

MEETING OF THE PARLIAMENT

Wednesday 7 June 2006

Session 2

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Scottish Parliament

Wednesday 7 June 2006

[THE PRESIDING OFFICER *opened the meeting at 14:30*]

Time for Reflection

The Presiding Officer (Mr George Reid): Good afternoon. The first item of business today, as it is every Wednesday, is time for reflection. Our time for reflection leader is Emma Campbell, a former pupil of Currie high school.

Ms Emma Campbell (Former Pupil, Currie High School): Hi. Kenya is the most spectacularly different place I have ever had the privilege to visit in my life. I had heard about Africa before on the news and in the newspapers, but I had never felt connected with it. I feel a connection now that I think will last a lifetime.

My school was nurturing a partnership with a girls' school in Chogoria near Mount Kenya, so my friend Lauren and I, along with three of our teachers, were sent as ambassadors for Scotland and for Currie high school. Chogoria is a small market town where live chickens, second-hand clothes stalls and hordes of people line the streets. The school is a sharp contrast to the disorder of the town. Pupils rise at dawn to clean the school and its grounds. The thought of me getting up that early to scrub our school toilets was unthinkable.

I had heard that the girls started class at 5 in the morning and did not finish until 9 at night. Although I had that information on good authority, I still did not believe it. Show me a teenager in Scotland who can concentrate for that length of time, because I certainly could not. Standing at a classroom window at 5 in the morning and seeing those girls working silently towards some invisible goal made me feel disgusted at my own laziness.

The two Kenyan girls who later stayed with me, Silvia and Silvanah, gave me a fresh perspective on my life, as I saw what I had through their eyes. Silvia asked me, "Why do you have a part-time job when you have everything you could possibly want?" It surprised me how difficult that question was to answer. I tried to give them a taste of Edinburgh using the most tried and tested tourist means at my disposal—a ghost tour. Feeling rather too pleased with myself, I was later brought back down to earth when they remarked, "Where were all the ghosts?"

The girls seemed most shocked to find that my male friends and other males in Scotland considered themselves equal to females. Their jaws dropped one evening as they watched my

dad clear the dining-room table. It chilled me to think that these incredibly intelligent people might be forced to live lives in which they could not reach their full potential because of such a trivial thing as gender. "We are so behind, but we will catch up", they told me.

After visiting Kenya, I could see the ways in which Scotland was behind. However, I feel that things are changing and partnerships between schools in countries such as Scotland and Kenya are helping that change. Kenya is not a country to be pitied—there is an abundance of skill, talent and enthusiasm among its people—but it lacks opportunities. However, we have endless opportunities; I see that clearly now. That knowledge is what I will take from Kenya. I just hope that the Kenyan girls have taken something as valuable from me.

Cross-cutting Expenditure Review of Deprivation

The Presiding Officer (Mr George Reid): The next item of business is a debate on motion S2M-4482, in the name of Des McNulty, on behalf of the Finance Committee, on its fifth report in 2006, "Cross-cutting Expenditure Review of Deprivation".

14:33

Des McNulty (Clydebank and Milngavie) (Lab): I declare an interest as a board member of the Wise Group, an organisation that concentrates on getting long-term unemployed people into work.

I have another interest to declare, which is a moral and intellectual interest in tackling poverty and deprivation. That interest was what first brought me into representative politics, perhaps longer ago than I would care to remember. There was a terrible aftermath in the west of Scotland from decisions that were made in the 1980s. The place where I was living—Maryhill—and the place where I became a councillor—Clydebank—showed the misery that could be caused by economic downturn and its consequent social problems.

I became a member of Strathclyde Regional Council, then a member of Glasgow City Council. Strathclyde Regional Council led the United Kingdom—perhaps its lead was even broader—in developing a social strategy, identifying areas of priority treatment and looking at ways of mainstreaming interventions on an inclusive basis in education and across the range of services.

When I joined Glasgow City Council, I was in the position of being able to write, along with colleagues, the vision and priorities of that council. Further, I was involved in the setting up of the Glasgow Alliance and was part of the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities committee that called for community planning partnerships to be set up as a mechanism for drawing together the various agencies to focus on deprivation and tackling poverty. My colleagues Frank McAveety and Charlie Gordon and many other people were involved in that process, which I think amounted to a moral commitment as well as a practical commitment with regard to the question of what we can do about the deprivation before us.

We have to learn not only from the experience of that period during the 1990s, but from the period that began when the Scottish Parliament was set up. Deprivation has different causes. Problems relating to health, housing, education, social services and community development are all linked. However, what we learned from the 1980s and 1990s—and what we should continue to bear

in mind—was that we must focus not only on how we get the correct services to tackle the problems, but on the needs of individuals and the needs of communities.

One thing that is absolutely central to ensuring change in deprived areas is getting people into a situation in which they can move into employment. That needs to be a focus of everything that we do. Of course, there are other issues. Alongside the issue of unemployment, Glasgow highlights the issue of drug misuse and its consequences for communities. Other places in Glasgow might focus on their own particular problems and the challenges and barriers that people in those communities face.

What I am trying to say is that there is a huge amount of knowledge in Scotland about tackling deprivation. However, I have to say that our knowledge tends to be better about the problems than it is about the solutions. One of the things that the deprivation report is intended to do is to draw together some of that knowledge and the things that have been seen to work and to begin to map out the things that need to be put in place for the future. There has been a bit of a failure to draw together the various strands of experience and to look at them systematically and apply those strategies that are supported by evidence.

The report is excellent and I thank all those who were involved in its production: my fellow committee members; the people from whom we took evidence; the clerks; our experts; and everyone who contributed to developing the report. However, the report is not a blueprint. It cannot be, as no parliamentary committee can produce a blueprint for change.

We have drawn together a series of strands, lessons and examples of things that are not going right and which ought to be changed. I hope that the minister will say that he is willing to take on board many of the issues that we have highlighted, accept that there are things that need to be changed and done better and, in particular, take on board the central message of our report, which is that the process is too complicated and complex. We need to simplify the system of funding that is linked to deprivation and make it more transparent and effective. We must speed up the way in which we respond to what is going on and give greater autonomy to people on the ground so that they can put into effect the solutions that they identify as most appropriate.

We all have to focus on that, no matter what party we belong to, because deprivation disfigures Scotland. I am pleased that our report was signed up to by every political party that is represented on the committee. We all have a common purpose in relation to tackling the deprivation and boosting the life chances and circumstances of everyone

who lives in Scotland, no matter in what community, but with particular regard to those who live in the most deprived and needy communities. Often, in Scotland, people's life chances are determined by where they live.

Our report has several core conclusions. We need to simplify greatly the funding regimes that provide the resources that are aimed at tackling aspects of deprivation. We need to institute robust arrangements for setting strategic priorities at both local and national levels. We need to give community planning partners much more autonomy in setting outcome targets and measures, while holding them accountable for the delivery of outcomes as well as outputs.

We need to consider new mechanisms, in particular the arrangements for employment, tendering and contracting, so that resources can be allocated with greater transparency and greater effectiveness, which would ensure that the appropriate solutions and actions were linked into the right areas or groups of people who require them. Above all, we must ensure that the application of resources is linked to effective, measurable, perceptible change in the circumstances of individuals and communities. Doing nothing or transforming nothing is not an option. We all have a shared responsibility to deal with the problem, not just talk about it. Every member of the Finance Committee would agree with that.

We considered some of the things that had been done before with respect to concentrations of urban deprivation, drawing in particular on some of the lessons that have come from the new life for urban Scotland initiative. We were told by experts that there had been an overconcentration on physical regeneration, including the refurbishment and rebuilding of areas, without the needs of the inhabitants being taken fully into account.

We would argue—our experts gave us this message—that both those things must be considered together. We need to invest in houses and the environment, but we also need to invest in people. Those two strands cannot be separated in one sense yet, unfortunately, they are all too often separated under the funding regimes that are set up. The resources that are allocated to one are all too often not matched by resources for the other. There is no properly thought-through process for how capital or resource investment can impact on the areas concerned, and it is not known how such a process of transformation will be monitored and measured in the longer term.

There are some splendid examples of places in which, almost by default, that process has taken place positively. I am thinking of the regeneration that has taken place in greater Easterhouse, in which my colleague Mr McAveety has been

involved. There are other examples in Pollok, in which the Deputy Minister for Communities has been involved. All too often, however, the application of resources has not delivered the intended results. We must identify where things are working effectively and where they are working less effectively, and we must learn lessons and draw conclusions from that.

The Wise Group—in which, as I said, I have an interest—and various other voluntary organisations have a considerable contribution to make, especially as they are unencumbered by institutional structures that might limit their freedom of action. They are able to innovate and respond in ways that local councils and health boards cannot. Voluntary organisations are not responsible for running mainstream services and they can focus their attentions differently.

Institutions such as local authorities and health boards must begin to consider how they disburse money through contracting and tendering arrangements if other organisations are better equipped or better placed to deliver. The focusing of attention on deprivation should be properly transparent; institutions should not say that they are doing that while not actually doing it. There has been a problem with that.

One of the consequences of devolution has been the successive disruptions to local government. There has been a disabling impact from that, in some ways. The natural response of institutions that are subject to change is to try to ensure that the buses—or some equivalent—run on time and that mainstream services are protected, because those are the services for which councils are statutorily responsible. That is where resources are most closely maintained.

The unfortunate consequence is that the targeted services, which often focus on tackling deprivation, become an afterthought or sideline—something that might be remembered at the end of the day, rather than at the start. I am talking about services that are not the mainstream responsibility of anybody. Tackling deprivation is not the mainstream responsibility of the education service, the health service or housing providers, yet all those agencies have, in a sense, been given a responsibility to do that.

Let us identify which organisation is responsible; ensure that its responsibility is clear; identify what outcomes it—or the organisations with which it is in partnership—is expected to carry forward; and ensure that it does so. We must ensure not just that we are getting value for money—although that is crucial from the Finance Committee's point of view—but that we are delivering effective change. All too often, that has not happened, which is an issue.

We have to be realistic and hard with ourselves and acknowledge that the kind of transformation that we seek is not necessarily easy for people to achieve. All too often, deprivation is not mapped out in the way that we need it to be if we are to tackle it effectively. We say that we are doing something, but we are not quite clear what it is or how much change we can effect. As a result, people have unrealistic expectations that are never met, which is disappointing to the individuals or communities who expect to get the help that they have been promised.

We have to be rigorous in setting realistic targets and tracking our progress in moving as fast as we can towards agreed outcomes. The instruments that we apply and the mechanisms that we put in place must be the most appropriate ones.

There is a resource issue. We are not talking only about getting resources into a more effective package; we need to target more resources towards areas such as Glasgow, West Dunbartonshire, Inverclyde and Dundee, which have higher levels of multiple deprivation. The deprivation that is experienced in those places is different from that which exists in other parts of Scotland. I am not saying that rural deprivation or deprivation in places such as Milngavie and Bearsden, which I represent, does not exist, but it is of a different character and we must tackle it in a fundamentally different way. We tackle such deprivation not on an area basis, but by providing better, more targeted services.

We need to focus on Glasgow in particular; Glasgow needs our help. We must acknowledge that if Scotland is not to be disfigured by deprivation, we must take the most appropriate action. I hope that the report and the debate that it will generate will be a catalyst for change.

I move,

That the Parliament notes the recommendations contained in the Finance Committee's 5th Report, 2006 (Session 2): *Cross-cutting Expenditure Review of Deprivation* (SP paper 536).

14:48

The Minister for Communities (Malcolm Chisholm): I am pleased to make preliminary comments on the recommendations of the Finance Committee report, but I emphasise that ministers are keen to hear Parliament's views on these important issues before providing a full response. Today's debate provides the opportunity for members to express their views and I am sure that it will make a constructive contribution to our response.

We welcome broadly the overall thrust of the committee's report, which focuses on outcomes,

the importance of mainstream budgets, simplifying funding streams and getting policies and budgets to work together more effectively. We share that agenda. We also wish to ensure that expenditure delivers real change on the ground. We do not want simply to stop areas or people's lives getting worse, but to transform them for the better with effective, measurable changes, to use Des McNulty's words.

I turn to the first of the committee's specific recommendations. We acknowledge fully that deprivation exists in different forms in different places in Scotland and that it has an individual and an area dimension, both of which must be tackled. The Scottish index of multiple deprivation, which the report mentions a great deal, has the specific purpose of identifying relative concentrations of multiple deprivation throughout Scotland, but it is by no means the only measure of deprivation that the Executive uses. We use the index for policies and programmes, such as the community regeneration fund, whose aim is to tackle or take account of multiple deprivation. We make no apology for focusing on the geography of poverty in that way.

Mike Rumbles (West Aberdeenshire and Kincardine) (LD): Will the minister acknowledge that the committee pointed out in its report that

"a majority of individuals and families who are deprived in Scotland do not live in the 15% most deprived communities"?

Malcolm Chisholm: I think that I said a few seconds ago that deprivation has individual and area dimensions, both of which must be tackled. That is our position.

The voluntary sector is the subject of the committee's third recommendation. We fully acknowledge that the voluntary and social economy sectors play a vital and increasing role in tackling deprivation, and we want to support and enhance their role by addressing some of the funding issues that the committee identified. That is what the strategic funding review of the voluntary sector and the funders forum aim to do.

The strategic funding review aims to improve the availability, effectiveness and sustainability of voluntary sector funding. A commitment by the Executive and COSLA to move towards three-year funding packages, action to encourage stronger relationships between the voluntary sector and local public bodies so that successful approaches that have been piloted in the voluntary sector can be mainstreamed and a determination to ensure that the voluntary sector is engaged in the early stages of policy development both nationally and locally have stemmed from the review. Those actions and the work of the funders forum, which brings together funding organisations such as the Big Lottery Fund and local and central

Government, will help to address the issues that the committee raised.

We accept the need to simplify funding streams, which was another key concern of the committee—indeed, doing so is a central part of our efficient government plan and the overall reform of public services. As a result, we will actively consider proposals for merging or simplifying funding streams as part of the spending review process. However, we must bear it in mind that some funding streams, such as the working for families fund, relate to pilot programmes in which we are working with local partners to explore new approaches to particular issues and to assess their effectiveness. Once we and they have a clearer idea of what works, we can consider simplifying or mainstreaming such funding.

Mr John Swinney (North Tayside) (SNP): Will the minister take an intervention?

Malcolm Chisholm: I will try to take an intervention by the member in a moment, but I must first make progress, otherwise I will not be able to say everything that I want to say in the nine minutes that are available to me.

We have made some progress on simplifying funding with the community regeneration fund, which is a single fund that replaced the social inclusion partnership fund, the better neighbourhoods fund and the tackling drug misuse fund and their separate reporting processes from April last year. On the back of the regeneration statement, we will consider how regeneration resources across the Executive can be better aligned and consolidated.

We will consider how local government funding takes deprivation into account. We agree that where deprivation is a driver of expenditure, it is important that we take proper account of it. We are therefore committed to working with COSLA to review the deprivation weightings in the core local government finance settlement, as the committee recommended. We will do so in time for the next settlement.

Shona Robison (Dundee East) (SNP): Will the minister take an intervention?

Malcolm Chisholm: I will give way to John Swinney in a moment, but I need to make progress before I do so because I have only four and a half minutes left.

We welcome the committee's emphasis on the importance of mainstream resources in tackling deprivation—indeed, we are clear that the mainstream budgets of local government and the health service, among others, matter most of all. Specific funds such as the community regeneration fund and the working for families

fund can and do make a real contribution to people's lives, but the mainstream budgets can make the most difference.

Regeneration outcome agreements are not just about the community regeneration fund—they are about getting community planning partners to work together to identify how the fund and their own services and resources can deliver better outcomes for the most deprived communities. We fully accept that regeneration outcome agreements have not yet bent the spend as much as we would have liked, but, given the fact that they have been operational for less than a year, it is premature for the committee to conclude that they are incapable of doing so. We will, of course, consider what else can be done to help regeneration outcome agreements to bend the spend more effectively, and we will review the issue as part of the evaluation of the ROA process.

We welcome the committee's focus on outcomes and performance management—indeed, such thinking lay behind the introduction of regeneration outcome agreements. As I have said, regeneration outcome agreements are not just about the community regeneration fund. They are also about partners' wider resources, analysing need and developing a well-thought-out strategy to address need, engaging communities and shifting away from the old focus on individual projects to a much greater emphasis on outcomes—on what actually changes in the fields of employment, crime and health—rather than on only physical regeneration, as Des McNulty emphasised. Regeneration outcome agreements are about providing a robust framework for monitoring progress towards outcomes and, in turn, the effectiveness of interventions and expenditure.

Mr Swinney: Will the minister please explain why it has taken the Executive so long to discover that outcomes actually matter to people?

Malcolm Chisholm: We have had the regeneration outcomes in place for the best part of two years. They were announced on the back of the last spending review in 2004. More work will be done on outcomes, which will be announced when the Minister for Finance and Public Service Reform talks about the public service reform package in the near future. We are also in discussion with COSLA about how we might achieve greater focus on outcomes.

The First Minister and the Minister for Finance and Public Service Reform have encouraged local authorities and their partners to come forward with proposals for new and better ways of working together for shared and integrated service delivery. As I said, the Minister for Finance and Public Service Reform will shortly announce his proposals for a dialogue on public service reform.

Those proposals will include discussions with public sector partners, over the summer, about strengthening our outcome approach for better service delivery.

The committee's recommendation of a single deprivation fund covering individual and area deprivation is an interesting one. It could achieve a better balance between national and local priorities; it could simplify funding and reporting; and it could lead to better joining up of individual and area approaches. I am sympathetic to the principle, but we must be careful not to dilute the impact of deprivation funding. Crucially, we must ensure that the needs of the most deprived communities are not sidelined for the sake of administrative simplicity.

We know that people who live in the 15 per cent most deprived neighbourhoods face particularly acute and reinforcing problems. Our social focus report showed that 16 to 19-year-olds in those areas are more than twice as likely as those in the rest of Scotland not to be in education, employment or training; that working-age people in those areas are four times as likely to be on income support; and that the rate of premature death in those areas is nearly twice that for the rest of Scotland. We and others must tackle that geography of deprivation if we are to have a significant impact on deprivation in Scotland as a whole.

Shona Robison: The minister will have seen from the report that Dundee's position has worsened relative to the Scottish average on all four deprivation indicators. What messages of reassurance can the minister give that there will be any change or difference in the Administration's policy programme to make that situation better? What reassurance can he give other than warm words?

Malcolm Chisholm: Our whole approach, as I am describing it, is to focus on areas in which there is most deprivation. Some improvements have been made in those areas but we are, of course, seeking to take more effective action. That is why we have moved the focus of deprivation spend to regeneration outcome agreements, and there will be lots of other developments. The flow of our policy developments is consistent with many of the committee's suggestions, which is why I am already indicating that there will be further action in terms of outcomes. I am sure that Shona Robison knows about the new actions that are being taken in health, which is her portfolio.

There is a concerted programme of policy action to address those difficult issues of the most deprived areas. Concentrations of poverty are particularly difficult to shift, which is why we are placing an emphasis on the geography of poverty and why we will not give way to those who say

that we should concentrate only on individual poverty. We must address the poverty of place as well as the poverty of individuals and families, wherever they live.

The Finance Committee has rightly focused on the issue of expenditure. That is undoubtedly crucial to tackling deprivation, but it is not the whole story. Tackling deprivation is also about changing the way in which we and others work. It is about ensuring that a joined-up approach is taken at the centre and on the ground; it is about focusing on what matters; and it is about linking opportunity and need, which was the crucial theme of our recent regeneration statement. That is highly relevant to Shona Robison's question.

We have more work to do on the issues, but our approach to closing the opportunity gap, to regeneration and to community planning provides a strong foundation. I thank the Finance Committee for its work on this important issue and I look forward to a productive debate.

14:59

Christine Grahame (South of Scotland) (SNP): I commend the Finance Committee for a unanimous, robust and uncompromising report. I acknowledge Des McNulty's sincerity; nevertheless, it is depressingly familiar to read again that what is required in the committee's overall conclusions and recommendations has been discussed in Parliament for nearly seven years. I am disappointed that my amendment to that end was not accepted.

Paragraph 179 of the report is about simplifying funding streams. That issue has been raised time and again during the seven years of the Lib-Lab coalition; to be quite frank, it is a disgraceful squandering of resources that should go to front-line services. The Executive has five departments and agencies that are responsible for 10 different funding streams, with a wide variety of eligibility criteria—that is from the committee report—and it is, to put it mildly, a bit of a bureaucratic quagmire. For example, there is the bureaucracy that is related to the community regeneration fund; the report refers to it as "massively disproportionate". I accept what the minister said about that being interesting—he should take it up immediately. Ten different funding streams could be amalgamated into one simplified fund.

Again, there is the familiar issue of short-term funding. I quote from a Social Inclusion, Housing and Voluntary Sector Committee report from 2000:

"the Committee has concluded that, in the longer term, significant and sustained investment will be required which specifically sets out to tackle poverty and social exclusion."

I have another quotation from a Justice 1 Committee report from 2003:

"The Committee recommends that funding arrangements should ensure that service providers receive the funding they require on a long term basis without the requirement to submit a large number of bids every year".

I have no doubt that those recommendations have been made elsewhere.

Over the years, many of us have harped on about how the Scottish index of multiple deprivation fails remote and rural areas; that point was raised by Mike Rumbles. It is important to note that the majority of deprived individuals and families live in the 85 per cent of communities that do not get touched by that index and so are deprived of funding. Paragraph 95 of the report notes that

"only one of the ten Closing the Opportunity Gap targets directly measure whether the gap is closing."

That one target is target J; what is the point of the others? What is the point in a target that cannot be measured?

Let us look at the crux of the matter, which is Communities Scotland. What does it cost, what does it do and do we need it? Communities Scotland's mission statement is

"to work with others to ensure decent housing and strong communities across Scotland."

In 2002-03, Communities Scotland cost £343.8 million and in the current year, it will cost £736 million. It has cost a total over the period of £2.2 billion. How much of that actually has trickled down to front-line services?

The report also raises the conflict of interests in Communities Scotland, which the report says is

"simultaneously strategic partner, project sponsor and adjudicator."

Why does the minister not do away with it altogether and take back responsibility for what will be delivered from the proposed single deprivation fund?

I wanted to leave time to quote from Anne-Marie Smith, who is a single parent, and Maureen West, both of whom gave compelling evidence to the Communities Committee last week. Although that evidence has not yet been published, I have listened to the recording of it and will reproduce it here to the best of my ability. It is people like them to whom the minister must answer.

Maureen West said, "We can start projects up, such as after-school care for low-income families and people trying to get back into education, and what happens? We got it up and running and got initial funding so that the places were free, then we got less and less, so the cost went up and now it's only workers who have children who can afford the scheme. The rest are left high and dry. The community gets jaded, and I think that's what's

happening in our area. The community planning partnerships are changing and it seems to me that every so many years, we take this notice down off the wall, we put another one up and the same people have to start all over again, so communities are losing faith in the Executive and their local representatives, because they are in the fallout area of this."

I am sure that everyone on the Communities Committee will agree that even more compelling was Anne-Marie Smith's frank evidence on the poverty trap. She said, "I've got all the skills and no one's listening. Do they think I'm stupid? If I've felt like that, how do other people feel?"

On income support, she said, "That extra £20 per week more money to survive on because the Government is not listening—we're not sick, and we don't want to be classed as sick, but some people feel it's the only way they can survive just now." In some areas of Glasgow, two in five adults are claiming incapacity benefit. That is 191,000 Scots.

Anne-Marie went on, "They are throwing them pills, not looking at the deeper problem. They need education and a bit more understanding. Even if they go to the doctor, they are being thrown tablets but they need more education and understanding to become part of society. By the time your children get older you've lost your skills. There's a lot of anger in my community as well about the haves and the have-nots. I feel it is a shame."

Anne-Marie also spoke about child care. Despite lottery funding, they still have to pay for the rooms. That is a crucial issue for people who are literally on the breadline. Even for mothers and toddlers groups, mothers need to chip in for the toy fund.

She spoke of her daughter, who left school at 16, jobless. She thought through her options for her daughter and decided to commit benefit fraud so that she could pay the bus fare for her daughter to go to the Prince's Trust. Therefore, she kept claiming her family allowance, which she is now honestly paying back. "Am I to be punished?" she asked. "What was I to do?"

Later, she described the anger of the young, especially when they perceive asylum seekers as receiving unfair assistance. "They get bus passes. Why do we need to pay fares to school?" She continued, "You can feel the young ones. It is building up and building up and there are no resources for them to say, 'You might get it.'" She said, "It is a case of them getting angry. We are breeding angry children who will become angry adults. This is something that we need to watch. I've got two children and I can see it in them. They're growing up thinking that they've got nothing." She has told herself that she has grown

up to teach her children how to learn to be poor. She says "We need to sort it out. We need to listen."

My advice to the minister is that he should, as well as reading the Finance Committee's report and taking on board its many valuable recommendations and my own recommendation on Communities Scotland, read the *Official Report* of last week's Communities Committee meeting. I suggest that he also listen to that young woman and then ask himself whether his deprivation policies are delivering.

15:06

Derek Brownlee (South of Scotland) (Con): I thank all those who have been involved in the report of the Finance Committee's inquiry, which was the first major committee inquiry in which I have participated. I thank everyone, from the clerks to the various witnesses who gave evidence on many occasions. I also thank those who participated in the informative site visit to Glasgow, where we had the opportunity to see for ourselves the problems that Des McNulty mentioned and that will no doubt be described by other members later today.

The report is useful. Unlike Christine Grahame, I am not jaded by the experience of having read and seen it all before—perhaps, in time, that will come—but I believe that the report is a useful contribution. I am grateful for the tone of the minister's introductory remarks, because it is important that the recommendations in the report be treated seriously and acted on. If they were simply to be placed on a shelf and forgotten about, that would be a great problem.

As other members have mentioned, deprivation is not a uniform, Scotland-wide problem. As Des McNulty said, the deprivation that exists in Glasgow is different from that which exists in rural areas. In whatever constituency or region we represent, we can probably all find pockets of deprivation with individual problems that need individual solutions. Therefore, we should not necessarily look for a uniform Scotland-wide solution. We need not so much Scottish solutions for Scottish problems as we need a set of local solutions for local problems.

In my first speech in Parliament last June, I raised the issue of rural deprivation. Quite simply, that form of deprivation is more familiar to me than are some of the problems of urban centres, so I am heartened that the committee report takes cognisance of rural deprivation. In many parts of the Borders, where I grew up—despite what some anti-railway campaigners might say—we have, and have had for some time, tangible and sustained deprivation. We have real poverty, with

people on low incomes and few opportunities. We could talk about that problem until we are blue in the face, but we need to change the situation and make an impact, which is why I hope that the minister will give serious consideration to the recommendations in the report.

The report's most fundamental and important recommendation is on the need for clarity of outcomes. We need to ensure that money that is spent on tackling deprivation delivers outcomes. Unusually, the report does not say that no money is being spent on the problem or that the Executive does not care about it; rather, the problem is that the money does not seem to be making a difference or delivering the outcomes that are needed.

In considering deprivation, we need to be conscious of what can be achieved. We need to be realistic about what the Executive can do to tackle deprivation, because not only the Executive can make a difference on the issue. We need to consider what the Westminster Government, local organisations, individuals and voluntary groups can do to tackle the problems.

One of the most fundamental points that were made by the groups that took part in evidence-taking sessions was that they were concerned less about the volume of spending—they did not say that there was not enough money—than they were about keeping hold of it. Many voluntary groups gave powerful evidence on the cycle of having to reapply for funding and the resources that are consumed in bidding repeatedly for money, rather than in delivering the services that they exist to provide. We need to address that while maintaining a contractual approach and ensuring that we achieve outcomes. I do not claim that that will be easy, because we must ensure that we get value for money and that money is spent effectively, but it is fundamental. Some of the evidence that we received on the proportion of time that many groups have to spend applying for funding was depressing.

I said that the problem is not uniform: there is not a single magic solution that we can switch on to sweep away deprivation, but a load of different solutions. One that has the biggest impact is the availability of work. In many areas, including urban areas, the lack of work and opportunity is one of the key contributors to sustaining deprivation. That problem needs to be tackled, but it cannot be tackled simply by spending—Christine Grahame made the point that we need to give people education and opportunity. The majority of people who are living in poverty in Scotland today would like to get out of it, if possible. It is incumbent on government at all levels to give them that opportunity.

I move on to what we can do to support the voluntary sector. If we can move towards a much more contractual system, the voluntary sector should find it easier to apply for and sustain funding and to build relationships with funders. That will ensure that organisations are aware of what they are doing and can share good practice on what does and does not make an impact. One of the depressing themes of the evidence was that, for all the good intentions that exist, there is no concrete evidence that the money that the Executive has spent on tackling deprivation has raised one individual out of poverty. It may have done so, but there is no evidence for that. The point that John Swinney made in his intervention during the minister's speech was absolutely right—it is outcomes that matter. Unless we can measure where we start and where we end up, we will be in a dark hole when it comes to assessing whether any progress is being made. That point applies not just to this issue, but to an awful lot of what the Executive does.

Christine Grahame's speech was very powerful—it was interesting to hear evidence that has been given to the Communities Committee. She will have seen some of the localised problems that exist in the region that we both represent. I hope that in a few years' time I will not have become as jaded and cynical as she is—

Christine Grahame: I am not jaded.

Derek Brownlee: I am sorry for calling the member “jaded”, but I will stick with “cynical”, if she does not mind.

Potentially, this is a very useful report. It must not sit on the shelf—it needs to be translated into tangible actions. Today we heard a lot of warm words from the minister and I am grateful to him for the tone of what he said, but we need to know that the report will be transformed into tangible outcomes that will change people's lives. It should not be about making people feel better as they live in deprivation, whether in a deprived area or as individuals, but about moving people out of deprivation. Unless that happens, all the money that we spend will be aimed more at salving our consciences than at delivering real change. I hope that the minister will propose some more concrete solutions, if not later today then during the summer recess.

15:14

Mr Andrew Arbuckle (Mid Scotland and Fife) (LD): Although there can be few less eye-catching titles than “Cross-cutting Expenditure Review of Deprivation”, I am glad that the Finance Committee was not put off by the title. The committee did good work into the effectiveness and efficiency of support spending in tackling

deprivation. I am pleased that we are debating this important matter today.

Like Derek Brownlee, I found the visits to areas where work to tackle deprivation is being carried out to be extremely helpful in informing some of the committee's conclusions. I was not alone in being impressed on those visits by the enthusiasm and energy of many of the people who are involved in that sphere of work.

As the Finance Committee convener said, tackling deprivation is a major area of work and concern. More than £1 billion—4 per cent of the total Scottish Executive budget—is spent annually on various schemes and initiatives. As the convener also said, we need to be assured that we are getting results for that level of investment.

It is not all about money; it is also about education, ethos and changing attitudes. If we are serious in our desire to help to eradicate the worries of people who for whatever reason live in areas of deprivation, the recommendations in the report should be picked up.

Members who have been local authority councillors or who have worked in local voluntary organisations will be well aware of the complexities of the various support schemes. However, they will be more aware that considerable resources are expended in accessing those funds. That alone is an indictment of the present multistream approach to deprivation funding. Currently, there is a danger of applicants sinking in a sea of multiple indices. Although the minister's promise to simplify that is welcome, I worried when he said that administrative simplicity was not all that should be considered. I recommend more administrative simplicity.

I support fully the proposal to set up a single deprivation fund and thereafter to leave it to local organisations and authorities to access that one-stop shop for deprivation support. I accept the City of Edinburgh Council's view that more definition is required for that single fund and that more work is needed on objectives, scale and distribution.

Christine Grahame: Andrew Arbuckle agrees with the establishment of a single deprivation fund to be accessed directly by local authorities, but does he think that there is a role for Communities Scotland or could we simply get rid of it and let the minister take responsibility for the fund, rather than pass it to another agency?

Mr Arbuckle: I will address the role of Communities Scotland in a moment.

It is not easy for the Scottish Executive to know the circumstances in all areas or sectors. It is therefore logical and correct that more autonomy be delegated to local authorities to ensure more effective support spending. As the report

concludes, that should also allow for partnership funding from the local authorities and other public bodies.

I am uneasy about the role of Communities Scotland in dealing with deprivation. As was outlined previously, local authorities have better first-hand knowledge of local circumstances and are therefore better placed to set and allocate funding. The Executive should have the primary role in assessing the outcomes that follow support funding. The role of Communities Scotland tends to complicate and confuse matters.

One of the more dispiriting findings of the Finance Committee was that some top-class projects are jeopardised because of the inability of public bodies to work together. The recommendation that more funding should be based on contractual outcomes would help to ensure that funding is efficient, and that it provides a long-term benefit and does not become a short-term fix to a problem. One of the most negative features of the current system is that short-term funding leads to short-term thinking. One of the organisations that gave evidence to the committee—the Jeely Piece Club—stated in its submission that year-to-year funding remains the biggest hurdle for voluntary organisations. As one person who works with and is used to three-year funding packages has remarked to me, the first year is used to establish the project, the second sees it beginning to operate effectively, but the third is dominated by a search for the next tranche of support.

I am pleased to support the findings of the Finance Committee on how this country could better deal with deprivation. However, I end with a personal plea, which is for recognition that deprivation is not confined to cities and urban areas. As other members have noted, many needy people currently live outside the present deprivation fences. After all, although it inevitably affects fewer people, deprivation in rural areas can often be more acute. I hope that the Finance Committee's recommendations are accepted, and I welcome the minister's initial sympathetic response.

15:20

Mark Ballard (Lothians) (Green): In its inquiry, the Finance Committee tried to tackle the really big question of how we deal with the concentrations of multiple deprivation that continue to blight Scotland. For me, the key is capacity building in communities and the development of community-led initiatives. The committee heard a sad tale of the ineffectiveness of Government agencies and local authorities in tackling deprivation over the years. However, there are no short cuts to dealing with the matter.

We must acknowledge that deprivation has social and economic roots, which is why—as Des McNulty said—investment in infrastructure on its own, although welcome, will not tackle the problem.

This report is important because it attempts to unpick the current system of Government spending on tackling deprivation and to find out how it is working. It is abundantly clear that the system is overcomplicated and that the roles of certain Government agencies have led to real conflicts of interests. As Christine Grahame pointed out, the committee found that 10 different funding streams spread across five different departments and agencies are targeted at tackling areas of deprivation—and that they are additional to all the other funding that is being targeted at household deprivation. The system must be sorted out, and the Executive must be clearer about how it funds ways of tackling deprivation. That said, I was gladdened to hear the minister's comments on the matter and I hope that future finance committees will be able to assess and report positively on the Executive's steps to simplify the very confusing system of funding.

We must also reflect on the role of agencies. Andrew Arbuckle and Christine Grahame highlighted the role of Communities Scotland, which not only funds projects but helps to deliver and monitor them. I believe that that represents a real conflict of roles. Communities, not agencies, should take the lead in determining how Government money should be spent. Moreover, we must clarify the real role of Communities Scotland—which, after all, began life as a housing agency—in dealing with deprivation.

Throughout our inquiry, I was impressed by the way in which community organisations and social enterprises were making a genuine difference on the ground. They offer long-term solutions to the roots of deprivation and they need support and recognition. As other members have made clear, we must end the system of short-term funding and the requirement on groups to keep finding innovative approaches in order that they can secure new tranches of money. The constant desire for innovation means that successful projects suffer from having to be reinvented and real opportunities for continuity are missed. By taking the contractual approaches that are set out in the report, we can ensure that groups on the ground get the best out of Government funding.

Such groups are most effective in tackling health deprivation, which is one of the key measurements in the Scottish index of multiple deprivation. Through community health initiatives and other community development health projects, we can begin to tackle some of the social problems that are associated with ill health. For example,

whatever their life circumstances or wherever they live, if people lack cooking skills, they will become reliant on processed and takeaway food and other unhealthy options. As a result, we need to tackle social change and to invest in infrastructure. However, community health projects are often the first services that are cut by local authorities in an inclement financial climate. I am concerned that such soft projects, which do a great deal to tackle the social causes of deprivation, will disappear entirely. I hope that the minister will agree that community development approaches are vital in areas such as tackling health deprivation, and that they need to be properly funded as part of any joined-up strategy to tackle deprivation.

As previous speakers have said, we need a better understanding of the real patterns of multiple deprivation, particularly in rural areas. One of the measurements that is used in the current Scottish index of multiple deprivation to assess whether an area is multiply deprived is the drive time to a supermarket in minutes: that is irrelevant for many rural areas and for people who do not have a car. As other members have said, the report makes it clear that most people who are living in multiple deprivation do not live in the 15 per cent of communities that are most deprived. Although I recognise that we need to tackle area deprivation as well as individual deprivation, I would like the minister to outline how we are going to match future Government spending to the full pattern of multiple deprivation, without focusing on one particular way of analysing it.

The report is welcome—it shows how complex the issue is and how difficult it is to tackle deprivation, but I hope that it will lead to improvements, particularly for groups and organisations that work to tackle deprivation.

15:26

Mr Frank McAveety (Glasgow Shettleston (Lab)): I welcome the Finance Committee's report. As a member of the committee, I thank the convener and other members for their hard work behind the scenes on producing a positive report that I hope the broader Parliament will reflect on beyond this afternoon's debate.

Like other members who have spoken, my life experience has been to have lived in, worked in, taught in and represented two of the most disadvantaged communities in Scotland, so I feel that my contribution to a debate on deprivation is as valid as anybody's. Even if we go back 120 years or more, we see from Booth's and Rowntree's work on poverty the key factors that shaped the reality of life for too many folk across the United Kingdom: worklessness, old age, ill health, poor educational attainment and, in those days, alcohol addiction. With one or two variations,

those are still the consistent themes that impact on what the sociological lexicon now terms "deprivation" and "disadvantage". The debates that took place 120 years ago among charities, churches, trade unions and socialist organisations record that a wide range of organisations agitated around those problems and the solutions to them.

Whatever their perspective, virtually everyone in this chamber arrives at the same broad conclusions: we must improve the educational opportunity of the vast mass of the population; we must create more employment opportunities; we must tackle pensioner poverty and poverty that is caused by ill health or old age; and we must ensure that individuals are at the very heart of the ways in which we improve communities, through the voluntary sector, local government or the Executive, or by allowing people to build their own social capital. The paper that the committee has produced tries to place the deprivation debate in that context, and the central theme of the committee's report is that we need to find ways in which that debate can influence the big mainstream decisions that are made by the major Government agencies.

How do we encourage educational attainment, how do we ensure good health and how do we create employment? All our agencies should be tasked with that responsibility, whether in urban Scotland or in rural Scotland. Every member will be partisan in championing his or her area, but the irrefutable evidence shows that the scale, extent, longevity and nature of deprivation in areas such as the east end of Glasgow have historically been markedly worse than other examples of deprivation in Scotland, although I am not decrying the concerns that other members have expressed.

The report says a number of important things, and the minister's initial response has been constructive. First, we need to provide coherence to ensure that the funding streams are systematic and well organised, and we must recognise that people need to be able to see beyond a year-to-year crisis about where their funds will come from.

Secondly, we need parity of esteem between all providers, whether local authority or voluntary sector providers. Unfortunately, people's experience of municipal provision has all too often been negative; it has turned them off the very services that are meant to liberate them and give them encouragement and protection. We need variety of provision, but we also need provision that is delivered within a public service ethos. The fact that even David Cameron is now utilising such language tells us that something is happening along the tectonic plates of UK politics—although maybe it is just telling us that an election is coming up in two or three years.

The second big issue is the roles of Communities Scotland and the local authorities. The report is fairly critical of the interventionist role that Communities Scotland plays, but we did not have a lot of time to look at the positive and negative role that the local authorities can play. My experience of local government is that there have been some incredible successes at local council level, including by Glasgow City Council, on which I had the privilege of serving and representing as leader. On other occasions, the experience was incredibly frustrating. Departments did not recognise the ways in which their services should shape the issues for the communities that they served.

The final big commitment that the report makes, among its many recommendations, is that the community planning model should be used to reinvigorate the debate at national level through legislation, and at local level on the role that communities and individuals should play. *[Interruption.]*

We received a welcome submission from City of Edinburgh Council in which it recognised the many different ways that poverty manifests itself. The council also recognised that poverty and deprivation are most concentrated in Glasgow, Inverclyde and Dundee. We need to address the issue in those areas while acknowledging the diversity of poverty across the city of Edinburgh. Members who represent non-urban seats also know about the level of deprivation in rural areas.

The fundamental debate is on how mainstream budgets should be changed. As many other members have, I have had representative roles at local government level. I have served on groups that led to many of the major regeneration strategies in Scotland, including the greater Easterhouse initiative, the east end social inclusion partnership, the Gorbals social inclusion partnership and the three partnerships that are now emerging under the new community planning model. I probably have regeneration fatigue, so if anyone can give me a report on how to regenerate myself, I would be delighted to read it.

What keeps me going, even amidst all the challenges, are individuals. Although people may disagree passionately with me—I have had some of the best possible barneys in such debates—they care about their neighbourhoods and areas. In fact, this very week, I have been dealing with the genuine concerns of people in the inner east end of Glasgow. Last night, 100 people in Calton were prepared to say that that they want to transform their area.

Two big issues need to be addressed if we are to achieve such transformation. First, as the minister said in his written response to the report, the Executive is planning to review the deprivation

weightings. The review will have consequences for every member in terms of allocations. In his winding up, I ask the minister to say whether the review will take into account the six areas that the committee identified as not being given recognition in the weightings. I refer to community education, services for people with disabilities, the independent living fund, sports and swimming facilities, recreation services and libraries, all of which contribute substantially to the quality of life issues that matter irrespective of whether a person lives in rural or city Scotland.

[Interruption.]

One of the great sayings of Jennie Lee from when I was younger was on arts funding. She said that she needed to find lots more money and then have a period of silence. The minister may want to reflect on that in terms of regeneration funding.

I will close on a positive note. Nearly 30 years ago, the great eastern area renewal project was established. Its main objective was to deal with the appalling slum housing in the inner east end of Glasgow. By and large, the quality of housing in that area is markedly better today than it was 30 years ago, particularly in the Calton and Bridgetown areas. However, an undercurrent of poverty, disadvantage and worklessness remains a persistent feature of those neighbourhoods. We need to try to change that, and change it dramatically.

The gateway project will be launched next week. As the minister said a few months ago, that project marks a major commitment to regeneration in Glasgow. The debate that should underpin the launch should be coherent. We need to engage fully with the citizens in the east end of Glasgow and beyond on the role that they can play in shaping their areas. If people engage in that debate and read the recommendations that the committee made in its report, we will go a significant way towards addressing concerns and recognising our common commitment in saying that poverty is something that scars not only the individual, but all those who care about the needs of communities. If we can do anything in Scotland, we should shift the debate so that the neediest people not only can be heard but are given the proper support that they require and deserve.

I commend the report.

The Deputy Presiding Officer (Trish Godman): I remind members that their mobile phones should be switched off and not just left in silent mode.

15:35

Ms Sandra White (Glasgow) (SNP): I welcome the recommendations in the Finance Committee's

report. Des McNulty's speech was very honest and I look forward to hearing the minister's response. I sincerely hope that the Government will consider seriously the recommendations and implement most of them, because the report is good and gets to the heart of the matter.

If Frank McAveety wants regenerating, he should fight for independence for Scotland. I am sure that independence would regenerate not just Frank McAveety but his constituency, Shettleston, too.

The statistics on deprivation throughout Scotland—particularly in Glasgow, which I will come back to—demonstrate the need for a serious overhaul of the funding system, as the Finance Committee acknowledged. Given that 22 of the 25 poorest and unhealthiest areas in the UK are in Scotland, it does not take a genius to realise that the system is not working. No amount of reports and spin can alter that.

As we approach the 300th anniversary of the acts of union we should think about what Scotland gained from the union. Scotland has the highest percentage of poor, deprived and unhealthy areas in the UK—that is the legacy of 300 years of the union for the people of Scotland.

Glasgow is a fantastic city and the driving force of the Scottish economy, but a third of the city falls within the 5 per cent most deprived areas in Scotland, accounting for seven out of the country's 10 poorest areas. Life expectancy figures in the city are the lowest in Scotland. As Frank McAveety knows well, on average men in Shettleston do not reach the pensionable age of 65, let alone the pensionable age of 68 that is his Government's new policy. The Labour Party should think about that. We should not ignore the fact that we have had decades and decades of Labour rule nationally and locally in Scotland.

Before members try to intervene, I acknowledge that there has been regeneration in Glasgow. However, which Glaswegian can afford the £250,000 houses that are being built by the Clyde? Only a few people can afford such houses.

Mr McAveety: Does the member welcome the commitment on the Laurieston regeneration area in the Gorbals, for which I have negotiated, whereby anyone who lives in the social rented sector in the Gorbals and wants to stay in the area will have the opportunity to have an improved flat or a brand new flat in the development? Does she accept that social housing can co-exist alongside major townhouse developments for people who want to buy houses? It is not the either/or situation that the member describes.

Ms White: People have everything to contribute and can live happily beside one other. However, I know people from Laurieston and half the

population was moved out of the area before the regeneration started. Where did those people go? They should have been given the opportunity to stay in the area years ago, not just now. There is hardly anyone left in the Gorbals and Laurieston areas who was born and bred there. The same goes for Anderston and other parts of the city. I will take no lessons from the Labour Party on that point. The regeneration is a small drop in the ocean of deprivation in Glasgow, and Labour members should hang their heads in shame.

Houses that cost £250,000 and £500,000 are being built in the waterfront development. What Glaswegian can afford such a house, even if they are working? What about the people who are unemployed, to whom Frank McAveety referred? What can they look forward to? What deprivation do they face?

Sergio Arzeni, the head of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, said:

"Without sustained effort to increase employment, Glasgow will struggle to meet other economic objectives. It is not possible to develop a modern, dynamic, twenty-first century European economy ... while maintaining a position where one in three residents relies on benefits."

We need to consider that seriously.

What happened to the huge national apprenticeship scheme? I am not talking about jobs that last for just six weeks or six months. I take my hat off to Glasgow for starting an apprenticeship scheme, but there should be a national scheme throughout Scotland that offers decent jobs with decent wages.

We need an evaluation of the policies of all the agencies that are involved in regeneration and employment to find out whether those policies are working. I commend the Finance Committee's call for a review of the national priorities action fund, the excellence fund and the antisocial behaviour programme. Those must be reviewed, as they were intended to benefit deprived areas but that aim does not appear to be reflected in the allocation to authorities with high levels of deprivation. That is a marvellous part of the committee's report, which I welcome. Des McNulty mentioned that the Executive is considering establishing a single deprivation fund. The Executive should establish such a fund. The minister said that he would look upon that favourably and I hope that he will do so. He has acknowledged that we need joined-up thinking. There is no point in spending money all over the place through various agencies if we do not have an outcome. However, as I said, such a review will not address all the problems of deprivation.

Money must be allocated on the basis of deprivation, not population, because Glasgow absolutely loses out with that method. I hope that

the minister will acknowledge that fact. I take on board the point that Mike Rumbles and others have made that there are many forms of deprivation, but we cannot get away from the fact that Glasgow is the most deprived area in Scotland. Something must be done to tackle that. Once we tackle the deprivation in Glasgow, we can get the powerhouse working, which I am sure will have a ripple effect throughout the economy.

An evaluation must be done of the success of funding projects. People must be taken out of poverty, ill health and deprivation, so that they can make the contribution that they want to make to their country. Most important, the only way in which we will achieve that is through independence, not through looking at reports and through small agencies here and there. It has been proved that the treaty of union is an absolute disgrace. Three hundred years down the line, let us turn the position round and let the people of Scotland be proud to be Scottish. Let us give them jobs and let them have a real and meaningful life.

15:42

Tommy Sheridan (Glasgow) (SSP): I apologise to the minister or deputy minister, but I must leave the chamber at 4.30, so unfortunately I will be unable to hear the reply to the debate.

Some fundamental problems are revealed in the Finance Committee's report. I apologise if this causes problems for the very hard-working staff of the official report, but if we examine paragraphs 5 to 8 of the executive summary, we can read about ROAs, the CRF, LOAs, CPPs, AEF, RSG and GAE. We read about jargon gone crazy and about the plethora of various funds, all of which are sought after competitively to solve the problem that everybody accepts exists, which is the grinding poverty and deprivation that far too many citizens in Scotland cannot get out of. The report has a glossary of terms that tries to get to grips with all the abbreviations. The explanation of regeneration outcome agreement—for the uninitiated, that is what ROA stands for—states:

"CPPs are obliged to set out how they intend to use the CRF alongside their own mainstream resources to deliver specific outcomes through three year Regeneration Outcome Agreements which are overseen by Communities Scotland."

Jargon has gone mad. Clearly, far too many funds are available, but there is far too little action to deliver the objectives.

I will come to the failures in the committee's report, but one important point is that it argues for a simplification of the process. We should bring the funds together and have a wee bit of practical common sense about what we are trying to achieve. At present, we have a spaghetti junction of available funds. Year after year, local authorities

and voluntary organisations have to compete for funding and get started, only to find out that they must fill in a new form just to keep the funds available.

Of course, one of the worst aspects is the number of organisations that are victims of their own success. They meet some of their objectives, but find out that some of the available funds are available only for new projects, so they cannot apply for them to keep their good work going. The report attempts adequately to get to grips with a problem that is far too complicated and diverse; it must be addressed by a concentration of minds and available funds. In my opinion, the Executive must take much more direct responsibility for such funding.

The report lets us down because it does not offer the radical solutions that are required for the problems that persist. It highlights that there has been not too little progress in dealing with poverty and deprivation across Scotland, but no progress at all in the most deprived areas of Scotland. What does the report illustrate about the deprivation indicators for Glasgow, Dundee and Inverclyde, which are identified as the most deprived of Scotland's local authority areas? It shows that between 1999 and 2003, deprivation indicators there have got worse. We have a situation in which the most deprived parts of Scotland are not moving forward at too slow a rate; they are falling further behind the rest of Scotland. The minister and the Executive must address the fact that what they have been doing is not good enough and is not delivering outcomes and solutions that tackle deprivation.

I believe that radical measures are required. Part of the report talks about some deprivation in Scotland being cross-area. It states that some of the worst deprivation is not geographically confined but exists among particular groups in Scotland, especially the elderly. Unfortunately, that group faces multiple deprivation. There has been a drop in the real value of the state pension, although the elderly must deal with a plethora of increasing bills, due to energy costs, housing costs and, of course, council tax.

I will illustrate one of the report's weaknesses. The Scottish Parliament has the power to abolish the council tax and replace it with an income-based alternative that would fundamentally and importantly improve the standard of disposable income among the elderly and other low-income households and individuals. During the debate in Parliament in February of this year on the Council Tax Abolition and Service Tax Introduction (Scotland) Bill, which I promoted, it was argued that the outcomes for which I was arguing could not be proved. I say to Des McNulty—I blame not just him, but he is the convener of the Finance

Committee—that it is unfortunate that nowhere does the Finance Committee state categorically that the Executive must get its finger out in relation to economic modelling. We do not know what the microeconomic outcome of macroeconomic changes would be. We do not know what would happen if council tax was abolished, or how that would feed in directly to individuals across Scotland. We can assume and allege, and we can argue about it, but quite frankly there is not enough econometric information available to work out the outcomes.

All the evidence that has been gathered shows that the Scottish Executive's most effective programmes and policies have been those—such as the central heating programme, free care for the elderly and free bus passes for pensioners—that do not have a means-testing tag and, instead, are universally applied. That is why the abolition of council tax, the introduction of free school meals for all pupils and the abolition of prescription charges are policies that would go to the heart of people's poverty and lack of income. That is what is required if we are really going to tackle poverty and deprivation. Unfortunately, although the Finance Committee's report attacks the spaghetti junction of labels and funds that we have, it falls down in its inability to offer the radical measures that are required if we want to tackle poverty and deprivation in Scotland.

15:51

Karen Whitefield (Airdrie and Shotts) (Lab): I congratulate the Finance Committee on its thorough report. The committee set itself a difficult task in examining the efficacy of Executive spending across departments in reducing deprivation in Scotland. There have been many attempts at large-scale, strategic initiatives to combat deprivation in Scotland. From the old urban programme to the priority partnership areas and social inclusion partnerships, Governments of various political persuasions have tried to find the most effective ways of reducing poverty and the effects of deprivation.

Indeed, as Tommy Sheridan pointed out, in the world of community regeneration, acronyms abound. We have had PPAs and SIPs and now we have the CRF and ROAs, not to mention their little brother, LOAs. It is easy to get lost in the jargon and the bureaucracy of the regeneration game, as the committee's report highlights.

However, we must remember that such initiatives should be and, in many cases, are improving the lives of those who live in our most deprived and isolated communities. I note that the report highlights concerns that the current arrangements for distributing funds still fail to tackle less concentrated areas of deprivation, such

as can be found in small pockets in some of our rural communities. There is no doubt that the current system is not perfect. However, in my constituency, under the current rules, the village of Salsburgh is included as a data zone in recognition of the problems that it faces as an isolated and poor rural village.

The report raises concerns about the ability of the community planning partnerships to use the ROA to bring more funding streams together to complement funding through the regeneration fund. I understand that concern and am aware of the pressures that each of the partner organisations faces in relation to the allocation of resources. However, Petersburn park in my constituency provides an excellent example of regeneration funding being used as a lever for additional funding from a range of agencies.

As I have mentioned in previous debates, the park is being developed by the Petersburn Development Trust, which is made up of community representatives and local people. Stage 2 of the park involves building a toddlers' play area, which will cost in the region of £350,000. Initial funding was made available through regeneration funding, which enabled the trust to approach North Lanarkshire Council, which has allocated a sum in the region of £60,000 to complement the regeneration funding. The trust has also submitted funding applications to a range of voluntary sector funders and has had success in obtaining additional funding that will allow the redevelopment of the Petersburn area to reach a conclusion. In addition, the trust has received considerable support from the staff of North Lanarkshire Council in relation to the development of the park and the work that has been done with young users of the park. Support has also been provided by the police, who are one of the key community planning partners. I believe that the project is an excellent example of how regeneration funding can be used as a stimulus and a catalyst for sustainable community regeneration.

The report highlights the problem of short-term funding that is associated with regeneration projects and suggests that a mechanism could be put in place so that successful pilot projects that meet clear evaluation criteria can be considered for long-term funding. I have sympathy with that suggestion. Some members will recall a members' business debate that I secured last year, highlighting the excellent intergenerational work that has been done in north Airdrie by project workers seconded from North Lanarkshire Council and paid for out of the better neighbourhood services fund. Unfortunately, the short-term nature of that funding meant that the staff who were involved in the project have now returned to mainstream jobs in the council.

The problem is easy to see. If a project has three-year funding, the first six months will be spent recruiting, and staff members will spend the last six to nine months trying to find more permanent jobs. That is not a stable environment for any project. I suggest that the Executive might want to work with local authorities to find innovative ways of dealing with the high staff turnover and the consequential loss of skills and experience that can arise as a result of short-term project funding. Perhaps councils could be given the opportunity to fund a core group of staff who can develop skills and experience in regeneration-related projects and who can be used flexibly throughout a local authority area.

The Finance Committee has made some interesting and worthwhile recommendations, which I am sure the Executive will consider carefully. However, there is much to be commended in the Executive's current approach to regeneration. Many communities in my constituency are starting to see the benefits of regeneration funding. Whether it involves increased youth work provision, improved community safety or improving the environment, regeneration funding is starting to make a real difference to the most deprived communities in Airdrie and Shotts, complementing the mainstream services provided by North Lanarkshire Council and the other partner agencies that are involved in the provision of public services.

We have made a good start, and I am sure that the Finance Committee's report will make a contribution to the future funding of regeneration in Scotland.

15:57

Mike Rumbles (West Aberdeenshire and Kincardine) (LD): I congratulate the Finance Committee on doing a tremendous amount of work and on producing a worthwhile report at the end of the process. There is no doubt in my mind that it is absolutely right for work to be done at all levels of government to determine how best to assist individuals and families throughout Scotland who are less well off than most. However, it is a mistake for the Minister for Communities to focus on—to use his words—assisting deprived communities as opposed to individuals and families right across Scotland.

As I mentioned in my intervention earlier, the Finance Committee recognises on page 1 of its report that

“a majority of individuals and families who are deprived in Scotland do not live in the 15% most deprived communities”.

It continues:

“Deprivation exists in rural as well as urban areas, but unlike urban deprivation, rural deprivation cannot be tackled by focusing investment on areas where deprivation is concentrated.”

Referring to the Scottish index of multiple deprivation, the report goes on:

“the SIMD is not suitable as a basis for allocating resources to tackle rural deprivation.”

The committee rightly recognises that

“the Executive needs to simplify and better co-ordinate the funding streams it has initiated with the aim of tackling deprivation and Closing the Opportunity Gap ... the Committee recommends that the Executive should consider establishing a single deprivation fund”.

I could not agree more with that latter recommendation. The committee adds to that, advocating a single deprivation fund. However, confusingly it says that the fund

“should supplement existing area-based programmes”.

What I thought was an excellent idea from the committee, which would make the Scottish Executive's commitment to assisting deprived people throughout Scotland absolutely transparent, has been watered down and has become a confusing suggestion. How can the committee recommend a single deprivation fund and, at the same time, say that it should supplement existing initiatives? That is muddled thinking, and I for one am disappointed that the committee was not as radical as it could have been in that respect.

One of the great disappointments of Government initiatives to address deprivation is that the efforts that are made are often less than transparent and less than open. What we really need is more openness and transparency, which would allow us all to see for ourselves the true extent of Government willingness to tackle deprivation. At the moment, Government funding to local authorities is steeped in mystery and clouded by claims of full funding and counter-claims of underfunding. The funding formula for local authorities is archaic and cannot be said to be transparent in any way.

The committee seems to lament the fact that only 53 per cent of the total grant aided expenditure for our local authorities is based on population factors. Although the committee obviously had reasons for using them, I was disappointed to see that all four sample areas that it used experienced falls in their population. Authorities with a rising population, such as Aberdeenshire in the area that I represent, were not sampled to see the effects of having to manage such rises and cope with deprived individuals and families using the allocated budget.

I would have liked the committee to be a little bolder. It says that there should be a single deprivation fund, but it should mean it. If we had a much simplified system of local authority funding, based on, say, population and rurality—the costs of delivering services in rural Scotland are far higher than those in urban Scotland—and an identifiable, single deprivation fund, we would have a far more open and transparent funding system. We would be able to see at a stroke how much the Scottish Executive was allocating to tackle deprivation throughout Scotland.

Openness and transparency have been the watchwords for how we deal with things in the Scottish Parliament. We need to have real openness and total transparency when we tackle expenditure on deprivation. Only then can we have a real discussion, argument and debate about the levels of expenditure on deprivation throughout the country.

I believe that the committee has done good work in its report; I just feel that it baulked at recommending the one step that would change dramatically how we tackle deprivation in Scotland. Let us not have any caveats: the way forward is for us to have a single fund to tackle deprivation throughout the country. Only then will we be able to see whether we are doing enough to tackle deprivation for individuals and families wherever they live.

16:02

Dave Petrie (Highlands and Islands) (Con): Deprivation should concern all political parties in Scotland. If we spend our time in office without addressing the issue we will have failed the people who elected us. Deprivation is not the preserve of inner cities; it is also prevalent in rural and island areas. Accordingly, I am pleased to support the debate.

I am encouraged that the Scottish Executive has attempted to address the situation. However, on weighing up the amount of money spent and the results achieved, I see that the opportunity has, disappointingly, been wasted. It cannot be denied that huge sums of money have been invested in our most deprived areas, but multimillion-pound headline grabbers can be misleading. I am tired of hearing how much money the Government has spent; I want to see and hear hard evidence of the scale of improvements that it has made.

The closing the opportunity gap strategy, which the Executive introduced to create sweeping advances, outlined a number of means of achieving them. It referred to employability, but, in relative terms, employment has worsened in Dundee, Glasgow and Inverclyde. It referred to qualifications and skills, but in Labour-controlled

Glasgow and Liberal Democrat-controlled Inverclyde, the percentage of pupils who gained no standard grades at levels 1 to 3 has increased. I could go on, but then the debate would turn into a statistics-football match and, although I was a maths teacher, I can see beyond numbers.

My first speech in a members' business debate was on 30 May, on funding and provision in the voluntary sector. Although my colleague Derek Brownlee has discussed in greater depth the wider issues, I wish to revisit the subject in the conviction that tackling deprivation and the voluntary sector are linked. The Conservative party has argued consistently for a greater role for the voluntary sector, not because, as politicians, we do not want to deal with the issues, but in the belief that community groups are free of the bureaucratic red tape and targets that often hamper much of the good work of Government agencies.

A strong voluntary sector will help to revive the community spirit that has—sadly—declined in many of our towns and cities in recent years and will help people to take control of their own lives and to improve their communities through their own efforts. Unfortunately, the Executive has demonstrated that it prefers to rely on state control. It exercises almost complete control over the voluntary sector, which damages that sector's flexibility and effectiveness. Voluntary organisations need to apply for unpredictable funding grants each year, which prevents their planning and co-ordinating for the long term. The process also means that bureaucrats on the outside, rather than activists in the know on the inside, are given the power to decide what is good for an area. The independence and autonomy of the voluntary sector need to be increased and it must be given a role in tackling inner-city deprivation. The Government should not be all-powerful and should not be misguided into thinking that it can do everything on its own. Spending taxpayers' money wisely is commendable; wasting it is unacceptable. To waste it while the most needy in our most deprived areas continue to live in abject poverty is even worse than unacceptable.

I hope that the points that I have made about the voluntary sector will be taken into account when the Executive reviews its strategy. Doing that will do more than anything to revive our inner cities and rural areas. If it has done nothing else, the Executive's initiative has proven that the old-fashioned, top-down socialist theory that money should be thrown at problems does not work. Such an approach will not significantly change anything. Only a real overhaul of the systems and practices that are in place will go any way to achieving significant changes.

The issue is currently being considered as part of the Conservatives' social justice policy review. I look forward to that review's findings and proposals being reported and to its further clear evidence that the policies of the left do not help the poorest in our society.

Mike Rumbles: Will the member take an intervention?

Dave Petrie: No, thank you.

In conclusion, I welcome the debate, which is on a crucial issue, and trust that valuable contributions from all sides will put an end to such a blight on our society.

16:07

Dr Elaine Murray (Dumfries) (Lab): I was going to apologise to the convener of the Finance Committee for being late for his opening speech because I was meeting a minister, but I see that he is not present to hear my speech, so I may not apologise.

We all agree that deprivation is not a straightforward concept. It is not only about poverty, although income is clearly a factor. It is possibly better to say that deprivation occurs when a person has a low standard of living, which could be the result of poor housing, poor health, a lack of education and employment opportunities or poor access to services. In some cities, deprivation is concentrated in geographical areas, where it is much more recognisable. Such levels of deprivation are often self-reinforcing.

I see that the convener of the Finance Committee has returned to the chamber. I apologise to him for being late for his speech.

As we know, in rural communities, individual households that are in close proximity to very advantaged households may experience multiple deprivation. It is therefore difficult to identify where deprivation exists. As a result, there cannot be a Scotland-wide solution to tackling deprivation.

Unlike some members who have spoken, I think that the Scottish index of multiple deprivation is spatially useful in identifying areas of multiple deprivation at a council ward level. It has been used by the Executive to allocate the community regeneration fund to the most deprived 15 per cent of areas. Some people who represent rural areas seem to argue that only places such as Glasgow, Dundee and Edinburgh receive benefits, but in my constituency in Dumfries and Galloway, funding has been made available to urban areas in north-west Dumfries and Stranraer. As a result, some 400 substandard flats will be demolished and replaced by 600 houses for rent, co-ownership and ownership. That has helped a more rural community.

The funding is extremely welcome, but it does not address the fact that the majority of deprived households do not live within the most deprived 15 per cent of communities. At the same time, some of the people who live in the most deprived 15 per cent of communities are not deprived. For example, I live in north-west Dumfries, but I do not think that I am suffering multiple deprivation—although there is always the chance of my being deprived of employment in the next year or so. That is true of most communities, including urban council areas. The response to our report from the City of Edinburgh Council states that, in Edinburgh, 62 per cent of people on low incomes and 68 per cent of unemployed people live outside the SIMD-defined areas of the city. It is not just about rural areas, therefore; it is true of many cities as well.

Nevertheless, I believe that the City of Edinburgh Council may have misunderstood some of our report. It thinks that we are talking only about area deprivation in most of our recommendations and I do not think that that is the case. We are reflecting the need for the division between area and individual aspects of deprivation. It is not fair, either, to maintain that the Scottish Executive is unaware of the issue. In the minister's interim response to our report, he mentioned recent work under the closing the opportunity gap project. Last month, 22 rural service priority areas were identified using the SIMD approach combined with difficulties in accessing services due to remoteness and rurality. The minister stated in his interim response that funding will be made available to those areas.

My constituency includes the council wards of Langholm and Upper Eskdale, Moffat, Canonbie and Kirtle, and Lockerbie East. Someone travelling around my constituency would not necessarily recognise those council wards as areas in which multiple deprivation is a problem, but they are. In areas such as Canonbie and Langholm, the economy is very fragile and the communities have suffered greatly because of the decline in the textile trade, which has meant a reduction in the number of employment opportunities, coupled with the difficulties that remoteness brings in accessing services. I therefore look forward to hearing more about how the rural services priority areas will be progressed.

The committee received a range of evidence on how the SIMD should be used, if it should be used at all. Some local authorities believe that the range should be much narrower and that, if we concentrated on the most deprived 10 per cent of areas, we would focus on the areas that had the most severe problems—areas such as Glasgow, Dundee, West Dunbartonshire and Inverclyde. They believe that that would give us a clearer focus on those areas of multiple deprivation.

However, other authorities argue that the range should be wider. I think that Fife Council argued that the range should be extended to about 25 per cent. That reflects the geography of that area, where there are small fishing communities and former mining communities in which deprivation exists, which would not necessarily show up in a rigorous analysis.

Local authorities have a fundamental role in determining how local regeneration should be effected. That has been reflected in the setting up of statutory community planning partnerships whose role is to agree the three-year regeneration outcome agreements and use their allocation of the communities regeneration fund to deliver specific outcomes. However, I will argue later that how those partnerships are set up at the moment is a bit too well defined—they are not flexible enough truly to reflect the needs of their communities.

Mention has been made of whether it is possible to bend the spend. That is not a phrase that I like terribly much. We need to reflect on the relative size of the budgets. The sum of £327.8 million has been allocated to the community regeneration fund and community voices, but that is a pretty small amount compared to the £8.1 billion in aggregate external finance that local authorities receive and the £6 billion that health boards receive. At the moment, there is little evidence that the Executive is really able to bend those big budgets, although I acknowledge the minister's point that the ROAs have not been in existence for long and that we are perhaps being a bit quick in judging their ability to create a real difference.

As we have heard, the committee recommends that the Executive reviews the possibility of including additional deprivation weightings in the mainstream local government and health budgets and that it also undertakes a more fundamental longer-term review. Of course, those weightings would need to take account of the tension between area and individual deprivation. That is why the committee has also recommended that the community planning partnerships should be given more discretion in determining how the balance of available funding can be directed—whether it should be directed towards area deprivation or towards individual family deprivation. I was pleased to hear from the minister that the Executive is taking on board the committee's recommendation that the deprivation weightings should be revisited before the next spending review. That is welcome, as is the fact that it will be done within that timescale.

However, as others have said, the most crucial recommendation in the report is the bringing together of the various funding streams into one single deprivation fund. I was not quite sure of

Mike Rumbles's points, because he did not seem to think that that is what we recommended. My understanding is that that is what we recommended. A single deprivation fund will be allocated among CPPs and will supplement area-based programmes with funding to tackle the wider issues of household deprivation.

We believe that local outcomes should be agreed but that national progress should be monitored relative to a fairly narrow range of performance indicators. Having criticised the Executive on many occasions for having too many targets, we are not going to advocate setting a whole range of targets to monitor how it is getting on in this area. We would like there to be a narrow range of national performance indicators so that we can assess whether we really are making progress in tackling deprivation across Scotland.

If we could take on board the recommendations, the approach could effect real change in Scotland. I therefore commend the report to Parliament, although I accept to some extent what Tommy Sheridan said. I thought it myself when I was reading the report. We did fail the plain-speaking test and it might be difficult for people who are not familiar with some of the concepts to understand what we are getting at. We might have to take that on board in future.

16:16

Euan Robson (Roxburgh and Berwickshire (LD)): I compliment the committee on its report and the extent of the work that has gone into its preparation and publication.

I agree with Des McNulty that we often think that we know more about problems than we do about solutions. That is probably true, given what Frank McAveety described as the longevity or the chronic nature of problems of deprivation. Des McNulty also summarised the report eloquently. It is an impressive document within which there is much to ponder.

I would like to address a few points in the time available to me. The single deprivation fund is a good idea. I do not think that there is any doubt that the simplification of funding streams to which the minister referred is important. There are 10 different funding streams across five departments, so there is clearly room for progress. There is time to do that now in advance of the next spending review, which will occur immediately after the next election. The ground can be prepared and work can be progressed while we are waiting for the decisions that will come in due course.

Of course, there is short-termism in funding. Three-yearly funding is better than the old yearly regime, but within that there is still the problem where the first year means celebrating the

success of the funding, the second year means getting on with the business and the third year means trying to find more funding for the future. We all know that and we have to find mechanisms to make that system work better. Perhaps a longer, more outcomes-based type of funding is important to the achievement of a better working regime for voluntary organisations and all those that rely on substantial tranches of Executive funding.

Having had some experience of previous systems, there is no doubt that the SIMD is an improvement. As Elaine Murray said, it goes down to council ward level and it can make important identifications. However, it should be treated as what it is: it is an index and it does not describe the whole picture. If policy is based on that understanding, so much the better. I agree with Elaine Murray that in some areas, where we all know that there is deprivation but it does not appear to be there as we drive around or pass through the area, the SIMD is deficient in its ability to make that identification.

Mark Ballard: Does Euan Robson agree that the use that is made of the index is not the only problem, as there are real problems with some of the index's components, such as the driving distance to the nearest supermarket?

Euan Robson: Yes, there are difficulties. Let me give a further example. In rural areas where no public transport is available, a cheap car is essential. However, ownership of a car can exclude a person from the index of multiple deprivation. We should not describe people as not suffering deprivation just because they live in circumstances where they need a car, but we do not yet have a sufficiently sophisticated measure that can identify that. Therefore, I accept to a degree the point that Mr Ballard made.

The committee report makes an interesting point at paragraph 13 of the executive summary, which highlights the need for a longer timeline for managing reductions in assistance from central Government and grant aid to local authorities in areas where the population is declining. Without question, that mirrors the problems of sparsity of population in rural communities. The difficulty is that, in areas of sparse or declining populations, the delivery of services becomes uneconomic. Ironically, there are considerable similarities between sparsity issues and the issues that face areas of declining population. The committee is right to say that we need a longer tapering effect. I believe that the Executive would do well to consider that recommendation.

Of course, as soon as we accept weightings in any kind of distribution formula, we will run into difficulties. For example, if we contrast deprivation characteristics with the aging populations that put

massive demands on certain local authorities, it is inevitable that we will eventually need to strike a balance somewhere and arguments will always arise about where that balance should be.

Much of today's debate has been about the difference between rural and urban deprivation, but any deprivation, wherever it occurs, should be an affront to all Scotland. It is as damaging to rural communities that urban deprivation exists as the reverse. However, we must of course develop different measures to cope with the different circumstances.

As the minister rightly recognised, a difficult balance must be struck between concentrating on areas in which population trends mean that deprivation levels will inevitably be highest, and focusing on deprivation that affects people in individual circumstances. It is important to ensure that sufficient resource and attention are addressed to both types of deprivation. Frankly, that is the human question. When it comes down to it, we are talking not about an abstract concept but about what is happening to people. Deprivation affects this nation's hidden talent, which we have so often failed to develop. No matter where that hidden human talent is, the issues that prevent it from flourishing need to be addressed. It benefits the community, society and the economy to develop that hidden human talent.

Inevitably, from time to time all those questions involve issues of balance. Decisions need to be made that could have gone one way or, with a slightly different outcome, another way. However, overall, we should keep it in mind that deprivation is not just an abstract concept, but an issue that affects real human situations.

16:24

Bill Aitken (Glasgow) (Con): Debates on deprivation are of necessity fairly depressing, but some aspects of today's debate inspire in me a level of hope.

The committee is to be congratulated on producing an honest report that in some respects is quite hard hitting. That makes it all the more disappointing that, in introducing the report, Des McNulty spent some time talking about the wrong decisions of the 1980s, before giving us an interesting insight into his undoubtedly distinguished political career. I say to Des McNulty that he cannot continue to hide behind the events of the 1970s and 1980s. That message should not be lost on the Executive either. In a more positive vein, Des McNulty made the point, which is stressed in the report, that resources must be targeted and went on to deal with the issue of Glasgow, which is clearly dear to my heart.

Mr Swinney: Without Mr Aitken fearing that I am intervening to defend the reputation of Mr McNulty, does he not believe that the economic and social damage that was done in this country by the Conservative Government in the 1980s was of such a deep-seated nature that it is taking a tremendous amount of effort to recover from? Would he care to apologise for that?

Bill Aitken: Mr Swinney is again indicating that he has the nationalist tendency to live in the past. I have heard SNP members refer to events 200 or 300 years ago, such as the Highland clearances, that are still holding Scotland back. I would be more than happy at any time to debate with Mr Swinney the events of the 1980s and their positive impacts, but for him to seek to defend the actions of an Executive that has been in power for seven years and of a Labour Government that has been in power for 10 years is indicative of a paucity of political thought and of deeply embedded political prejudice.

The principal depressing feature of the report is that the issue is not a lack of resources—indeed, the Executive is to be congratulated on making resources available—but a lack of effect from those resources. That is a matter of the most serious concern. Not only does the committee appear to find that the way in which funds are allocated is, if not chaotic, extremely disorganised and inhibits organisations from using the money to best advantage, but it is apparent that for far too long outcomes have not been on the Executive's radar. The way in which it has sought to ensure that money is spent according to its diktats has been very negative. The leader of Glasgow City Council argues that the Executive should identify the areas of deprivation, provide the money and tell the council and others to deliver the outcome. That is the appropriate way forward. The bureaucratic checklists and tick boxes that we have seen time and again are simply not working.

One of the most depressing features of the debate, given the billions of pounds that have been invested in areas such as Glasgow, is that the situation has got worse. In 1999, the proportion of income support beneficiaries in Glasgow was 21 per cent; in 2003, it was 22 per cent. In 1999, the unemployment level was 6.3 per cent, but it has now risen to 6.6 per cent. Mortality rates are shameful. As Frank McAveety quite properly pointed out, in certain areas of the east end of Glasgow, average male life expectancy is something like 53 years of age. The maximum figure is 60, which is appalling. In that respect, the situation has worsened. The same applies to educational attainment. As Dave Petrie said, the number of pupils who leave school with very limited qualifications has increased. All those things have happened even though, by my calculation, about £5 billion has been put into the

equation since 1999. We are not getting a result from that investment.

Des McNulty: I point out to the member that mortality rates are not worsening, but improving significantly across Scotland. Mortality rates in the east end of Glasgow may not be improving as fast as they should, but they are definitely getting better. The same is true of unemployment rates.

Bill Aitken: Perhaps Mr McNulty is relaxed about the fact that people in Calton die at 53 and at 59 in Ruchazie, but I am not.

We have to ask the hard question: why, after all that money has been invested, does the situation appear to be worsening when, by any calculation, it should be getting better?

First, we have to look at what is going wrong, what works and what does not work. It is simple. If it is working, it should be encouraged; if it is not working, it should be changed. Secondly, as Dave Petrie wisely said, we should encourage the voluntary sector and I listened with interest to what the minister said in that respect. We can learn from the lesson of post-war Scottish housing. The housing association movement gave people responsibility for looking after their houses and it worked.

We rely on charities and should extend the use of the voluntary sector into many more areas. Let us see what it can do in drug addiction, in health and in cases of general deprivation.

Des McNulty, who declared his involvement with the Wise Group, will know that it has worked effectively over the years, given short-term jobs to many people who would not otherwise have had one and allowed them to move on to greater things. It is a real success story. If the Wise Group works, why cannot other organisations?

We have to look at simplifying funding schemes. There is clear evidence in the committee's report, from which I have taken a number of examples, of organisations such as the Jeely Piece Club that are not able to properly plan—

Christine Grahame: Does the member, who has been here as long as I have, share my dismay that we were saying exactly those things about short-term funding as early as 2000?

Bill Aitken: Absolutely. I share that view entirely and it is time to call a halt.

The minister said today in his usual manner that he will listen and look at what has gone wrong. He is clearly disturbed by a great deal of the report's content. We will not press him particularly hard today because we note that he will come back to us on the subject, at which point we will listen with great interest. However, it is clear that if so much money is invested to such little effect, the minister

and his colleagues will have some hard questions to answer from the chamber and the general Scottish electorate.

16:32

Jim Mather (Highlands and Islands) (SNP):

The debate is an important one on an urgent subject. The subject has been urgent for many years, but the committee's report represents progress. It is a sound contribution that I hope will edge Scotland closer towards getting to grips with deprivation.

The report provides guidance on how we can improve people's lives by setting solid objectives. When we met representatives of caring over people's emotions—COPE—in Drumchapel in November last year, we heard their simple, clear-cut view that the first objective is to get people into work; the second is to help people to stay in work and hold down a job; the third is to keep people well; and the fourth is to hold families together. Those are all sensible, outcome-oriented goals. We also heard the same performance and results-oriented emphasis when we spoke to the Wise Group. Already, the better players are focused on outcomes.

Des McNulty said earlier that the report is not a blueprint for change; he is right—it could not be. However, it is a basis and, I hope, a catalyst for change. I particularly welcomed his backing of the need to track realistic outcomes carefully in future. That same support came from members on the Tory benches, when Derek Brownlee put his healthy focus on outcomes and called for genuine results, which is what we are all about at the end of the day. When Andrew Arbuckle spoke about the wastefulness of multistream funding, he was speaking to the gallery and gained support throughout the chamber.

The speaker with whom I took most issue today was Tommy Sheridan. Although he made a compassionate speech, he based his vision of our future on his proposed service tax, which would result in the mass migration of the high earners who drive our economy. His plan would cause further deprivation. I find that sad, especially when local income tax is a much superior option that, I have to say, awaits Liberal Democrat support.

I was taken by the minister's positive response to the report, and hope that, especially given that outcome measurement is becoming a more accepted practice, progress will be made within what I would describe as the current constraints. However, some of his comments were rather punctured by Christine Grahame's hard-hitting approach, which highlighted a real, poignant case of how human potential can be wasted, and Sandra White's strong factual assessment of the

current position. The points that they raised must be addressed.

Indeed, the minister's response has also been punctured by the fact that we received his holding letter, which describes economic growth as a key priority, in the week in which we discovered that Scotland's economic growth since 1999 has been a mere 13.7 per cent. In comparison, economic growth in Ireland has been 55 per cent, which gives it a more material basis on which to move forward. I will not linger on my agreement with John Redwood and Des McNulty on this matter, but we need to get more people into work and create stronger economic growth.

However, economic growth alone is not the complete answer, just as establishing a single fund is not the complete answer. As Mark Ballard pointed out, the problem is as much social as it is economic. Indeed, one of the witnesses in our inquiry, Steven Purcell from Glasgow City Council, set out a worthy and focused—but, unfortunately, flawed—approach to worklessness and addiction. We need to help Mr Purcell to correct that flaw. For example, simply replacing an addict who leaves—or indeed dies in—Glasgow with a non-addicted working person can in no way be considered a successful way of reducing both worklessness and addiction.

Moreover, the danger is that, if programmes for tackling deprivation are not working, their effects can be hidden away or people can claim that they have worked, either because workless people have moved from the area or, indeed, because the lion's share of recovery in an area has been due to infrastructure. For example, in Pollok, which is the constituency of the Deputy Minister for Communities, the construction of the M77, the replacement of deteriorating public sector housing stock with private sector housing and the development of new retail facilities have all had a more dramatic effect on recovery than the local SIP.

We need to pause and think about where we are. In that regard, Frank McAveety and Derek Brownlee would be disappointed if I did not mention W Edwards Deming, the man who turned around the Japanese economy. According to his wonderful theory, the senior management in any system, be it a factory or a country, is 97 per cent responsible for output, because it dictates the product and work flow, recruits the staff and decides on the machinery, its maintenance, the raw material, the suppliers, the end price and the route to market. We must let people in deprived areas and deprived people in other areas know that the situation in which they find themselves is not their fault, and we need an approach that places a moral duty on the Executive to create

better conditions for growth, to take remedial action and to achieve much better outcomes.

As we have seen in Ireland, such an approach creates economic rewards. Charlie McCreevy made it clear that, in this respect, the key priorities must be competitiveness, skills, infrastructure and getting more people into work; however, in Scotland, we need national targets for such activity. For example, in a useful exchange that I had with the minister in committee, he appeared to agree that setting a target of perpetually increasing the number of working age people in work would pull together all the silos of Government and, if properly analysed, would allow us to see whether the figure was increasing in Scotland as a whole and in various areas.

After all, if we are unable to pull together all those targets, we get the sort of anomaly that has emerged in the Highlands and Islands. Under Willie Roe, Highlands and Islands Enterprise has capitalised on the fact that many working age people in the Highlands move out of the area to have careers elsewhere, and that has allowed Mr Roe to burnish his medals for labour participation and relatively low unemployment. In fact, what he has claimed to have done has little connection with what has actually happened.

I believe that the potential blueprint is within our grasp, but it needs more than a single fund and more, even, than economic powers. It needs continuing investment in infrastructure and early intervention for young people in schools, as we have heard in the Allander series from James Heckman. It needs the rescue of those not in education, employment or training that is being advocated by the Smith group, a level playing field across all sectors and asset-based community recovery, so that we can start to persuade communities that they have real strengths and can, if they work together, really move things forward. Above all, we need a Government that is committed to perpetual improvement and which treats not only the symptoms but the core problem of our lack of competitiveness. I therefore await the Executive's response with interest, and I commend the report to Parliament.

16:41

Malcolm Chisholm: The main focus of the debate has been on the problems and challenges that we face, and I entirely agree with the case study that was presented and with the many poignant examples that were given. Dealing with the issues of poverty and deprivation that still confront us is what drives me and many others in politics. However, it is also right, although it is not a dimension that I emphasised in my opening speech, to acknowledge briefly the progress that has been made and the successful action that is

being taken. In that respect, Karen Whitefield's speech restored a bit of balance when she described one example of an initiative in her constituency that was funded from the £33 million of community regeneration funding that was given to North Lanarkshire.

More generally, we should remember the achievement of a 34 per cent reduction in child poverty in Scotland over the past five years—way beyond the 25 per cent target that had been set. We should also remember that there are 120,000 fewer pensioners in relative low-income households—a reduction of more than half since 1997. In relation to Jim Mather's point, we should also remember the record high employment rate—not high enough, of course—of 75 per cent, which is 3.7 per cent higher than it was in 1999. There has been progress in relation to individual poverty and in relation to area regeneration. I see that progress every week of my ministerial life as I go around Scotland.

However, last year's "Social Focus on Deprived Areas" report was a stark reminder of the problems facing Scotland's most deprived communities, and we are determined to make greater inroads into deprivation across all of Scotland. We want to ensure that our investment really helps those in most need, lifting them out of poverty permanently. That is what underpins our approach to closing the opportunity gap and to regeneration. Christine Grahame complained about the targets for closing the opportunity gap, but they are all about improving the position of deprived individuals, whether in relation to employment, health or education and training. We are making significant progress and the improvements in health statistics are well known. We will launch our employability framework very soon, with some new funding, to try to reach people who are still furthest from work, notwithstanding the high levels of employment.

Christine Grahame: At paragraph 95 of its report, the Finance Committee makes the point:

"Moreover, only one of the ten Closing the Opportunity Gap targets directly measure whether the gap is closing."

I cannot see the point in having targets if we cannot measure whether the gap is closing. That is the committee's point, not mine.

Malcolm Chisholm: Because of the "Social Focus on Deprived Areas" report, we can measure very accurately how many more people will be in work in specific areas and what the health outcomes will be. The health target is about accelerating the rate of improvement in the most deprived communities, so the targets that have been set are significant.

Our recent policy statement on regeneration makes it clear that the main purpose of

regeneration is to stimulate economic growth and generate prosperity—not growth for its own sake but growth that will help people out of poverty and help to regenerate the most deprived communities. I look forward to going with Frank McAveety to the launch of the gateway project in about 10 days' time. The gateway project, along with the Clyde waterfront project, emphasises the fact that the Clyde corridor is our national priority for regeneration.

Sandra White and Des McNulty talked about Glasgow, and there is nothing more important to us in regeneration terms than the regeneration of Glasgow. We recognise the great advances that are being made in Glasgow. The Glasgow community planning partnership is beginning to bring together the partners; we recognise its strong focus on worklessness and addiction in particular. Obviously, its work comes within the framework, which was much criticised in the debate, of regeneration outcome agreements and so on. A lot of local flexibility and autonomy are built into the process, and the Glasgow CPP is showing how the community planning process can be operated to best effect.

Des McNulty, Derek Brownlee and many other members emphasised that moving people into employment is central to the agenda. The Executive agrees totally with that important point, which is also emphasised in many of our policies, including the forthcoming employability framework. Des McNulty stressed the importance of giving greater autonomy to the people on the ground, and Mark Ballard spoke about the need to develop capacity in communities. Again, we strongly support those objectives. Des McNulty also addressed the need to achieve effective and measurable change for individuals and communities. As I just indicated, regular updating of the analysis that is published in the "Social Focus on Deprived Areas" will give us accurate information on what is happening in our communities.

Des McNulty said that we should not overconcentrate on physical regeneration, which sometimes happened in the past. We should, of course, have a much broader regeneration agenda than one that focuses only on physical regeneration. I want to make it absolutely clear that we have taken that on board in our priorities for regeneration. That said, we should never ignore the importance of physical regeneration. For example, I ask the chamber to note the £386 million investment that we made in housing this year via Communities Scotland.

Communities Scotland was much criticised in the debate. Members should recognise that Communities Scotland is part of the Executive and that it is directly accountable to ministers. We can

always have the argument about whether the Executive or an agency should do something; nonetheless, Communities Scotland has a role to play.

On the ground, it is up to the community planning partnerships to decide which projects should receive funding. Those decisions have nothing whatever to do with Communities Scotland. That said, there is a role for performance management. Of course we want less bureaucracy. We will take full account of the proportionality issues that the committee raised in its report and of the need to focus on a narrower set of key outcome indicators. In terms of monitoring funding and ensuring that national priorities are followed, there is a role for a degree of performance management around regeneration outcomes.

Frank McAveety and Elaine Murray in particular emphasised that all budgets should contribute to regeneration objectives. That point is absolutely fundamental to the report's conclusions. One cannot underestimate the importance of mainstream budgets in dealing with deprivation. Mainstream budgets make significant contributions, particularly the health and local government budgets.

Frank McAveety asked whether the review of deprivation weightings will cover the six areas that the committee highlighted in its report. I confirm that the review will cover the areas that the committee identified. Mike Rumbles said that the formula could be simplified. We agree. We have made that suggestion to COSLA; the issue will be looked at.

Dave Petrie and Mark Ballard emphasised the importance of the voluntary sector. Certainly, in our vision for the sector, which we published a few months ago, we recognise the vital and increasing role that voluntary organisations play in the delivery of services. As I indicated in my introductory speech, we are committed to continuing to address the funding issues that affect the sector. We have put our money where our mouth is. For example, we have put £18 million into the voluntary sector as part of the futurebuilders initiative. The focus of that investment was very much on closing the opportunity gap. Elaine Murray helpfully reminded us of the rural service priority areas. Obviously, the committee raised concerns about rural areas, but funding the rural service priority areas is a key objective around closing the opportunity gap.

Finally, I return to the overarching theme of area-based versus individual approaches that ran through the debate. The committee hinted at the need for more flexibility in those approaches. I am sympathetic to that view. We heard both sides of the argument today. On the one hand, members

were clear that deprivation affects individuals and households as much as it affects neighbourhoods, and that it affects rural as well as urban areas. We accept that. On the other hand, we have heard about and seen the evidence of the particularly acute problems of Scotland's most deprived neighbourhoods and we know how the life chances of families are blighted by the combined effects of those problems, which were brought into sharp relief by the report, "Social Focus on Deprived Areas".

A balance must be struck between individual and area-based approaches. We will consider that balance carefully, but it is clear to us that we must address the problems of Scotland's most deprived neighbourhoods if we are to have a significant and lasting impact on deprivation. Place compounds problems of poverty, and the reinforcing tendency of concentrated poverty makes it harder to find solutions, which is why we face difficult problems, as members highlighted. We will redouble our efforts to find better solutions and we will reflect closely on the Finance Committee's important report as we do so.

The Deputy Presiding Officer (Murray Tosh):

There is a problem, in that the division bell is ringing in the chamber to alert members. Obviously we will not continue to ring the bell while Mr Swinney speaks—

Members: Why not?

The Deputy Presiding Officer: Although Mr Swinney is not one to shirk a challenge, he might resent the interruption.

We will stop ringing the bell now and we will not ring it at 4.55 pm. We do not want to detract in any way from Mr Swinney's closing remarks.

16:51

Mr John Swinney (North Tayside) (SNP): The Presiding Officer's remarks are typically generous. I am enthusiastic about contributing to the debate.

We have had a serious debate about a report that contains a serious message. There is no better way to start my speech than with the beginning of the report, where the committee says:

"Whilst there have been regeneration success stories, in other areas change has been limited or partial, preventing further spiralling decline rather than transforming the life chances of local people and the prospects for the community."

That is a sobering indictment of the situation that we have reached in our country. The Government must seriously reflect on such concern in its response to the report.

Of equal significance for the Government is the need to reflect on the statistical evidence that the

committee included in the appendices to its report, in particular the index of relative deprivation, which shows a deteriorating position in Inverclyde, Glasgow, Dundee and West Dunbartonshire—the four principal areas of multiple deprivation—in relation to income support beneficiaries and other indicators of poverty.

Of course, some of the problems are deep seated. My colleague Frank McAveety referred to the reflections of Booth and Rowntree more than 100 years ago on the implications of worklessness, alcohol, ill health and a lack of education and opportunity. However, in a modern society that has so many advantages—the young woman who led time for reflection encouraged us to think about our advantages compared with those of the women in Kenya whom she had met on her interesting exchange—why on earth are we presiding over a situation in which the problems remain so grave? I hope that the Government will reflect seriously on that point in its response to the report.

Members of all parties agreed that getting people into employment is the fastest and most effective way of tackling poverty. That unity of opinion has been refreshing. The Parliament must focus on how we bring about the greatest impact as we tackle poverty and how we succeed in encouraging more people into employment. In that context, the debate focused on three principal themes, about which the Government must learn lessons from the Finance Committee's substantial report.

First, there seems to be an innovation in Government policy, in that there is greater focus on the need to reflect on outcomes. I am delighted by that, but I am staggered that it has taken the Government so long to reach this point. The minister suggested that it was unfair of the committee to criticise regeneration outcome agreements, because such agreements have been in place for only a couple of years. The question is why on earth it has taken us so long to get round to having regeneration outcome agreements, when they should have been essential from the beginning. Several members, including the committee convener and Jim Mather, referred to the outcome-focused approach of the Wise Group, which focuses entirely on outcomes and nothing else to try to ensure that it changes individuals' life chances. I was struck by the evidence from the Wise Group, which seems to have a commendable track record.

The second theme that has run through the debate is that the principal lessons for the Government to learn are about complexity. Tommy Sheridan went through the glossary of terms that the committee included in its report and highlighted effectively the great complexity that

exists in this policy area. Elaine Murray was concerned that the committee had perhaps not passed the plain English test. However, none of the terms is the committee's; they come from the lexicon of the complex bureaucracy over which the Government presides.

On behalf of the committee, I appeal to the Government to reflect on the issue of complexity. I am reassured by the minister's comment that he intends to simplify the funding arrangements. I hope that he does that in a way that genuinely reduces complexity and bureaucracy. Today, the Government has announced another regulator to regulate regulation, which makes one begin to wonder whether we are cutting through the process or simply making the process worse. In his winding-up speech, the minister reflected on performance management. It is no use having a set of targets if we do not measure whether we are making progress. As Christine Grahame rightly said, we should have targets and outcomes that we can measure so that we know whether the execution of public policy is making any difference whatever.

The third theme, which ran through this afternoon's debate and the committee's discussions, is the difference between urban and rural poverty. Wherever poverty exists, whether in an urban or rural situation, it is a deep and human problem for the individuals who are affected and it must be tackled. The proposals in the committee's report for the establishment of a single fund to manage some programmes will assist, but we should be aware that a significant amount of money is being spent on tackling deprivation in our society and that we are entitled to more and better results for the money that we are spending. I return to the concerns that members from all parties have expressed about complexity, some of which arises from the proliferation of agencies that are involved in this policy area.

One key point in tackling poverty is the focus that we bring to policy. Like Jim Mather, I was struck by Steven Purcell's evidence to the committee, when he said that he is focusing Glasgow City Council on the priorities of tackling worklessness and addiction. Whether or not those are the right issues on which to focus, at least that is a clear and sharply focused set of priorities. When I look across the plethora of Executive policies, I doubt whether sufficient clarity exists to undertake the task properly.

Tommy Sheridan took the committee to task for missing the opportunity to be radical and bold in its recommendations. He said that the committee had failed to agree to a suite of measures, such as council tax abolition, free school meals, abolition of prescription charges, or whatever other radical measures are required to tackle the problems.

Notwithstanding the general good spirit in the Finance Committee in coming to agreed conclusions, even it would struggle to come to unanimity on that shopping list of priorities. However, we should not underestimate the significance of a committee that represents five political parties in the Parliament coming to such dramatic and forceful conclusions.

The report does not give a political prescription to tackle the deprivation problems that Scotland faces, but some of those issues are the natural preserve and messages of our political parties. I happen to believe that the deprivation crisis that Scotland faces is about aspiration and that, in our current condition, we will not achieve the aspirations that people naturally have for society. I happen to believe that, if the Parliament had the power to take all the macroeconomic measures, we could tackle that problem effectively.

However, let us not allow the report's lack of a political prescription of recommended measures for the Government to obscure in any way the force of what the report says: for the scale of expenditure for which the Government is responsible, we are entitled to expect a greater impact. We will observe whether the Government is capable of delivering that.

Business Motion

17:00

The Presiding Officer (Mr George Reid): The next item of business is consideration of business motion S2M-4505, in the name of Margaret Curran, on behalf of the Parliamentary Bureau, setting out a business programme.

Motion moved,

That the Parliament agrees the following programme of business—

Wednesday 14 June 2006

2.00 pm Time for Reflection

followed by Parliamentary Bureau Motions

followed by Ministerial Statement: Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service Review of Rape and Sexual Offences

followed by Final Stage Proceedings: Waverley Railway (Scotland) Bill

followed by Business Motion

followed by Parliamentary Bureau Motions

5.00 pm Decision Time

followed by Members' Business

Thursday 15 June 2006

9.15 am Parliamentary Bureau Motions

followed by Debate on an Executive Motion to treat the proposed Senior Judiciary (Vacancies and Incapacity) (Scotland) Bill as an Emergency Bill

followed by Stage 1 Debate: proposed Senior Judiciary (Vacancies and Incapacity) (Scotland) Bill

11.40 am General Question Time

12 noon First Minister's Question Time

2.15 pm Themed Question Time—
Justice and Law Officers;
Enterprise, Transport and Lifelong Learning

2.55 pm Ministerial Statement: Public Service Reform

followed by Committee of the Whole Parliament: Stage 2 Debate on the proposed Senior Judiciary (Vacancies and Incapacity) (Scotland) Bill

followed by Stage 3 Proceedings: proposed Senior Judiciary (Vacancies and Incapacity) (Scotland) Bill

followed by Parliamentary Bureau Motions

5.00 pm Decision Time

followed by Members' Business

Wednesday 21 June 2006

2.30 pm Time for Reflection

followed by

Parliamentary Bureau Motions

followed by

Executive Business

followed by

Business Motion

followed by

Parliamentary Bureau Motions

5.00 pm

Decision Time

followed by

Members' Business

Thursday 22 June 2006

9.15 am

Parliamentary Bureau Motions

followed by

Stage 3 Proceedings: Local Electoral Administration and Registration Services (Scotland) Bill

11.40 am

General Question Time

12 noon

First Minister's Question Time

2.15 pm

Themed Question Time—
Finance and Public Services and Communities;
Education and Young People,
Tourism, Culture and Sport;

2.55 pm

Continuation of Stage 3 Proceedings: Local Electoral Administration and Registration Services (Scotland) Bill

followed by

Parliamentary Bureau Motions

5.00 pm

Decision Time

followed by
Curran.]

Members' Business.—[*Ms Margaret*

Motion agreed to.

Parliamentary Bureau Motion

17:01

The Presiding Officer (Mr George Reid): The next item of business is consideration of Parliamentary Bureau motion S2M-4503, in the name of Margaret Curran, on behalf of the Parliamentary Bureau, on the approval of a Scottish statutory instrument.

Motion moved,

That the Parliament agrees that the draft Advice and Assistance (Assistance by Way of Representation) (Scotland) Amendment Regulations 2006 be approved.—
[Ms Margaret Curran.]

The Presiding Officer: The question on the motion will be put at decision time.

Decision Time

17:01

The Presiding Officer (Mr George Reid): There are two questions to be put as a result of today's business. The first question is, that motion S2M-4482, in the name of Des McNulty, on the Finance Committee report on deprivation, be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

That the Parliament notes the recommendations contained in the Finance Committee's 5th Report, 2006 (Session 2): *Cross-cutting Expenditure Review of Deprivation* (SP paper 536).

The Presiding Officer: The second question is, that motion S2M-4503, in the name of Margaret Curran, on the approval of a Scottish statutory instrument, be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

That the Parliament agrees that the draft Advice and Assistance (Assistance by Way of Representation) (Scotland) Amendment Regulations 2006 be approved.

Deaf and Deafblind People (Mental Health)

The Deputy Presiding Officer (Trish Godman): The final item of business is a members' business debate on motion S2M-3971, in the name of Adam Ingram, on mental health and deaf and deafblind people.

Motion debated,

That the Parliament acknowledges and supports the campaign by the Scottish Council on Deafness (SCoD) for equal access to mainstream and specialist mental health services for deaf and deafblind people in Scotland; notes the widespread lack of provision for deaf and deafblind people who have specific language and communication needs and that presently their rights under the Mental Health (Care and Treatment) Scotland Act 2003 and Disability Discrimination Act 2005 are not being met, leading to misdiagnosis and unsuitable treatments being applied; further notes with concern the complete lack of consultant psychiatrists in Scotland who are trained and experienced to work with deaf and deafblind people who have mental health problems and that the nearest available specialist mental health service for deaf and deafblind inpatients is Manchester whose outreach service, which is currently used by Scots deaf and deafblind people, is now under threat of closure; endorses the campaign for a specialist mental health service for deaf and deafblind people in Scotland, funded through the NHS, and SCoD's aim of providing support for training and recruiting of deaf and deafblind people to enable them to work with deaf and deafblind patients; backs SCoD's call for additional resourcing for mainstream psychiatric services in both hospital and community settings which would lead to greater accessibility for deaf and deafblind people with mental health problems, and recommends the establishment of a specialist Scottish centre for deaf and deafblind people with mental health problems in the south of Scotland or other suitable region.

17:03

Mr Adam Ingram (South of Scotland) (SNP): At the outset, I pay tribute to the Scottish Council on Deafness, several of whose members are in the public gallery for this evening's debate. SCoD has a long history of raising awareness of issues affecting deaf and deafblind people. Right at the top of its campaign priorities is the need to establish specialist mental health services for a disadvantaged group of our citizens who are being denied access to the help and treatment that they require and which other national health service patients who are not sensorily impaired receive as a matter of course.

The Executive, which supposedly is committed to social inclusion and has designated mental health as one of its national clinical priorities, has signally failed to deliver for deaf and deafblind people. The minister will no doubt argue that the Executive is aware of the problem and that last June it issued guidance in the shape of Health Department letter 27 to all Scotland's health boards on making access to services easier for

deaf and deafblind people. However, the obligatory rider to such guidance is that it is for each NHS board to meet the health care needs of its resident population from within the funding that is available, taking account of national and local priorities. There is the rub: no new money is available to fund service development, and neither deafblindness nor mental health—which is often called the Cinderella service of the NHS—features prominently on the list of health board priorities. That is a recipe for continued inaction or, at best, ad hoc and piecemeal service development, which leads to postcode lotteries for access to and delivery of services. The situation is crying out for national leadership and initiative. I do not understand the Health Department's reluctance over many years to step in and solve the problem. It surely cannot be because of a lack of finance, given the vast increase in funding that the NHS in Scotland has enjoyed since devolution.

I will return to what precisely ministers should do, but first I will define the nature and scale of the problem. The fundamental problem that deaf and deafblind patients face at every level in the NHS is a communication barrier. Effective diagnosis and treatment are predicated on a clear understanding of the patient's symptoms and state of mind. Deaf patients continually report that there is a lack of understanding on the part of doctors, that, because of restricted access to counselling, medication is the only treatment option that is offered and that they are underreferred to specialist services.

The system failure is compounded by the fact that the NHS in Scotland provides no specialist mental health services for deaf and deafblind people. The only specialist service available is an outreach service that is delivered by the John Denmark unit from Manchester under Professor Paul Anderson, a consultant psychiatrist who is skilled in sign language. The unit also provides a hospital-based service, which can be accessed by Scottish patients if their health boards sanction the cost of treatment. In England, there are now four hospital-based services that offer a range of in-patient and out-patient services specifically for deaf people. There is a medium-secure unit at Bury and even a unit for deaf people at Rampton hospital. In those units, all staff are required to learn to communicate in sign language and to be deaf aware. Indeed, there is a drive to recruit and train deaf people to staff the units. In so doing, England is following best practice that has been adopted elsewhere in Europe.

The contrast with Scotland is stark. We have no specialist mental health officers and only two counsellors who are deaf and experienced in working with deaf and deafblind people. We also have only one registered mental health nurse who is deaf, but that nurse does not work specifically

with deaf and deafblind patients. There is one consultant psychiatrist and one community psychiatric nurse who have worked with deaf patients before, but they do not officially provide a specialist service. They are currently seeking funding for an out-patient service in Glasgow.

To be frank, the lack of provision and the absence of planning for the future are scandalous and will be thrown into sharper relief if the John Denmark unit is forced to withdraw its outreach services to Scotland under pressure from its local mental health trust, which is a real and current threat. I urge the minister to cut through the bureaucratic inertia that seems to be afflicting his department on the matter. He has a golden opportunity to make a significant difference to the lives of many in our deaf and deafblind communities, who are much more prone to mental health problems than are people in the wider community because of their sensory impairment and the isolation that it brings.

We require the creation of a small centre of excellence in Scotland to not only provide specialist services but take the lead in breaking down the barriers to access for deaf and deafblind people across the whole NHS system. The costs would not be great. The cost of the John Denmark unit's services in 2004-05 was only £326,000. That is a mere drop in the ocean of funds that are going into the NHS. What is more, there is already a blueprint for implementation to hand, in the form of a paper that Dr John Loudon, the former principal medical officer for mental health in the Health Department, commissioned from Dr Ken Black, of the national services division of the NHS in Scotland, on a strategy for developing mental health services in Scotland for people who are deaf. The Scottish Executive Health Department promised to distribute that paper for consultation, but it has failed to do so, despite repeated requests. I ask the Deputy Minister for Health and Community Care why that report is sitting on a shelf somewhere in his department, gathering dust. Is he going to allow the deplorable lack of service provision for our deaf and deafblind citizens to continue indefinitely? After seven years of the Scottish Parliament and the current Executive, they deserve answers and action.

17:11

Mrs Nanette Milne (North East Scotland) (Con): I am pleased that Adam Ingram has secured the debate, which highlights the serious lack of provision for deaf and deafblind people in Scotland and their right to equal access to mainstream and specialist mental health services. Deafblind people number around 5,000 in Scotland, and that group forms—[*Interruption.*] I apologise, Presiding Officer. I did not realise that I

had my mobile phone with me. That group of people forms a small proportion of the population. However, most of them are over 60 years of age, and as their dual sensory impairment is the result of age-related problems, we can reasonably expect their number to grow in future as the population continues to grow older.

The increasing deafness—[*Interruption.*] I am sorry. The increasing deafness and visual impairment that often come with old age can lead to people becoming isolated, depressed and unhappy at being unable to communicate their thoughts and feelings in a world that seems to be passing them by. I had an uncle who became increasingly hard of hearing in his 80s. In his early 90s, he rapidly lost his eyesight due to age-related macular degeneration. Until then, he had played golf and bowls and had been able to drive. Mentally, he was as bright as a button but, because of his communication problems, he found it extremely difficult and depressing to keep up with what was going on around him. Indeed, he was depressed in the end. That was not helped by repeated delays in getting his hearing aids fixed when they went wrong. The pressurised audiology service was a major contributor to his frustrations and difficulties. That needs to be addressed.

I first encountered deafblind resources manager Drena O'Malley when I attended an event in Glasgow at the start of the Equal Opportunities Committee's inquiry on disability. I vividly remember the admiration and amazement that I felt at the communication skills that she displayed with the deafblind person to whom she introduced me. Such skills are rarely found. They can make such a difference to people with dual sensory impairment. Without the services of a trained guide communicator, I do not see how a deafblind person could possibly communicate with health service personnel at all, let alone if they were trying to get help with a mental health problem, when one-to-one dialogue can be all important.

I can be persuaded of the need for a specialist centre in Scotland, where staff have the skills to deal with deaf and deafblind patients who are also mentally ill. I also see a need for more guide communicators at a local level. The availability of staff with special communications skills is important for local psychiatric services, as the ability to access mainstream services in the community is key to the effective diagnosis and appropriate treatment of deaf and deafblind people.

We need an outreach service to help people. I hope that one might appear in the Aberdeen area, where there is currently great demand. I hope that the guidance that is to be published by the Executive will soon help to remove obstacles and provide barrier-free access to services. I hope that

the report that the Executive has requested from health boards, which is expected this summer, will result in services being put in place with the minimum of delay.

I apologise for my phone going off and for the fact that I have to leave before the end of the debate, which means that I will miss the minister's response. I have had to curtail my speech significantly, but I look forward to reading the *Official Report* in anticipation that the minister will lend his support to the motion's necessary and worthy proposals.

17:15

Eleanor Scott (Highlands and Islands) (Green): I congratulate Adam Ingram on securing this debate on an important issue. Like other members, I will make extensive reference to a meeting that was held by the cross-party group on mental health and the cross-party group on deafness. If I repeat some of what Adam Ingram said, it is because he and I were both at the meeting.

The information that was presented to the cross-party groups was quite chilling. There is no dedicated service for deaf people with mental health problems in Scotland. A welcome but inadequate service has been provided part-time on an outreach basis from Manchester. In Scotland, no mental health officers work specifically with deaf people and only one psychiatrist and one psychiatric nurse work with the deaf on an unofficial basis, although I understand that there is talk of a pilot service. There are only two deaf counsellors in the whole of Scotland. Unless a patient is able to access the outreach service from Manchester, he or she will be obliged to use the general mental health services, which are not geared towards the needs of deaf or deafblind people.

It was made clear to us that deaf and deafblind people are looking not for special treatment but for equality of access. Effective communication is the key to successful treatment, but that is often where the problem lies. Health service or social work managers often feel that the way to address the problem is to provide British Sign Language interpreters, but it was made clear to us that the clients see that as only the third-best option. The ideal would be to have deaf people trained as professionals in mental health. That happens elsewhere, but it has never been promoted in Scotland—it should be.

The next-best option would be to have services provided by professionals with good skills in communication with deaf and deafblind people and an awareness of deaf issues.

Interpreters are only the third-best option and there are problems with it in that there are only 42 registered BSL interpreters in Scotland. Those interpreters carry out all sorts of duties and none is a mental health specialist. Availability is a problem, as getting hold of an interpreter can take ages. All too often, clients and professionals resort to using written notes or family members, even children, as interpreters, which is clearly not acceptable. If a patient needs to be sectioned, it is even worse. The Mental Health (Care and Treatment) (Scotland) Act 2003 states that a professional must make the patient aware of his rights in relation to consent to treatment. Deaf patients are, in effect, being denied those rights.

In England, even Rampton hospital has a deaf unit. The Department of Health is now giving deaf people the chance to train as psychiatric nurses. The National Assembly for Wales is considering services and Northern Ireland is considering an all-Ireland service. Scotland is falling behind.

I have spoken mainly about the needs of deaf people, but we have also to consider the small group of deafblind people, who need highly specialised services. About 10 per cent of deaf people have a severe visual impairment. That group forms about 40 per cent of those who have been accessing the outreach service from Manchester. Given their problems of isolation, they are at greatest risk of developing mental health problems. They need a lot of specialised input just to maintain good mental health.

I do not have time to talk about services for children. There are no services for deaf children or adolescents with mental health problems. The nearest in-patient unit is in London.

At the time of the meeting of the cross-party groups, there had been a series of meetings with the Executive about getting a service, in view of the possible withdrawal of the Manchester outreach service. I hope that the minister will be able to update us on that in his speech.

17:19

Stewart Stevenson (Banff and Buchan) (SNP): I congratulate Adam Ingram on bringing the debate to the Parliament and note that the Scottish Council on Deafness suggested that the subject should be raised here. I hope that the debate will advance the cause of deaf and blind people throughout Scotland, who suffer from very severe handicaps compared with those from which the rest of us suffer. Adam Ingram suffered from a substantial handicap when he was speaking. I think that I am allowed to say that one of his teeth fell out during his speech. It is a tribute to him that he was not deflected from his task by that inconvenience, which was very minor in

comparison with the substantial difficulties that deaf and blind people face. I will make no comment on mobile phones.

I have read a range of material on the subject. The Scottish Council on Deafness's leaflet "Advice for GPs on Counselling Deaf and Deafblind Patients" states:

"40% of deaf people compared with 25% of hearing people have a mental health problem at some point in their life".

The focus of the debate is therefore extremely relevant and important. The leaflet also states:

"The average length of stay for a hearing mental health patient in psychiatric hospitals is 148 days; deaf mental health patients spend an average of 19.5 years"

in mental health hospitals. We can see the relationship between the social isolation that is associated with people with dual sensory deprivation and the increased risk of suffering from mental ill health. More critically, there is the reduced capacity of the NHS and wider social support to respond to mental ill health in people who suffer from dual sensory deprivation. Therefore, the campaign is an excellent start. I hope that the minister will say something of value in that context.

For various reasons, I have a medical every year and can see from my annual reports over the past 15 years the deterioration that age has brought in my hearing and indeed in my sight, with my move from single-capacity specs to bifocals—I am now thinking about trifocals. Figures that are before me suggest that a million people in Scotland have difficulty hearing whispers or faint speech and some 2,000 deaf people use sign language. A wide range of hearing disabilities exists.

On communicating with the health service, 15 per cent of people with the problem said that they would avoid going to see their general practitioner—the figure doubles for sign language users. Almost no GPs are sign language users or interpreters. I once knew around three sign language symbols simply because my Sunday school taught them to me, but I have forgotten everything else that I was taught about sign language. Not many of us know much about sign language.

A high proportion of severely or profoundly deaf people have other disabilities. Among those who are under 60, 45 per cent—nearly half—have other disadvantages.

I feel this personally. In 1964, when I was 17 and worked in a psychiatric hospital, one patient in the ward in which I worked was deafblind. My training was limited and the only communication that I had with that person was when I touched a

spoon on their lip. They would then open their mouth so that I could feed them.

A test of our ability to call our society civilised lies in our support for those who are least able to support themselves. I say to the minister let us hear about more action.

17:24

John Farquhar Munro (Ross, Skye and Inverness West) (LD): Like Stewart Stevenson, I congratulate Mr Ingram and thank him for securing the debate, which is on an important issue. I am pleased that a number of colleagues have remained and hope that they will take part in such an important debate and learn more about the many difficulties that our deafblind citizens encounter in their daily lives.

We have heard that it has been estimated that some 5,000 people in Scotland are registered as deafblind. Some of those people were born with the condition and others acquired deafblindness later in life. As members will appreciate, the needs and problems of those two groups are very different. It is important to recognise that deafblind people are people first and foremost. Their needs, skills, aspirations and daily challenges will be just as varied and complex as those of any other group of people in society.

Our knowledge and understanding of ourselves and the surrounding world comes to us mainly through our vision and our hearing. Deafblind people, who lack those senses, find their mobility, communication and access to information greatly hampered in their daily lives. I am pleased to support the suggestion in Mr Ingram's motion that more appropriate medical provision should be made available in hospitals and community settings for our deafblind people, especially those who, unfortunately, suffer from mental illness.

I enthusiastically support the concept of a purpose-built facility in Scotland to cater for the treatment and help of our deafblind population. I understand Mr Ingram's desire to have such a facility established in the south of Scotland. I have no preference other than to see the facility established at the earliest opportunity in an appropriate location, which must be convenient and easily accessible by deafblind people from all areas of Scotland.

17:27

Dr Jean Turner (Strathkelvin and Bearsden) (Ind): I thank Adam Ingram for bringing this important subject to the Parliament. I am concerned that deafblindness should be diagnosed in people at an early age, so that we know exactly who is coming through the system. I spoke to some people before I came into the

chamber, and the emphasis was on communication. That is what I would like to deal with.

Communication is fine if someone knows how to read and write English, but I am told that many people do not know how to read and write English. I did not come across any deaf or blind people who could not communicate with me when I was a general practitioner; however, I had to cope with patients who were deaf. I would have loved to have been able to take a course in sign language. As it was, my patients were very good at lip-reading and my attempts at communication were good enough. If we could not communicate between ourselves, a family member would get involved, but that takes me to another point. When someone goes along to see their GP, that is a private thing. They want to be on an equal footing with every other member of the community in having a private consultation with their doctor. If someone cannot have that because their doctor does not know sign language and cannot communicate with them, they have to introduce somebody else.

At another stage in life, as people get older and go into nursing homes—there is one near my constituency in which people who are severely deaf and severely blind are nursed—their nursing staff need to have the appropriate communication skills. However, we have a long way to go, and we need to train doctors, nurses, psychiatrists and even people in the allied professions. It is a little bit embarrassing that our deafblind people have to go down to Manchester.

Depression and mental ill health form a large part of a GP's caseload. If someone cannot communicate, they tend to slip into their own little world. My mother was deaf in one ear, and a very close doctor friend of ours was also deaf. I would watch them and, if two or three people were talking, they would sit back and not take part in the conversation. They would become quite anxious about the whole thing because they would feel that people were laughing at them when they answered inappropriately; there would be a little giggle and my mother and her friend thought that that was dreadful.

The nearest that I came to dealing with people who had profound communication problems was when we had Kosovan refugees who had to have interpreters. I was lucky because I had very good interpreters. A man once came to get his hearing aid and, because we created a good rapport through the interpreter, who interpreted exactly what the man was telling him, I found out that he was also epileptic and should have been receiving treatment.

Doctors need to be able to communicate with their patients. They need to know exactly what the

patients are saying, but they might not always get that through an interpreter. We need a Scottish service and we need to train an awful lot of people because we are way behind, but it would do no harm to start. I support Adam Ingram's motion and every aspect of what he said. I hope that we can get something. I do not think that it would cost an awful lot of money to make a start and to get a service up and running. I support the motion and I expect the minister to accept what it says.

17:31

Ms Sandra White (Glasgow) (SNP): I congratulate Adam Ingram on securing the debate and I thank the Scottish Council on Deafness, particularly Drena O'Malley and Lillian Lawson, for their tenacity. The Scottish Council on Deafness is based two floors below my constituency office in Hope Street—bumping into Lillian every day and being told that we must push this issue forward can sometimes be too much to bear. Lillian knows exactly what I mean, because I have been to her office quite often.

I first came across the issue when it was raised at the Public Petitions Committee, of which I am a member. I have the petition with me and I will confine my remarks to the subject of the petition and to Adam Ingram's motion. The petition asks that deafblind people should receive a decent service. It does not just want services to be provided in the community; it wants there to be a unit for deafblind people, in particular for those with mental health problems.

When Drena O'Malley gave evidence to the Public Petitions Committee, some of the stories that she told were horrifying and heart-breaking. She told of deafblind people with mental health problems who had been taken to prison because there was no one in the police station or anywhere else who could tell exactly what had happened. Those people were put into prison or psychiatric hospitals, and some of them were never given an explanation of why they were there. Sometimes it was 24 hours or a couple of days before an interpreter could be found. I commend Drena O'Malley for all the times that she has responded when she was called out in the early hours of the morning because she was the only interpreter whom people could rely on. There is a great dearth of people who can help with the communication problems of this branch of the community in our country.

I cannot understand why the John Denmark unit, which has been providing services—they might not have been the best services, but at least something was being provided—is under threat of being taken away, with nothing to replace it. I know that the minister has mentioned to the health boards that access should be made easier, but as

Adam Ingram pointed out, access is subject to a postcode lottery—it depends on the health board area in which someone stays. We need to give these people a decent service. No other members of our community would put up with such totally inadequate psychiatric, mental health or health services. I appeal to the minister to take that on board. We are here to represent all our communities, but deafblind people, particularly those who have mental health problems, are being served the least well.

I remind members of the evidence that was given to the Public Petitions Committee. We heard about people who did not know what was happening suddenly being taken to a psychiatric hospital and not having a clue why they were there; there was no one there to interpret for them and to tell them that they could contact their family. I ask the minister to put himself in their shoes and imagine what that must be like. Stewart Stevenson highlighted the length of time that deafblind people, in comparison with other folk, spend in institutions. Please try to imagine what it must be like if access to services is not available.

Finally, I ask the minister to say tonight when we will get a replacement for the service that is currently provided by the John Denmark unit. It is surely inadequate that deaf and deafblind people are required to make appointments on an ad hoc basis with specialists who come up from Manchester.

17:35

The Deputy Minister for Health and Community Care (Lewis Macdonald): I, too, congratulate Adam Ingram on securing this important debate. I also commend him for completing his speech despite the little local difficulty that he encountered along the way.

Adam Ingram and other members have raised some important issues, and it is important that people understand how those issues are being addressed. Care and support for those with both sensory loss and mental ill health are founded on the principle of inclusion, as we seek to secure barrier-free access to services for all. Where deaf and deafblind people and others with a sensory loss have mental health issues, they clearly have particular needs that must be addressed. The key to our policy approach is that we do not separate those who have particular needs but aim to ensure that they are given the best possible access to mainstream services.

That will not happen overnight, but I am clear that it must happen. I believe that we have made a significant start, not least through the progress that has been made in taking forward the initiative that was set out in “Fair for all” and through our

sensory impairment action plan for community care services. Our research into those issues, which will be published next month, will further inform the development of future policy.

The progress that we have made has relied on, and will continue to depend on, input and support from people with sensory impairment and their representative organisations. I thank those organisations for their on-going input, support and commitment to the plan.

Let me respond to some particular points. The Loudon and Black report to which Adam Ingram referred is not, as he implied, gathering dust. The report formed part of our early consideration of policy development for change and improvement and informed investment and the direction of policy. The report has also played a part in the formulation of the current guidance. If Adam Ingram believes that other recommendations in the report should be taken further forward, he is welcome to let me know of them and I will seek to respond in the most appropriate way. However, the report has informed our process and I think that in some respects we may have moved on from when the report was produced.

One thing that has changed in that time is that the Mental Health (Care and Treatment) (Scotland) Act 2003 has begun to be implemented. The act has implications for the care of those who face both mental health and sensory loss issues. As a consequence of the implications of the act, we conducted a review last year of all the published material on services and approaches for those with mental ill health and sensory loss. We wanted a pragmatic document that would help to identify the key issues and offer workable solutions.

Mr Ingram: As the minister has mentioned a review of the impact and implementation of the Mental Health (Care and Treatment) (Scotland) Act 2003, I should mention that it has been brought to my attention that there are a number of problems with the community treatment orders for deaf people. As the minister is aware, a key principle of the new act is reciprocity. In other words, where there is an element of compulsion in the medication that a patient receives in their home, they should receive services in return. The feedback that we have received is that deaf people with mental health problems who are subject to such compulsion are not receiving those services. That is the nub of the problem.

Lewis Macdonald: As I said, we are keen to understand as much of the validated information as we can obtain about the way in which people receive services so that we are able to improve and further develop them. The guidance that we have issued focuses on improved access, better communications, better training and a better

understanding of needs and how services are received. As part of that, we will also promote on-going review. That includes a commitment to undertake a national survey on progress. The survey is well under way and will be completed in the next few weeks and published. We will follow it up as necessary to secure the level of service that will be required.

The issue of a specialist mental health service was raised. It is for NHS boards and their local partners to keep all service options under review. I take issue with the proposition that we should remove such discretion from health boards. Ministers do not support that. We believe that it is right for local decisions to be made on how to meet local needs and, year on year, we are providing record resources for NHS boards and local authorities to invest in services that improve access and outcomes. Health spending will reach more than £10 billion next year. In 2004-05, more than £670 million was spent on mental health by health boards or local authorities. It is for partners to set local priorities for that expenditure.

Ms White: The minister spoke about not interfering in local health boards. However, will he intervene if he receives evidence from groups such as SCOD that provision is not being made?

Lewis Macdonald: The Scottish Council on Deafness and other representative organisations are part of the on-going work. We expect them to feed any concerns that they have into the review process and consideration of the sensory impairment action plan.

Reference was made to the John Denmark unit and concern was expressed about the future of that in-patient service. We were in touch with the Bolton, Salford and Trafford Mental Health NHS Trust in advance of the debate. I understand that there are no plans to withdraw the in-patient services that are available to Scottish patients and that no changes will be made until suitable alternative arrangements have been put in place.

The issue of training in sign language was raised. We are keen to take that forward. Significant investment is being made in a graduate diploma in teaching BSL tutors. As part of the sensory impairment action plan, we are funding and working on a basic awareness and communication training package, which will encompass all three areas of in-patient care and is geared towards both social care and health care staff. We believe that all staff who deal with persons with sensory impairment should be able to meet the basic communication needs of those patients in an appropriate way. That is why the package is encompassed in our national training strategy, which we aim to have in place by 2007.

One member referred to the good example of NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde, which is planning the development of a multi-agency, multidisciplinary specialist team, with members based in mainstream community mental health teams, who will be trained to BSL stage 3, with special emphasis on mental health. The approach that is being rolled out in Glasgow can be applied profitably elsewhere.

A number of significant issues have been raised. A good deal of continuing attention is being given to those issues by Government, the NHS and local partners. We have issued robust guidance and taken specific initiatives to tackle exclusion head on and have put in place a framework for developing better and more responsive services. We recognise that there is still more to do, but future development will be informed both by our national survey of the current situation and by our continuing research. It will also be informed by those who experience these challenges in their daily lives, which is absolutely essential. The service user and the carer must be at the heart of health care and social care policy. I look forward to continuing engagement with deaf and deafblind people and the organisations that represent them as we develop accessible mainstream services over the months and years ahead.

Meeting closed at 17:44.

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