heating on. Many more live on the margins, struggling every single day simply to make ends meet.

In a city that is a global energy superpower, that reality makes me sick. It should make every MSP in the chamber feel sick, too. During my election campaign, I spoke to thousands of Aberdonians who told me that they do not feel that the current political system delivers for them. No wonder. In Aberdeen Central, hard work does not always lead to job security, especially for our oil and gas workers. While London politicians are arguing about how they want to spend our energy wealth,

we are paying some of the highest bills on the continent.

My city faces many challenges, but I know that the answers to those challenges do not lie in the tired old politics of the past, nor do they lie in hatred or within division; those answers lie outside the walls of the chamber and among the sovereign people of Scotland.

Key to understanding what is happening today in Aberdeen Central is acknowledging what is not happening. When it comes to our vast energy wealth, Westminster calls the shots, and the UK Government has no pride in Scotland's premier industry. It promised to remove the energy profits levy and move to an oil and gas price mechanism, but it has not done so. It promised to bring thousands of jobs to Aberdeen through Great British Energy, but it has not done so. Aberdonians are being asked to ignore that reality. All the while, Labour lifts sanctions on Vladimir Putin's regime and waves through dirty Russian oil and gas via the back door, while blocking use of our own domestic resources.

The UK Government talks us down and tells us to keep our mouths shut, but, Presiding Officer, I will be crystal clear in speaking on behalf of my constituents. There is nothing morally just about sending thousands of working women and men to the jobcentre during a cost of living crisis of Westminster's making, with little prospect of those people regaining employment in the industry in which they have honed their skills for years. There is nothing progressive about blowing up the investment and infrastructure supply chain that we need to secure Scotland's future as a green renewables powerhouse.

To be frank, I do not think that those in charge at Westminster have a clue. The average punter in the north-east of Scotland has a greater understanding of industry and Scotland's energy requirements in their pinkie finger than the boffins and bean counters in Whitehall, who rarely venture beyond the M25, will gain in their entire careers. Why on earth would we continue to put our trust in those charlatans, who want to exploit Scotland's energy resources simply to fill the coffers of the UK Treasury and, perhaps if they are lucky, drive down bills for taxpayers in England? If we want things to change, it is very obvious that Scotland's huge energy wealth has to be in Scotland's hands.

To visualise what that would look like, we need not dream or imagine—we just need to look a few hundred miles across the North Sea to Norway. Stavanger is a city of broadly similar size to Aberdeen. Norway discovered oil off its shores at virtually the same time as we discovered it off our own, yet Norway has much lower poverty, much higher wages and much greater job security. The cherry on top is that its people enjoy a quality of life and a set of living standards that are the envy of the world. The Norwegians used the discovery of oil to become wealthier; in Scotland, by most metrics, we have somehow become poorer.

That is because, while we entrusted Westminster with our energy wealth, Norway trusted itself. It understood one simple principle: a nation's resources should be used to benefit a nation's citizens. That is why its sovereign wealth fund is now larger than the gross domestic product of most western democracies. If Scotland had had the power to make the same choices as Norway did back then, a Scottish sovereign wealth fund would be worth more than £1 trillion by the end of this parliamentary session.

I accept that we cannot go back. However, we can go forward and prepare for the future, because we have North Sea resources that will last for decades and a renewables potential that should last forever.

The choice that we face in Scotland is whether we trust them—the folk who threw £400 billion in taxes from our oil revenues up against the wall—or whether we trust ourselves, the people of Scotland, to make decisions that are in our interests on issues such as new licences, to ensure that that huge energy wealth is serving our citizens. The next step in securing that very future is for members to support the motion in the name of Stephen Gethins.

The Deputy Presiding Officer (Clare Adamson): I call Paul Sweeney, to be followed by Karen Adam.

15:34

Paul Sweeney (Glasgow) (Lab): Thank you, Deputy Presiding Officer. I welcome you to your place. I also congratulate the member for Aberdeen Central on a fine maiden speech. It was an excellent and erudite tour of the granite city. Whether in the granite city or the sandstone city that I represent, the challenges that our people face are very similar.

However, I am afraid that the Government's motion is merely an economic and political sleight of hand. "Scotland's energy in Scotland's hands" is certainly a plausible and intuitive slogan to anyone who cares about our country's interests, but the stark reality behind it is the SNP's 20-year betrayal of our nation's proud electrical engineering heritage.

For two decades, the SNP Administration has systematically dismantled Scotland's baseload generating capacity. It has replaced real engineering substance and Scottish ownership with handouts to multinational capital, foreign

control, imported infrastructure, and hollow photo opportunities to boot.

We must judge the Government on its record, not its rhetoric. In 2021, we witnessed the spectacle of former First Minister Nicola Sturgeon ceremoniously pushing the button to demolish the iconic chimney stack at Longannet power station. It was the ultimate visual metaphor for the Government: destroying foundational, world-class energy infrastructure without a back-up plan for the sake of a fleeting headline, in defiance of Scotland's greatest engineering minds.

In 2015, the much-missed Sir Donald Miller, the legendary former chairman of Scottish Power and the foremost electrical engineer of his generation in Scotland—the man who designed Scotland's post-war electricity supply system—delivered a devastating warning that the Government chose to ignore completely. His prophecy has, sadly, become our painful reality. He warned us plainly that

"The decommissioning of our conventional generation is fast approaching and yet there are no plans to replace the generating capacity at Longannet or the nuclear"

stations. With the closure of Longannet, Scotland will be left with only around half of its peak demand capacity. It is incomprehensible that a country with Scotland's energy resources should find itself entirely dependent on its neighbour for security of supply.

Sir Donald looked at that trajectory and asked the fundamental question that every member on the Government benches should be forced to answer:

"You may wonder just why Scotland (birthplace of so much engineering) should be importing power we could well generate here, exporting highly skilled jobs in the process."

He concluded that that drifting, ideologically driven approach would leave Scotland with

"the least reliable and insecure electricity supply that we have seen for a hundred years"

and warned us that failing to secure baseload capacity would make for

"a very long night indeed"

if we did not get it right.

His prediction has proven to be an accurate guide to Scotland's present reality: because of the Government's catastrophic mismanagement of our energy sector, Scotland is now regularly forced to import power from England on calm days just to keep the lights on. Scotland has become more dependent on our southern neighbours, not less, due to the Government's policy.

Neil Gray: Will Mr Sweeney reflect on the fact that, regardless of the energy generation that is chosen in Scotland, one of the greatest hindrances to progress relates to access to, or offtake from, the national grid, and that there has been a singular failure to improve that situation under both the previous Conservative Government and his party's Government?

Paul Sweeney: I thank the cabinet secretary for making that point. The model is challenging. Even when our wind turbines are generating, under the integrated UK market, English bill payers heavily subsidise Scottish grid bottlenecks. Around a quarter of Scotland's entire wind generation capacity was paid to turn off last year, which accounted for more than 90 per cent of total constraint payments across the Great Britain network.

Members should look at the Moray East wind farm for an example of that. Between September 2021 and September 2023, the owners were paid approximately £100 million in constraint payments just to sit idle. Currently, those costs are socialised across the whole UK market but, if full devolution of energy were to take place, the Scottish Government's approach to energy would mean that those constraint payment costs would fall entirely on the shoulders of Scottish taxpayers. Contrary to what many speakers on the Government benches have said, further devolution of energy would be neither quick nor cheap for Scotland's people.

We see the hypocrisy of the motion reach its peak when we look at the SNP's attitude towards our industrial supply chain. The SNP spent weeks screaming about sabotage when the UK Government rightly blocked the Chinese state-controlled firm Ming Yang from developing a wind turbine factory at Ardersier. However, let us be entirely clear that the European Union explicitly views such state-subsidised entities as a security risk and as systemic rivals to European original equipment manufacturers. We cannot claim to be pro-European while rolling out the red carpet for a foreign supply chain that actively undermines our European allies and undercuts domestic firms. That is geopolitical illiteracy.

Indeed, we can contrast that with the decision to invest—

Stephen Gethins: Will the member give way?

Paul Sweeney: I am happy to give way if I can have the time back.

Stephen Gethins: The British Government vetoed Ming Yang and has not given us an adequate reason. Members from the Highlands and Islands will rightly be furious about that. It was also the British Labour Government that last week eased sanctions on Russia. What did our European partners make of that?

Paul Sweeney: The British Government did no such thing. It introduced new sanctions on Russia; it did not remove them.

If the minister would like to look at a serious industrial strategy, he can look at the recent UK Government coup of securing the Vestas nacelle manufacturing plant for Scotland, bringing highly skilled manufacturing jobs back to our shores through British market stability.

In the 1980s, Glasgow's own James Howden & Company led the world in wind turbine manufacturing—a position that Scotland surrendered by the 1990s because we lacked an integrated state development strategy. We have a historic chance to right that wrong today, but we will do it through secure alliances, a robust grid and a nuclear baseload, not by returning to the same old stale arguments from 2014 that have led to stagnation and decline. Power pooling across the United Kingdom protects Scottish consumers, funds our infrastructure and secures our industrial future.

Let us reject this short-sighted, headline-driven motion, honour the legacy of Sir Donald Miller and finally build a serious energy strategy that is grounded in engineering reality and will power Scotland's homes for generations to come.

The Deputy Presiding Officer (Clare Adamson): I call Karen Adam, to be followed by David Barratt.

15:40

Karen Adam (Banffshire and Buchan Coast) (SNP): Thank you, Deputy Presiding Officer. I welcome you to your role.

It is an absolute honour to stand here again as the MSP for Banffshire and Buchan Coast. I want to be clear from the very start that, in my constituency, energy is not a theoretical debate. We see it, we work in it and we live beside it, yet still too many people pay through the nose for it. From Buckie to Banff, along the coast of Fraserburgh, St Fergus, Peterhead and Boddam, Banffshire and Buchan Coast is rural, coastal and, in some parts, industrial. It is very skilled and, importantly, it is energy rich.

In my constituency, we have families who have built their lives around oil and gas, and our young people are already training for the renewable and low-carbon industries of tomorrow. It is not a place where the people need energy explained to them from any distance; it is a place that has helped to power this country for decades. During my campaign, I was asked to speak up for constituents and not to shy away from the difficult questions. At almost every single door that I knocked, people raised the issue of energy.

St Fergus regularly supplies around a third of the UK's natural gas. Peterhead power station provides essential flexibility to the grid. Moray East wind farm, which is operated and maintained from Fraserburgh, and Moray West wind farm, with its operations and maintenance base at Buckie, sit off our coast, generating power on a scale that most countries would envy. The Acorn project at St Fergus shows how carbon capture, utilisation and storage, alongside hydrogen, could help to make the north-east central to the next chapter of Scotland's energy future.

Liam Kerr: The Acorn carbon capture project was promised £80 million by the Scottish Government in January 2022. To date, not a single penny has been paid out. Will Karen Adam tell us when it will be?

Karen Adam: I remind Liam Kerr that I am not a member of the Government, so I do not have the facts to hand. Investment was pledged to the Acorn project to match and support what the UK Government had put into it. However, the UK Government snubbed the Acorn project and left it on the back burner. That was pure politics, because it does not want Scotland having anything.

The question that I bring to the chamber is simple: how can communities that help to power the country still have households that cannot afford to heat their homes? That is not just unfair; it is a failure of how energy is governed. Citizens Advice Scotland's latest energy briefing lays bare the human cost of that failure. The average energy debt is more than £2,800, which rises to £3,200 in rural areas. That is not just a statistic on a page; it is someone sitting in a cold house, trying to stretch their shopping, worrying about fuelling the car and being able to afford to fill up the heating oil, provide for their bairns and pay all the extra costs that come when someone lives further away from the centre of power. That is why the debate matters.

The range of amendments before us shows exactly why Scotland needs these powers to be in Scotland's hands. While other parties pull the debate towards delay, denial, dependence or unrealistic simplicity, my constituents need a serious Scottish plan that is rooted in jobs, bills, climate responsibility and, importantly, a community benefit. At one end, there are those who speak as though net zero is the problem and as though Scotland should turn away from the renewables, hydrogen, carbon capture, grid upgrades, apprenticeships and offshore wind developments that young people in my constituency and across the north-east are already preparing for.

I cannot accept that. That would not protect Banffshire and Buchan Coast. It would strand us.

It would leave communities with nothing to transition into. We have seen before what happens when industrial communities are told that the market will sort it out—Thatcher did that to the coalfields.

I cannot support the premise that we can simply walk away from domestic oil and gas before the infrastructure, jobs and alternatives are fully in place. We must work at pace.

My constituents are fearful. They consistently raise with me the fact that oil and gas demand has not disappeared. They ask me about whether that energy, which we still use, should be produced domestically by our own skilled workforce, under our standards, while we build the transition properly, or whether we should make ourselves more dependent on imports, global shocks and political decisions made far away from Scotland by people who do not care about our communities. In any energy planning, we must offer reassurance that we are cognisant of that.

For more than 50 years, Scotland's energy wealth has flowed to the UK Treasury, with hundreds of billions of pounds taken from oil and gas production, yet too many of our communities are still waiting to see the long-term investment that should have followed that.

This debate is not about choosing one energy source over another. In Scotland, we have it all. We need to balance a full energy mix to strategically lead us through to what comes next—and we need to have the power to do it our way. Our offshore workers are not yesterday's story; they are the people who built the skills base that the future depends on. The offshore energy sector supports 128,400 jobs in Scotland—as far as the stats show—and 90 per cent of offshore workers have transferable skills that are essential for the expansion of renewables. That is the serious path: not shutting down our industrial base, not pretending that climate change is not real and not leaving Scotland dependent on Westminster decisions, unfair taxation, UK market rules, unfair transmission charges or imported energy from other countries. Energy-rich Scotland should mean energy-secure Scots. It should mean skilled jobs, lower bills, stronger communities and a real industrial future with energy resilience.

In Banffshire and Buchan Coast, we help to power this country. It is Scotland's energy. It should be in Scotland's hands.

The Deputy Presiding Officer (Clare Adamson): I call David Barratt to make their first speech.

15:47

David Barratt (Cowdenbeath) (SNP): I want to begin by paying tribute to my predecessor, Annabelle Ewing. Annabelle spent decades in the service of Scotland and was a formidable voice for the Cowdenbeath constituency. She was vocal on issues such as improving the rail services on the Fife circle and defending our hard-working and essential fire crews, and she fought for investment in the replacement Lochgelly health centre—something that I will, constructively, continue to press for.

As I walked into this building for the first time, earlier this month, I found myself recalling a visit many years ago, when I was still in primary school and the Parliament was still under construction. Alongside thousands of schoolchildren from across Scotland, I had drawn a picture of myself, to be displayed on the construction hoarding around the site. The project was intended to symbolise the generations that the Parliament was built to serve. I remember spending what felt like hours hunting for that drawing. I would love to say that that visit inspired me to seek election one day, as I hope that visits here inspired many young people now. Truthfully, I suspect that I was more excited by whatever came after—I cannot remember whether it was Edinburgh Zoo or Dynamic Earth.

Reflecting on that visit, it struck me how strange this parliamentary session must feel to those who have been here ever since then, and for this to be the first session without a Ewing among us. I promise to do my bit to inject a little Ewing spirit into defending the people I represent. I can already feel the whips getting nervous, so I should move on.

The tradition of a first speech is that I should try to shoehorn in references to my constituency. It is not difficult to do that in a debate on the subject of energy, as Cowdenbeath is a constituency that has been forged by energy boom and energy decline. Our mining heritage shaped our communities and powered our economy and our nation. The decline of mining was rapid and devastating, and it left families and communities broken. It was the very antithesis of a just transition.

That legacy lives on today. It lives on in deprivation, in communities that are vulnerable to rising energy costs and in places that too often feel left behind, but it also lives on in the character of our communities. I am profoundly honoured to represent those proud, resilient and deeply tight-knit communities. They are my first priority, and I will not let them down.

Today, the constituency faces a new wave of energy development: vast solar farms, towering

wind turbines and massive grid infrastructure in the form of eastern green link 4, which is a high-voltage cable linking Ballingry to Norfolk. That cable, which will be more than 600km long, will be capable of transmitting 2GW of clean, green Scottish energy to homes in England. Ballingry is a proud community with deep roots in its mining heritage, but it is also a community surrounded by energy wealth, the benefit of which it too often sees little of. The EGL4 cable will transmit electricity to an area in England that has lower standing charges than apply in Scotland. Energy that is sent from Ballingry will cost less in King's Lynn than it does for those who live in Ballingry.

I do not object to the principle of energy infrastructure. I spent the best part of 15 years working in renewables and energy as a hydrologist and an environmental consultant. What I object to is communities not feeling the benefit of that infrastructure and Scotland not having powers over its own energy. Scotland stands on the cusp of another renewable energy boom, but that was true a decade ago, so why are we still paying some of the highest energy bills in the world when we produce so much energy?

The answer is simple. We do not have powers over our own energy. In 2015, the UK Government, under David Cameron, systematically dismantled support mechanisms for renewables, which devastated the then growing small-scale wind, hydro and solar sectors. I use the term "support mechanisms" rather than "subsidy", because the term "subsidy" is never used when people talk about nuclear power, is it? The strike price for energy from Hinkley, after inflation, is more than double that of most offshore wind, and that is leaving aside the cost of nuclear waste. With greater powers, we could invest some of that difference in smarter grids, insulation, efficiency, and greater heat and energy storage.

I mentioned what the UK Government did in 2015 to undermine our renewables industry. At that time, I was helping to take a small-scale hydro scheme through the consenting process. Construction very nearly did not go ahead, because the funding structures were ripped away with virtually no notice. It was only through the intervention of the then Scottish Government energy minister, Fergus Ewing—that is another Ewing reference—that the project was ultimately completed. The Scottish Government moved heaven and earth to salvage what it could, with one hand tied behind its back.

Very little hydropower has been developed in the more than a decade since then. That is not because the resource is not there in vast and untapped quantities; it is because the resource is predominantly in Scotland. When decisions are made elsewhere, Scotland's priorities will never come first. For too long, decisions about Scotland's resources have been made elsewhere, and our communities have paid the price. Scotland's energy should be in Scotland's hands, and, in Scotland's hands, it could power our future.

The Deputy Presiding Officer (Clare Adamson): I call Mark Simpson to make their first speech.

15:54

Mark Simpson (North East Scotland) (Reform): Thank you, Deputy Presiding Officer. I congratulate you on your election to the post.

It probably goes without saying that I am delighted to be standing here today representing North East Scotland, a place that I am proud to call home. I want to start by being thankful. I am thankful to the 383,000 Scots who voted for Reform across the country. That is an honour, and we want to thank them all. Across North East Scotland, 60,000 voters were responsible for putting me here, and, again, I am thankful to them. I want to be thankful to volunteers from across the region, from Peterhead to Braemar to Dundee. We have two by-elections going on in the north-east, and those volunteers are still going at it hard, campaigning, so I thank them again.

I note that this is the first time that Reform has been in the Scottish Parliament. We do not take that lightly. It has been disappointing to hear what some of my new colleagues have said about locking Reform out of influence or about how they would rather Reform was not here. We are here, and we hope that we can collaborate on areas where we can come together.

During the campaign, I asked the people I spoke to the simple question, "What is getting better for you?" There was not a great deal, but I will share some of what they told me. They brought up the cost of living. Those people have seen their disposable incomes rise no higher than they were a decade ago and families are being forced to choose between heating their homes and putting food on the table. That is simply not acceptable.

People have never been taxed higher. Those earning £50,000 a year in Scotland are paying £1,500 more tax than those in the rest of the UK, and top-rate taxpayers are paying 48 per cent in tax. People feel that they have less and less cash in their pockets.

On safety and crime, the number of recorded rapes and attempted rapes reached almost 3,000 in 2024-25, which is a 15 per cent increase on the previous year. That should shame us all deeply.

On schools and education, we have seen the scores from the programme for international

student assessment declining significantly in the past decade, especially in maths and science. We must ensure that our children are given the best possible start in life.

Scots were also voting on UK-wide issues during the election. One of those was immigration. Over the bank holiday weekend, we saw about 1,000 people, mainly young men of fighting age, coming over the English Channel. That has resulted in Glasgow becoming the asylum capital of the UK.

On net zero and energy, which is pertinent to what we are discussing today, the policies of the establishment parties have failed the average Scot. The SNP said that it would bring in net zero by 2045, five years ahead of the UK. The SNP talks about a just transition for oil and gas workers, but the sad reality is that there is no such thing as a just transition for oil and gas workers. The reality is that 1,000 jobs are being lost per month in the north-east.

I will not spend too long talking about Labour, because their failings are pretty apparent, but we can look at Ed Miliband banning new drilling and at Labour's windfall tax. The Conservatives are not much better. They brought in the energy profits levy and the legislation that meant that we had to try to achieve net zero by 2050. They are not even here in the chamber.

What now? Those are some of the problems, so what is Reform UK going to do to change that? On energy and the North Sea, we are going to abandon net stupid zero and get the North Sea pumping again. In doing that, we are going to bring back thousands of jobs and billions of pounds in tax revenue, and we are going to stop importing oil and gas from Norway and gambling on unreliable renewables.

On immigration, we have a very simple policy: anyone who has entered this country illegally will be detained and deported. We will make sure that women and girls are safe from these mostly fighting-age men who are coming over the channel.

On tax, we believe that a pound in your pocket is better than a pound in the Government's hands. We want to put money back in people's pockets, to stimulate growth. We believe in trusting the Scottish people.

I will conclude by saying that we are looking forward to the next five years. Reform has been trusted for the first time to deliver for Scotland. What we want to be judged on at the end of those five years is how we have positively made the case that Reform is able to deliver the solutions to the woes of many, many Scots.

The Deputy Presiding Officer (Clare Adamson): I call Pauline Stafford to make their first speech.

16:00

Pauline Stafford (Bathgate) (SNP): Thank you, Deputy Presiding Officer. I congratulate you on your new role. I declare an interest as an elected member of West Lothian Council.

I am delighted to make my first speech in this chamber representing the new constituency seat of Bathgate, which is the area that I grew up in and the area where I am now raising my family. I am deeply grateful to the voters of the constituency for placing their trust in me to represent them. I will work every day to support them and give them a voice in our Parliament.

The Bathgate constituency sits right at the heart of Scotland's energy and industrial story, so I am really pleased that my first contribution is to a debate on Scotland's energy. Before I turn to the motion, I will pay tribute to my predecessor, Fiona Hyslop. If any other new members are concerned about the size of the boots that they have to fill, I ask them to please spare a thought for me. As one of the Parliament's longest-serving MSPs, Fiona spent more than 16 years in government, and her work has made a huge difference to the lives of people across Scotland. I thank her for her work and wish her all the best for her future.

Nothing demonstrates the need for Scotland to have control of its own resources and decision making better than the issue that we are debating today. My election campaign began with a focus on Scotland's energy and, with almost a third of households in Scotland living in fuel poverty, the issue clearly resonated with almost everybody we spoke to on the doorsteps. We had assumed that, as we headed into spring with warmer weather, people's focus would turn to other issues, but that did not happen. As the UK found itself buffeted by events in the middle east, with soaring oil and gas prices for a second time and the UK Government being unable or unwilling to meet the scale of the challenges that people are facing, energy security came even more sharply into focus.

Further, just last week, we saw the UK Government panicking over its failure to manage energy infrastructure and watering down its sanctions on Russian oil. That was a betrayal of the Ukrainians who are fighting so hard for their democracy. The closure of the Grangemouth refinery, where many of my constituents worked, has clearly contributed to the situation. In addition, where are the benefits of the much hyped GB Energy? A year since its creation, there are just 30 permanent jobs to show for it. That does not meet the scale that is required.

There is a disconnect between what people hear from the UK Government and the energy that they see being created all around them. The lack of tangible improvement that that makes to people's lives is so damaging to our democracy. It pushes people to the conclusion that it may not be worth voting at all, and it leaves space for the narrative that we can put dealing with the climate crisis on the back burner until another day. We cannot do that. Scotland's energy needs to be in Scotland's hands, with all energy powers being devolved to the Scottish Parliament.

Just as we have seen the closure of Scotland's last commercial oil refinery at Grangemouth, the world's first was pioneered in Bathgate by James "Paraffin" Young in 1850. Communities across my constituency—in Whitburn, Blackburn, Winchburgh, Broxburn, Uphall, Blackridge and Armadale—all bear the physical legacy of that era of decades of coal and shale mining. The striking red shale bings—the red giants that rise across the area—remain enduring symbols of the skill and labour of generations of workers that powered Scotland.

My constituency has also known the pain of deindustrialisation, with the loss of jobs, opportunities and confidence that affected so many families across Scotland. The Proclaimers captured that sense of loss in their song "Letter from America" with the famous lyric "Bathgate no more". However, while that reflects one chapter of our history, it must not define our future. Today, our task here, and my task, is to make sure that it is "Bathgate once more". With control of our vast renewable resources, we can be at the leading edge of the next energy revolution.

We must not leave this in the hands of Westminster, which has squandered Scotland's energy wealth to date, and we must not risk repeating the mistakes of the 1980s, when towns that had their industry closed down were left to bear the social and economic costs alone. Instead, the move to clean energy must deliver secure, skilled and well-paid jobs here in Scotland, with investment rooted in communities such as Bathgate, Whitburn and Armadale. That means not only generating renewable energy but giving communities a real ownership stake and building the infrastructure of the future here at home.

We already see what that future can look like through initiatives such as the ECOHOUSE at West Lothian College—a green skills centre that is the first of its kind in Scotland—and companies such as Invinity Energy Systems in Bathgate, which is developing grid-scale battery technology. That is already happening. Young people in our communities should be able to look at our net zero transition and see not uncertainty but opportunity, good jobs, apprenticeships and a future that they can build here, in Scotland.

Today, many members will have travelled to the Parliament through the Bathgate constituency by rail or by the two motorways that dissect us. As members pass the shale bings, please consider what those red giants represent: generations of skilled and resilient people who worked hard to see Scotland prosper and grow. This cannot be the best that their legacy bears.

With Scotland's energy in Scotland's hands, we can build an energy system for our future. Communities in Bathgate and across Scotland will not only share in that future but help to lead it, just as they helped to power Scotland's past.

The Deputy Presiding Officer (Clare Adamson): I call Heather Anderson to make their first speech.

16:05

Heather Anderson (Dundee City West) (SNP): I begin by declaring an interest, as I am an elected councillor on Dundee City Council. I congratulate you on your election, Deputy Presiding Officer.

I am very honoured to address the Parliament as the newly elected MSP for Dundee City West. The young lassie from up a wee multi in Lochee never dreamt that she would be standing here in Scotland's national Parliament representing the warm, funny, strong and resilient people of bonnie Dundee.

Colleagues might not know that William Wallace was a former pupil of what is now known as Dundee high, and they might not know that I was the former head girl of the Morgan, but they will know that Dundee is famous for the three Js—jam, jute and Joe FitzPatrick.

Joe is my mighty predecessor. He served in the Parliament for 19 years and held a variety of ministerial roles. Joe was fearless in standing up for every single minority group and for everybody in our city. He was also a relentless campaigner, and I am indebted to him and to those in the phenomenal SNP team, who work tirelessly every day to make sure that Dundee continues to be the "Yes" city.

Not only is Dundee a city of discovery; it is a city of relentless resilience. During my lifetime, Dundee has survived the demise of the global jute trade. We then reinvented ourselves with Timex and NCR, before watches and tills became digital. Undeterred, we became a global digital powerhouse through the gaming industry. Rockstar Games is based in the city and Abertay University is ranked the top international school for

video game design. The University of Dundee is leading in life sciences and drug discovery, and along with Dundee and Angus College, we have three world-class higher education institutions, all of which must be cherished.

Our waterfront proudly showcases the Victoria and Albert museum—known as the V and A—and Dundee Rep theatre and Dundee Contemporary Arts are internationally recognised. LiveHouse, which is a newcomer on the scene, is doing great, and we hope to welcome the Eden Project to its Scottish home very soon.

I will now focus on Dundee's role in the energy transition and the need for Scotland to have power over our own energy. As colleagues know, and as has been said today, Scotland won the energy lottery twice, not only with all the oil and gas that we were told had run out in 2014, but with the huge potential of renewable energy that is generated here due to our geology, climate and highly skilled workforce.

Scotland is an energy-rich nation, which should mean energy-rich Scots, but instead, too many Dundonians are living with no route out of fuel poverty. Labour promised £300 per year off fuel bills, but we are realising that people are now going to be £600 worse off each year. The 13 per cent increase in the Office of Gas and Electricity Markets energy cap will put a load more people into fuel poverty.

I am passionate about ensuring that we get our energy to work for the benefit of the people who live here. I am proud to be the depute chair of the Dundee climate leadership group, which is a pioneering group that brings together the utility companies, the national health service, our universities and our college, the council, the housing sector and the third sector in Dundee.

The Dundee climate leadership group has developed detailed plans for the phased introduction of decarbonised district heating across the city. We are keen to get on with the transition. If we are going to do district heating at scale anywhere in Scotland, we should do it in Dundee—we are built for it. We have a compact, densely populated area of land, with 150,000 people living on 25 square miles on a south-facing slope. Members should not just think of Desperate Dan when they think of Dundee; they should think, "That's Dundee, where they dae the district heatin."

If we are to deliver the necessary scale of infrastructure investment, we need collaboration, expertise and sound governance over decades. We must attract private investment, which requires the business case to add up. However, right now, the market is rigged against renewables, and we do not have any power to do anything about that. It is increasingly clear that if we want to ensure that the price of energy is protected and affordable for the future citizens of Dundee—and Scotland—we need power over our own energy system. It is not enough to generate the energy; we need to have the power over the distribution of the energy, the upgrading of the grid, the unit costs, the tariffs, the taxes that are applied to the bill and the pricing mechanisms.

At present, we have all the energy but none of the powers. As a former member of the European Parliament, I know what powerlessness feels like. Scotland, a proud European nation, had no powers to prevent us from being dragged out of Europe against our will and without our consent. Europe knew it, too. That is why they sang "Auld Lang Syne" when we left.

We know what it feels like to send £400 billion-worth of oil and gas wealth to Westminster, to be left paying the highest energy bills in Europe and to watch our pensioners lose their winter heating payments. We know what it feels like to repeatedly elect independence-supporting Governments and to have our democracy denied. However, take heart. Supporters of independence, like Dundonians, are relentlessly resilient. We will never give up fighting for what we believe in.

We know that Scotland will thrive as an independent nation. We know that Scotland will take her seat back at the heart of Europe, where she belongs. We know that the energy wealth of Scotland will benefit the people of Scotland. The people who just voted for the largest-ever number of independence-supporting MSPs know it, too. That is why they will not be silenced.

I strongly support the motion and look forward to the day when Scotland has both the energy and the power to ensure that Scotland's resources benefit the people of Scotland.

The Deputy Presiding Officer (Clare Adamson): I call Kristopher Leask to make their first speech.

16:12

Kristopher Leask (Highlands and Islands) (Green): Thank you, Presiding Officer. I congratulate you and the minister on your appointments, and I look forward to our working together.

I am unashamedly a product of our renewable energy story in Scotland—specifically at home, in Orkney. It is what led me to this Parliament and what drives me to make change for my community and region, the Highlands and Islands. I am pleased to make my first speech on a topic so close to my heart.

All too often, when we talk about our national transition to renewable energy, we focus purely on jobs and the economic impact. We forget that this is not only the economic opportunity of our time but our chance to build thriving, sustainable communities in areas that desperately need investment. Those communities are located right across Scotland, but particularly in the Highlands and Islands. Orkney has been a trailblazer in community-owned energy for decades, stretching back to the Westray Development Trust well over 20 years ago. However, the outlook for community energy in Scotland is challenging. In the context of successive UK Governments that have failed to plan for our future energy system and seem perpetually stuck in reforming our grid system to no conclusion, the challenge is undoubtable. However, the Scottish Government, too, must be serious about delivering on its existing commitments. We need a credible road map to significant expansion of renewable energy, owned by Scotland's communities.

Equally, we need to be honest about what we have achieved towards that goal so far. For years, the Scottish Government's target of 2GW by 2030 has conflated community-owned energy and locally owned energy, the latter of which includes energy that is owned by private businesses and large estates. Together, those account for an encouraging 1.15GW, but only 113MW of that is truly community-owned energy. That rate of progress is too slow. We already have the power to make progress faster by prioritising public land for community developments and by getting ahead of the first generation of mass, significant repowering of private onshore wind, which is already starting.

Herein lie opportunities for the Scottish Government to work with us to make the progress that we can and that we should begin. I have seen at first hand the positive impact that our development of renewable energy is having on the communities that are driving it forward—nowhere more so than in marine energy in Orkney. I have been incredibly fortunate in my life so far to benefit not only from the knowledge of the rich economy in renewables and decarbonisation that we have built in Orkney, but also from the people it has brought into my life—the friends and mentors who now call Orkney home and who have helped to create an international, outward-looking community.

Our island communities, even more acutely than the rest of Scotland, face enormous demographic and population challenges. To remain the viable, thriving and culturally rich places that they are, we must recognise them in this Parliament as drivers of our energy transition. That is why I am proud to have stood for election on a manifesto that is ambitious for the renewable energy sector and our communities.

We must commit to leading the world in areas such as tidal stream energy and floating offshore wind testing. That same national opportunity now sits in front of us with deep-water floating wind test facilities in Orkney, the commercialisation and deployment of tidal stream and further developing our supply chain, across the country—300MW of tidal stream project capacity await us in Orkney and the Pentland Firth alone, and it is built on a 50 per cent Scottish supply chain. That is a clear national success story that this Government needs to get behind and work with us to deliver. It is time for us to deliver a sectoral policy plan for tidal energy.

The role of communities such as Orkney in the transition to renewable energy tells the story of modern Scotland. It points to where we need to go. Yes, our transition to renewable energy is a challenge, but it is also undoubtedly our greatest opportunity. We must unashamedly pursue it, and we must do so together. We can also take action on what we can do now, and we must begin doing that.

It is on members of the Parliament to grasp the opportunity that is in front of us, and I am glad that the minister is keen for us to work together.

The Deputy Presiding Officer (Clare Adamson): I call Alan Brown to make their first speech, which will be followed by closing speeches.

16:16

Alan Brown (Kilmarnock and Irvine Valley) (SNP): It is the honour of my life to represent Kilmarnock and Irvine Valley in this Parliament, which is the one that is answerable to the people of Scotland. I grew up in the Irvine valley, and I have always called it my home. There is such a wonderful mix of different communities in the constituency.

We are here because of the votes cast—that is what gets us here—but many of us are also here thanks to Alexander Fleming of Darvel, who discovered penicillin in 1928 and has been responsible for saving some 200 million to 500 million lives. You are all welcome. [*Laughter*.]

It was while staying with the Reverend Lawrie of Newmilns that Robert Burns decided not to continue his journey to Greenock and then to emigrate, thanks to which our famous bard was able to stay and give us the poems and the humanitarian stuff that we all love and appreciate—again, you are welcome.

The oldest co-operative in the world was founded in Fenwick, which is a small village in my constituency. Kilmarnock has long been one of the beating industrial hearts of Scotland, with its proud locomotive and carpet industries, so I am glad to see Brodie Engineering continuing that railway heritage. It is also, of course, the home of Johnnie Walker whisky—and not only that; it is the home of Kilmarnock Football Club, which is the most successful non-city club in Scotland.

Kilmarnock FC brings me to my predecessor, Willie Coffey, who I would like to pay tribute to. It was Willie who first taught me to never take no for an answer in constituent casework and to always fight to get the result that you want. I hope to repeat that work ethic and repay the faith that the voters have put in me, and I pay tribute to Willie for what he did before me.

I know that this is my first speech, but as I intervened on other people, I would be willing to consider taking an intervention if there is enough time.

There are unionists who try to decry us with the cliché phrase “grievance politics”, but truthfully, when it comes to energy, we have a right to some grievances, given the way that Westminster has mishandled our resources. Let us start with the 1974 McCrone report. It was stamped “secret” and hidden for 31 years. The report confirmed that were Scotland independent, our currency would become the hardest in Europe, with the exception, perhaps, of the Norwegian krone. It also confirmed that there would be an influx of foreign funds to Scotland and that we would have an embarrassing budget surplus.

What a betrayal. All these years later, they tell us that oil is running out and that we are too poor to be independent, while knowing full well the opportunities that were there for Scotland. They buried that information. The next betrayal is what we have heard about today: the squandering of resources, which they knew were coming, with the money flowing to the Treasury. We could have had a sovereign wealth fund akin to Norway’s, which is a $2.2 trillion fund that is the largest in the world.

So, where has the money gone? It has been lost in Thatcher’s tax cuts and in funding infrastructure such as the M25, high speed 1 and the Channel tunnel, rather than being spent on the dualling of the A9 and the A96 or the construction of the Aberdeen bypass, which have all been left to the SNP to deliver. There has been no thought given to a wider reindustrialisation strategy, which would have benefited my constituency of Kilmarnock over the years.

The third betrayal is the lack of support for carbon capture in the north east, despite the Acorn project being vital to the transition of oil and gas workers and the decarbonisation of Peterhead power station. In 2015, Osborne pulled the £1 billion funding competition that Acorn was about to win. Now, 11 years on, £22 billion is committed to the clusters in the north of England, but Acorn still waits for the £200 million that was promised by the UK Government. Somehow, we are meant to be grateful for £200 million, which is one thousandth of the funding that has been given to the English clusters.

Of course, it is not just hydrocarbons; Scotland is rich in renewables—onshore, offshore and floating wind, as well as marine energy. We are a net exporter of electricity, despite the grid charging system that penalises generation in Scotland. Generators in the south of England get paid to connect to the grid, but we have to pay to connect, resulting in an additional cost of up to £1 billion for offshore projects in the north of Scotland. The system has required change for decades, but it has been ignored by Westminster. It is ironic that members have been complaining about the grid upgrades that are still required as if it is somehow Scotland’s fault and as if, somehow, we cannot do it, whereas, for all these years, a lack of planning from Westminster has led us to the situation. Members complain about constraint payments, but they are in place because the grid has not been upgraded or planned for for all those years.

I will move on to another type of energy—marine energy. We are world leaders in tidal stream energy, with the MeyGen project being the largest operational development in the world. However, the sector also lacks long-term financial support from the UK Government. With control of energy policy, Scotland could develop 4.3GW of tidal stream energy and the same again in wave energy, which would create an £8.7 billion GVA opportunity according to the University of Edinburgh.

Onshore wind deployment has been a success story for Scotland, but we lost out on the chance to be early leaders and manufacturers for onshore wind due to a lack of UK Government ambition. We cannot and must not miss out on world-first opportunities for marine energy. Marine energy is a technology that gives predictable baseload to supplement the intermittency of renewables. Another renewable technology that is suited to grid balancing is pumped storage hydro. It has taken long enough to get a cap and floor pricing mechanism agreed, but now that it is there in principle, it must be allocated to several of the schemes that are ready to go in Scotland, starting with Coire Glas, which was first granted planning permission in 2013. We have had years of lost opportunities for construction jobs, long-term energy security and balancing.

As we know, because Scotland is not in control of those policies, too much of the UK's energy focus has been spent on the procurement of new nuclear. We heard that again from the unionist parties today. The technology is ridiculously expensive and takes about 15 years to deliver. I said earlier that Hinkley Point C station is now estimated to cost £50 billion, not forgetting that it was originally estimated to cost £18 billion in 2016. Somehow, Starmer has signed us up for the same again for Sizewell C.

Duncan Massey: Will the member give way?

Alan Brown: I will take the intervention.

The Deputy Presiding Officer (Clare Adamson): Mr Brown is about to wind up, Mr Massey.

Duncan Massey: The member said that he would take an intervention, and I would like to make a point in relation to nuclear power. South Korea has built eight nuclear reactors at a cost of $5 billion to $6 billion each, with an average construction time of 8.5 years. I would like the member's opinion on that.

Alan Brown: I draw the member's attention to research that shows that, out of 180 nuclear stations that were included in the study, 175 came in at double the expected cost and, on average, took 64 per cent longer to build than was predicted. I do not take on board the member's isolated information.

The Deputy Presiding Officer (Clare Adamson): Please wind up, Mr Brown.

Alan Brown: We are talking about money that should have been allocated to the renewable supply chain for development and to energy efficiency measures to tackle fuel poverty. It beggars belief that energy-rich Scotland has people living in fuel poverty while paying some of the highest energy bills in Europe.

Zonal pricing was an option that could bring down bills, but that was immediately ruled out by Westminster because it might increase bills in the south-east of England, an area that already has lower bills. No, we could not allow there to be any impact in the south-east of England, which is the richest area in the UK.

It is clear that Westminster does not develop energy policies with Scotland in mind. We should feel the benefit of being a net exporter of oil, gas and electricity, yet we know that our bills are going to go up once again.

It is time that Scotland's energy was in Scotland's hands, so that our resources can work for the people of Scotland.

The Deputy Presiding Officer (Clare Adamson): We move to the first of the closing speeches, which is also a first contribution. I call Sanne Dijkstra-Downie.

16:26

Sanne Dijkstra-Downie (Edinburgh Northern) (LD): Thank you, Deputy Presiding Officer, and congratulations on your election.

It is a profound honour to stand here as the MSP for the new constituency of Edinburgh Northern. I pay tribute to my three predecessors: Angus Robertson, Alex Cole-Hamilton and Ben Macpherson, whom I congratulate on his ministerial position. I am conscious of my responsibility to build on their good work, and I am grateful to them for their words of support and guidance.

Edinburgh Northern is a compact constituency. As members would expect of somebody with a Dutch background, I can cycle from one corner to another in 27 minutes, and I often do. My route takes me along a beautifully rewilded former railway network: the Roseburn path, which stacks up against any cycling route in the country.

Within such a tight geography, the constituency is made up of many different communities, each with a distinct character, history and identity. There is the centuries-old coastal community of Newhaven village, with the best fish and chips in the city, just minutes away from brand-new developments on the Granton waterfront. There are vibrant high streets in Stockbridge and Davidson's Mains. There are residential communities such as Trinity, Powderhall, Bonnington, Granton, Pilton, Muirhouse, Drylaw, Silverknowes, Craigleith and Blackhall, each with a deep sense of its own identity, its own much-loved green and blue spaces, and dedicated local organisations that enhance the lives of the people living there. It is where I have built a life, raised a family and found a community.

One thing that unites all those communities is the energy that powers their people's lives, so permit me to forget about Scotland's energy for a minute and instead ask what energy means to the people of Edinburgh Northern.

As a councillor and a candidate, I have spoken to thousands of people across the constituency over the past four years, and I have found that energy means a lot of things to them. On a chilly day, energy is about someone making decisions about whether to buy food or heat their cold, draughty home, or to keep their windows firmly shut to waste no heat, but then ending up with mould on their walls, which makes their children sick, with a persistent cough that means that they miss school. Energy might be about someone

worrying about their family's bills rising sharply because of conflicts far from our shores that have impacts that are felt in our homes. It might be about people putting off important financial decisions or forgoing things in their lives that they value and enjoy, or it might mean that someone's business is struggling to keep up with rising production costs. It might be about a young person who wants to go to Edinburgh College to become a heat pump installer but cannot get a place to study because there is not enough money in further education to meet the demand for places. Energy is also about the Granton waterfront heat network plans falling apart at the 11th hour because the cost of electricity is so high that it is difficult to make the numbers stack up.

However, energy is also about the primary 7s in Wardie and Blackhall primary schools who spoke to me about how they would design the city of the future. Some of their ideas were a little outlandish—I remember that they had a real thing for living underground—but their love for the environment and their enthusiasm for innovative clean energy gave me immense hope for the future.

Energy is also about people working together as neighbours to produce their own renewable energy. It is about groups such as the Dudleys eco-community, whose members are collectively navigating the planning system to add solar panels and heat pumps to homes within a conservation area, because they want to play their part in reducing our carbon emissions.

All of those things are what energy means to the people of Edinburgh Northern and, as their MSP, it is my responsibility and privilege to help to find ways to address the issues that they face.

That is why the Liberal Democrats want to insulate cold homes through an emergency home insulation programme and help the most vulnerable households with their fuel bills. It is why we want an expansion of renewable energy to reduce our reliance on fossil fuels and to reform community benefits, as my colleague Liam McArthur highlighted, so that communities truly benefit from projects on their doorstep. It is why we want to protect funding for colleges, as we did in the most recent Scottish budget, to make sure that young people can gain the skills that they need in order to get good green jobs and that our society needs for a just transition to an economy that does not rely on fossil fuels. It is why we want the UK Government to follow through on a full decoupling of electricity prices from expensive and volatile gas prices, so that heat pumps, heat networks and other electrified heating and transport options are feasible and affordable. It is also why we want to remove barriers to microgeneration and community energy projects, so that more renewable energy is generated near to where it is used.

I will work with the Government with passion and positive energy to use the powers that we already possess to deliver for the people of Edinburgh Northern.

16:31

Murdo Fraser (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con): I thank all those who made their first speeches during this debate: Duncan Massey, Jack Middleton, David Barratt, Mark Simpson, Pauline Stafford, Heather Anderson, Kristopher Leask, Alan Brown and Sanne Dijkstra-Downie. All of them made well-informed and helpful contributions, and we heard a wide variety of opinions. That is as it should be in a Parliament such as this.

I do not want to single anybody out, but I very much enjoyed the contribution from my fellow Fife representative David Barratt, although I was absolutely horrified at the revelation that he first visited this building as a primary school pupil. That makes some of us feel very old.

David Barratt: That was the intent.

Murdo Fraser: I thank Mr Barratt for that sedentary contribution.

We do, of course, miss both Annabelle and Fergus Ewing, and I hope that Mr Barratt will be equally independently minded when it comes to members of his front bench.

Mr Gethins opened the debate. I congratulate him on his new role, and I welcomed his confident delivery of his speech. It was so confident that I omitted to realise that it was his first speech in this Parliament. However, I have to agree with Daniel Johnson's analysis of it, because, although the delivery was good, the content was simply pie in the sky and lacked any credible detail.

In recent decades, Scotland has seen massive investment in energy, particularly in the renewables sector, with the construction of a huge range of offshore wind projects, which have created jobs and helped with our energy security. However, that is possible only because the investment is supported by the generous UK-wide subsidy regime, which is funded by the bill payments of 70 million consumers across the United Kingdom. That simple fact exposes the fallacy at the heart of SNP policy—the single UK energy market supports investment in industry, and breaking that up would be a disaster. I thought that there was perhaps a wry smile on Mr Gethins's lips when he accused others in this chamber of being isolationist. It is not us who are

proposing breaking up the UK energy market and splitting away; it is Mr Gethins and his colleagues.

Of course, the SNP claims that independence would reduce energy bills by one third, but there was no explanation from the minister as to how that would come about, because, in fact, independence would increase energy costs. The reason for that is that, despite what we sometimes hear from SNP members, renewable energy is not cheap. The most recent contracts for difference round showed that the cost of offshore wind projects—the most significant area of expansion in Scotland in recent years—is now set at nearly double the wholesale cost of gas, and that is before we factor in all the additional costs that renewable energy brings.

Lorna Slater: Does Murdo Fraser accept that any oil and gas costs must include the cost of sequestering that carbon later, because we cannot continue to emit carbon without reabsorbing it or else we face catastrophic global warming?

Murdo Fraser: The problem for Lorna Slater and those who make such arguments is that we will need oil and gas for decades to come. The choice is not about whether we use oil and gas, because we will need it; the choice is about whether we produce it here or import it from other countries and, therefore, export our carbon emissions to them. To me, that makes no sense—we should have the jobs here, in Scotland.

Duncan Massey made some good points about the cost of renewable energy. It is not just the strike price and the subsidy that we have to look at; we have to look at the on-costs that arise from developing renewables. Our grid needs to be upgraded. SSE in Perth is investing tens of billions of pounds in grid expansion to accommodate new renewables projects to deal with the issues that we have been talking about today regarding constraint payments. Every pound that we are spending on that is coming from bill payers across the United Kingdom and is adding to fuel poverty.

Renewable energy is intermittent, so we have to be able to provide storage and back-up. That is why we see proposed battery projects across Scotland, and every one has to be paid for through our electricity bills. As Alan Brown said, SSE is progressing a massive pump storage project at Coire Glas in the Highlands at a cost of billions of pounds. Who is paying for that? Energy bill payers. All the costs of transmission, storage and back-up for intermittency must be factored in, which gives us what energy economists call the whole-system cost. The whole-system cost of renewable energy is many times higher than the whole-system cost of oil and gas.

There might be good reasons to decarbonise our energy supply—I accept that—but let us not kid ourselves that doing so will reduce our bills. It will not reduce our bills but will make them more expensive. The only reason why we can do this is that there are 70 million people across the United Kingdom who pay their energy bills. If the costs had to be shared among 5.5 million people in Scotland, bills would rocket.

The second issue that we need to address is the future of the oil and gas industry. Scotland has lost three oil and gas jobs for every one clean energy job that has been created over the past decade. A recent report from Robert Gordon University suggests that the number of oil and gas jobs could halve by 2030 to 60,000—a direct result of the policy that is being pursued by the UK Labour Government and backed up by the SNP in Scotland.

The SNP now says that it is against the energy profits levy. When the energy profits levy was introduced, the SNP said that it was not high enough. The SNP was calling for it to go even higher, but, fortunately, it seems to have changed its tune, with it now agreeing with us that the EPL needs to go, and it is right to do so.

However, the SNP is no friend of the oil and gas sector. When Nicola Sturgeon was First Minister, she called for the presumption against oil and gas to be formalised. She was clear that new fossil fuel developments were not in the interests of either the climate or the North Sea workforce. In that respect, Labour and the SNP are cut from the same cloth. We know that Mr Flynn might take a different view, but the view of the Scottish Government, consistently repeated, is that there should be a presumption against new oil and gas fields. It is no friend of the oil and gas sector.

That flies in the face of Scottish public opinion. According to recent surveys, 84 per cent of Scots support the continuation of North Sea oil exploration and drilling—and no wonder.

The Presiding Officer (Kenneth Gibson): Wind up, please.

Murdo Fraser: As Liam Kerr said, where is the sense in importing Norwegian oil and gas from the North Sea basin when we could be producing it ourselves and benefiting from having the jobs here? That is the Conservative approach. That is how we cut bills and support jobs. That is the point that is made in Liam Kerr's amendment, and members should support it.

The Presiding Officer: I call Patrick Harvie.

16:39

Patrick Harvie (Glasgow) (Green): Thank you, Presiding Officer. I am happy to have my first chance on the record to congratulate you and the

Deputy Presiding Officers on your appointments. I also congratulate the minister on his appointment. I hope that he enjoys being constructively pushed out of his comfort zone over the next few years, because it is clearly going to be needed.

I also congratulate most of those who gave their first speeches today—at least those who chose to engage with the reality of a world in climate crisis. Not all chose to do that. I will pick out one member in particular: Heather Anderson, who spoke about a clear example of climate action in her community in the development of heat networks. I suspect that every MSP in every part of Scotland will be able to find examples of where climate action is improving people's lives if we choose to look for them, rather than turn away.

I am well used to disagreeing with other parties in this chamber on matters of policy, particularly with those that are happy to set climate targets and then block climate action. It is pretty clear from today's debate that that dynamic will continue. However, we also face a new dynamic in Parliament, in which we will disagree not only on matters of policy but on matters of fundamental reality. In the election that has just finished, I heard candidates say things such as

"Carbon dioxide isn't a problem, really",

or

"Climate change is caused by the sun",

or

"CO_2 is plant food",

and, literally,

"There is no climate crisis".

Such drivel from the far-right blogosphere and the junk tanks is now clearly going to be heard in our Parliament as well. However, it is heard not only in this Parliament, and I think that we need to worry less about its effect here than about the effect in other places, because that kind of online conspiracy theorising and propaganda, amplified by AI slop and pumped out by billionaire-funded media platforms, is now the information environment in which many of our citizens live. If the Scottish Government wants to make any progress at all on climate, it will need to develop a robust response to the growing wave of disinformation and conspiracy theories.

With regard to climate denial arguments, though, my real worry for this parliamentary session is not so much about them winning the day in Parliament but about their impact on the SNP. The SNP already knows that it has a climate plan that is not up to the task, so the real danger is that it will feel that it can play the next five years on easy mode. All that the SNP will need to do is say that climate change is real and, by comparison with that lot, it will look as though it is a leader, even as some of its own parliamentarians echo the "Drill, baby, drill" mantra of the far right.

I remind the SNP that the high point of its popularity came when it provided clarity and leadership—when Nicola Sturgeon made climate a priority and made it clear that Rosebank should not go ahead. By contrast, the SNP's lack of clarity now, in demanding energy powers but still refusing to publish an energy strategy, and in its desire to face both ways on climate leadership while sounding like oil and gas lobbyists, will not stand. Greens want powers on energy, but we want them for a purpose.

In relation to Jackdaw and Rosebank, I remind members that Rosebank would produce more than 200 million tonnes of CO_2, which is more than the combined annual emissions of 28 of the lowest-income countries in the world—that is, more than the emissions created by 700 million people. Those people have done the least to cause the climate crisis, but they are already suffering its effects the most.

Liam Kerr: I presume that the member would acknowledge that the emissions from any oil and gas taken from the North Sea are three times less than the emissions from any oil and gas imported from places such as Qatar.

Patrick Harvie: I have seen a huge amount of disinformation about the comparative emissions associated with that, but I also know that the vast majority of what would come from Rosebank would be exported anyway.

The UK public would be carrying around 90 per cent of the costs of developing Rosebank through subsidies and tax breaks. The profits, though, would go to the oil and gas giants, which make nothing more than a token investment in the transition. They include one that is directly complicit in illegal Israeli settlements in occupied Palestine. Supporting that would make a mockery of the SNP's backing for boycott, divestment and sanctions. We also know that, like every other fossil fuel company that is currently laying off people, they will abandon communities and workers as soon as the profits dry up. I challenge the SNP to accept the reality on those projects and the reasons why they should not be given the go-ahead.

Whatever energy policy the SNP finally adopts, having Scotland's energy in Scotland's hands has to mean more than just bringing decision-making powers here. It has to mean ending the assumption that the entire system—

The Presiding Officer: Will you wind up, please?

Patrick Harvie: —remains in the hands of big business. Kristopher Leask spoke clearly about the opportunity for more community ownership of energy, and in that area we need to catch up with our European neighbours. Ending our reliance on fossil fuels is urgent. It is an urgent response to the climate crisis to cut our emissions in heat and transport, as we have done in electricity generation, but it is also the only coherent and credible way to cut the cost of living and free people from the continual cycle of fossil fuel price hikes and crises. It is also the only way to achieve credible energy security—

The Presiding Officer: Thank you.

Patrick Harvie: —and national security, because every step that we take towards decarbonisation takes geopolitical power away from some of the world's most dangerous and violent regimes.

The Presiding Officer: I was a bit lax with you, Mr Harvie, but that takes time from other members, so please try to keep within your time. Even given the time for interventions that you accepted, you are still considerably over.

I call Mr Offord. You have three minutes.

16:45

Malcolm Offord (West Scotland) (Reform): I welcome Mr Gethins to his place on the front bench. It is nice to see another refugee from Westminster.

We can all agree that we have got ourselves in a mess on energy. My colleague Duncan Massey gave an eloquent description of that. We have the highest energy prices in the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, with less than 1 per cent of global emissions.

Net zero was conceived by Labour in 2008 and has been doubled down on by Ed Miliband since 2024, but the real damage was done to us by the Conservative Party. We had 14 years of mismanagement of the energy system, which is one of the two main reasons why I left the Conservative Party. Writing net zero into law in 70 minutes in a Commons debate with no vote, and imposing the energy profits levy, which the last budget from Jeremy Hunt maintained, demonstrates that the Conservative Party cannot be trusted on energy, to be frank.

The impact of net zero policies is that, as Mr Massey discussed, we have had terrible deindustrialisation in Scotland, which has blighted our communities and towns.

Lloyd Melville (Angus South) (SNP): I remind Lord Offord that his manifesto called for the end of all subsidies to the renewables sector. He is talking about deindustrialisation, so has he had a Damascene conversion or does he still believe that those workers and job opportunities should be put on the scrapheap?

Malcolm Offord: I am delighted to answer that, because it will be the last minute of my speech and I have one minute left.

We have had massive deindustrialisation, which has blighted our towns and communities across Scotland.

Julie MacDougall (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Reform): Malcolm Offord and I have both witnessed at first hand the impact on our communities in Fife with the closure of the Fife ethylene plant at Mossmorran and 400 job losses. That was due to bad policy choices. Does he share my concerns about the proposed large data centre in Auchtertool, as that will create nowhere near the amount of jobs lost at Mossmorran?

I would like to know—

The Presiding Officer: That is enough for an intervention. It is not a speech within a speech.

Malcolm Offord: I agree with Julie MacDougall. It is the classic example of the ideology that is put in front of people. The reality is that renewables are a big, fat racket, and I will explain why.

They first came to our shores 30 years ago— [*Interruption*.] I will talk about exactly that. They were given 15 years' subsidies on the basis that they need to be nurtured, like a child growing into an adolescent and becoming an adult, and will mature into being merchant viable. Fifteen years ago, they were given another 15 years of subsidies and, in February this year, they were given 20 more years of subsidies. That is 50 years of subsidies to what is meant to be the cheapest part of our electricity system and all the jobs that come with it, which Offshore Energies UK says are less than half of the transition from hydrocarbon to renewables and at less than half the salaries.

Here is the thing that Mr Melville needs to be reminded of: this is the biggest transfer of money from poor people to rich people in our generation. If he is proud of that, proud of that industry and proud of what it is based on, he should feel free. The reality is that it does not help the people of Scotland when two thirds are paying for subsidies for the so-called just transition.

The reality is that net stupid zero is the biggest act of self-harm in a generation. We need to take the ideology out of this. Can we just all grow up and be intelligent about it? Can we just agree that we want a balanced scorecard, that our obligation to our people first and foremost is to get energy prices down, in order to allow people to heat their homes and increase their productivity? Of course,

we will have oil and gas, which needs to be the bedrock and our transition fuel. If, in time, renewables become merchant viable, they can be at the table, as well. However, we need to build prosperity, so I cannot back the motion.

16:50

Michael Marra (North East Scotland) (Lab): I will dispense with further sickly warm words for the minister—perhaps, like us, Mr Gethins, it is all getting a little bit old.

I very much enjoyed the many first speeches from new members today. I make particular mention of Heather Anderson—the more Dundee the better. I am sure that she will be a mighty advocate for God's gift to Scotland.

The debate has come down to the future of the subsidy regime and whether the cost for that should be spread across 70 million taxpayers or 5.5 million taxpayers. The validity of the Government's motion rests on that question above all others. The subsidy regime—whether the contracts for difference scheme, its predecessor, which was the renewable obligations certificate, or a more direct subsidy from taxpayers for the transition—is the cost of the hugely challenging but necessary energy transition, and it is being socialised across the whole of the UK.

Unfortunately, the sloganeering of the election has given way to the sloganeering in this motion. The minister is absolutely right to raise the issue and to campaign on the price of energy. However, frankly, the promise of a one-third cut in prices under independence exploits people's concerns. The minister was completely unable to justify those claims when I asked him to do so during his initial speech, so I hope that, in closing, he might be able to attempt that. The strike price has been higher than the wholesale electricity cost, apart from for a very brief period during the Russian invasion of Ukraine, so how can he justify that position in anything but his imagination?

I say to Alan Brown that, unfortunately, the answer cannot be zonal pricing. He made a fine opening speech, and I forgive him for not knowing that Scottish ministers had ruled out zonal pricing. That had to be wrung out of them like blood from a stone—it took a period of months for them to take a position—but ruled out it was, because of the devastating impact that it would have on the renewables industry in Scotland.

Across the chamber, we are acutely aware of the challenge to households and to industry, and we really need a serious plan in these difficult times when global price shocks are frequent and the constrained fiscal environment makes long-term decision making increasingly challenging.

We, on the Labour benches, completely reject the climate denialism of Reform, which we have now heard in a couple of speeches.

Duncan Massey: Will Michael Marra give way?

Michael Marra: Excuse me—not at the moment.

Man-made or human-made climate change is real, and it is devastating communities around the world. It is driving resource competition, and it is one of the key causes of migration, with which Mr Massey's party is so obsessed.

Stephen Kerr: Will Michael Marra take an intervention?

Michael Marra: No, thank you.

North-east communities are acutely aware of the impact of climate change in this country, whether in regard to the crumbling sandstone in Dundee or the displaced people of Brechin. Climate change needs a solution urgently.

Patrick Harvie: In that case, I invite Michael Marra to condemn the contribution that Tony Blair has made in recent days, calling for the abolition of net zero policies, and I invite him to encourage the UK Cabinet to give Tony Blair short shrift.

Michael Marra: I have not read the piece by Tony Blair, but—

The First Minister (John Swinney): Surely!

Michael Marra: Surely not. However, what I have read of it, I did not like. I can leave that for Mr Harvie, and perhaps we can compare notes on it.

If I can come back to Mr Massey's contribution—

Stephen Kerr: Will Michael Marra give way?

Michael Marra: Not at the moment.

Mr Massey's point on Spain was well made, but I would take it a step further. He made a point about overreliance on intermittent capacity. However, Spain's system failed because of frequency regulation, which was the inability to maintain a 50Hz current that regular turns of a turbine allow. What that tells us is that we require a diverse energy mix.

France turned off the power supply from Spain in 3.5 seconds because of how vulnerable it made France's economy and its households. We need a diverse energy mix and to go beyond questions of supply, capacity and baseload capacity. That requires a properly integrated system across the UK, which includes nuclear.

There is no answer to our need for that crucial baseload capacity—we should, and must, retain our long-term position as an energy powerhouse in Europe and the UK. My colleague Paul Sweeney pointed that out, quoting Sir Donald

Miller about the lack of a plan to replace our generation capacity. In Paul Sweeney's words, it is incomprehensible.

That supply has to be secure. I find the minister's points on the security of supply inside Europe, but outside the UK, difficult to follow.

Stephen Gethins: Why?

Michael Marra: I will tell the member why. We know that our North Sea assets, in which Russian submarines have threatened cabling in recent weeks, must be a defence priority. The extraction of Scotland from the UK defence capacity would require those further costs to be met at a time when investment must increase rather than decrease.

That partnership across these islands is a difficult one. The challenge is generational and it requires a calm, reasoned dialogue from the Government, based on realistic analysis. I know that Michael Shanks, the UK Minister for Energy and member of Parliament for Rutherglen, has really valued the constructive engagement that he had with Gillian Martin, the minister's predecessor, to build consensus on that work. I am sure that he can anticipate further collaboration with Stephen Gethins. However, the motion does not get that off to a great start.

The Presiding Officer: I call Stephen Gethins to wind up the debate.

16:56

Stephen Gethins: Thank you, Presiding Officer. I did not have the opportunity to do so earlier, but I welcome you to your position—it is good to see you.

I thank colleagues for engaging in today's debate and I congratulate all those members who, like me, have made a first-time speech. I will tackle as many of those comments as I possibly can, one by one.

The debate opened with Daniel Johnson. It was such a pity to hear the Labour Party talk about devolution—fundamentally, the issue is about where those powers sit—and saying that it is an incoherent motion. The motion is a straightforward one about where the best place is for those powers to lie.

Daniel Johnson *rose*—

Stephen Gethins: I will not take the member's intervention at the moment. However, I thought that that was a huge pity.

He talked about issues of consent. He also talked about grid capacity, and we have doubled the capacity. I encourage him to have a chat with his colleagues down the road at the UK Government about that—I will engage with them positively, and I encourage him to do the same.

Daniel Johnson was fortunate in that he was followed by Duncan Massey. While I congratulate the honourable member for being in his place, can I say—[*Interruption*.]

The Presiding Officer: "Honourable member"?

Stephen Gethins: Forgive me, Presiding Officer—you have put me in the First Minister's bad books now. [*Laughter*.]

I congratulate the member. However, there is a serious point. It takes some courage to be a North East Scotland MSP and to call for an end to net zero, which, only yesterday, a report said supports 105,000 jobs, many of which are in the area that he and I represent.

Duncan Massey *rose*—

Stephen Gethins: Let me tell him this—and he can sit down and listen for a moment: the CBI report that came out yesterday said that, in Aberdeen city, 9.4 per cent of gross value added came from net zero, as did 12.7 per cent of jobs in that fine granite city. I am delighted that the member for Aberdeen Deeside and North Kincardine will stand up for those kinds of job and that kind of economy.

Duncan Massey *rose*—

Stephen Gethins: I will let Duncan Massey in after this point. To describe climate change—

The Presiding Officer: Mr Massey, stay seated until you are called by the member to take the intervention.

Stephen Gethins: —as being on "faith-based terms" is a scandal. Nobody else in this Parliament should stand for that kind of nonsense. On that, I give way to him.

Duncan Massey: First, to the dishonourable member—

The Presiding Officer: Now, now. I do not think that you can say that, either. Come on.

Duncan Massey: My speech was very clear. I acknowledged climate change and the IPCC. What I said was that "climate emergency" is not a term that is used in the scientific consensus.

On Mr Gethins's point about the CBI report, it has now been stated that the CBI does not support that report, which was done by a separate consultancy.

I ask Mr Gethins directly whether he will stand up and back Jackdaw and Rosebank and support new drilling and new licences. [*Interruption*.]

The Presiding Officer: As I said to one of Mr Massey's colleagues, an intervention is not a speech within a speech.

Stephen Gethins: As I said, 105,000 jobs rely on the renewables industry. Mr Massey's—and our—constituents rely on it. There is a place for renewables. There is a place for the other industries as well, but those are jobs that we back.

Richard Tice said that a Reform Government would strike down all renewables contracts, which would put people out of work and out of good jobs. Lorna Slater was absolutely right to call that out. I mentioned the issue of oil and gas being a finite resource from which we have not secured a long-term benefit.

The less said about Liam Kerr's speech the better. He complained about constraint payments in the UK market while the Conservatives have turned us away from a pan-European market.

I will try to be more generous to Liam McArthur, whose ongoing commitment to community benefit I take seriously. I want to work with him and with Kristopher Leask, who made a very good point on that issue. I have also had Hannah Mary Goodlad in my ear in that regard in relation to Shetland, and I know that other members will want to make sure that such benefit is felt across Scotland.

Donald MacKinnon (Na h-Eileanan an Iar) (Lab): Will the minister give way?

Stephen Gethins: I will not, but I recognise that the member will make the case for Na h-Eileanan an Iar, which must also benefit.

Jack Middleton is an outstanding advocate for Aberdeen Central. As well as thanking Kevin Stewart, he highlighted the poverty challenge, the sanctions on Russia and what independent Norway has been able to achieve.

It was courageous of Paul Sweeney to mention Ming Yang and constraint payments. I encourage him to take up those issues with the UK Government.

Karen Adam was right to highlight the fact that, for her constituents, this is not a theoretical debate.

Paul Sweeney: Will the minister give way?

Stephen Gethins: I will not at the moment.

The issue is one of how communities can afford to heat their homes.

With his professional experience, the people of Fife and Cowdenbeath are lucky to have David Barratt as their representative.

The Presiding Officer: We are over here, minister. You must talk through the chair—stop turning your back to the chair.

Stephen Gethins: Presiding Officer, I am sure that you will agree that the people of Cowdenbeath are lucky to have David Barratt as their representative. He was right in what he said about the lessons that we must learn on energy boom and decline.

Mark Simpson talked about stopping renewables. I wish him luck in trying to get that message across in North East Scotland. I will tell members something else. Mark Simpson also talked about immigration, and I am happy to talk about issues that are reserved to Westminster. The number of people who crossed the Channel on boats exploded when the UK left the Dublin convention. I obtained those figures, and they exploded as a result of Brexit, which, today, is costing taxpayers £250 million. I say to Lord Offord that that is the disaster of our times.

Pauline Stafford paid tribute to Fiona Hyslop.

The Presiding Officer: Hello!

Stephen Gethins: Given the Presiding Officer's instruction, I will have to turn my back on Heather Anderson, to whom I make a special call-out. What an outstanding advocate she is. I am lucky to have her as a colleague in Dundee. The people of Dundee West got the better deal, I expect.

I mentioned Kristopher Leask, who said that we must seize the good chance that renewables give us. I commit to working with him on that.

Alan Brown said that Kilmarnock gave us Alexander Fleming, Burns and the co-operative movement. Frankly, it also gave us Alan Brown, who will be an exceptional addition to the Scottish Parliament.

I am looking forward to working with Sanne Dijkstra-Downie, who I thought made a lekker speech.

As for Murdo Fraser, it was good to see the fable in action. I understand that he has lost seven elections against our First Minister. He talked about generous UK-wide benefits while turning his back on the rest of Europe. That kind of British exceptionalism has done us down and been extremely damaging over the years.

Patrick Harvie is right: I want to be pushed out of my comfort zone—that is exceptionally important. Regardless of any disagreements that we might have, the threat of misinformation is one that we must all take exceptionally seriously.

I will talk briefly about Lord Offord. I congratulate him on his election and thank him for his comments, but, if he is going to refer to the renewables industry as a big fat racket, I wish him luck when going up to campaign in Aberdeen, Dundee and the rest of the north-east in the next wee while, because he is putting lives there at risk.

Finally, I suspect that Michael Marra will be in big trouble with the Blairites who inhabit his party. Oh dearie me. He asked how a country the size of Scotland could possibly manage, but other countries are able to manage their own electricity systems, set prices, be part of Europe and control their own resources. He also talked about security when we have to wait for 24 hours for the Royal Navy to respond and when the UK does not even compete in saving for defence procurement. They have pursued a hard Tory and Reform Brexit.

We are asking for a very simple thing: that powers over energy should no longer sit in a failed Westminster but should sit in Scotland's Parliament, where the voters of Scotland get to decide their own Government.

The Presiding Officer: That concludes the debate on the motion entitled "It's Scotland's energy".

Decision Time

17:06

The Presiding Officer (Kenneth Gibson): There are six questions to be put as a result of today's business. I remind members that, if the amendment in the name of Daniel Johnson is agreed to, the amendments in the names of Duncan Massey and Liam McArthur will fall.

The question is, that amendment S7M-00159.2, in the name of Daniel Johnson, which seeks to amend motion S7M-00159, in the name of Stephen Gethins, entitled "It's Scotland's energy", be agreed to. Are we agreed?

Members: No.

The Presiding Officer: There will be a division. There will be a short suspension to allow members to access the digital voting system.

17:06

Meeting suspended.

17:10

On resuming—

The Presiding Officer: We move to the vote on amendment S7M-00159.2, in the name of Daniel Johnson, which seeks to amend motion S7M-00159, in the name of Stephen Gethins, entitled "It's Scotland's energy". Members should cast their votes now.

The vote is closed.

The Cabinet Secretary for Education, Culture and Gaelic (Màiri McAllan): On a point of order, Presiding Officer. I could not connect to the voting app. I would have voted no.

The Presiding Officer: Your vote will be recorded. Thank you.

Zen Ghani (Glasgow Cathcart and Pollok) (SNP): On a point of order, Presiding Officer. My device seemed not to connect. I would have voted no.

The Presiding Officer: Thank you, Mr Ghani. Your vote will be recorded.

For

Ahmed, Irshad (Edinburgh and Lothians East) (Lab)
Baillie, Jackie (Dumbarton) (Lab)
Bibby, Neil (West Scotland) (Lab)
Clark, Katy (West Scotland) (Lab)
Fagan, Joe (South Scotland) (Lab)
Griffin, Mark (Central Scot and Lothians West) (Lab)
Johnson, Daniel (Edinburgh Southern) (Lab)
Long, Joe (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab)
MacKinnon, Donald (Na h-Eileanan an Iar) (Lab)

Marra, Michael (North East Scotland) (Lab)
McNeill, Pauline (Glasgow) (Lab)
Mochan, Carol (South Scotland) (Lab)
Sangster, Katherine (Edinburgh and Lothians East) (Lab)
Sarwar, Anas (Glasgow) (Lab)
Sweeney, Paul (Glasgow) (Lab)
Young, Jenny (Central Scot and Lothians West) (Lab)

Against

Adam, George (Paisley) (SNP)
Adam, Karen (Banffshire and Buchan Coast) (SNP)
Adamson, Clare (Motherwell and Wishaw) (SNP)
Anderson, Heather (Dundee City West) (SNP)
Arthur, Tom (Renfrewshire West and Levern Valley) (SNP)
Bannerman, Max (Highlands and Islands) (Reform)
Barratt, David (Cowdenbeath) (SNP)
Beattie, Colin (Midlothian North) (SNP)
Beresford, Senga (South Scotland) (Reform)
Black, Dawn (Angus North and Mearns) (SNP)
Bland, Amanda (Central Scot and Lothians West) (Reform)
Bonnar, Steven (Uddingston and Bellshill) (SNP)
Bouse, Gary (Falkirk West) (SNP)
Briggs, Miles (Edinburgh and Lothians East) (Con)
Brown, Alan (Kilmarnock and Irvine Valley) (SNP)
Brown, Keith (Clackmannanshire and Dunblane) (SNP)
Brown, Siobhian (Ayr) (SNP)
Bruce, Holly (Glasgow Southside) (Green)
Burgess, Ariane (Highlands and Islands) (Green)
Campbell, Kate (Edinburgh Eastern, Musselburgh and Tranent) (SNP)
Campbell, Michelle (Renfrewshire North and Cardonald) (SNP)
Carson, Finlay (Galloway and West Dumfries) (Con)
Chapman, Maggie (North East Scotland) (Green)
Constance, Angela (Almond Valley) (SNP)
Currie, Victor (Highlands and Islands) (Reform)
Day, Martyn (Falkirk East and Linlithgow) (SNP)
Doris, Bob (Glasgow Kelvin and Maryhill) (SNP)
Duane, Iris (Glasgow) (Green)
Dunbar, Jackie (Aberdeen Donside) (SNP)
Eagle, Tim (Highlands and Islands) (Con)
Findlay, Russell (West Scotland) (Con)
Flynn, Stephen (Aberdeen Deeside and North Kincardine) (SNP)
Fraser, Murdo (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
Gallacher, Meghan (Central Scot and Lothians West) (Con)
Gethins, Stephen (Dundee City East) (SNP)
Ghani, Zen (Glasgow Cathcart and Pollok) (SNP)
Gibson, Patricia (Cunninghame South) (SNP)
Gilruth, Jenny (Mid Fife and Glenrothes) (SNP)
Goodlad, Hannah Mary (Shetland Islands) (SNP)
Gray, Neil (Airdrie) (SNP)
Greer, Ross (West Scotland) (Green)
Hagmann, Katie (Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley) (SNP)
Harvie, Patrick (Glasgow) (Green)
Haughey, Clare (Rutherglen and Cambuslang) (SNP)
Hepburn, Jamie (Cumbernauld and Kilsyth) (SNP)
Hoy, Craig (Dumfriesshire) (Con)
Kerr, Alex (Hamilton, Larkhall and Stonehouse) (SNP)
Kerr, Calum (Midlothian South, Tweeddale and Lauderdale) (SNP)
Kerr, Liam (North East Scotland) (Con)
Kerr, Stephen (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
Kerr, Thomas (Glasgow) (Reform)
Kinross-O'Neill, Kayleigh (Edinburgh and Lothians East) (Green)
Kirkwood, David (South Scotland) (Reform)
Kumar, Simita (Edinburgh South Western) (SNP)
Langan, Jamie (South Scotland) (Reform)
Leask, Kristopher (Highlands and Islands) (Green)
Linden, David (Glasgow Baillieston and Shettleston) (SNP)
Lindsay, Amanda (Central Scot and Lothians West) (Reform)
Lumsden, Douglas (North East Scotland) (Con)
MacDougall, Julie (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Reform)
MacGregor, Fulton (Coatbridge and Chryston) (SNP)
Mackay, Gillian (Central Scot and Lothians West) (Green)
Macpherson, Ben (Edinburgh North Eastern and Leith) (SNP)
Manivannan, Q (Edinburgh and Lothians East) (Green)
Martin, Gillian (Aberdeenshire East) (SNP)
Massey, Duncan (North East Scotland) (Reform)
McAllan, Màiri (Clydesdale) (SNP)
McDade, Helen (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Reform)
McKee, Cara (West Scotland) (Green)
McKee, Ivan (Glasgow Easterhouse and Springburn) (SNP)
McLennan, Paul (East Lothian Coast and Lammermuirs) (SNP)
McMillan, Stuart (Inverclyde) (SNP)
McNair, Marie (Clydebank and Milngavie) (SNP)
Melville, Lloyd (Angus South) (SNP)
Merrick, Colm (Glasgow Anniesland) (SNP)
Middleton, Jack (Aberdeen Central) (SNP)
Minto, Jenni (Argyll and Bute) (SNP)
Mitchell, Laura (Moray) (SNP)
Moodie, Laura (South Scotland) (Green)
Nevens, Kate (Edinburgh and Lothians East) (Green)
Offord, Malcolm (West Scotland) (Reform)
Oswald, Kirsten (Eastwood) (SNP)
Roddick, Emma (Inverness and Nairn) (SNP)
Ross, Angela (Edinburgh and Lothians East) (Reform)
Ruskell, Mark (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Green)
Schmulian, Kim (Glasgow) (Reform)
Simpson, Graham (Central Scot and Lothians West) (Reform)
Simpson, Mark (North East Scotland) (Reform)
Slater, Lorna (Edinburgh Central) (Green)
Smith, Alyn (Stirling) (SNP)
Smith, David (West Scotland) (Reform)
Somerville, Shirley-Anne (Dunfermline) (SNP)
Stafford, Pauline (Bathgate) (SNP)
Stevenson, Collette (East Kilbride) (SNP)
Swinney, John (Perthshire North) (SNP)
Thewliss, Alison (Glasgow Central) (SNP)
Todd, Maree (Highlands and Islands) (SNP)
Torrance, David (Kirkcaldy) (SNP)

Abstentions

Baxter, Andrew (Skye, Lochaber and Badenoch) (LD)
Chou Turvey, Yi-pei (North East Scotland) (LD)
Cole-Hamilton, Alex (Edinburgh North Western) (LD)
Dijkstra-Downie, Sanne (Edinburgh Northern) (LD)
Dunlop, Duncan (South Scotland) (LD)
Green, David (Caithness, Sutherland and Ross) (LD)
Harley, Adam (Strathkelvin and Bearsden) (LD)
MacCallum, Morven-May (Highlands and Islands) (LD)
McArthur, Liam (Orkney Islands) (LD)
Rennie, Willie (Fife North East) (LD)

The Presiding Officer: The result of the division on amendment S7M-00159.2, in the name of Daniel Johnson, is: For 16, Against 98, Abstentions 0.

Amendment disagreed to.

The Presiding Officer: I remind members that, if the amendment in the name of Duncan Massey is agreed to, the amendments in the names of Lorna Slater and Liam McArthur will fall.

The next question is, that amendment S7M-00159.1, in the name of Duncan Massey, which seeks to amend motion S7M-00159, in the name of Stephen Gethins, entitled "It's Scotland's energy", be agreed to. Are we agreed?

Members: No.

The Presiding Officer: There will be a division.

The vote is closed.

Màiri McAllan: On a point of order, Presiding Officer. I am not sure whether my app connected. I would have voted no.

The Presiding Officer: Your vote has been recorded.

For

Bannerman, Max (Highlands and Islands) (Reform)
Beresford, Senga (South Scotland) (Reform)
Bland, Amanda (Central Scot and Lothians West) (Reform)
Briggs, Miles (Edinburgh and Lothians East) (Con)
Carson, Finlay (Galloway and West Dumfries) (Con)
Currie, Victor (Highlands and Islands) (Reform)
Eagle, Tim (Highlands and Islands) (Con)
Findlay, Russell (West Scotland) (Con)
Fraser, Murdo (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
Gallacher, Meghan (Central Scot and Lothians West) (Con)
Hamilton, Rachael (Ettrick, Roxburgh and Berwickshire) (Con)
Hoy, Craig (Dumfriesshire) (Con)
Kerr, Liam (North East Scotland) (Con)
Kerr, Stephen (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
Kerr, Thomas (Glasgow) (Reform)
Kirkwood, David (South Scotland) (Reform)
Langan, Jamie (South Scotland) (Reform)
Lindsay, Amanda (Central Scot and Lothians West) (Reform)
Lumsden, Douglas (North East Scotland) (Con)
MacDougall, Julie (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Reform)
Massey, Duncan (North East Scotland) (Reform)
McDade, Helen (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Reform)
Offord, Malcolm (West Scotland) (Reform)
Ross, Angela (Edinburgh and Lothians East) (Reform)
Schmulian, Kim (Glasgow) (Reform)
Simpson, Graham (Central Scot and Lothians West) (Reform)
Simpson, Mark (North East Scotland) (Reform)
Smith, David (West Scotland) (Reform)

Against

Adam, George (Paisley) (SNP)
Adam, Karen (Banffshire and Buchan Coast) (SNP)
Adamson, Clare (Motherwell and Wishaw) (SNP)
Ahmed, Irshad (Edinburgh and Lothians East) (Lab)
Anderson, Heather (Dundee City West) (SNP)
Arthur, Tom (Renfrewshire West and Levern Valley) (SNP)
Baillie, Jackie (Dumbarton) (Lab)
Barratt, David (Cowdenbeath) (SNP)
Baxter, Andrew (Skye, Lochaber and Badenoch) (LD)
Beattie, Colin (Midlothian North) (SNP)
Bibby, Neil (West Scotland) (Lab)
Black, Dawn (Angus North and Mearns) (SNP)
Bonnar, Steven (Uddingston and Bellshill) (SNP)
Bouse, Gary (Falkirk West) (SNP)
Brown, Alan (Kilmarnock and Irvine Valley) (SNP)
Brown, Keith (Clackmannanshire and Dunblane) (SNP)
Brown, Siobhian (Ayr) (SNP)
Burgess, Ariane (Highlands and Islands) (Green)
Campbell, Kate (Edinburgh Eastern, Musselburgh and Tranent) (SNP)
Campbell, Michelle (Renfrewshire North and Cardonald) (SNP)
Chapman, Maggie (North East Scotland) (Green)
Chou Turvey, Yi-pei (North East Scotland) (LD)
Clark, Katy (West Scotland) (Lab)
Cole-Hamilton, Alex (Edinburgh North Western) (LD)
Constance, Angela (Almond Valley) (SNP)
Day, Martyn (Falkirk East and Linlithgow) (SNP)
Dijkstra-Downie, Sanne (Edinburgh Northern) (LD)
Doris, Bob (Glasgow Kelvin and Maryhill) (SNP)
Duane, Iris (Glasgow) (Green)
Dunbar, Jackie (Aberdeen Donside) (SNP)
Dunlop, Duncan (South Scotland) (LD)
Fagan, Joe (South Scotland) (Lab)
Flynn, Stephen (Aberdeen Deeside and North Kincardine) (SNP)
Gethins, Stephen (Dundee City East) (SNP)
Ghani, Zen (Glasgow Cathcart and Pollok) (SNP)
Gibson, Patricia (Cunninghame South) (SNP)
Gilruth, Jenny (Mid Fife and Glenrothes) (SNP)
Goodlad, Hannah Mary (Shetland Islands) (SNP)
Gray, Neil (Airdrie) (SNP)
Green, David (Caithness, Sutherland and Ross) (LD)
Greer, Ross (West Scotland) (Green)
Griffin, Mark (Central Scot and Lothians West) (Lab)
Hagmann, Katie (Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley) (SNP)
Harley, Adam (Strathkelvin and Bearsden) (LD)
Harvie, Patrick (Glasgow) (Green)
Haughey, Clare (Rutherglen and Cambuslang) (SNP)
Hepburn, Jamie (Cumbernauld and Kilsyth) (SNP)
Johnson, Daniel (Edinburgh Southern) (Lab)
Kerr, Alex (Hamilton, Larkhall and Stonehouse) (SNP)
Kerr, Calum (Midlothian South, Tweeddale and Lauderdale) (SNP)
Kinross-O'Neill, Kayleigh (Edinburgh and Lothians East) (Green)
Kumar, Simita (Edinburgh South Western) (SNP)
Leask, Kristopher (Highlands and Islands) (Green)
Linden, David (Glasgow Baillieston and Shettleston) (SNP)
Long, Joe (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab)
MacCallum, Morven-May (Highlands and Islands) (LD)
MacGregor, Fulton (Coatbridge and Chryston) (SNP)
Mackay, Gillian (Central Scot and Lothians West) (Green)
MacKinnon, Donald (Na h-Eileanan an Iar) (Lab)
Macpherson, Ben (Edinburgh North Eastern and Leith) (SNP)
Manivannan, Q (Edinburgh and Lothians East) (Green)
Marra, Michael (North East Scotland) (Lab)
Martin, Gillian (Aberdeenshire East) (SNP)
McAllan, Màiri (Clydesdale) (SNP)
McArthur, Liam (Orkney Islands) (LD)
McKee, Cara (West Scotland) (Green)
McKee, Ivan (Glasgow Easterhouse and Springburn) (SNP)
McLennan, Paul (East Lothian Coast and Lammermuirs) (SNP)
McMillan, Stuart (Inverclyde) (SNP)
McNair, Marie (Clydebank and Milngavie) (SNP)
McNeill, Pauline (Glasgow) (Lab)

Melville, Lloyd (Angus South) (SNP)
Middleton, Jack (Aberdeen Central) (SNP)
Minto, Jenni (Argyll and Bute) (SNP)
Mitchell, Laura (Moray) (SNP)
Mochan, Carol (South Scotland) (Lab)
Moodie, Laura (South Scotland) (Green)
Nevens, Kate (Edinburgh and Lothians East) (Green)
Oswald, Kirsten (Eastwood) (SNP)
Rennie, Willie (Fife North East) (LD)
Roddick, Emma (Inverness and Nairn) (SNP)
Ruskell, Mark (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Green)
Sangster, Katherine (Edinburgh and Lothians East) (Lab)
Sarwar, Anas (Glasgow) (Lab)
Slater, Lorna (Edinburgh Central) (Green)
Smith, Alyn (Stirling) (SNP)
Somerville, Shirley-Anne (Dunfermline) (SNP)
Stafford, Pauline (Bathgate) (SNP)
Stevenson, Collette (East Kilbride) (SNP)
Sweeney, Paul (Glasgow) (Lab)
Swinney, John (Perthshire North) (SNP)
Thewliss, Alison (Glasgow Central) (SNP)
Todd, Maree (Highlands and Islands) (SNP)
Torrance, David (Kirkcaldy) (SNP)
Young, Jenny (Central Scot and Lothians West) (Lab)

The Presiding Officer: The result of the division on amendment S7M-00159.1, in the name of Duncan Massey, is: For 28, Against 95, Abstentions 0.

Amendment disagreed to.

The Presiding Officer: The next question is, that amendment S7M-00159.3, in the name of Lorna Slater, which seeks to amend motion S7M-00159, in the name of Stephen Gethins, entitled "It's Scotland's energy", be agreed to. Are we agreed?

Members: No.

The Presiding Officer: There will be a division. Members should cast their votes now.

The vote is closed.

John Swinney (Perthshire North) (SNP): On a point of order, Presiding Officer. I was unable to connect to the voting app. I would have voted no.

The Presiding Officer: Your vote will be recorded.

For

Bruce, Holly (Glasgow Southside) (Green)
Burgess, Ariane (Highlands and Islands) (Green)
Chapman, Maggie (North East Scotland) (Green)
Duane, Iris (Glasgow) (Green)
Greer, Ross (West Scotland) (Green)
Harvie, Patrick (Glasgow) (Green)
Kinross-O'Neill, Kayleigh (Edinburgh and Lothians East) (Green)
Leask, Kristopher (Highlands and Islands) (Green)
Mackay, Gillian (Central Scot and Lothians West) (Green)
Manivannan, Q (Edinburgh and Lothians East) (Green)
McKee, Cara (West Scotland) (Green)
Moodie, Laura (South Scotland) (Green)
Nevens, Kate (Edinburgh and Lothians East) (Green)
Ruskell, Mark (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Green)
Slater, Lorna (Edinburgh Central) (Green)

Against

Adam, George (Paisley) (SNP)
Adam, Karen (Banffshire and Buchan Coast) (SNP)
Adamson, Clare (Motherwell and Wishaw) (SNP)
Ahmed, Irshad (Edinburgh and Lothians East) (Lab)
Anderson, Heather (Dundee City West) (SNP)
Arthur, Tom (Renfrewshire West and Levern Valley) (SNP)
Baillie, Jackie (Dumbarton) (Lab)
Bannerman, Max (Highlands and Islands) (Reform)
Barratt, David (Cowdenbeath) (SNP)
Baxter, Andrew (Skye, Lochaber and Badenoch) (LD)
Beattie, Colin (Midlothian North) (SNP)
Beresford, Senga (South Scotland) (Reform)
Bibby, Neil (West Scotland) (Lab)
Black, Dawn (Angus North and Mearns) (SNP)
Bland, Amanda (Central Scot and Lothians West) (Reform)
Bonnar, Steven (Uddingston and Bellshill) (SNP)
Bouse, Gary (Falkirk West) (SNP)
Briggs, Miles (Edinburgh and Lothians East) (Con)
Brown, Alan (Kilmarnock and Irvine Valley) (SNP)
Brown, Keith (Clackmannanshire and Dunblane) (SNP)
Brown, Siobhian (Ayr) (SNP)
Campbell, Kate (Edinburgh Eastern, Musselburgh and Tranent) (SNP)
Campbell, Michelle (Renfrewshire North and Cardonald) (SNP)
Carson, Finlay (Galloway and West Dumfries) (Con)
Chou Turvey, Yi-pei (North East Scotland) (LD)
Clark, Katy (West Scotland) (Lab)
Cole-Hamilton, Alex (Edinburgh North Western) (LD)
Constance, Angela (Almond Valley) (SNP)
Currie, Victor (Highlands and Islands) (Reform)
Day, Martyn (Falkirk East and Linlithgow) (SNP)
Dijkstra-Downie, Sanne (Edinburgh Northern) (LD)
Doris, Bob (Glasgow Kelvin and Maryhill) (SNP)
Dunbar, Jackie (Aberdeen Donside) (SNP)
Dunlop, Duncan (South Scotland) (LD)
Eagle, Tim (Highlands and Islands) (Con)
Fagan, Joe (South Scotland) (Lab)
Findlay, Russell (West Scotland) (Con)
Flynn, Stephen (Aberdeen Deeside and North Kincardine) (SNP)
Fraser, Murdo (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
Gallacher, Meghan (Central Scot and Lothians West) (Con)
Gethins, Stephen (Dundee City East) (SNP)
Ghani, Zen (Glasgow Cathcart and Pollok) (SNP)
Gibson, Patricia (Cunninghame South) (SNP)
Gilruth, Jenny (Mid Fife and Glenrothes) (SNP)
Goodlad, Hannah Mary (Shetland Islands) (SNP)
Gray, Neil (Airdrie) (SNP)
Green, David (Caithness, Sutherland and Ross) (LD)
Griffin, Mark (Central Scot and Lothians West) (Lab)
Hagmann, Katie (Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley) (SNP)
Hamilton, Rachael (Ettrick, Roxburgh and Berwickshire) (Con)
Harley, Adam (Strathkelvin and Bearsden) (LD)
Haughey, Clare (Rutherglen and Cambuslang) (SNP)
Hepburn, Jamie (Cumbernauld and Kilsyth) (SNP)
Hoy, Craig (Dumfriesshire) (Con)
Johnson, Daniel (Edinburgh Southern) (Lab)
Kerr, Alex (Hamilton, Larkhall and Stonehouse) (SNP)
Kerr, Calum (Midlothian South, Tweeddale and Lauderdale) (SNP)
Kerr, Liam (North East Scotland) (Con)
Kerr, Stephen (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
Kerr, Thomas (Glasgow) (Reform)

Kirkwood, David (South Scotland) (Reform)
Kumar, Simita (Edinburgh South Western) (SNP)
Langan, Jamie (South Scotland) (Reform)
Linden, David (Glasgow Baillieston and Shettleston) (SNP)
Lindsay, Amanda (Central Scot and Lothians West) (Reform)
Long, Joe (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab)
Lumsden, Douglas (North East Scotland) (Con)
MacCallum, Morven-May (Highlands and Islands) (LD)
MacDougall, Julie (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Reform)
MacGregor, Fulton (Coatbridge and Chryston) (SNP)
MacKinnon, Donald (Na h-Eileanan an Iar) (Lab)
Macpherson, Ben (Edinburgh North Eastern and Leith) (SNP)
Marra, Michael (North East Scotland) (Lab)
Martin, Gillian (Aberdeenshire East) (SNP)
Massey, Duncan (North East Scotland) (Reform)
McAllan, Màiri (Clydesdale) (SNP)
McArthur, Liam (Orkney Islands) (LD)
McDade, Helen (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Reform)
McKee, Ivan (Glasgow Easterhouse and Springburn) (SNP)
McLennan, Paul (East Lothian Coast and Lammermuirs) (SNP)
McMillan, Stuart (Inverclyde) (SNP)
McNair, Marie (Clydebank and Milngavie) (SNP)
McNeill, Pauline (Glasgow) (Lab)
Melville, Lloyd (Angus South) (SNP)
Merrick, Colm (Glasgow Anniesland) (SNP)
Middleton, Jack (Aberdeen Central) (SNP)
Minto, Jenni (Argyll and Bute) (SNP)
Mitchell, Laura (Moray) (SNP)
Mochan, Carol (South Scotland) (Lab)
Offord, Malcolm (West Scotland) (Reform)
Oswald, Kirsten (Eastwood) (SNP)
Rennie, Willie (Fife North East) (LD)
Roddick, Emma (Inverness and Nairn) (SNP)
Ross, Angela (Edinburgh and Lothians East) (Reform)
Sangster, Katherine (Edinburgh and Lothians East) (Lab)
Sarwar, Anas (Glasgow) (Lab)
Schmulian, Kim (Glasgow) (Reform)
Simpson, Graham (Central Scot and Lothians West) (Reform)
Simpson, Mark (North East Scotland) (Reform)
Smith, Alyn (Stirling) (SNP)
Smith, David (West Scotland) (Reform)
Somerville, Shirley-Anne (Dunfermline) (SNP)
Stafford, Pauline (Bathgate) (SNP)
Stevenson, Collette (East Kilbride) (SNP)
Sweeney, Paul (Glasgow) (Lab)
Swinney, John (Perthshire North) (SNP)
Thewliss, Alison (Glasgow Central) (SNP)
Todd, Maree (Highlands and Islands) (SNP)
Torrance, David (Kirkcaldy) (SNP)
Young, Jenny (Central Scot and Lothians West) (Lab)

The Presiding Officer: The result of the division on amendment S7M-00159.3, in the name of Lorna Slater is: For 15, Against 110, Abstentions 0.

Amendment disagreed to.

The Presiding Officer: I remind members that if the amendment in the name of Liam Kerr is agreed to, the amendment in the name of Liam McArthur will fall.

The next question is, that amendment S7M-00159.4, in the name of Liam Kerr, which seeks to amend motion S7M-00159, in the name of Stephen Gethins, entitled "It's Scotland's energy", be agreed to. Are we agreed?

Members: No.

The Presiding Officer: There will be a division.

For

Bannerman, Max (Highlands and Islands) (Reform)
Beresford, Senga (South Scotland) (Reform)
Bland, Amanda (Central Scot and Lothians West) (Reform)
Briggs, Miles (Edinburgh and Lothians East) (Con)
Carson, Finlay (Galloway and West Dumfries) (Con)
Currie, Victor (Highlands and Islands) (Reform)
Eagle, Tim (Highlands and Islands) (Con)
Findlay, Russell (West Scotland) (Con)
Fraser, Murdo (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
Gallacher, Meghan (Central Scot and Lothians West) (Con)
Griffin, Mark (Central Scot and Lothians West) (Lab)
Hamilton, Rachael (Ettrick, Roxburgh and Berwickshire) (Con)
Hoy, Craig (Dumfriesshire) (Con)
Kerr, Liam (North East Scotland) (Con)
Kerr, Stephen (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
Kerr, Thomas (Glasgow) (Reform)
Kirkwood, David (South Scotland) (Reform)
Langan, Jamie (South Scotland) (Reform)
Lindsay, Amanda (Central Scot and Lothians West) (Reform)
Lumsden, Douglas (North East Scotland) (Con)
MacDougall, Julie (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Reform)
Massey, Duncan (North East Scotland) (Reform)
McDade, Helen (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Reform)
Offord, Malcolm (West Scotland) (Reform)
Ross, Angela (Edinburgh and Lothians East) (Reform)
Schmulian, Kim (Glasgow) (Reform)
Simpson, Graham (Central Scot and Lothians West) (Reform)
Simpson, Mark (North East Scotland) (Reform)
Smith, David (West Scotland) (Reform)

Against

Adam, George (Paisley) (SNP)
Adam, Karen (Banffshire and Buchan Coast) (SNP)
Adamson, Clare (Motherwell and Wishaw) (SNP)
Ahmed, Irshad (Edinburgh and Lothians East) (Lab)
Anderson, Heather (Dundee City West) (SNP)
Arthur, Tom (Renfrewshire West and Levern Valley) (SNP)
Baillie, Jackie (Dumbarton) (Lab)
Barratt, David (Cowdenbeath) (SNP)
Baxter, Andrew (Skye, Lochaber and Badenoch) (LD)
Beattie, Colin (Midlothian North) (SNP)
Bibby, Neil (West Scotland) (Lab)
Black, Dawn (Angus North and Mearns) (SNP)
Bonnar, Steven (Uddingston and Bellshill) (SNP)
Bouse, Gary (Falkirk West) (SNP)
Brown, Alan (Kilmarnock and Irvine Valley) (SNP)
Brown, Keith (Clackmannanshire and Dunblane) (SNP)
Brown, Siobhian (Ayr) (SNP)
Bruce, Holly (Glasgow Southside) (Green)
Campbell, Kate (Edinburgh Eastern, Musselburgh and Tranent) (SNP)
Campbell, Michelle (Renfrewshire North and Cardonald) (SNP)
Chapman, Maggie (North East Scotland) (Green)

Chou Turvey, Yi-pei (North East Scotland) (LD)
Clark, Katy (West Scotland) (Lab)
Cole-Hamilton, Alex (Edinburgh North Western) (LD)
Constance, Angela (Almond Valley) (SNP)
Day, Martyn (Falkirk East and Linlithgow) (SNP)
Dijkstra-Downie, Sanne (Edinburgh Northern) (LD)
Doris, Bob (Glasgow Kelvin and Maryhill) (SNP)
Duane, Iris (Glasgow) (Green)
Dunbar, Jackie (Aberdeen Donside) (SNP)
Dunlop, Duncan (South Scotland) (LD)
Fagan, Joe (South Scotland) (Lab)
Flynn, Stephen (Aberdeen Deeside and North Kincardine) (SNP)
Gethins, Stephen (Dundee City East) (SNP)
Ghani, Zen (Glasgow Cathcart and Pollok) (SNP)
Gibson, Patricia (Cunninghame South) (SNP)
Gilruth, Jenny (Mid Fife and Glenrothes) (SNP)
Goodlad, Hannah Mary (Shetland Islands) (SNP)
Gray, Neil (Airdrie) (SNP)
Green, David (Caithness, Sutherland and Ross) (LD)
Greer, Ross (West Scotland) (Green)
Hagmann, Katie (Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley) (SNP)
Harley, Adam (Strathkelvin and Bearsden) (LD)
Harvie, Patrick (Glasgow) (Green)
Haughey, Clare (Rutherglen and Cambuslang) (SNP)
Hepburn, Jamie (Cumbernauld and Kilsyth) (SNP)
Johnson, Daniel (Edinburgh Southern) (Lab)
Kerr, Alex (Hamilton, Larkhall and Stonehouse) (SNP)
Kerr, Calum (Midlothian South, Tweeddale and Lauderdale) (SNP)
Kinross-O'Neill, Kayleigh (Edinburgh and Lothians East) (Green)
Kumar, Simita (Edinburgh South Western) (SNP)
Leask, Kristopher (Highlands and Islands) (Green)
Linden, David (Glasgow Baillieston and Shettleston) (SNP)
Long, Joe (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab)
MacCallum, Morven-May (Highlands and Islands) (LD)
MacGregor, Fulton (Coatbridge and Chryston) (SNP)
Mackay, Gillian (Central Scot and Lothians West) (Green)
MacKinnon, Donald (Na h-Eileanan an Iar) (Lab)
Macpherson, Ben (Edinburgh North Eastern and Leith) (SNP)
Manivannan, Q (Edinburgh and Lothians East) (Green)
Marra, Michael (North East Scotland) (Lab)
Martin, Gillian (Aberdeenshire East) (SNP)
McAllan, Màiri (Clydesdale) (SNP)
McArthur, Liam (Orkney Islands) (LD)
McKee, Cara (West Scotland) (Green)
McKee, Ivan (Glasgow Easterhouse and Springburn) (SNP)
McLennan, Paul (East Lothian Coast and Lammermuirs) (SNP)
McMillan, Stuart (Inverclyde) (SNP)
McNair, Marie (Clydebank and Milngavie) (SNP)
McNeill, Pauline (Glasgow) (Lab)
Melville, Lloyd (Angus South) (SNP)
Merrick, Colm (Glasgow Anniesland) (SNP)
Middleton, Jack (Aberdeen Central) (SNP)
Minto, Jenni (Argyll and Bute) (SNP)
Mitchell, Laura (Moray) (SNP)
Mochan, Carol (South Scotland) (Lab)
Moodie, Laura (South Scotland) (Green)
Nevens, Kate (Edinburgh and Lothians East) (Green)
Oswald, Kirsten (Eastwood) (SNP)
Rennie, Willie (Fife North East) (LD)
Roddick, Emma (Inverness and Nairn) (SNP)
Ruskell, Mark (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Green)
Sangster, Katherine (Edinburgh and Lothians East) (Lab)
Sarwar, Anas (Glasgow) (Lab)
Slater, Lorna (Edinburgh Central) (Green)
Smith, Alyn (Stirling) (SNP)
Somerville, Shirley-Anne (Dunfermline) (SNP)
Stafford, Pauline (Bathgate) (SNP)
Stevenson, Collette (East Kilbride) (SNP)
Sweeney, Paul (Glasgow) (Lab)
Swinney, John (Perthshire North) (SNP)
Thewliss, Alison (Glasgow Central) (SNP)
Todd, Maree (Highlands and Islands) (SNP)
Torrance, David (Kirkcaldy) (SNP)
Young, Jenny (Central Scot and Lothians West) (Lab)

The Presiding Officer: The result of the division on amendment S7M-00159.4, in the name of Liam Kerr, is: For 29, Against 95, Abstentions 0.

Amendment disagreed to.

The Presiding Officer: The next question is, that amendment S7M-00159.5, in the name of Liam McArthur, which seeks to amend motion S7M-00159, in the name of Stephen Gethins, entitled "It's Scotland's energy", be agreed to. Are we agreed?

Members: No.

The Presiding Officer: There will be a division.

For

Ahmed, Irshad (Edinburgh and Lothians East) (Lab)
Baillie, Jackie (Dumbarton) (Lab)
Baxter, Andrew (Skye, Lochaber and Badenoch) (LD)
Bibby, Neil (West Scotland) (Lab)
Chou Turvey, Yi-pei (North East Scotland) (LD)
Cole-Hamilton, Alex (Edinburgh North Western) (LD)
Dijkstra-Downie, Sanne (Edinburgh Northern) (LD)
Dunlop, Duncan (South Scotland) (LD)
Fagan, Joe (South Scotland) (Lab)
Griffin, Mark (Central Scot and Lothians West) (Lab)
Hamilton, Rachael (Ettrick, Roxburgh and Berwickshire) (Con)
Harley, Adam (Strathkelvin and Bearsden) (LD)
Johnson, Daniel (Edinburgh Southern) (Lab)
Long, Joe (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab)
MacCallum, Morven-May (Highlands and Islands) (LD)
MacKinnon, Donald (Na h-Eileanan an Iar) (Lab)
Marra, Michael (North East Scotland) (Lab)
McArthur, Liam (Orkney Islands) (LD)
McNeill, Pauline (Glasgow) (Lab)
Mochan, Carol (South Scotland) (Lab)
Rennie, Willie (Fife North East) (LD)
Sangster, Katherine (Edinburgh and Lothians East) (Lab)
Sarwar, Anas (Glasgow) (Lab)
Sweeney, Paul (Glasgow) (Lab)
Young, Jenny (Central Scot and Lothians West) (Lab)

Against

Adam, George (Paisley) (SNP)
Adam, Karen (Banffshire and Buchan Coast) (SNP)
Adamson, Clare (Motherwell and Wishaw) (SNP)
Anderson, Heather (Dundee City West) (SNP)
Arthur, Tom (Renfrewshire West and Levern Valley) (SNP)
Bannerman, Max (Highlands and Islands) (Reform)
Barratt, David (Cowdenbeath) (SNP)
Beattie, Colin (Midlothian North) (SNP)
Beresford, Senga (South Scotland) (Reform)
Black, Dawn (Angus North and Mearns) (SNP)

Bland, Amanda (Central Scot and Lothians West) (Reform)
Bonnar, Steven (Uddingston and Bellshill) (SNP)
Bouse, Gary (Falkirk West) (SNP)
Briggs, Miles (Edinburgh and Lothians East) (Con)
Brown, Alan (Kilmarnock and Irvine Valley) (SNP)
Brown, Keith (Clackmannanshire and Dunblane) (SNP)
Brown, Siobhian (Ayr) (SNP)
Bruce, Holly (Glasgow Southside) (Green)
Burgess, Ariane (Highlands and Islands) (Green)
Campbell, Kate (Edinburgh Eastern, Musselburgh and Tranent) (SNP)
Campbell, Michelle (Renfrewshire North and Cardonald) (SNP)
Carson, Finlay (Galloway and West Dumfries) (Con)
Chapman, Maggie (North East Scotland) (Green)
Clark, Katy (West Scotland) (Lab)
Constance, Angela (Almond Valley) (SNP)
Currie, Victor (Highlands and Islands) (Reform)
Day, Martyn (Falkirk East and Linlithgow) (SNP)
Doris, Bob (Glasgow Kelvin and Maryhill) (SNP)
Duane, Iris (Glasgow) (Green)
Dunbar, Jackie (Aberdeen Donside) (SNP)
Eagle, Tim (Highlands and Islands) (Con)
Findlay, Russell (West Scotland) (Con)
Flynn, Stephen (Aberdeen Deeside and North Kincardine) (SNP)
Fraser, Murdo (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
Gallacher, Meghan (Central Scot and Lothians West) (Con)
Gethins, Stephen (Dundee City East) (SNP)
Ghani, Zen (Glasgow Cathcart and Pollok) (SNP)
Gibson, Patricia (Cunninghame South) (SNP)
Gilruth, Jenny (Mid Fife and Glenrothes) (SNP)
Goodlad, Hannah Mary (Shetland Islands) (SNP)
Gray, Neil (Airdrie) (SNP)
Greer, Ross (West Scotland) (Green)
Hagmann, Katie (Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley) (SNP)
Harvie, Patrick (Glasgow) (Green)
Haughey, Clare (Rutherglen and Cambuslang) (SNP)
Hepburn, Jamie (Cumbernauld and Kilsyth) (SNP)
Hoy, Craig (Dumfriesshire) (Con)
Kerr, Alex (Hamilton, Larkhall and Stonehouse) (SNP)
Kerr, Calum (Midlothian South, Tweeddale and Lauderdale) (SNP)
Kerr, Liam (North East Scotland) (Con)
Kerr, Stephen (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
Kerr, Thomas (Glasgow) (Reform)
Kinross-O'Neill, Kayleigh (Edinburgh and Lothians East) (Green)
Kirkwood, David (South Scotland) (Reform)
Kumar, Simita (Edinburgh South Western) (SNP)
Langan, Jamie (South Scotland) (Reform)
Leask, Kristopher (Highlands and Islands) (Green)
Linden, David (Glasgow Baillieston and Shettleston) (SNP)
Lindsay, Amanda (Central Scot and Lothians West) (Reform)
Lumsden, Douglas (North East Scotland) (Con)
MacDougall, Julie (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Reform)
MacGregor, Fulton (Coatbridge and Chryston) (SNP)
Mackay, Gillian (Central Scot and Lothians West) (Green)
Macpherson, Ben (Edinburgh North Eastern and Leith) (SNP)
Manivannan, Q (Edinburgh and Lothians East) (Green)
Martin, Gillian (Aberdeenshire East) (SNP)
McAllan, Màiri (Clydesdale) (SNP)
McDade, Helen (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Reform)
McKee, Cara (West Scotland) (Green)
McKee, Ivan (Glasgow Easterhouse and Springburn) (SNP)
McLennan, Paul (East Lothian Coast and Lammermuirs) (SNP)
McMillan, Stuart (Inverclyde) (SNP)
McNair, Marie (Clydebank and Milngavie) (SNP)
Melville, Lloyd (Angus South) (SNP)
Merrick, Colm (Glasgow Anniesland) (SNP)
Middleton, Jack (Aberdeen Central) (SNP)
Minto, Jenni (Argyll and Bute) (SNP)
Mitchell, Laura (Moray) (SNP)
Moodie, Laura (South Scotland) (Green)
Nevens, Kate (Edinburgh and Lothians East) (Green)
Offord, Malcolm (West Scotland) (Reform)
Oswald, Kirsten (Eastwood) (SNP)
Roddick, Emma (Inverness and Nairn) (SNP)
Ross, Angela (Edinburgh and Lothians East) (Reform)
Ruskell, Mark (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Green)
Schmulian, Kim (Glasgow) (Reform)
Simpson, Graham (Central Scot and Lothians West) (Reform)
Simpson, Mark (North East Scotland) (Reform)
Slater, Lorna (Edinburgh Central) (Green)
Smith, Alyn (Stirling) (SNP)
Smith, David (West Scotland) (Reform)
Somerville, Shirley-Anne (Dunfermline) (SNP)
Stafford, Pauline (Bathgate) (SNP)
Stevenson, Collette (East Kilbride) (SNP)
Swinney, John (Perthshire North) (SNP)
Thewliss, Alison (Glasgow Central) (SNP)
Todd, Maree (Highlands and Islands) (SNP)
Torrance, David (Kirkcaldy) (SNP)

The Presiding Officer: The result of the division on amendment S7M-00159.5, in the name of Liam McArthur is: For 25, Against 98, Abstentions 0.

Amendment disagreed to.

The Presiding Officer: The final question is, that motion S7M-00159, in the name of Stephen Gethins, entitled "It's Scotland's energy", be agreed to. Are we agreed?

Members: No.

The Presiding Officer: There will be a division. Members should cast their votes now.

The vote is closed.

The Cabinet Secretary for Health and Care (Angela Constance): On a point of order, Presiding Officer. I could not connect to the app. I would have voted yes.

The Presiding Officer: Your vote will be recorded.

For

Adam, George (Paisley) (SNP)
Adam, Karen (Banffshire and Buchan Coast) (SNP)
Adamson, Clare (Motherwell and Wishaw) (SNP)
Anderson, Heather (Dundee City West) (SNP)
Arthur, Tom (Renfrewshire West and Levern Valley) (SNP)
Barratt, David (Cowdenbeath) (SNP)
Beattie, Colin (Midlothian North) (SNP)
Black, Dawn (Angus North and Mearns) (SNP)
Bonnar, Steven (Uddingston and Bellshill) (SNP)

Bouse, Gary (Falkirk West) (SNP)
Brown, Alan (Kilmarnock and Irvine Valley) (SNP)
Brown, Keith (Clackmannanshire and Dunblane) (SNP)
Brown, Siobhian (Ayr) (SNP)
Bruce, Holly (Glasgow Southside) (Green)
Burgess, Ariane (Highlands and Islands) (Green)
Campbell, Kate (Edinburgh Eastern, Musselburgh and Tranent) (SNP)
Campbell, Michelle (Renfrewshire North and Cardonald) (SNP)
Chapman, Maggie (North East Scotland) (Green)
Constance, Angela (Almond Valley) (SNP)
Day, Martyn (Falkirk East and Linlithgow) (SNP)
Doris, Bob (Glasgow Kelvin and Maryhill) (SNP)
Duane, Iris (Glasgow) (Green)
Dunbar, Jackie (Aberdeen Donside) (SNP)
Flynn, Stephen (Aberdeen Deeside and North Kincardine) (SNP)
Gethins, Stephen (Dundee City East) (SNP)
Ghani, Zen (Glasgow Cathcart and Pollok) (SNP)
Gibson, Patricia (Cunninghame South) (SNP)
Gilruth, Jenny (Mid Fife and Glenrothes) (SNP)
Goodlad, Hannah Mary (Shetland Islands) (SNP)
Gray, Neil (Airdrie) (SNP)
Greer, Ross (West Scotland) (Green)
Hagmann, Katie (Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley) (SNP)
Harvie, Patrick (Glasgow) (Green)
Haughey, Clare (Rutherglen and Cambuslang) (SNP)
Hepburn, Jamie (Cumbernauld and Kilsyth) (SNP)
Kerr, Alex (Hamilton, Larkhall and Stonehouse) (SNP)
Kerr, Calum (Midlothian South, Tweeddale and Lauderdale) (SNP)
Kinross-O'Neill, Kayleigh (Edinburgh and Lothians East) (Green)
Kumar, Simita (Edinburgh South Western) (SNP)
Leask, Kristopher (Highlands and Islands) (Green)
Linden, David (Glasgow Baillieston and Shettleston) (SNP)
MacGregor, Fulton (Coatbridge and Chryston) (SNP)
Mackay, Gillian (Central Scot and Lothians West) (Green)
Macpherson, Ben (Edinburgh North Eastern and Leith) (SNP)
Manivannan, Q (Edinburgh and Lothians East) (Green)
Martin, Gillian (Aberdeenshire East) (SNP)
McAllan, Màiri (Clydesdale) (SNP)
McKee, Cara (West Scotland) (Green)
McKee, Ivan (Glasgow Easterhouse and Springburn) (SNP)
McLennan, Paul (East Lothian Coast and Lammermuirs) (SNP)
McMillan, Stuart (Inverclyde) (SNP)
McNair, Marie (Clydebank and Milngavie) (SNP)
Melville, Lloyd (Angus South) (SNP)
Merrick, Colm (Glasgow Anniesland) (SNP)
Middleton, Jack (Aberdeen Central) (SNP)
Minto, Jenni (Argyll and Bute) (SNP)
Mitchell, Laura (Moray) (SNP)
Moodie, Laura (South Scotland) (Green)
Nevens, Kate (Edinburgh and Lothians East) (Green)
Oswald, Kirsten (Eastwood) (SNP)
Ruskell, Mark (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Green)
Slater, Lorna (Edinburgh Central) (Green)
Smith, Alyn (Stirling) (SNP)
Somerville, Shirley-Anne (Dunfermline) (SNP)
Stafford, Pauline (Bathgate) (SNP)
Stevenson, Collette (East Kilbride) (SNP)
Swinney, John (Perthshire North) (SNP)
Thewliss, Alison (Glasgow Central) (SNP)
Todd, Maree (Highlands and Islands) (SNP)
Torrance, David (Kirkcaldy) (SNP)

Against

Ahmed, Irshad (Edinburgh and Lothians East) (Lab)
Baillie, Jackie (Dumbarton) (Lab)
Bannerman, Max (Highlands and Islands) (Reform)
Baxter, Andrew (Skye, Lochaber and Badenoch) (LD)
Beresford, Senga (South Scotland) (Reform)
Bibby, Neil (West Scotland) (Lab)
Bland, Amanda (Central Scot and Lothians West) (Reform)
Briggs, Miles (Edinburgh and Lothians East) (Con)
Carson, Finlay (Galloway and West Dumfries) (Con)
Chou Turvey, Yi-pei (North East Scotland) (LD)
Clark, Katy (West Scotland) (Lab)
Cole-Hamilton, Alex (Edinburgh North Western) (LD)
Currie, Victor (Highlands and Islands) (Reform)
Dijkstra-Downie, Sanne (Edinburgh Northern) (LD)
Dunlop, Duncan (South Scotland) (LD)
Eagle, Tim (Highlands and Islands) (Con)
Fagan, Joe (South Scotland) (Lab)
Findlay, Russell (West Scotland) (Con)
Fraser, Murdo (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
Gallacher, Meghan (Central Scot and Lothians West) (Con)
Green, David (Caithness, Sutherland and Ross) (LD)
Griffin, Mark (Central Scot and Lothians West) (Lab)
Hamilton, Rachael (Ettrick, Roxburgh and Berwickshire) (Con)
Harley, Adam (Strathkelvin and Bearsden) (LD)
Hoy, Craig (Dumfriesshire) (Con)
Johnson, Daniel (Edinburgh Southern) (Lab)
Kerr, Liam (North East Scotland) (Con)
Kerr, Stephen (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
Kerr, Thomas (Glasgow) (Reform)
Kirkwood, David (South Scotland) (Reform)
Langan, Jamie (South Scotland) (Reform)
Lindsay, Amanda (Central Scot and Lothians West) (Reform)
Long, Joe (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab)
Lumsden, Douglas (North East Scotland) (Con)
MacCallum, Morven-May (Highlands and Islands) (LD)
MacDougall, Julie (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Reform)
MacKinnon, Donald (Na h-Eileanan an Iar) (Lab)
Marra, Michael (North East Scotland) (Lab)
Massey, Duncan (North East Scotland) (Reform)
McArthur, Liam (Orkney Islands) (LD)
McDade, Helen (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Reform)
McNeill, Pauline (Glasgow) (Lab)
Mochan, Carol (South Scotland) (Lab)
Offord, Malcolm (West Scotland) (Reform)
Rennie, Willie (Fife North East) (LD)
Ross, Angela (Edinburgh and Lothians East) (Reform)
Sangster, Katherine (Edinburgh and Lothians East) (Lab)
Sarwar, Anas (Glasgow) (Lab)
Schmulian, Kim (Glasgow) (Reform)
Simpson, Graham (Central Scot and Lothians West) (Reform)
Simpson, Mark (North East Scotland) (Reform)
Smith, David (West Scotland) (Reform)
Sweeney, Paul (Glasgow) (Lab)
Young, Jenny (Central Scot and Lothians West) (Lab)

The Presiding Officer: The result of the division on motion S7M-00159, in the name of Stephen Gethins, is: For 70, Against 54, Abstentions 0.

Motion agreed to.

The Presiding Officer: That concludes decision time.

Point of Order

17:21

Maggie Chapman (North East Scotland) (Green): On a point of order, Presiding Officer. In my haste to ask my first question of the session at First Minister's question time, I did not put on the record my entry in the register of members' interests. I am rector of the University of Dundee. Apologies—I should have done that before I asked my question.

The Presiding Officer (Kenneth Gibson): Thank you for advising Parliament. That has been noted.

Meeting closed at 17:21.

Correction

Stephen Gethins has identified an error in his contribution and provided the following correction

The Minister for Europe, External Affairs and Energy (Stephen Gethins):

At column 20, paragraph 3—

Original text—

Renewables alone deliver 20.8 terawatt hours outside of Scotland annually. To put it into context, that net export is worth £1.7 billion and, if we kept the energy in Scotland, it would be enough to power every home in Scotland for three and a half years.

Corrected text—

Net electricity exports were 20.8 terawatt hours in 2025. To put it into context, that net export has an indicative value of £1.7 billion and, if we kept the energy in Scotland, it would be enough to power the equivalent of every home in Scotland for around three and a half years.

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