



The Scottish Parliament
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

Official Report

MEETING OF THE PARLIAMENT

Wednesday 16 November 2011

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Scottish Parliament

Wednesday 16 November 2011

[The Presiding Officer *opened the meeting at 14:30*]

Time for Reflection

The Presiding Officer (Tricia Marwick): Good afternoon. The first item of business this afternoon is time for reflection, for which our leader today is Suselle Boffey from the Scottish Churches Disability Agenda Group.

Suselle Boffey (Scottish Churches Disability Agenda Group): A meditation. Listen. No: really listen. If it helps, shift to a more comfortable sitting position, take a few deep breaths, perhaps close your eyes and still your thoughts, your business. What do you hear? Perhaps you hear the ambient sounds inside and outside this chamber.

Let me tell you what I hear. I hear the rhythmic whisper of my ventilator—perhaps you can, too. In the beginning it was a disturbance to me—a reminder of my frailty—but then people in my prayer group said that the same sound helped them to relax, reflect and pray and to gain a sense of peace. I began to change the way I listened. What had been a negative noise in my ears became transformed into something positive—something deeper, helpful.

What else do you hear? Is there a clamour of voices in your head, perhaps from the personal and family situations that you left this morning, from the debates and discussions that you will have this afternoon or from the many and diverse concerns that are brought to your attention by the constituents whom you represent? How do we choose to listen to those competing voices? Do we listen with inward impatience or some other negative emotion, or with a compelling desire to leap in with our own voices, our own ideas, our own agendas and priorities? So often, we fail to take time to pause, to go deeper into the moment and so to transform our jumble of business into truly helpful listening. I urge you to seek out pathways of transformative listening.

In the book of James, in the New Testament, we are advised to

“be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry”.

Those are wise words indeed. There is, of course, an even deeper listening, which is perhaps the most important of all. Some call it tuning in to the voice within. Some call it meditation. Some, including myself, call it prayer—a sacred opportunity to be guided by the divine presence who loves each one of us. Avail yourselves of this

amazing opportunity. The people of Scotland need you to listen. May the God of peace and the peace of God be with us all. Amen. [*Applause.*]

The Presiding Officer: Thank you, Ms Boffey, for your contribution to the Scottish Parliament today.

Business Motion

The Presiding Officer (Tricia Marwick): The next item of business is consideration of business motion S4M-01341, in the name of Bruce Crawford, on behalf of the Parliamentary Bureau, setting out revisions to the business programme for this week.

14:36

The Cabinet Secretary for Parliamentary Business and Government Strategy (Bruce Crawford): In moving the motion, I had better explain why we are considering a business motion first thing on a Wednesday afternoon. Its purpose is to allow for the insertion in today's business programme a Standards, Procedures and Public Appointments Committee debate on minor standing order rule changes and, in tomorrow's, a legislative consent motion on the Terrorism Prevention and Investigation Measures Bill, which is United Kingdom legislation.

I move,

That the Parliament agrees—

(a) the following revision to the programme of business for Wednesday 16 November 2011—

after

<i>followed by</i>	Scottish Government Debate:
	Regeneration Strategy

insert

<i>followed by</i>	Standards, Procedures and Public Appointments Committee Debate: Minor Standing Orders Rule Changes
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(b) the following revision to the programme of business for Thursday 17 November 2011—

after

2.55 pm	Scottish Government Debate: Oil and Gas Framework
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insert

<i>followed by</i>	Legislative Consent Motion: Terrorism Prevention and Investigation Measures Bill – UK Legislation
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Motion agreed to.

Regeneration Strategy

The Presiding Officer (Tricia Marwick): The next item of business is a debate on motion S4M-01336, in the name of Alex Neil, on the regeneration strategy.

I call on Alex Neil to speak to and move the motion. Mr Neil, you have 14 minutes—it is an extremely generous 14 minutes.

14:37

The Cabinet Secretary for Infrastructure and Capital Investment (Alex Neil): Thank you very much indeed, Presiding Officer. I will try to use it as productively as possible, as always.

Regeneration of Scotland's most disadvantaged areas—

The Presiding Officer: Excuse me, minister, could you sit down for a moment?

The minister's microphone is not on. Will broadcasting please put it on? Perhaps the minister could move to the next desk.

Alex Neil: It is on now.

The Presiding Officer: Indeed it is.

I again call on Alex Neil to speak to and move the motion. You still have 14 minutes, but it is now not such a generous 14 minutes.

Alex Neil: I will add injury time.

Regeneration of Scotland's most disadvantaged areas and strengthening of our communities are key priorities for the Scottish Government. We are committed to ensuring equality of opportunity and support for the places and people who need it. Our vision is of a Scotland in which our most disadvantaged communities are supported and where all places are sustainable and promote wellbeing. The Scottish Government's regeneration strategy, which I will publish shortly, will set out the Government's plans for delivering that vision in partnership with our stakeholders.

Since 2007, this Government has invested significant amounts of money in regeneration—I will talk more about some of that investment in a moment. Together with our public, private and third-sector partners, and alongside communities themselves, we have achieved some notable successes, but over the years our collective efforts have not been enough. Too many of Scotland's people still live in communities that are suffering the effects of deprivation, high unemployment and disadvantage, where too many people are not in work and have low educational attainment, where crime and fear of crime are too high, where the physical environment is poor and where people still die far younger than their fellow Scots.

The regeneration strategy will reinvigorate efforts to change that. I make it clear that the strategy will not offer a silver bullet—there are no silver bullets—but we will re-energise our regeneration policy and focus on the priority areas that the evidence tells us are vital to success.

Those priorities include a focus on tackling area-based deprivation by reforming the way in which mainstream resources are used and by working together more effectively; a stronger focus on community-led regeneration as a way of delivering the change that local people want; and a commitment to ensuring that the right type of funding and other support are in place at national and local levels to support Scotland's communities to flourish. I will talk about each of those strategic priorities later.

I turn now to the investment so far. This Scottish Government has invested record levels of funding to improve the physical and economic fabric of our cities, towns and villages. In the face of unprecedented Westminster cuts, we have continued to provide support to the communities that need it most.

We have developed the £50 million JESSICA—joint European support for sustainable investment in city areas—fund in partnership with the European Investment Bank, and we have, since 2007, invested more than £90 million in Scotland's urban regeneration companies, which has already secured more than 1,300 new jobs. A further £25 million investment is planned in 2012-13, with priority being given to Clyde Gateway in recognition of its key role in securing an economic legacy for the 2014 Commonwealth games.

We have supported 89 town centres with £60 million of funding from our town centre regeneration fund, and we have invested more than £40 million to tackle the issue of vacant and derelict land in some of our most deprived communities. We have made a commitment to establish four enterprise areas in Scotland to support economic growth, and we have brought forward tax increment financing pilot projects in partnership with the Scottish Futures Trust as a way of unlocking private sector investment in local areas.

We have invested about £700,000 in the past three years in the Development Trusts Association Scotland to support communities in owning assets. In addition, our investments in skills development, employability, housing, transport, renewables and other infrastructure projects all help to ensure that disadvantaged communities can access new opportunities.

Despite those investments, however, there is much more to be done and many challenges to face. Earlier this year, I published a regeneration

discussion paper—"Building a Sustainable Future"—that kick-started the debate about the future of regeneration in the current economic climate. More than 70 written responses were received, and a wide range of stakeholders engaged through a series of events. A number of key themes emerged from those discussions. They included the need for a clear vision for regeneration policy; clarification of the roles that different organisations have in delivering regeneration; support for a co-ordinated local and national approach to tackling area-based deprivation; the importance of community-led regeneration; the need for continued funding; and support for town centres as a central part of community life. I expect those themes to feature in today's debate and I assure members that the themes have shaped the development of the regeneration strategy and are at the heart of the Government's approach to future regeneration.

I mentioned the three key priority areas that will form the strategy and I will speak about each in turn. First, there will be a renewed approach to tackling area-based disadvantage. Respondents to the regeneration discussion paper recognised that addressing the deeply ingrained economic, physical and social issues that some of Scotland's communities face requires a sustained and co-ordinated approach across the public sector and its partners.

I recognise and support the good work that is being progressed at local level: a key aspect of the regeneration strategy will be to build on that localised approach, which will include working with public-sector partners to raise the profile of efforts throughout the country to tackle area-based disadvantage, and to promote and encourage best practice and culture change in the public sector in order to join up mainstream resources and services to tackle area-based disadvantage.

The strategy will also involve working with local authorities to identify barriers to delivery and opportunities to strengthen skills and capacity. We will lead the way in developing better partnership working between the public and private sectors and in improving collaboration between public-sector agencies.

Secondly, there will be a stronger focus on community-led regeneration. Strong, engaged and empowered communities are vital to Scotland's success. The regeneration strategy will place support for community-led regeneration at the heart of the approach, because we recognise that the changes that are required to make all communities sustainable will be achieved in the long run only through a bottom-up rather than a top-down approach.

Through the regeneration strategy, we are committed to supporting community-led

regeneration in order, first, to grow the number and strength of locally controlled enterprising community organisations that act as anchors for regeneration; secondly, to support locally based organisations to take on ownership of viable assets; and thirdly, to help people to organise and respond to the challenges in areas where capacity is low. Community-led regeneration is about local people identifying for themselves the issues and opportunities in their areas, deciding what to do about them, and being responsible for delivering the action that will make a difference.

We are starting from a strong position. An impressive range of activities is already taking place across urban and rural communities, led by organisations such as development trusts and community-based housing associations. The regeneration strategy will build on that strength through a range of new and existing support from both the Scottish Government and partner organisations including the Big Lottery Fund Scotland. We are at the early stages of developing proposals for the community empowerment and renewal bill. Through a wide-ranging dialogue, we are exploring how legislation can help communities to own certain public-sector assets, to have their voices heard on local decisions and to tackle vacant and derelict properties in those communities. We expect to consult on proposals next spring.

Michael McMahon (Uddingston and Bellshill)

(Lab): I agree with the minister that we need to take a community-based bottom-up approach as far as that is possible. However, in the case of regeneration projects such as Ravenscraig, which does not have a community in which to begin the regeneration, does he agree that the Scottish Government needs to have a greater say? Does he agree that the decision in 2008 to downgrade Ravenscraig to a regional priority prevented the project from having the impetus that it requires?

Alex Neil: As the member will know, the Scottish Government has given priority to Ravenscraig; indeed, it is the subject of one of our TIF pilot projects. Along with North Lanarkshire Council, we are determined to work together with everybody involved to make it successful.

My third point is that investing in the economic potential of our communities is also vital. That covers a broad spectrum of activity, including support for projects that deliver physical and economic change, including and especially jobs. That is not an easy task. The limited availability of public-sector funding and private-sector resource means that our funding models need to change and become more innovative, with a move towards financing and investment, as opposed to grant, where possible.

Nonetheless, we will confirm a range of support in the strategy, including confirmation that JESSICA—Scotland's regeneration loan fund—is open for business. The fund currently totals £50 million and it is anticipated that it will be recycled up to three times in 10 years. There will be continued support for Scotland's urban regeneration companies in the short term, building on their considerable success to date, and a move to more flexible capital funding for them in the medium term, which will be focused on enabling infrastructure and town centre support. There will be funding to enable local authorities to tackle vacant and derelict land, continued support to enable registered social landlords to carry out their regeneration role and continued support to enable coalfield communities to grow in strength and access opportunities to prosper. In addition, we will continue to work with the private sector and other partners to develop new and innovative methods of funding, building on the initial approach through JESSICA.

The three priority areas of tackling area-based disadvantage, strengthening community-led regeneration and investing in the economic potential of our communities will form the basis of the strategy that will focus the efforts of the Scottish Government on ensuring that all Scotland's communities are sustainable and promote wellbeing and that, in the pursuit of sustainable economic growth, no one is left behind.

In my view, the central issue is to safeguard existing jobs and to create as many new jobs as we can. Access to decent jobs and reasonable income is an absolute prerequisite for the success of any regeneration strategy at local and national levels. That is why we have given such priority to attracting new investment in Scotland and why earlier this year Ernst & Young classified Scotland as the best location in the whole United Kingdom for new investment. The jobs that go with that are crucial to the success of regenerating the deprived communities.

The actions within the strategy will contribute directly to the Scottish Government's overarching purpose of sustainable economic growth and increased job opportunities. However, I am clear that the Scottish Government alone cannot deliver regeneration. If it is possible to get cross-party support for our strategy, we would very much welcome it. Successful regeneration is dependent on a wide range of organisations and individuals working together—I believe that that includes the political parties. It relies on co-ordinated action that encompasses economic, physical and social aspects, along with input from the public, private and third sectors and—crucially—the communities themselves.

We are committed to working with partners to deliver on the actions that will be identified within the strategy and to delivering change for the communities that need it most. I hope that, today, the Parliament will support us in that commitment.

I move,

That the Parliament acknowledges that in the current challenging financial climate it is imperative that there is a strategic vision for the regeneration of the most disadvantaged communities across Scotland; acknowledges the importance of regeneration to *The Government Economic Strategy* and the Scottish Government's ambition to create a more successful country, with opportunities for all of Scotland to flourish, and recognises that successful regeneration relies on a wide variety of organisations and agencies working together and an increased role for communities themselves to help them improve their circumstances.

The Presiding Officer: I now call Michael McMahon to speak to and move motion S4M-01336.1. Mr McMahon, you have a generous 10 minutes.

14:52

Michael McMahon (Uddingston and Bellshill) (Lab): Thank you, Presiding Officer.

I thank the cabinet secretary for bringing the debate to Parliament this afternoon, but I do so with a sense of *déjà vu*. Last week, Patricia Ferguson and I led from these seats on a debate that centred on a fairly anodyne, if not utterly mundane, motion on the importance of architecture in relation to matters such as the creation, development and sustainability of local communities. It turned out to be an enjoyable and informative debate and I hope that this afternoon's debate around an equally bland, if not insipid, motion is as good.

My sense of *déjà vu* is not, however, restricted to recollections of last week's discussion, but comes from a debate that was held in the previous session on regeneration. In that debate, I noted that the Government motion contained predictable platitudes, but that

"the issue under discussion is hugely important and cannot be hidden, even under the banality of the motion."—[*Official Report*, 3 March 2010; c 24170.]

So, here we are again, debating a hugely significant issue around a motion that barely nods in the direction of just how vital regeneration is to Scotland, to its current and future economic prospects and to the wellbeing of our communities. As I said in the previous debate:

"I am not saying that the Government has got it wrong on ... regeneration".—[*Official Report*, 3 March 2010; c 24171.]

Similarly, I am not saying that the Government has nothing to defend in that regard, and we really

could have had a more substantive motion on what the Government believes has to be done.

It would also have been good to see in the motion or have heard in Mr Neil's speech a sense of humility or even an apology, with the cabinet secretary recognising that he was overseeing a reduction in regeneration funding for vital projects in the period ahead. For example, why is there no recognition that the ring-fenced budget for all URCs other than Clyde Gateway now only goes up to 2012-13 and that after that Riverside Inverclyde, Irvine Bay Regeneration Company and Clydebank Re-built will all have to bid for funding as part of the wider regeneration strategy, and that they no longer have guaranteed funding beyond 2012-13, even though they were originally guaranteed 10 years of funding?

John Mason (Glasgow Shettleston) (SNP): I note the point that Michael McMahon is making, but I wonder whether anyone is guaranteed funding at this time. Surely, when the budget has been cut so severely by Westminster, the starting point is that everything is being cut.

Michael McMahon: John Mason has to identify his priorities. On an issue as important as regeneration, we can say that some budget lines have to be protected more than others. The cuts that we are seeing in the regeneration budget and URCs are well in excess of what is required.

Kevin Stewart (Aberdeen Central) (SNP): Will the member give way?

Michael McMahon: I would like to make some progress.

With the budgets of some regeneration programmes being cut in half, we cannot allow the Scottish National Party Government to get away with blaming Westminster for its decision to prioritise a referendum over regeneration.

With the Ravenscraig project in my area of Lanarkshire already downgraded by this Government in 2008 and £70 million of funding being taken from it at a stroke, it is easy to see the direct correlation between this Government's decisions to reduce support for regeneration and a direct negative impact on areas such as mine.

My constituency of Uddingston and Bellshill is home to some of the country's largest construction companies and there are more people employed in construction in my area than there are in any other in Scotland, so I recently had a meeting with representatives of construction companies to discuss the current employment situation with them. The picture that they painted of the impending decimation of jobs in that sector is frightening.

It is bad enough to learn that Mr Neil intends to make himself a latter day Dr Beeching with his rail

franchise proposals, but it is worse to learn that he is taking a lead from Arnold Schwarzenegger, not in terms of his political leadership, but in his role as “Demolition Man”, when it comes to urban regeneration companies.

I know that times are hard financially, but that is why resources that are available from central Government and local government need to be used smartly to maximise positive outcomes for people and to create virtuous cycles of education, employment, equity, civic pride and community cohesion. That is why our amendment focuses on the creation of jobs, particularly for young people. As we state:

“persistent youth unemployment will have an impact on communities for generations to come.”

There has to be a place for community enterprises, credit unions, co-operatives, housing associations and other community-based organisations in regeneration strategies. The bottom line, however, is that the Government simply cannot choose to slash the housing, regeneration, enterprise and tourism budgets and still claim to have sustainable growth as its purpose, as it is trying to do.

Neighbourhoods frame people's lives, and provide a bundle of services that people need and an environment on which families depend. They also provide a vital anchor to individual lives, as the cabinet secretary pointed out. That is why our amendment asks Parliament to recognise that the cutting of funding for further education colleges will undermine the important role that colleges play in providing local people with the skills that they need to gain the qualifications that they need for work.

That is why we highlight that the provision of quality social housing is increasingly important as more people in our disadvantaged communities are classified as being fuel poor. Finally, it is why our amendment notes with disappointment that the Scottish Government has chosen to cut the funding to URCs, which will have a negative impact on areas such as Inverclyde, and why we are calling on the Scottish Government to come forward with details about its cities strategy and proposed enterprise areas as soon as possible. We will give those elements our support, because they are vital, but there will have to be constructive dialogue to ensure that we all move together in the same direction.

As I have said previously on this subject, Government must create the space and capacity to assist communities in regeneration of their areas, and the planning framework is central to that.

We know that communities need access to funds to help them regenerate their areas, to bring derelict properties and waste ground into

productive use and to promote community engagement while creating local jobs and training opportunities. However, regeneration is not just about paying for new buildings; it must also increase social justice and quality of life by overcoming poverty and disadvantage and by producing more inclusive, equitable and sustainable areas.

Neighbourhoods help to shape people's lives because they do more than house people. They form a base for wider activities and provide many of the social services that link individuals with one another and give rise to a sense of community.

Many neighbourhoods that are labelled “disadvantaged” are in areas where there have been major and long-term disruptions to the local economy, often through the closure or shrinkage of major employers. Regeneration programmes can claim some success in terms of the physical renewal of public space, the development of commercial properties in some areas and the provision of new and refurbished homes—although not necessarily on the scale and in the forms that are needed.

As was identified in last week's debate on architecture, people who live in disadvantaged neighbourhoods tend to feel they have very little influence over what happens to their area, and that the interests of those who fund developments often seem to come first. I am therefore delighted that the cabinet secretary has mentioned the importance of involving communities at the outset of regeneration. There must be a continuing emphasis on housing renewal that is dominated not by the interests of developers but by the needs of communities.

There has been an associated lack of attention paid to the cultivation of social capital and community. We have also seen the continuing provision of housing that does not meet the needs and wishes of families, and there has been a tendency, for various reasons, to go for clean-sweep schemes at the cost of restoration and reintegration. That is a disappointment in too many cases. Regeneration initiatives often promise far more than they can deliver, but they will certainly fail to produce the positive results that we all want if the Government rolls back on any commitment on urban regeneration.

If the Parliament does not wish to see any more backsliding on regeneration, I urge members to support Labour's amendment.

I move amendment S4M-01336.1, to leave out from second “acknowledges” to end and insert:

“considers that central to this will be the creation of jobs, particularly for young people, as persistent youth unemployment will have an impact on communities for generations to come, the important role that colleges play

in local areas to provide people with the skills needed to get them the qualifications that they need to work and the provision of quality social housing, which is increasingly important as more people in disadvantaged communities are classified as fuel poor; notes with disappointment that the Scottish Government has chosen to cut the funding to urban regeneration companies and the impact that this will have on areas such as Inverclyde, and calls on the Scottish Government to bring forward details of its Cities Strategy and proposed enterprise areas."

The Presiding Officer: I now call Alex Johnstone to speak to and move amendment S4M-01336.2. Mr Johnstone, you have a generous six minutes.

15:01

Alex Johnstone (North East Scotland) (Con): It is always nice to be given a generous time limit. Generally, it means that I will have a wander around the subject and end up saying less than I would otherwise have said.

I welcome the fact that the Government moved the motion today. It was criticised by the previous speaker for being anodyne, but what I took from the minister's opening speech was that he is looking for support across parties. When parties are only too willing to go for one another's throats, sometimes an anodyne motion is what it takes to find cross-party consensus. The minister has made an excellent start and there is a very strong chance that I might vote for his motion at the end of the day.

The problem we have—and have had for a couple of years now—in debates in this chamber is that they have one fundamental theme: there is no money, and whose fault is it? We have a regular circular habit of blaming one another for the problem. The Labour Party blames the Scottish National Party for all the cuts in Scotland today, and, of course, it is the SNP Government's fault because it sets the budget. The SNP Government immediately blames the Conservatives—and, occasionally, our Liberal colleagues, who are conveniently missing today—because a Conservative Government, working with the Liberal Democrats, sets the overall funding level that comes north. The Conservatives blame the Labour Party, because a Labour Government undermined the economy and made the spending cuts necessary in the first place. We can each happily and accurately blame one another from now until 5 o'clock, and perhaps beyond, without actually being very wrong. That takes us back to the problem that, regardless of whose fault it is, there is no money. That is the challenge we face.

Kevin Stewart: Will the member take an intervention?

Alex Johnstone: Ah, go on. Why not?

Kevin Stewart: I thank Mr Johnstone for giving way.

Without pointing the finger of blame at anyone, I would say that it is at times such as this when we have to be a little innovative in what we do. Does Mr Johnstone agree that the approach the Government is taking through projects such as retail parks in Aberdeen and the funding of district heating systems is a way to regenerate communities without huge cost or the need to bring in investment from elsewhere?

Alex Johnstone: There are many examples of success and they were not all achieved under this Government. In Scotland's history, regeneration has been an on-going theme for many years—for generations, in fact—and there have been some wonderful examples of success as well as some catastrophic failures, and no Government or party has a monopoly over one or the other. That is why, at this difficult time, it is important that we work together to make the best of the difficult circumstances we are in.

I agree with the broad themes that the minister set out. I intend, however, to talk about the things that could be done differently or, perhaps, better. I also hope to speak for a while about some of the things that have come out of the Finance Committee's inquiry into the budget, which I think might cast some light on the matter.

First, I refer members to my amendment, which, superficially, is just as bland and anodyne as the Government's motion. Although I do not expect everyone to support it, I will explain its purpose—and seek members' patience as I try to set out what is a subtle argument.

In the past, when resources have been limited, we have too often decided to target resources for regeneration at areas of greatest need. However, those areas are quite often not the areas that will deliver the greatest benefit from that spend. For a community that desperately needs regeneration, it can sometimes be more effective to spend the money in a neighbouring community to create more jobs and achieve more benefits. In the midst of all our bland talk about targeting areas of greatest need, we must ensure that we get value for money. After all, money is short.

Duncan McNeil (Greenock and Inverclyde) (Lab): Will the member give way?

Alex Johnstone: Not at the moment—I want to develop my argument.

In the past, I have criticised our tendency to be insular with regard to the communities that we represent, and I have argued that, when opportunities arise to create economic growth in an area, although we might very well create the jobs, we cannot persuade Scots to move to where

those jobs are. If we cannot achieve results over a longer distance, we might be able to do so on a community-by-community basis.

Duncan McNeil: I was wondering how long it would take the member to tell us to get on our bikes.

Does the member accept that regeneration is not just about economic growth, important though that is, but about the wellbeing of communities? In these days of preventative spending, do we recognise the impact of mass unemployment and poor health outcomes that, I am afraid to say, are the legacy of the previous Conservative Government?

Alex Johnstone: It is clear that, when they look back over history and at the trends that the member has highlighted, both the Conservative and Labour Parties will find it difficult to justify certain aspects of their record in government. However, at a time when we are trying to find ways of taking this issue forward, it is inappropriate to make it party political.

Nevertheless, I am glad that Duncan McNeil has raised the issue of preventative spending and early intervention because the Government obviously intends to move towards both and has made available a significant amount of resource to achieve its aims. However, evidence that the Finance Committee has taken over the past few months has highlighted the difficulties with such an approach. For a start, although there are people in Scotland's public sector who understand the priority and will be able to target resources to achieve those objectives, others—some at senior level in our local authorities, health boards and other public bodies—got where they are today through managing their silos effectively. If members choose to look, they will find countless examples of people maintaining that silo mentality to this day.

If we are to get any benefit from preventative spending—and we all know what benefits it can bring—we will need more leadership from the Government. We should not simply allocate resources and hope that they work. Although bottom-up approaches are often successful in this area, sometimes the top-down approach is necessary to ensure that things work. I am not entirely sure, but I thought that I heard Michael McMahon say something similar in his speech. If he did, that is at least some common ground between us.

I applaud the Government's willingness to engage with the private sector on this issue but, as the Finance Committee heard, it appears that people in the sector who might otherwise access funding through JESSICA or TIF are not as aware

as they might be of the availability of funding and other such opportunities.

Once again, there is an opportunity for the Government to engage. The policy intention has been stated many times, and it has been stated by the minister once more today. It is of genuine concern to me that I talk to people who still do not get the message.

The generous six minutes that I was allocated has passed by some margin.

There is still much that I would like to raise with the minister and I look forward to the opportunity to do so in future. For the purposes of the debate, I accept the generosity of the minister's opening remarks. I understand that this is not about allocating blame but about achieving results for some of Scotland's most deprived communities. We will work with the Government and will vote for the motion at decision time tonight.

I move amendment S4M-01336.2, to insert at end:

“, and further acknowledges that, where difficult choices must be made, regeneration spending should be targeted where it will bring most benefit to the wider community.”

The Presiding Officer: We move to the open debate. I can offer members up to seven minutes for speeches.

15:10

Adam Ingram (Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley) (SNP): I am grateful for the opportunity to speak in the debate.

I will focus my remarks on the need to regenerate the former coalfield communities in my constituency, not because other communities do not require regeneration activity but because the scale of the challenge demands the attention of a Government whose ambition is to provide opportunities for all of Scotland to flourish.

We know that deprivation in Scotland is disproportionately concentrated in the former coalfield areas. Analysis of the Scottish index of multiple deprivation showed that in the final year of the previous Labour Administration, 34 per cent of the data zones in the Ayrshire coalfield were among the worst 20 per cent in Scotland. That is the highest figure for any coalfield area in Scotland. The figure rose to 40 per cent for employment deprivation or worklessness among those actively seeking work and those who have become dependent on state benefits, and to 42 per cent for health deprivation.

Geographic access is a big problem in the Ayrshire coalfield area. Although coalfield communities traditionally grew up in small towns and villages around mines that were located

outside the main urban areas, the coalfield settlements in Ayrshire are among the most rural in the United Kingdom. As Alex Johnstone said, there is an issue about trying to match up communities in need with communities in which there are opportunities. There is a disconnect there because we do not have adequate transport between such areas.

Many people have moved away to find work. Communities such as Muirkirk and New Cumnock have suffered significant depopulation, which has accelerated a spiral of decline.

The jobs base has not recovered from the closure of the pits, and new business formation has been lower than average. Despite the exodus of people, the latest available figures for 2007 showed that 3.1 working-age adults were resident in coalfield areas for every job located there. I think it is fair to say that that was a distinctly poor legacy for the incoming SNP Government in 2007 to inherit.

Despite those deep-rooted problems, progress has been made in recent years, with the Scottish Government playing a leading role. That has taken many forms, including continued funding of the Coalfields Regeneration Trust, which in turn has supported some 30 projects in Cumnock and Doon Valley in the past year. There have been significant improvements to Cumnock town centre through the town centre regeneration fund. The small business bonus scheme has been a major boost, safeguarding and creating local jobs. The Government provided the bridging funding that was vital in securing the commitment of Prince Charles—whom the cabinet secretary knows well—to the Dumfries House Trust. It has also supported, through the sustainable communities initiative, the associated Knockroon development—the creation of a new village, with all the necessary community facilities.

Importantly, the Scottish Government has not acted alone. The area has benefited greatly from a progressive SNP-run council, which has invested in, and is continuing to invest heavily in, new and refurbished schools in New Cumnock, Patna, Littlemill and Sorn; in the Cumnock conservation area regeneration scheme, along with Historic Scotland and other funding parties; and in new community centres in Auchinleck, Netherthird and New Cumnock.

Crucially, investment in physical infrastructure has been accompanied by support for community-led development, including for very large projects such as the Catrine environmental heritage project. The council has backed the Catrine Community Trust to the tune of £230,000, which helped it to secure a grant of £2 million from the Scottish rural development programme for a unique project incorporating heritage-led

regeneration and the use of renewable energy to provide a sustainable income stream. The project involves the restoration of a scheduled monument—the River Ayr weir—reuse of redundant hydro turbines, and the development of an education and visitor information centre.

Smaller but no less important projects are springing up across the coalfield communities. Confidence is building and activity is growing. Such activity is proof positive that empowered communities can lead the regeneration process. However, it is particularly important that individuals and groups in our most disadvantaged and fragile communities who make that commitment have access to adequate and appropriate support.

I echo the calls in the briefings for the debate from organisations such as Planning Aid for Scotland and the Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations for community capacity building to be at the core of our new national regeneration strategy. I look forward to that emerging in the next few weeks and to the introduction of the community empowerment and renewal bill in the new year. I expect that we will make a step change in our regeneration efforts in the next few years.

15:17

Duncan McNeil (Greenock and Inverclyde (Lab)): I am also pleased to be able to take part in the debate and I welcome the minister's comments about focusing on the hard-pressed communities that are less resilient to the recession and downturn that we face.

Like other members, I know all too well, given the profile of my constituency of Greenock and Inverclyde, that the regeneration game has faced challenges and had difficulties over the years.

With the decline of heavy industry in my community and subsequent mass unemployment, the results have become predictable and evident over time: depopulation, deprivation, poverty, poor health outcomes, and an increase in crime and in drug and alcohol dependency. However, the real result has been the dashing of expectation and ambition in communities, wasted talent and destroyed communities.

Adam Ingram mentioned some figures. Over the years, many quick fixes have been tried in an effort to replace the large number of jobs lost from the shipyards and the engine works. We have learned over time that we cannot simply reverse the decline by replacing industries with something that is not sustainable. We cannot put a Band-aid on a problem that has been caused by years of neglect and decline.

The sunrise industries were a classic example. Electronic manufacturing took up a lot of the slack in places such as Inverclyde and North Ayrshire. Employment in such manufacturing was plentiful but, of course, it was low paid, there was increased casualisation and the legacy, because we did not get the cycle right, is empty factories.

During that process, we created a new class of people who are known as the working poor—those who work for what is now the minimum wage and who cannot provide for their families without state aid. The quick fixes involved big announcements followed by even bigger disappointments. We had the failure of the enterprise zones and the failure of Government and the enterprise agencies to work together. Ambitious community plans were left to gather dust and we could not move on because of disputes about planning and who owned land.

At times during that period, the challenges that we faced in Inverclyde appeared to be almost insurmountable, and it seemed that we could not move on at all. However, at last, we moved on from the quick fixes. They were replaced with a longer-term model—the urban regeneration company, which has a tight focus on the community and is tasked to work across it. The URC model is long term and recognises that we need to invest not just in business, but in the community. Thanks to the URC Riverside Inverclyde, those advances have come to the Inverclyde area. The changes are there for everybody to see. There are new businesses and there has been wider investment in colleges, housing and new schools, which I believe is the result of the thinking and ambition in the URC.

Many members were in Inverclyde during the recent by-election and were confronted by the new Inverclyde and what has been achieved. It might have been a backhanded compliment, but many members took me aside in the Parliament to tell me about the changes that they had noticed, which were not what they had expected. A transformation has taken place.

I cannot argue with the overall thinking in the strategy and the cabinet secretary's comments, although I suppose that the devil will be in the detail. The benefit of that type of thinking in the URC and of its can-do attitude reaches far beyond the obvious physical improvements in facilities and infrastructure. Riverside Inverclyde has become a catalyst for change in the area and an infectious model for action that has been picked up by other agencies in the Inverclyde community, resulting in changes in schools and housing.

With the necessary support, Riverside Inverclyde can offer much more, such as the development of the famous sugar sheds and the James Watt dock area. Recently, the popular

television drama "Waterloo Road" relocated to Inverclyde. That can be part of how we promote the identity of Greenock and Inverclyde.

Members would not expect me to say anything else but, sadly, we are fearful that that progress is under threat because of the deep cuts to the URC. The cuts to Inverclyde's regeneration funding have been serious and we are worried that they put a question mark over the continuation of the steady progress that has been made. How can we expect long-term results when a crucial 10-year project is to be abandoned halfway through? How can the URC make good on its commitment to those deprived communities when the Government cannot even make good on its commitment to the urban regeneration companies? How do we look forward and commit to a new strategy, which needs to be long term, when our experience is that commitments are not being seen through?

My challenge to the Scottish Government and the cabinet secretary is to make good on the commitment to regeneration and to back a wider manifesto for the regeneration of Inverclyde. Our ambitions have increased. I say clearly to the Scottish Government that it must keep its side of the bargain and allow Riverside Inverclyde to see through its long-term plans by making good on previous commitments and ending the uncertainty about future funding.

The Deputy Presiding Officer (Elaine Smith): Mr McNeil, will you begin to wind up, please?

Duncan McNeil: Right. Sorry, Presiding Officer.

The urban regeneration company is but one part of our wider manifesto. We have great ambition to see the renewables industry come to Inverclyde, and we want to see Inverclyde get a share of the £100 million fossil fuel levy to make that a reality. However, we must test the Government's words and actions and look for continued support for a hard-pressed community.

15:25

Sandra White (Glasgow Kelvin) (SNP): I thank the cabinet secretary for holding this debate.

As a previous MSP for the Glasgow region and as the current MSP for Glasgow Kelvin, I, like my colleague Adam Ingram, have a lot of experience of regeneration issues. As I have said previously, I fully support the Government's commitment and the aim to put regeneration at the top of the agenda.

I do not dispute that Duncan McNeil spoke from the heart or the sincerity with which his speech was delivered. He is absolutely right about the neglect and lack of ambition that there have been. We have spoken about them before. That neglect and lack of ambition have been visited on

communities for generations, but he must be aware that there were Labour Governments during those 40, 50 or 60 years—decades and generations. That happened not just in Scotland, but at Westminster. However, I appreciate Duncan McNeil's sincerity.

Duncan McNeil: I accept that there has been a failing for 30 or 50 years, although well-meaning attempts have been made, such as the bringing in of the sunrise industries, which failed. Those industries lifted up communities, but they were not sustainable. What we have now is a sustainable model that is being damaged and put in jeopardy by the current Administration. I hope that that attitude will change, and I am sure that it will. We might hear something about that later, in the minister's response.

Sandra White: I thank the member for his intervention, but I remind him that this is not the end of the URCs. I think that the cabinet secretary mentioned that, and I am sure that he will have to say something about it in his winding-up speech.

Obviously, it is not only Inverclyde that has suffered high levels of deprivation; many areas in Glasgow have suffered them, too. Despite the money that has been invested—we have already spoken about that—those communities still have the same problems. There have been generations of unemployed in those communities, and there is no hope. Things are getting better, but as Duncan McNeil said, there have been generations of unemployed people, which is a problem that we must consider.

I believe that the cabinet secretary and the other ministers in the Government are looking at innovative approaches. We cannot continue with the old ways in which money is spent in areas that are still deprived. That is why we need to consider innovative approaches, and I welcome those that the cabinet secretary outlined.

I do not want to make the debate very political, although, obviously, I raised a political issue, which Duncan McNeil acknowledged. However, I was pretty disheartened when I read the Labour Party's amendment. As I said, the Labour Party has been in power in Glasgow and in other areas, but it has failed to successfully regenerate areas and communities, particularly in Glasgow. As even Alex Johnstone mentioned, we must work together to regenerate those areas. I would have thought that we would want to work together on the Government's ambition for regeneration, but, unfortunately, Michael McMahon seemed to take the same downbeat and pessimistic tone. I am sorry to say that he was bereft of fresh ideas or clear direction. I will take an intervention from him if he wants to intervene.

Michael McMahon: There is no point in talking to the member.

Sandra White: I put it to the member that perhaps the Labour Party needs to be regenerated.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: If members are not going to intervene, they should not shout across the chamber, please.

Sandra White: I sincerely hope that the Labour Party will work constructively with the Government and others to ensure that future generations of people are not treated in the same way that people were treated decades ago. We must consider regeneration optimistically, as we can regenerate areas. We all know where those areas are, and a real change would benefit their communities. They want change, and it is up to us as elected members to give that to them.

I want to touch on a couple of issues that are obviously important, particularly in the Glasgow area.

The Commonwealth games will be a real catalyst for regeneration, not only in Glasgow but across Scotland. I hope that the minister will say something in his closing speech about community benefit clauses, which are being inserted into public contracts to ensure that local communities benefit from them. I fully support that interesting and innovative approach, but I would like to see more meat on the bones in relation to how it will work in practice.

As the minister knows, because I have raised the issue on numerous occasions, I am particularly interested in the community empowerment bill. I agree with him that community empowerment must come from the bottom up, not the top down. I heard what Alex Johnstone said, and, yes, we all need to work together. However, if communities are not involved and engaged, regeneration will not work. For too long, things have been thrown at communities—such as the sunshine industries that Duncan McNeil mentioned—without anybody asking the people on the ground what they wanted and how they would get involved.

The community empowerment bill is one of the most important bills in this session of Parliament. I look forward to seeing more meat on the bones of the bill and to working with the Government and with local communities on it.

Tax increment financing provides a golden opportunity for cities. The Glasgow Kelvin constituency, which I represent, covers the city centre, the merchant city and the vibrant west end area of Glasgow. It could really benefit from that finance. Glasgow City Council is putting forward a business case—I think it is for £80 million—for such funding for the Buchanan quarter. I do not

say this lightly, but there have been some concerns about that TIF scheme. I plead with the council to listen to those concerns. I also hope that they will have no adverse effect, regardless of what the council proposes to the Government, because we desperately need such finance to be put into city centres, as it will raise areas up.

Duncan McNeil mentioned Inverclyde docks; I would like something to be done about the waterfront area on the Clyde as well. We should bring such derelict areas back into use so that all the communities can use them and businesses can locate there. I would like that to be considered for a future TIF scheme, if not the one that Glasgow City Council is proposing now.

I am pleased to speak in the debate. Regeneration is at the heart of communities as well as being at the heart of business. It is also at the heart of cities, including Glasgow, which is obviously the greatest city in Scotland. I want to ensure that regeneration works. That is why I appeal to all parties to work together to ensure that we get decent regeneration and a decent Scotland for the people who matter—the people who live here.

15:33

Aileen McLeod (South Scotland) (SNP): I welcome the debate. The regeneration of our towns and communities is one of the key elements in the Government's strategy for tackling the deep-seated inequalities that continue to blight our society and limit the opportunities for our citizens—indeed, whole families—to realise their potential.

I go further: I suggest that regeneration is possibly the single most important policy at our disposal if we are to make real inroads into improving the life chances of many of our most vulnerable and disadvantaged people by combating the vicious cycle of deprivation to which far too many individuals and families are consigned for reasons that are entirely outside their control.

Regeneration is about communities and neighbourhoods, whether in our cities, towns or smaller villages throughout rural Scotland. It is focused on improving the places where people live. It is about creating jobs, improving housing, tackling poverty and empowering those who have the skills and resources to make a difference. It is about transforming possibilities, raising aspirations and enhancing prospects.

If we are able to achieve that and to improve lives—that is the Government's absolute aim—we will make a significant contribution to reducing the future demand, especially the failure demand, on our public services.

Regeneration is not only about economic development, although that is an essential element; it is also about delivering social justice and reducing the inequalities that fundamentally curtail the life chances of far too many of our citizens. That aspiration underpinned the regeneration discussion paper that the cabinet secretary published in February this year and it is increasingly being turned into reality by the policies that this Government is implementing.

As we have heard from the cabinet secretary this afternoon, the Scottish Government has invested more than £90 million in Scotland's urban regeneration companies since 2007. More than 1,300 new jobs have been created as a result. Our substantially increased investment in skills, employment measures, housing, transport and infrastructure is playing a central role in delivering our regeneration strategy.

Of course, the sheer scale of the challenges, coupled with the current economic and financial climate, inevitably means that there is still much to do. Although there is no getting away from the reality that hard cash matters if we are successfully to deliver our regeneration strategy, let us not forget one of the key messages of the Christie commission: communities must be empowered to help themselves.

This Government is fully committed to releasing the potential of Scotland's communities to do things for themselves. In addition to putting in resources, we have to ensure that communities have the leadership needed to drive forward the regeneration process and that all our public service agencies—public sector and third sector—are operating in an integrated manner and thinking creatively about solutions that might work in particular localities.

As a South Scotland MSP, I want to mention one very good example of regeneration in my region: the waterfront project in Stranraer. That programme stems from the forthcoming opening of Stena Line UK's new operation at Old House Point, near Cairnryan, which will create the opportunity for real transformational change for Stranraer. A master plan is in place to guide the regeneration programme, central to which is ensuring that the waterfront and the existing town centre are developed as one distinctive and successful visitor destination. The basis of that is to develop Stranraer and Loch Ryan as a centre of excellence for marine leisure and green tourism, with opportunities for new business, retail and housing developments and enhanced public space for residents and visitors. All that builds on the inherent strengths of the south-west of Scotland.

Efforts to achieve that have already started. A Scottish Government-backed town centre regeneration fund project of £790,000 has

transformed the town centre at Castle Square, which recently won the Saltire Society's award for the use of art in public places—the design was by two local artists, Matt Baker and David Ralston. A new shore-block facility is being built to support an increase in sailing from the marina, supported by a joint European Union grant shared with Northern Ireland and Ireland.

Delivering such a transformational change in the current economic and financial climate will be a challenge, given the level of public and private sector investment required. Finding new and innovative ways to secure such investment is key. Although council capital borrowing capacity is one option to lever in EU and other grant support, I believe that there is a real opportunity for the Scottish Government to support rural regeneration through new public-private financial instruments such as tax increment financing. However, we also need to consider how asset-backed financial vehicles such as JESSICA could be used in rural areas such as the south-west of Scotland to help achieve the scale of investment required.

In the context of the Scottish economy, the value of a successful Stranraer regeneration programme cannot be underestimated, given the potential to position Stranraer not just as a major gateway to Scotland from Ireland but as a major gateway to Europe from Ireland.

I know that the fundamental objectives that underpin this Government's regeneration strategy are shared across the chamber and I do not doubt for one second that colleagues from all political parties feel as strongly as we in the Scottish National Party do about tackling the profound inequalities of opportunity that characterise far too many communities in Scotland. I hope that this debate will provide an opportunity for us all to consider constructively how we might take this shared agenda forward to the benefit of those whom we all seek to help.

15:39

Neil Bibby (West Scotland) (Lab): The unemployment statistics that were announced this morning are a stark reminder of the need for a long-term strategic vision for the regeneration of the most disadvantaged communities and towns in Scotland.

Unemployment has risen by 5,000 in the past three months, and Scotland's unemployment rate now stands at 8 per cent. One in five 18 to 24-year-olds is unemployed—a total of 84,000 young people across the country—and the number of people in employment has fallen by 28,000 in the last quarter.

In my West Scotland region, the number of people claiming jobseekers allowance has soared

to 20,718, a change over the past year of 1,956. The constituency of Cunninghame South saw a 0.7 per cent increase in claimant count to 2,832, while the figures for Dumbarton and Paisley have both risen by more than 0.5 per cent in the past year. That all underlines the absolute importance of regeneration in Scotland and, in particular, my West Scotland region.

As other members have pointed out, there are many communities in need of regeneration, but I will focus particularly on Clydebank and the regeneration company Clydebank Re-built in my West Scotland region.

Clydebank Re-built was formed in 2002 to drive the economic, social and physical regeneration of the town. Its two founders are West Dunbartonshire Council and Scottish Enterprise, and it receives financial support from the council as well as from the Scottish Government and Scottish Enterprise.

Much has been achieved to date, including major developments at Queens Quay—the former site of John Brown's shipyards—at John Knox Street, and at the prestigious 4-acre riverside site in the Clyde Gate area next to the national health service Golden Jubilee hospital. Improvements have also been made to the public realm in the town centre, and riverside walkways by the Clyde have been created.

This year saw the completion of the improvements to the canal south bank at the Clyde shopping centre, complementing earlier work on the north bank. Next year will, we hope, see the completion of the Clydebank town hall, which will feature a major upgrade of the facilities for conferences and performances, a civic space with break-out areas, a small cafe, a new wedding chapel, a larger museum and a new gallery and garden.

Looking down, above all of that, is the Titan crane—a reminder of Clydebank's industrial past that is being used in a modern way for a number of activities including abseiling. Restored more than four years ago, it has already attracted 35,000 visitors. The new education and visitor centre that was opened in May this year will greatly assist schools and the wider community in learning about the area's history.

Clydebank Re-built is a success story so far, but there are still chapters to be written. As Eleanor McAllister OBE, managing director of Clydebank Re-built, stated in the 2010-11 annual report,

"We are less than mid-way through our 20-year regeneration programme for Clydebank. There is still much to do."

She also noted:

"Jobs are critical for the town. We have worked closely with local business to help sustain and expand their activity in our new business pavilions, the successful JKS workshops (which have achieved almost 100% occupancy). Our projects have generated directly almost 300 jobs in the town."

As my colleagues Duncan McNeil and Michael McMahon have already mentioned, the ring-fenced budgets for all urban regeneration companies other than Clyde Gateway run only until 2012-13. After that, Riverside Inverclyde, Irvine Bay and Clydebank Re-built will all have to bid for funding as part of a wider regeneration strategy. They no longer have guaranteed funding beyond 2012-13 even though they were originally guaranteed 10 years of funding. There is now a very real concern that they will not be able to function in the way they are used to.

Clydebank Re-built wants to build more workshops that will allow more training and work opportunities for local people. House building on the waterfront is still an absolute priority, and there are many other projects that need to be done. We should give the company the certainty of funding that it needs.

Today's figures show that 2,190 people claim jobseekers allowance in Clydebank and Milngavie. Taking the wind out of the sails of Clydebank Re-built by forcing it to compete for funding after 2012-13 threatens to make that grave statistic even worse and to bring to a halt the significant advances seen in Clydebank as a direct result of Clydebank Re-built.

There is also a brand-new college in Clydebank. It is doing important work but it, too, needs to receive continued support to create opportunities for young people in the area and not to be affected by the cuts that we are seeing from the Scottish Government. We have seen excellent results in a relatively short space of time in Clydebank, but long-term plans with the potential to provide genuine and lasting benefits to the people of the town and the area are at risk of falling off the radar.

The motion states:

"it is imperative that there is a strategic vision for the regeneration of the most disadvantaged communities across Scotland".

I welcome that statement and agree with it, but that needs long-term focus. Going back on a commitment to guarantee urban regeneration companies 10 years of funding is an example of short-term thinking and strikes me as counterproductive.

We have heard a lot about cities from the Scottish Government and we have a minister for cities strategy. Although I do not disagree that cities are important to the national economy, we

must not forget the real and pressing issues that are faced by our towns, particularly in the west of Scotland. I hope that the Government will offer the reassurance of action and money that those towns and communities need.

15:45

George Adam (Paisley) (SNP): I, too, welcome the debate. Neil Bibby has mentioned many of the challenges that we face at the moment. I would like to live in an independent Scotland, but we are not there yet and I must work with the situation that we are in. Nevertheless, I am ambitious about how we can make things happen in our local communities, and the administration in Renfrewshire has shown how ambitious and confident we can be in going out into the greater world to promote ourselves.

I may not have mentioned it before, but I am from Paisley. I am a proud Paisley buddie and I am ambitious for the town, as are most people who are from towns such as Paisley—they are ambitious to see us build something for the future. A problem arises if we do not give people ambition and ideas for the future, showing them where we can go; negativity develops and they start to turn in on themselves. Luckily, over the past five years, we have shown that things can get better for Paisley if we have a can-do attitude.

I am a great believer in community-led regeneration. In fact, the Renfrewshire administration reinstated the local area committees with a budget of grant money from the general fund and some money from the towns fund. Through those cross-party groups, people were able to decide what they wanted themselves. I was the chair of a committee in Paisley south and said at the very first meeting, "Right. Let's get out there and change our local community." The local community thought that that was hyperbole from the big man again, but, with the limited funds that the group had, we made a difference.

For example, we got £160,000 of external funding and invested £20,000 ourselves in state-of-the-art tennis courts in Brodie park. It is an incredible thing, in this day and age, to have state-of-the-art municipal tennis courts that are free for all and that everybody can use. Now, 40 young people arrive at those courts every night of the week to learn to play tennis. It helped that, when we eventually made contact with Andy Murray's mother, she held a gun to the head of Tennis Scotland—metaphorically speaking—and told it to give us the money. There is no point in having the elite of the sport at Braehead arena if local people are not allowed to play. If that is not the work of a strong community, I do not know what is.

I agree with the cabinet secretary that, over the years, community planning and work with local businesses, the community and public sector partners have been extremely important. That is what my colleague Derek Mackay did as the chair of the Paisley vision board. There were many difficult situations in Paisley town centre, and Mr Mackay led businesses and the local community—

Derek Mackay (Renfrewshire North and West) (SNP): Hear, hear.

George Adam: —even if he says so himself. Instead of worrying about how to fill the empty shops, we decided to market them ourselves and do something about it. We started a “Paisley is ...” campaign. There was also what Derek Mackay called the holy trinity in Paisley, involving regeneration of the old Arnott’s site, the Littlewoods site—sorry for the advertising, Presiding Officer, but it is how we know them locally—and the council’s old north building. All three of those projects are now moving forward, but they had not moved forward before my colleague took control as leader of the council—obviously helped by his best man and friend on the council and now on the back benches.

We also invested in social housing—there has been talk of that today. There is a Scottish housing quality standard to meet by 2015 and the previous Labour administration said that it was to privatise the housing stock or nothing, but we achieved the standard. It took three or four attempts to achieve it, but we got there in the end through the biggest investment in housing in Renfrewshire since the second world war.

I want to say one thing about the tax increment financing scheme. The cabinet secretary and I have known each other for many years. Renfrewshire Council made a bid to the scheme for the Glasgow airport economic investment zone. We are not taking the huff, but we will keep on at the cabinet secretary to have a look at the proposal, because it is a way of ensuring that we get the necessary infrastructure in an area where lack of infrastructure has been identified as a major constraint. It would give us a chance to create 3,300 jobs over 25 years through investment of £17 million. That is quite a good deal, even if I say so myself, so perhaps the cabinet secretary could consider it.

I want to talk about one of our local further education colleges, Reid Kerr College, whose principal, Audrey Cumberland, has invested in a state-of-the-art institute of construction and engineering. Some of her colleagues think that that is quite a strange thing to do in these difficult times. The college has spent £4 million ensuring that it has increased space for training in motor vehicles, electrical work and the fast-developing area of renewable energy. It is training people

such as electricians so that they can get involved in the renewables side of things, which is important. It is a college that believes in investing in the future.

I am running out of time. I would like the cabinet secretary to consider having an economic zone or area in Paisley town centre, because that is definitely something that we need. That would help us to hold events such as the one that Renfrewshire Council and Paisley vision board held recently, when 37,500 people partied in Paisley town centre as they watched the Christmas lights being switched on. Incidentally, takings for restaurants and pubs in the area were up 55 per cent, which shows that people spent their money.

Despite Tesco’s breaking new ground in Wallneuk in the new year and the £9 million investment in Gilmour Street station, I would still like the cabinet secretary to fund some of the things that I have asked for. I have given local examples from Paisley and Renfrew, but I have no doubt that other members could identify similar initiatives from their areas. It is important that I am ambitious for the future of my town and my community. That is my job, which is why I have used my time as I have.

15:52

Stuart McMillan (West Scotland) (SNP): We have heard a lot about regeneration strategies and about the urban regeneration companies, which I intend to address later in my speech.

Given that we are in the midst of a real-terms reduction in capital funding from Westminster of 36.7 per cent between 2010 and 2015, the current funding strategies need to be examined, and I await with great interest the cabinet secretary’s announcement about the new regeneration strategy.

Duncan McNeil: Just for clarity, the budget of the Inverclyde regeneration company Riverside Inverclyde is down by 57 per cent, whereas the Scottish Government’s overall capital budget is down by 25 per cent. Those are the figures for 2011-12. The proposed budget for Riverside Inverclyde for 2012-13 is down by 37 per cent, whereas the Scottish Government’s overall capital budget is down by only 4.9 per cent. Are there any conceivable circumstances in which the member can justify that cut to the URC?

Stuart McMillan: I will come on to that later in my speech.

As I said, major cuts have been made to the Scottish Government’s budget. The debate highlights the limitations on the Scottish Government’s ability to borrow and on its financial

powers and shows that the Parliament needs to be a normal independent Parliament if it is to be able to deal with the cuts that sometimes come this way.

Regeneration takes many forms, as we all know, and we should recognise—whether we are talking about funding the URCs, building new homes, building and refurbishing schools, refreshing our town centres or building new health and other facilities—that it is not defined by any one thing.

Two weeks ago, I was surprised to hear the Scottish Government's announcement that it would cease Riverside Inverclyde's funding at the end of the next financial year and reduce its funding allocation by £1.5 million to £2.5 million. I raised the matter with the cabinet secretary at the Economy, Energy and Tourism Committee, and I met him the very next day. He gave me an assurance that even with the new regeneration strategy, there will still be Government funds available for which RI can bid.

Being given that assurance is better than being told that there will be nothing left at all, and nothing available.

Duncan McNeil: Will the member take an intervention?

Stuart McMillan: No—I have taken an intervention, and you are going to listen to what I have to say. [*Interruption.*] I have already taken an intervention—you have taken up enough of my time.

Yesterday, a meeting of Inverclyde Council's regeneration committee took place. There were a few interesting points of note in the meeting papers.

Paragraph 2.5 of one of the papers states:

"Members will recall that CoSLA negotiated the transfer of local regeneration/economic development functions and the Business Gateway from Scottish Enterprise (SE) in 2008. As part of that deal, CoSLA secured an ongoing commitment in SE's budget to at least £12.5 million annually for Urban Regeneration Companies (URCs) throughout two Spending Review periods".

I found that to be of great interest, as I spoke to somebody in the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities and they informed me that that is not true: the commitment was for one spending round and not two. Either I have been informed incorrectly, or the papers that Inverclyde Council has published are factually incorrect. As a result, I have written to COSLA officially to establish the situation.

The second point of note concerns the financial amounts that have already been provided to Riverside Inverclyde for its work. Between 2006 and the current financial year, the Scottish

Government provided £25.3 million, with £2.5 million guaranteed for next year; Scottish Enterprise provided £13.9 million; and Inverclyde Council provided £13.1 million, with £4.7 million earmarked for the next two years. That is a massive £52.3 million already spent in Inverclyde solely through Riverside Inverclyde since 2006.

In the *Greenock Telegraph* of 3 November, Duncan McNeil is quoted as saying:

"Riverside Inverclyde has only just begun its mission to attract jobs and business to the area, and it appears the Scottish Government is pulling the rug from under their feet."

If Mr McNeil—

Duncan McNeil: Will the member take an intervention?

Stuart McMillan: I will go on with my point first.

If Mr McNeil actually believes that comment—and I dare say that he does—it just goes to show the state in which decades of Labour misrule in Inverclyde have left our community.

Added to that were the lost years in which the Tories tried to close down shipyards on the Clyde, including in Inverclyde. Thankfully, they failed in their mission to totally deindustrialise the Clyde.

The announcement two weeks ago that Ferguson shipbuilders in Port Glasgow—the town in which I grew up—will build the world's first two hybrid ferries for CMAL, safeguarding 75 jobs and creating up to 100 more, including up to 20 new apprenticeships, was fantastic news. I told the cabinet secretary that it was excellent news that will be warmly welcomed in Inverclyde.

That order amounts to £20 million, which is funded by the Scottish Government. The context of the comparison is stark: £20 million guarantees those shipbuilding jobs at Ferguson, and yet according to Duncan McNeil, £52.3 million has not provided any jobs as the mission has only just started.

Duncan McNeil: Will the member take an intervention?

Stuart McMillan: I have placed on record many times in the Parliament my support for Riverside Inverclyde—I make no bones about that, and I will continue to support it. Riverside Inverclyde has done a very good job despite the state that Inverclyde was in when it came into being.

Duncan McNeil: You are nothing but a patsy.

Stuart McMillan: Mr McNeil is shouting and bawling from a sedentary position, but decades of the dead hand of Labour misrule are obvious and apparent in Inverclyde. Mr McNeil needs to acknowledge that.

The £52 million that has so far been spent has improved parts of Inverclyde and made them more attractive for future private investment. As I said, I will continue to champion Riverside Inverclyde and the regeneration.

As part of the regeneration, this Government has invested £99 million in social housing; £18 million in the fairer Scotland fund; and £2.2 million for the town centre regeneration fund. It has also invested £5.5 million, which is half of the money for the new additional needs school to be built in Port Glasgow, and half the cost of the new Wellpark centre, which deals with addictions. For those latter two projects, the Government was lobbied hard by the SNP council in Inverclyde. Under the SNP Government, 817 small businesses in Inverclyde have received the small business bonus. There are many more examples of why this Government has done a good job.

However, we cannot rest on our laurels, as there are still many more challenges ahead. I know that. Mr McNeil is sitting there laughing, but I do not think that the decades of Labour misrule in Inverclyde are a laughing matter. He knows that, and he has to admit to it—

Duncan McNeil: You are a patsy.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: Mr McNeil, could you stop shouting across the chamber, please?

Stuart McMillan: Inverclyde has made great leaps forward in the past four years under the SNP, but the challenges remain. It is vital that we build on the progress that has been made and ensure that Inverclyde continues to develop and prosper.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: Mr McMillan, could you finish your speech now, please? You are over time.

Stuart McMillan: Okay. Thank you.

16:00

John Mason (Glasgow Shettleston) (SNP): There are many aspects to regeneration. Many factors have been mentioned this afternoon and I am sure that others will be mentioned. Members have talked about job creation, youth unemployment, housing and colleges. We face many challenges at a time when the Scottish budget is being cut severely, but while accepting those challenges, we must not forget the past and current successes.

I will concentrate on my constituency. Most people would accept that the east end of Glasgow has particular challenges, but we have seen some significant progress. The first area that I will touch on is transport. The M74 was completed on time

and on budget and it is estimated that there is potential for 20,000 jobs to be brought to the wider area because of that motorway. Being built at the moment and linked in with the M74 is the east end regeneration route, which is under construction just yards from my constituency office. That will link up more of the east end with the wider motorway network. Both Glasgow City Council and the Scottish Government deserve to be congratulated on the progress that has been made on those roads.

Public transport, too, is being boosted in my area, with the Airdrie to Bathgate rail line giving new links. It is worth saying that many of the transport projects benefit much wider areas than just the areas in which they are built. The M74 benefits Renfrewshire, Lanarkshire and many other areas, and similarly, the railway is of great benefit to the east end of Glasgow. As I travel, I see students who are now able to attend a wider variety of courses because of that railway line. Dalmarnock station is receiving a £10 million upgrade with funding from the Scottish Government, Glasgow City Council, Clyde Gateway URC, Strathclyde partnership for transport and European money.

One reason why a number of those things are happening in the east end of Glasgow is to give better access to the Commonwealth games site, which brings me to my second topic. The fact that the Commonwealth games are coming to Scotland is a tremendous success for Scotland. We talk about the legacy of the games and what it will mean. It means different things to different people. For example, we hope that it will mean that folk exercise more and their health improves. From my point of view, the main legacy will be the physical legacy of the buildings that will continue to exist after the games. The village and four of the main venues will be in Glasgow Shettleston. That will create the opportunity for local people to watch sport, but also the opportunity for them to take part and use the facilities afterwards.

Stuart McMillan: Does the member agree with the Labour councillors in Inverclyde who said yesterday that money should be diverted away from the Commonwealth games to go elsewhere?

John Mason: That strikes me as a slightly bizarre suggestion. The Commonwealth games will benefit the whole of Scotland and raise our profile in the world. I would think that one of the areas that Inverclyde should be moving forward on is tourism. It is doing that, as far as I am aware. A boost to Scottish tourism should therefore be a boost to Inverclyde.

One advantage of the Commonwealth games, like the Olympics, is that lesser-known sports get more of a profile. One of those is hockey. I am grateful to Scottish Hockey for inviting me to be its

guest at the recent dinner to mark 1,000 days until the Commonwealth games. Not only will the top hockey pitches in Scotland come to the east end of Glasgow, but Scottish Hockey will move its headquarters to Glasgow Green. That is an example of a long-term commitment that will give the area a real boost. It is real regeneration as far as I am concerned.

I should also mention the athletes village. The houses there will not have kitchens because the athletes will not need to cook, but after the games are over, kitchens will be fitted and a considerable number of new houses will be made available. There will be 300 social rented houses and a 120-bed care home that will be run by the council, which will allow older people to stay in the area, in the one building, as their situation changes. There will also be a considerable number of houses for sale.

There will also be jobs in building the facilities and running them later on; 620 jobs, including 84 apprenticeships, will be linked to the village. I understand that this week Nicola Sturgeon visited CCG (Scotland) Ltd, which is making timber frames for the housing. One of the employees there, Paul Doherty, said:

"After a lengthy period without work, I was fortunate enough to be given the opportunity to be taken on at the CCG off-site manufacturing plant back in August 2010. I'm not exaggerating when I say that my life has been transformed as a result. I'm very proud to be living proof that Clyde Gateway really is making a difference across our communities."

That leads me on to my third and final topic, Clyde Gateway. I declare an interest in that I have been trying, through Clyde Gateway, to employ a young person who would not normally be getting a job, so I have a link with it in that way.

Clyde Gateway has been doing some tremendous things. Transport has been mentioned already, and Clyde Gateway's work spans Rutherglen and South Lanarkshire as well as Glasgow, preparing derelict and contaminated land for business use, which has been a tremendous success.

The M74 has opened up many new sites that can be used for businesses. Glasgow community and safety services is moving to Bridgeton to the new Eastgate building, which will be home to about 500 staff. I hope, too, that the police offices in Pitt Street might be able to move to Dalmarnock, where a site is ready for them. I understand that such a move would immediately save on running costs and that such a building would be needed both by Strathclyde Police and by the new national police force, so that decision should not be too much of a factor.

On a more general point, we cannot stress enough the importance of house building. Just

yesterday I was at the Scottish Federation of Housing Associations finance conference in Crieff, at which people emphasised the important impact that house building has on the economy and on health, saving fuel and education. While I am enthusiastic about transport projects, I have to say that if money is tight we should emphasise housing.

We face a challenging financial climate, as the motion states, but let us not downplay what has been achieved and is being achieved by this Government.

16:07

Graeme Pearson (South Scotland) (Lab): Presiding Officer, thank you for allowing me to contribute to the debate.

As a South Scotland list member, I acknowledge the contribution to the debate of my colleague across the chamber, Aileen McLeod, and I support much of what she said in her speech. I thank her for acknowledging that all of us in the chamber are committed to regeneration and that it is in all our interests that Scotland should be regenerated and our communities given every opportunity to be all that they can be. At the same time, I ask Sandra White to accept that Michael McMahon's amendment to the motion is not necessarily negative, as she would see it. It is the duty of the Opposition to point out what we see as shortcomings in the way forward that the cabinet secretary has presented.

Creating new life from what was there before is the key to regeneration. It is about revitalising communities and giving people in them the opportunity to be part of 21st century Scotland. This debate should be about delivering life back to the communities that need it most. I was pleased that the cabinet secretary said that in his speech.

Regeneration is not an easy topic. Certainly, in all my working life, regeneration has been a fact of Government policy and a focus of local authority effort. My first involvement in this area was with a regeneration initiative from Strathclyde region. At that time in the 1970s, it was called generating change. I have no doubt that politicians of that generation were like-minded in their commitment to do their best for the people whom they served. However, it is not as easy as just adding up the numbers and putting together initiatives.

In my experience of regeneration, there are four key elements. The first key element is our people, but there are difficulties that need to be faced full on and delivered on. Currently, homelessness figures are up by 25 per cent, with 36,440 households identified as homeless in our communities. Although that is a tragedy for those families, it also offers the opportunity of

regeneration. We have affordable homes to build to give those families the opportunity to participate and be part of what we would see as a regeneration process.

As was said earlier, unemployment is up to 8 per cent. One in five young people are unemployed. One in four young men are unemployed. The regeneration of areas such as Ayr, Kilmarnock, Stranraer and rural communities is important. We need to learn the lessons that were delivered at Dalrnock and Ravenscraig. The old idiom suggests that an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure. Preventative spending seems to have won out, and there is a consensus. Job creation, particularly for young people, can support the regeneration of areas and increase economic activity and it is good for the economy. It will also limit the decline of an area, minimising the need for drastic regeneration again in the future. Therefore, in the current financial climate, with 215,000 unemployed and a need for more skills in our workforce, there is clear evidence of the negative and pervasive effect of significant youth unemployment. Our Government needs to have a strategy for job creation.

Clare Adamson (Central Scotland) (SNP): Does the member acknowledge that the Government's opportunities for all programme, which benefits 16 to 19-year-olds, as well as the commitment to 25,000 apprenticeships every year, will go some way to tackling the issue?

Graeme Pearson: That is a good point. The problem is that the latest figures for apprenticeships for 2010-11 reveal that 12,827 apprenticeship starts are currently at college and the information from building firms that I deal with in the south of Scotland—and from the Confederation of British Industry—indicates that the likelihood of delivering on those 25,000 places is pie in the sky. There is a challenge for the Government to deliver on its target and to be seen to be doing so. If it is delivered, I will applaud that fact, but there is a question mark that needs to be faced, and it is a question mark that young people worry about daily. I am sure that there is no member in this chamber who has not had young people approach them and share their worries about their future and their families' futures.

Last month, while speaking of the impact of the budget constraints, the principal of Borders College told the Education and Culture Committee:

"We will have to reduce places, lose staff and turn away even more students than we already turn away."—[*Official Report, Education and Culture Committee*, 4 October 2011; c 265.]

That is an uncomfortable statement, and it is not one that anyone in this chamber wants to hear. However, as an Opposition, we need the

Government to answer that point, and to do so with confidence and with facts.

The second key issue in regeneration is capital. Entrepreneurs, banks, local authorities and the Scottish Government must work together to release investment. UK cuts are regularly referred to in this chamber, but we need to accept that we are talking about world cuts. The priorities for the Scottish budget are set by ministers in this Parliament, and they need to be answerable for where they decide to invest the funds.

Kevin Stewart: The member says that the cuts are world cuts, but many other countries are investing in capital projects to put their people back to work and ensure that the worst excesses of the cuts are not felt. Unfortunately, we do not have the levers of power in this Parliament to do all those things. Does the member agree that one of the first things that might be considered is a rethink of the increase in the Public Works Loan Board interest rate?

Graeme Pearson: The first thing that we should do is to ensure that we use to best effect all the powers that we already have and demonstrate the efficiency of our policies.

Another element in terms of delivery is ideas—the vision, the ambition, the leadership by the Government and the ownership of the problems that lie behind the current situation. The final element concerns land and projects. The Government must find the means to reduce the time lag in delivering projects, developing projects and ensuring that people can enjoy the projects that we plan. I offer the Gartcosh project as an example. It is nearly 10 years old and is still to be occupied, not only as a facility for public use but, more important, as a development opportunity for North Lanarkshire. I encourage the Government to look to similar projects in the south of Scotland and to give rural communities the opportunity to be part of 21st century Scotland.

The Deputy Presiding Officer (John Scott): I would be grateful if you could close now.

Graeme Pearson: I am obliged, Presiding Officer. I am complete.

16:15

Kenneth Gibson (Cunninghame North) (SNP): The process of regenerating some of Scotland's most deprived areas is of huge importance to the Scottish Government and, as we have heard in this afternoon's debate, to all members. Regeneration is, of course, essential on a number of levels and will undoubtedly help to create a Scotland that is more vibrant, equal and sustainable while simultaneously supporting and

creating jobs and building communities in which people are proud to live.

Regeneration projects are rarely simple and are not always successful, and it is therefore vital that they are carefully planned and well financed, that they deliver value for money, that they are supported by a range of organisations and that they focus on securing specific positive outcomes. As Irvine Bay Regeneration Company operates partly within my constituency, I am particularly interested in its activities and I am pleased that we have taken the time to discuss the important matter of regeneration in the Parliament.

Sadly, through decades of neglect by successive Labour and Conservative UK Governments, swathes of Scotland have been allowed to deteriorate and decline to a sorry condition. Many areas suffer from high levels of unemployment, poor health, high levels of crime and a lack of suitable housing and local facilities. I am confident that the policies of this Government and the commitment to regeneration projects will help to turn such areas around, creating opportunities and prosperity for the people who live here.

Regeneration cannot be done on the cheap and at a time when Westminster has cut Scotland's capital budget by 36.7 per cent over three years, it is essential to secure investment from all potential sources and to secure as much value as possible from the finances available. The role of the Scottish Futures Trust, established by this Government in the previous session, has been invaluable in that, providing expertise in negotiating development contracts, securing lower rates of interest on finance and ensuring more effective planning and delivery of projects than was the case under our profligate and wasteful Labour predecessors, who have left us with the legacy of private finance initiatives.

The benefits already delivered by the Scottish Futures Trust have been quite extraordinary. On 1 September 2010, it was announced that according to independently audited figures it had delivered £111 million of efficiencies for a £3.5 million investment, avoiding costs and developing additional investment on future infrastructure in Scotland during the 2009-10 financial year. The expertise that the Scottish Futures Trust offers will be vital to regeneration projects as it pursues a £9 billion portfolio of projects, including developing a £2.5 billion programme of revenue-financed investment in transport, health and education projects to be funded through the non-profit-distributing model. It continues to manage the £1.25 billion schools for the future programme—which will help to deliver a new Garnock academy in my constituency—£400 million to £500 million of which will be funded through the NPD model. It is

also vital to deliver homes for intermediate rent under the first phase of the national housing trust initiative.

Irvine Bay Regeneration Company is working to revitalise five towns and their environs in North Ayrshire. I have mentioned some of its achievements in a previous debate, but for the future plans are in place to build a hotel, create a new golf course, refresh and develop town centres, clean up old industrial sites, construct quayside office space, extend Ardrossan marina and set up light engineering units. There are many other innovative projects to rejuvenate the communities that the company serves. All that excellent work is taking place over and above Scottish Government and local authority plans to build schools and houses and improve the local transport network.

Only a week ago, I attended a meeting with Irvine Bay chief executive, Patrick Wiggins, the leader of North Ayrshire Council, David O'Neill, and the Cabinet Secretary for Infrastructure and Capital Investment, Alex Neil, to discuss the future of Irvine Bay. I am delighted that the cabinet secretary was able to pledge that the Scottish Government will continue to work in partnership with North Ayrshire Council and Irvine Bay Regeneration Company in the medium to long term. Alex Neil asked Irvine Bay to produce a business plan for the next four to five years, focusing on key projects and developments, and made it clear that he would provide secure core funding for the regeneration company over that period. I am aware that both North Ayrshire Council and Irvine Bay Regeneration Company were pleased with the cabinet secretary's guarantee. Councillor O'Neill said:

"We had a very positive meeting and are delighted that the Scottish Government has committed to continued support of regeneration in Irvine Bay.

We are happy that they recognise our efforts to breathe much-needed new life into the area.

This outcome proves how effective local partnership working can be, with representatives from across the political spectrum and all tiers of government pulling together for the good of North Ayrshire and its people."

Meanwhile Patrick Wiggins, Irvine Bay's chief executive, said:

"We are grateful to the Scottish Government for their continued support. The fact that cabinet secretary Alex Neil has made a number of visits to view the work being done by Irvine Bay has undoubtedly helped him gain a first-hand view of the value of the work that is being carried out."

In terms of further investment in regeneration, the Cabinet Secretary for Finance, Employment and Sustainable Growth, John Swinney, has attempted to counteract Westminster cuts by moving £200 million each year from Scottish resource budgets to fund new capital projects in Scotland.

We heard from Michael McMahon, who is not with us at the moment, that regeneration is a priority for Labour. However, everything appears to be a priority for Labour if we listen to the funding demands in every area, from colleges to justice to the NHS, from its front-bench representatives. They have completely failed to square the circle in terms of the budget and so lack credibility. Sadly, there appears to be little thinking in the Labour front-bench ranks, although I am glad to hear in Graeme Pearson's speech that there is certainly some on the back benches. It is unfortunate that there is no joined-up thinking on Labour's front bench.

As for Alex Johnstone, who I note has been listening intently—yes, I am about to talk about him—I was quite surprised by his “rob the poor to feed the rich” speech, which I am sure that he will add to if he winds up.

The Scottish Government is fully committed to regeneration and I am fully confident that, even during these difficult times, when this Parliament's budget has been cut so dramatically by Westminster, we can still bring positive and meaningful change to some of Scotland's most deprived communities. I look forward to the publication of the new strategy.

Housing was mentioned as being very important and we should remember that, in North Ayrshire alone, the Scottish Government, in partnership with North Ayrshire Council, will build 182 council houses in the next financial year. We should remember that between 2003 and 2007 Labour built six council houses in the whole of Scotland, all of which were in Shetland—thanks, no doubt, to the hard work and perseverance of Tavish Scott.

This Government has invested more than £216 million directly in regeneration since 2007 and plans for next year will include £25 million a year for capital, to be discussed with COSLA, and £7.9 million for resources. Vacant and derelict land—I have talked about that for more than a decade—will receive £40 million. I am delighted at the Scottish Government's approach and I believe that we will make significant progress in regenerating our communities in the months and years ahead.

16:22

James Dornan (Glasgow Cathcart) (SNP): As has been recognised across the chamber, the regeneration of our communities is one of the most important aspects of any programme for government. In my view, being the minister responsible for the national regeneration strategy must be one of the most exciting jobs in Government and I am sure the chamber will recognise and welcome Alex Neil's determination

to deliver a national regeneration strategy fit for a 21st century Scotland.

Clearly, regeneration is about more than bricks and mortar; it is an opportunity for local and national Government to work together with partner agencies, such as housing associations, schools, colleges, community councils and health boards. It is also an opportunity to bring about growth in the local and national economy by boosting investment and creating jobs, all to make life better for our constituents.

One of the most challenging issues that regeneration can address is the social problems that we have here in Scotland—drug and alcohol abuse, crime, antisocial behaviour, poor educational attainment, unemployment, health inequalities and low aspiration. All those things have been touched on by previous speakers, but it is important that we reiterate the high correlations that are found between living in deprived areas and a range of those negative outcomes. Although a person's community cannot be claimed to solely determine life outcomes, it clearly plays an important role in shaping them. Just look at the statistics—in justice, 62 per cent of prisoners previously lived in 25 per cent of Scotland's most deprived areas. In health, between 2001 and 2004, the rate of hospital admissions related to alcohol misuse per 100,000 of the population was just over three times higher in the most deprived areas than in less deprived areas. In education, the exclusion rate in the 10 per cent most deprived areas of Scotland is 91 per 1,000 pupils, compared with 12 per 1,000 pupils in other areas of Scotland.

As a Glasgow MSP, I recognise those statistics. We need to do what we can to change that for the better. Sustainable regeneration of our communities is hugely important, and investment in the new generation of community organisations that will develop community cohesion and resilience is vital, especially in these tough economic times. However, it is about not just providing financial support but allowing genuine community ownership of projects that benefit our communities.

I was interested to read the SCVO briefing for the debate, which highlights the importance of community ownership of energy projects. Members will be aware—they are probably sick of me talking about it—of the on-going dispute with Glasgow City Council about allowing the Castlemilk and Carmunnock Community Wind Farm Trust to develop a community-owned renewable energy project, the profits of which would go into the community to combat many of the social issues that have been highlighted in the debate.

The project would contribute to single outcome agreements set by the Scottish Government and COSLA, make life better for local residents and ease the burden on council tax payers, yet the council refuses to grant a lease for the land unless the trust surrenders the management of the project and the profits, which were meant to benefit the community, to the city chambers. While there is hope that the Government's planned community empowerment bill will address some of those issues, I would appreciate it if the cabinet secretary would tell me when he sums up what is in the regeneration strategy to combat the obstructiveness of councils such as Glasgow on issues such as that.

The debate has touched on housing a couple of times. I would like to talk about two housing associations, one of which is slightly bigger than the other. The first one is Glasgow Housing Association. I declare an interest, in that I am still on the board of the GHA. When the GHA came into being it was not universally greeted. It has had six or seven years of a bumpy ride, and it is only over the past two or three years that it has really pulled itself together and done the job that it was meant to do.

Recently, the GHA has played a big part in the regeneration of the city of Glasgow. It has invested more than £1.1 billion in existing stock transfer, £150 million of which has been ploughed into new housing construction, community facilities, additional environmental schemes and 59 new and improved play areas.

The report of an independent evaluation of the GHA's investment programme concluded that

"given the 'multiplier' impact of capital investment on the wider economy, GHA's £983 million capital expenditure is likely to have generated an additional £923 million in benefits to the UK (mainly the Scottish) economy."

It goes on to say that £682 million of that would have remained in the Glasgow area. Those are encouraging figures, but there is more to it than that. Such initiatives play their part in the environment. For example, 90 per cent of demolition material from high rises has been recycled by the GHA. John Mason talked about the M74, much of which is made from those old buildings. The GHA should be congratulated on that.

While we all blame different people for the financial situation, we all accept that there are difficulties. It is not about throwing money at the difficulties—the money is not there to be thrown—but about using the money that we have wisely. That is one of the best things that the GHA has done. The Government has approved a bid for £1.1 million from its innovation and investment fund towards the cost of redeveloping a block of surplus multistorey flats at Ibroxholm Oval. From

the point of view of cost and the environment, that is a good example of how we should be using what is there and the money that we have instead of always looking for fresh money and to build again.

The second housing association is much closer to home. I was delighted to see in the SCVO briefing that Cassiltoun Trust, which is based in my constituency in Castlemilk, was used as a model of success in how asset transfer and community ownership can drive urban regeneration. In a recent visit to the project, I was mightily impressed by Castlemilk Stables. I have known that area of Castlemilk for the best part of 50 years and it was a completely different place before Cassiltoun took it over. Back then, the houses could not have been given away and people could not even have been paid to move into them. Now, the waiting lists are enormous. The trust has done a magnificent job of regenerating the area and of ensuring that the community wants to be part of what is happening. It takes on local apprentices and is looking to open up a community-owned and run shop that will deliver groceries to those with mobility problems in the area. There are community facilities in the stables block.

The trust is not the only organisation that is regenerating the area, but it is a perfect example of what housing associations should be doing. Our job as policy makers is to ensure that the tools and mechanisms are in place so that such organisations can spend the money that they have. They know that they are facing difficult times and they accept that there is not as much money as there has been previously, but they have cut their cloth accordingly, they are using their money wisely and they are investing in their communities. That is what all organisations such as housing associations and others should be doing, and I applaud them for it.

I welcome the new regeneration strategy and commend the Government for bringing forward the consultation on developing the strategy.

16:30

Murdo Fraser (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con):

This has been a wide-ranging and worthy debate. I am sure that we are all grateful to Stuart McMillan and Duncan McNeil for giving us some entertainment when our spirits were flagging an hour and a half into the debate.

I will touch on two issues that are of interest to my constituents in Mid Scotland and Fife and will then touch on some of the broader issues raised in the debate.

The first issue that I will address is town centre regeneration. I was interested to read Fife

Council's response to the Scottish Government's regeneration discussion paper. Fife Council refers to the threat to town centres from

"the growing importance of the internet; the increasing dominance of supermarkets; the expansion of retail and business space permitted outwith town centres; a move to 'leisure shopping' by increasingly demanding consumers; increasing geographic mobility ... fewer purchasing trips being taken to larger centres with larger outlets; an increasing stock of vacant but unsuitable property for modern retail trading; rising costs."

Kevin Stewart: Does Mr Fraser agree that business improvement districts, which have been pushed forward by the Government, are immensely beneficial in ensuring that town centres do not suffer as badly as they otherwise would from the factors that he mentions?

Murdo Fraser: BIDs have brought some benefits. One downside is that the businesses themselves are expected to contribute, so in a way it is a form of additional taxation.

The cabinet secretary said that the town centre regeneration fund was a £60 million fund that had provided assistance to 89 town centres. I am sure that it was due only to forgetfulness on his part—perhaps brought on by advancing years—that he did not mention that it was a Conservative initiative, which was inserted into a previous Scottish Government budget due to Conservative pressure. I am delighted that we have seen so many benefits for town centres across Scotland as a result of that excellent idea. Some of the challenges that Fife Council identifies in its paper are being addressed by the injection of those funds.

The minister will be familiar with the situation in Blairgowrie and Rattray, where funds to the sum of £1.5 million were obtained for town centre regeneration. He will know that the situation has not been without its local difficulties. The community and the regeneration company are working hard to find a way forward. I hope that he will be sympathetic to initiatives being brought forward by the community to utilise that money, as it would be a tragedy if, after so much work has gone into the bid, the funding was lost to the community due to misfortune rather than any lack of attention by those driving the bid.

The second point specific to my constituency that I want to raise is the future of Perth city centre. Of course, Perth is not yet a city, but we hope that it will be come the Queen's diamond jubilee next year. The development control committee of the local authority decided today to demolish the city hall in Perth. It is a landmark building of some historic importance, which has been the venue for a great many civic events over the years and, indeed, a venue for many political conferences. In fact, I am sure that many

members have attended conferences there. My colleague reminds me that Margaret Thatcher spoke there many times. Some will remember that it was the venue for Ted Heath's famous declaration of Perth back in, I think—[*Interruption.*] I was going to say 1967, but I am being heckled and told that it was 1968. Nobody has made a film about him yet.

The city hall is a building of questionable architectural merit, which is perhaps overlarge for its site. Crucially, following the creation of the new concert hall in Perth, it had no viable future economic use, so the decision has been taken to knock it down. That has created the opportunity to establish a civic square in the centre of Perth—an objective that I support—and to improve the setting of St John's kirk, the most important historic building in the centre of the city. On balance, that was the right decision, although a halfway house was proposed of retaining the front part of the city hall for another use and knocking down the back half. An interesting point about the proposal, which relates to the broader discussion on regeneration, was how controversial it was. It divided opinion throughout the city and further afield. That shows the challenges that we face when ambitious ideas for regeneration are proposed and we try to win public support for them.

I will touch on other issues to do with regeneration priorities that have been raised during the debate. The cabinet secretary talked about the need for community leadership and for the process to be bottom up and not top down. That is essential. Successful regeneration projects are those in which people at the grass roots come up with ideas and then seek funding from a variety of sources.

That leads me to my next point, which is about the need to involve the private and voluntary sectors as well as the public sector. As we all know, and as the Government has acknowledged, we live in difficult times as far as funding is concerned. We therefore need to bring in private sector funding where that can be achieved. A good example of that, about which members from the north-east will know more than I do, are the proposals to redevelop Union Terrace gardens in Aberdeen. I will not get into the controversy about whether that is a good idea, but it has been made possible by generous philanthropic support from Sir Ian Wood. Were it not for that support, we would not have that potential redevelopment. The point about a participatory approach from the public sector is well made in the briefing for the debate from the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors, which points out that, too often, there is an adversarial relationship between the public and private sectors.

We must examine the planning system. The Public Audit Committee recently considered the Audit Scotland report “Modernising the planning system”, which presented a range of challenges for planning. One important fact that was pointed out was that, although income for planning departments is reducing because the number of planning applications has fallen as a result of the economic downturn, the cost of planning departments is still going up. That seems extraordinary, and there is clearly a mismatch. Of course people want a planning system that gives a fair balance, but it must be responsive and it must reach decisions more quickly than happens at present in many cases.

I am coming towards the end of my time but, if I may, Presiding Officer, I will make a couple of final points.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: Quickly.

Murdo Fraser: The first is about deprivation. Regeneration is not only about so-called deprived areas. As I said, many small towns have changed shopping patterns and so need support, but they are not what are traditionally seen as deprived areas.

On funding models, the cabinet secretary talked about JESSICA and TIF and other acronyms, but we already have a model whereby we can spend money now when there is a shortage of capital funds: the public-private partnership. However, the Scottish Government has an ideological opposition to PPP as a means of creating economic opportunity now and paying for it down the road.

We look forward to scrutinising the Government’s regeneration strategy in due course. In the meantime, I support the Government’s motion and the amendment in the name of Alex Johnstone.

16:38

Patricia Ferguson (Glasgow Maryhill and Springburn) (Lab): The debate has been an interesting one on a subject that is of importance to us all. It has been useful to hear about colleagues’ experiences and priorities and to understand better the challenges that communities throughout the country face. As Michael McMahon said, the debate is a useful continuation of some of the themes that arose in last week’s debate on architecture and place making. I suspect that many of the issues that have been raised today, not least the stalled spaces agenda, will recur in the debate that we are to have on the cities strategy. I wonder whether it might be worth while having a longer debate, perhaps over a whole day—I am being optimistic—in which we have the opportunity to range over all those issues. It is

difficult to cut one off from the other, and I wonder whether we should try to do so.

The cabinet secretary is right that there is no silver bullet. It is good that the Scottish Government is using the JESSICA fund in the way that he described. After all, that is what the money is for. However, if memory serves me correctly, the funding streams are in minimum quantities of £1 million. If a local community is to access and use money on that scale, it will need support to maximise the opportunity. I hope that the cabinet secretary will say something about that in his closing speech.

I have previously asked the Cabinet Secretary for Finance, Employment and Sustainable Growth to clarify one or two points about enterprise areas. We have had enterprise zones and enterprise areas before, but what they were best at was encouraging work, employment and jobs from one area—sometimes an area of relatively low employment—into an area of even greater unemployment. I sincerely hope that that would not be the effect of any new initiative.

The cabinet secretary was right to say that we need a co-ordinated approach. For that reason, I am pleased that the Labour amendment has expanded the scope of the debate and focused some of it on our further education colleges. My constituency is currently in the unenviable position of having the highest claimant count in Scotland. In that context, our local colleges make a vital contribution to the life of our communities.

I will talk a little bit about the experience of North Glasgow College, which is the college that I know best. This year alone, it has reduced the number of its faculties from five to three, lost 30 full-time equivalent posts at a one-off cost of £568,000 and—most important of all—lost 500 years of staff experience. A price cannot be put on that experience, but we can consider the findings of the “Review of Scotland’s Colleges: Transforming Lives, Transforming Scotland: An Overview by the Review’s ‘Core Group’”, which estimated that, for every £1 that was spent on further education colleges, £3.20 accrued to the Scottish economy. The then education secretary, Ms Hyslop, described that figure as “conservative”.

North Glasgow College and others are surely exemplars of the initiatives that the minister seeks to achieve. Therefore, I sincerely hope that the Scottish Government will think again about the punitive cuts in further education in the years ahead that it proposes. Those colleges are at the heart of our communities, and they are best able to work with local schools and employers to work out what skills are needed and to educate and train the very people whose hard work will get us out of the economic crisis. They also have an effect on our young people’s life chances and help

them to break the cycle of deprivation that Aileen McLeod spoke about.

It is clear that housing continues to be an area of interest across the chamber. It was therefore disappointing to learn last week that the Scottish Government proposes to cut the transfer of management of development funding budget for Glasgow and Edinburgh. I have been told that Glasgow's budget looks set to be reduced from an expected £174 million to around £114 million over the next three years.

Derek Mackay: The Labour Party has failed to say that, where the Government overspends in sectoral budgets, it should transfer money into areas with underspends, so let us try geography. I have heard a number of Labour members say that their areas are underfunded; indeed, it appears to me that Labour members say that throughout the country. Is there any area in Scotland that Patricia Ferguson thinks is overfunded from which we should transfer resources to Labour areas that are believed to be underfunded?

Patricia Ferguson: I am sorry to disabuse Mr Mackay, but I am not talking about things in the narrow way that he is; I am talking about the budget that Glasgow was led to believe it would have compared with the one that it now looks as though it will have. Perhaps he can tell me where that money has gone. I would be very interested in that.

The effect of the budget reductions—this is where they really matter—is to put at risk budgets that provide money for adaptations; work to achieve our homelessness targets next year; important reprovisioning projects; and, of course, the transformational regeneration areas, in which I have a particular interest. If Mr Mackay is seriously saying that those areas do not matter in Glasgow, Edinburgh or anywhere else, I would be most surprised. In closing, will the minister address Glasgow City Council's genuine concerns and advise members as to whether he is still confident about achieving the homelessness targets?

I say to Kenny Gibson that we have heard peddled before the figure for the number of houses in local authority areas for which Labour and our Liberal Democrat colleagues were responsible. Actually, he is incorrect about that number. However, we must look at the wider picture, which indicates that, between local authorities and housing associations, over the period of the previous Labour Administrations, more than 31,000 new social rented houses were provided. The Scottish Parliament information centre will verify that fact, if Kenny Gibson does not believe me. He may want to denigrate the housing associations' contribution, but I suspect that he does not, so perhaps he should think more carefully in future about what he says.

Kenneth Gibson: Will Patricia Ferguson give way?

Patricia Ferguson: No. I have already heard what Kenny Gibson has to say on the issue.

The minister also mentioned the town centre regeneration fund. I was delighted that Maryhill in my constituency received funding from that stream. Later this month, the Maryhill burgh halls will open, and the town centre regeneration money was part of a huge mosaic of funding for that project. I think that the minister has already visited the burgh halls or is about to, and I am sure that he will agree with me that they are a stunning example of what can be done with our heritage.

As I have said before, I was, of course, disappointed that the community-led bid from Possilpark, which is near Maryhill, was not as successful as the Maryhill bid. However, that is what happens.

Duncan McNeil and Neil Bibby gave us examples of the regeneration of the areas in which they are most interested. They are right to argue to secure their funding.

I say to George Adam that he must not talk Paisley down. That comment is slightly tongue in cheek, but there is a serious point to it. He clearly was not listening to Sandra White, who indicated in her speech that any criticism of what the Government intends is unacceptable. We must be able to make constructive criticism, and it was refreshing to hear a little bit of gentle criticism of the Government from George Adam.

I now do not have time to range over all the issues that I would have liked to cover. However, I will say that we will not be able to accept the Conservative amendment, which indicates that the Conservative Party thinks that

"regeneration spending should be targeted where it will bring most benefit to the wider community."

The Labour Party believes that it should be targeted where it is most needed.

16:47

Alex Neil: I congratulate Murdo Fraser on his award at the Scottish politician of the year dinner as the politician who has made the most impact on Scottish politics over the past year. Had he won the leadership and abolished the Scottish Conservative Party, he would have had an even greater impact of more benefit to the rest of us than perhaps anything else.

As I am fair, I should also put on record my congratulations to my colleague Nicola Sturgeon, who won the debater of the year award despite the stiff competition from me and my colleague Michael Russell.

Just for the record, I also say to Mr Fraser—

The Deputy Presiding Officer: Entertaining as this is, the debate is on regeneration, minister.

Alex Neil: I say to Mr Fraser, on his constituency interest, that I will meet Blairgowrie and Rattray Regeneration Company later this month. As he knows, we have done everything possible to assist the town centre regeneration project in the Blairgowrie and Rattray area. We will continue to work with BARRC and Perth and Kinross Council, because we are keen for that community to benefit as intended from the town centre regeneration fund. I will be happy if Mr Fraser includes that statement in the press release that, no doubt, he has already written.

I will also comment on Patricia Ferguson's speech. It was interesting that she boasted that the total number of social houses built during the eight years of the previous Administration was 31,000. If we divide 31,000 by eight, we get an average figure of just below 4,000. I find it incredible that the Labour Party brags about having built an average of less than 4,000 social houses a year but complains because we are building 6,000 social houses a year for each of the next five years. With all due respect, I think that that is an indication of muddled thinking if ever there was one.

A number of issues have been raised and I will try as best I can in the 10 minutes that the Presiding Officer has awarded me to update members.

On the big picture, despite the cuts that are being imposed from Westminster on our capital budget, the Scottish Government, through various means—particularly through our imaginative and innovative programmes—will be spending or leveraging something of the order of £12 billion of capital spend over the three-year period that is covered by the comprehensive spending review. That includes £7.5 billion, which is the capital part of the allocation from Westminster, £2.5 billion from our NPD programme, about £1 billion from Network Rail's regulatory asset base, and a range of other investments, including the housing investment that we announced six weeks ago. The housing investment budget is core to the regeneration of every one of the communities mentioned in this debate.

Within the space of a week, Mr Brown and I between us announced total investment of £460 million to build more than 4,300 new houses. The important point about that is that the Scottish Government's share of that was £110 million, so we were leveraging £3 for every £1 spent. In these difficult times, using what Government money is available to leverage in additional resources from elsewhere, so that we can build the houses that

we need, not just in the areas mentioned in the debate but the length and breadth of Scotland, has to be the right approach. We cannot judge or predict the success of any programme, let alone the housing programme, by the amount of Government money that goes in; we have to judge it by the total investment and the output that comes out. More than 4,300 houses, 74 per cent of which are for social rent and many more of which are for intermediate rent, represent a huge achievement by any standards. In that one announcement, we announced more new houses than the average house building programme total for the previous Executive in any one year.

I heard a number of speakers mention colleges. The role of education—college education, school education, pre-school education and university education—is essential to all our communities that are involved in regeneration. I, too, welcome the initiative that Glasgow City Council announced this week to facilitate better destinations and training opportunities around the Commonwealth games for graduates in Glasgow. That announcement is welcome and I hope that other local authorities follow that example.

The role of the college sector is important. For the record, it is worth pointing out that, between 2007 and the end of the spending review period that we are about to go into, we will have spent 40 per cent more in the college sector than the previous Administration did in eight years. I am comparing our eight-year period with the previous Administration's eight-year period. We will have spent 40 per cent more in cash terms in the college sector than the previous Administration did.

One need only look at the impact of the capital spend on the college sector. I was in the new Motherwell College in Ravenscraig the other day—it takes pride of place in the Ravenscraig estate. If we look at the improvements at Cumbernauld College and other colleges throughout Scotland, we see that the capital estate is absolutely ready for the 21st century. As part of our NPD programme, we will include new college campuses in Inverness, Glasgow and Kilmarnock. It is therefore simply not true to say that the Government is neglecting the college sector.

My colleague Mr Swinney will make an announcement in the period ahead about his decisions on the future of enterprise zones in Scotland. I agree, and I know that Mr Swinney agrees, with Patricia Ferguson that, in devising and designing the enterprise zone policy, we must ensure that there is no repetition of what happened with many enterprise zones in the 1980s—including Clydebank, for example—when far too often the jobs that went into the enterprise zone were simply relocated from adjacent areas.

One of the major considerations in designing the enterprise zones that Mr Swinney will announce is the need to ensure that there is net additionality in jobs and investment into the regional and national economies of Scotland. I am sure that, when Mr Swinney makes his announcement, everybody will be satisfied.

There have been a number of myths around the urban regeneration companies. I fully understand the concern of members, and I say to Duncan McNeil that I am happy to meet him as the constituency member for Inverclyde. I am also happy to meet Stuart McMillan, although by the sounds of things I might need two meetings—one with one and one with the other.

Duncan McNeil: Will the minister take an intervention?

Alex Neil: Of course.

The Presiding Officer (Tricia Marwick): Very briefly, Mr McNeil.

Duncan McNeil: The minister offered a meeting to the constituency MSP. Will he extend the invitation to all West Scotland representatives? I do not know why he would invite only Stuart McMillan in particular.

Alex Neil: I never have any problem in extending invitations to all list members because I want to educate them all about the facts. The reality is that Labour-led COSLA reached an agreement with the Scottish Government in 2008 that the money for the URCs from Scottish Enterprise would come to an end as earmarked funding in 2013-14. I have given a guarantee to Riverside Inverclyde and Irvine Bay, and I will give the same guarantee to Clyde Gateway, that the Government will continue to work with all the URCs to ensure that, against the background of the severe cuts that we face, as much money as possible is made available to them to carry out their priority projects over the period ahead.

Duncan McNeil: Will the minister take an intervention?

Alex Neil: Unfortunately, I have to finish now. However, when the representatives come to see me, I will be able to explain to them that, despite Alistair Darling's cuts, which are deeper than Margaret Thatcher's were, we are still delivering for the people of Scotland.

Standing Orders (Changes)

The Presiding Officer (Tricia Marwick): The next item of business is consideration of motion S4M-01347, in the name of Dave Thompson, on behalf of the Standards, Procedures and Public Appointments Committee, on minor standing orders rule changes. I call on Dave Thompson to move the motion.

16:58

Dave Thompson (Skye, Lochaber and Badenoch) (SNP): Thank you, Presiding Officer. I did not realise that so many members are interested in standing orders.

The motion seeks Parliament's agreement to some minor changes to standing orders on two subjects: committee substitutes and the quorum of the Conveners Group.

First, the rules on committee substitutes state that a member cannot be a committee substitute for more than one committee at the same time. That rule can cause difficulties to parties, particularly the smaller ones, when they are trying to find substitutes for a number of parliamentary committees. The Standards, Procedures and Public Appointments Committee therefore recommends increasing from one to two the number of committees on which a member can be designated as a substitute. That will allow increased flexibility without the practical difficulties that are associated with a member being a substitute on too many committees at once.

Secondly, the rule on the Conveners Group quorum requires representatives of three or more political parties to be present before a meeting can go ahead. As only two parties—the Scottish Labour Party and the Scottish National Party—have more than one convener, that puts undue pressure on the Conservative convener of the Economy, Energy and Tourism Committee, who must attend Conveners Group meetings if the meetings are to be quorate.

Members: Aw. [*Laughter.*]

Dave Thompson: To address the problem, the Standards, Procedures and Public Appointments Committee has concluded that party representation on the Conveners Group should for this session be reduced from three to two.

It is possible that in the future conveners may be drawn from a wider range of parties, and in such circumstances the quorum of two or more political parties may be too low. The committee therefore recommends amending the rule so that the quorum will generally remain at three, but the reduced quorum of two will apply in the particular

circumstances that have been experienced in this session.

On behalf of the Standards, Procedures and Public Appointments Committee, I move,

That the Parliament notes the Standards, Procedures and Public Appointments Committee's 1st Report 2011 (Session 4), *Minor Standing Orders Rule Changes* (SP Paper 25), and agrees that the changes to Standing Orders set out in Annex A to the report that relate to committee substitutes and the Conveners Group quorum be made with effect from 17 November 2011.

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

Business Motion

17:00

Patrick Harvie (Glasgow) (Green): On a point of order, Presiding Officer. I want to raise my point of order specifically before consideration of the next item, which is a business motion. Before members reach a decision on how they are going to vote on what is likely to be a contested business motion, it is important to ask some questions of you about the practical consequences of the decision that is about to be made, especially concerning rules 15.1 and 15.2 of our standing orders.

The Parliament is required to meet in public for our considerations in the chamber and it is required that members of the public be admitted to the public gallery during any meeting of the Parliament. We are all well aware of the forthcoming strike action that is scheduled to take place on 30 November and of the reasons for it. There has been an overwhelming response to the call for that action from Unison, from the Educational Institute of Scotland, of which more than 82 per cent—

The Presiding Officer (Tricia Marwick): I think that you have made your point of order, Mr Harvie. I will respond to it.

Patrick Harvie: Presiding Officer—

The Presiding Officer: You have made your point of order. Please sit down, Mr Harvie.

Patrick Harvie: Further to that point of order—

The Presiding Officer: I will answer your point of order. If you have further points of order, you can ask. I assure—

Patrick Harvie: I—

The Presiding Officer: Please sit down, Mr Harvie.

Patrick Harvie: Am I not allowed to raise a point of order?

The Presiding Officer: Please sit down, Mr Harvie, while I respond to your point of order.

Patrick Harvie: I have three minutes in which to make my point of order.

The Presiding Officer: You asked me specific questions; please allow me to answer. If you wish to make a further point of order, I will allow you to do so, but please allow me to answer the questions that you have asked.

Hugh Henry (Renfrewshire South) (Lab): On a point of order, Presiding Officer.

The Presiding Officer: If Mr Henry will allow me to answer—

Hugh Henry: Presiding Officer—

The Presiding Officer: Mr Henry, please sit down.

Neil Findlay (Lothian) (Lab): On a separate point of order, Presiding Officer.

The Presiding Officer: Mr Findlay, please sit down.

Neil Findlay: This is wrong.

The Presiding Officer: In response to the specific point of order that was raised by Patrick Harvie, who asked whether there will, in the light of the planned industrial action, be access for the public on 30 November, I say to him that I am grateful for notification of that point of order and I assure all members that Parliament will be open for business on 30 November and that access for the public will not be adversely affected by the planned industrial action. There are no plans to bring in external staff to support the business of Parliament on that day.

Mr Harvie, do you have a further point of order that you wish to make in the light of my response?

Patrick Harvie: Presiding Officer, I would have been grateful to have been allowed three minutes, which is, I believe, what members are entitled to in raising a point of order, under the rules of the chamber. You have anticipated my question regarding external workers.

Will any Scottish Parliamentary Corporate Body staff be expected to cross picket lines during what is expected to be the largest co-ordinated industrial action for generations? It is a matter that affects anyone who believes that the Parliament's response should be to direct our attention to the actions of the United Kingdom Government. It is important to have that on the record before members make a decision about the business motion that will schedule business for 30 November, which will put pressure on members of trade unions to cross picket lines.

The Presiding Officer: In response to Mr Harvie's point about SPCB staff, I assure members that no member of SPCB staff will be given any direction to cross picket lines.

Hugh Henry: On a point of order, Presiding Officer. I do not seek to respond to the detailed response that you have given to Patrick Harvie, for which I thank you. However, I ask you to clarify the rules of Parliament, according to the standing orders, when a member raises a point of order. Does that member have a specific amount of time in which to raise the point of order? If the member chooses to use that time to make the point of order, will they be allowed to do so?

The Presiding Officer: You are correct that a point of order can last for three minutes. I considered that Mr Harvie had made his point of order and, according to standing orders, all members in the chamber speak at my pleasure.

Hugh Henry: On a further point of order, Presiding Officer. That is an interesting clarification. Will you enlighten the Parliament on whether the interpretation of that standing order will mean that, in the future, you will decide when a member is finished, and that a member will no longer be entitled to assume that they have the allocated time?

The Presiding Officer: Mr Henry will know that I always seek to protect the Parliament's time.

Now is consideration of business motion S4M-01342, in the name of Bruce Crawford, on behalf of the Parliamentary Bureau, setting out a business programme. I ask any member who wishes to speak against the motion to press their request-to-speak button now.

First, I ask Bruce Crawford to move the motion.

Motion moved,

That the Parliament agrees the following programme of business—

Wednesday 23 November 2011

2.30 pm	Time for Reflection
<i>followed by</i>	Parliamentary Bureau Motions
<i>followed by</i>	Scottish Government Debate: Carers Strategy
<i>followed by</i>	Business Motion
<i>followed by</i>	Parliamentary Bureau Motions
5.00 pm	Decision Time
<i>followed by</i>	Members' Business

Thursday 24 November 2011

9.15 am	Parliamentary Bureau Motions
<i>followed by</i>	Scottish Government Debate: Maritime Safety and Coastguards
11.40 am	General Question Time
12.00 pm	First Minister's Question Time
12.30 pm	Members' Business
2.15 pm	Themed Question Time Health, Wellbeing and Cities Strategy
2.55 pm	Scottish Government Debate: Scotland's Contribution to UN Climate Summit

<i>followed by</i>	Parliamentary Bureau Motions
5.00 pm	Decision Time
<i>followed by</i>	Members' Business

Wednesday 30 November 2011

2.30 pm	Time for Reflection
<i>followed by</i>	Parliamentary Bureau Motions

followed by Scottish Government Business

followed by Business Motion

followed by Parliamentary Bureau Motions

5.00 pm Decision Time

followed by Members' Business

Thursday 1 December 2011

9.15 am Parliamentary Bureau Motions

followed by Scottish Government Business

11.40 am General Question Time

12.00 pm First Minister's Question Time

2.15 pm Themed Question Time
Infrastructure and Capital Investment;
Culture and External Affairs

2.55 pm Scottish Government Business

followed by Parliamentary Bureau Motions

5.00 pm Decision Time

followed by Members' Business—[*Bruce Crawford.*]

The Presiding Officer: I have received two requests to speak. Standing orders state that there can be only one speaker for and one speaker against a business motion. In accordance with standing order rule 8.11.3, each speaker is permitted to speak for a maximum of five minutes.

17:06

Paul Martin (Glasgow Provan) (Lab): On behalf of the Scottish Labour Party, I oppose the business motion in the name of the Scottish Government, and I do so in respect of the business that is being proposed for 30 November.

Members will, of course, be aware of the action that is proposed for that day. They should be aware that the planned day of action has been supported by trade unions throughout the country. The action will be on a scale that has never been seen in the history of this Parliament.

Nearly 3 million public sector workers across 20 trade unions will exercise their right to withhold their labour and to demonstrate against the injustices that are being brought against them, their families, their workmates and their communities. It is unacceptable that those public service workers are being asked to pay the price for a crisis that is not of their making. Instead of taxing the bankers, the United Kingdom Government is taking the decision to attack the hard-earned conditions of workers such as cleaners, teachers, nurses and many more people. Women workers, who are so often the poorest paid and in the most vulnerable jobs, will bear the worst of the pain across the UK.

Labour members believe that now is the time for us to take action in support of Scottish workers. The UK Government has had ample time to

negotiate a meaningful settlement. It has chosen not to do so, and the labour movement now steps forward to take action for the rights of working people throughout Scotland. The Scottish Labour Party makes no apologies for standing shoulder to shoulder with workers across Scotland.

We continue to hope that the dispute can be resolved. The SNP Government has claimed that it has the role of bystander in the dispute, despite the fact that it has chosen to impose detrimental changes to local government pensions, which are entirely within its control. [*Interruption.*]

The Cabinet Secretary for Finance, Employment and Sustainable Growth (John Swinney): Would Mr Martin please advise Parliament how the Scottish Government is applying changes to the local government pension scheme, given that I made it clear in the spending review statement that we would not do to local government what the UK Government has done to us?

Paul Martin: I am told that many SNP members are trade union members. Perhaps Mr Swinney is in that category. I know—[*Interruption.*]

The Presiding Officer: Order.

Paul Martin: I know that we already have the support of the Green party, but on behalf of the Scottish Labour Party I ask all trade unionists in the Parliament to join the labour movement on this day of action, to show their solidarity with and to stand up for the working people of Scotland by opposing the Government's business motion.

17:11

The Cabinet Secretary for Parliamentary Business and Government Strategy (Bruce Crawford): First, I make it clear that this Government fully respects the rights of employees who might choose to withdraw their labour on the day of action that is planned for 30 November. I also make it clear that the Scottish Government is committed to public sector pensions that are affordable, sustainable and fair.

We think that it is wrong to increase public sector workers' contributions to pension schemes at this time and in the way that it is being done. It is a naked cash grab to reduce the deficit and will do nothing to address the long-term sustainability of pensions. We have made our principled position of opposition to the UK Government policy abundantly clear.

We recognise that this is an extremely challenging time for public sector workers—a time of pay freezes, significant increases in national insurance contributions, higher VAT and rising inflation and fuel costs. We have sympathy with the substance of the concerns of the public sector

workers and join with them in urging the UK Government to think again.

The UK Government's handling of the situation has been misguided: it has been no way to run any kind of process, never mind one that will affect the livelihoods of millions of people. In contrast, the Scottish Government will continue to engage in full and extensive dialogue with trade unions and employers' representatives on the future of pensions provision.

As members are only too aware, the United Kingdom Government has made it crystal clear that if the Scottish Government does not implement the increase in pension contributions, it will reduce the amount of money in the Scottish budget by more than £100 million in 2012-13 alone. I say to Mr Martin that that is exactly the point that Mr Swinney was making. We did not pass that on to local government as Mr Martin has accused us of doing; it is interesting that he gave no response to Mr Swinney's point.

We all know that the UK issue will have a knock-on effect on Scottish public services. The Scottish Government has urged—and continues to urge—the UK Government to reconsider its position. That is why, as recently as 4 November, John Swinney again wrote to Danny Alexander on the matter.

All of us who were afforded the privilege of being elected to the national Parliament of Scotland have a responsibility to speak up on behalf of the people of Scotland about the issues that matter to them. That is why the Scottish Government will recommend to the Parliamentary Bureau that on 30 November we have a full plenary debate in Government time on the UK's misguided handling of public sector pensions. Debating public sector pensions in this Parliament on 30 November will provide the perfect opportunity to shine a light on the failings on the Conservative-Liberal Democrat UK Government in that regard.

The purpose of this Parliament is to provide the forum and the focus for debate on issues that matter to the people of Scotland. It is clear that the UK Government does not speak for Scotland on this matter, so it is therefore even more important that the Parliament speaks for Scotland on 30 November.

Finally, I repeat that we are afforded the privilege of being elected to the Parliament to represent the people of Scotland: that is exactly what we should be doing. It is our responsibility—nay, it is our duty—to be in Parliament on 30 November to debate issues of such significance and importance to the people of Scotland.

The business motion that I moved is in the name of the Parliamentary Bureau.

The Presiding Officer: The question is, that motion S4M-01342, in the name of Bruce Crawford, be agreed to. Are we agreed?

Members: No.

The Presiding Officer: There will be a division.

For

Adam, Brian (Aberdeen Donside) (SNP)
 Adam, George (Paisley) (SNP)
 Adamson, Clare (Central Scotland) (SNP)
 Allan, Dr Alasdair (Na h-Eileanan an Iar) (SNP)
 Beattie, Colin (Midlothian North and Musselburgh) (SNP)
 Biagi, Marco (Edinburgh Central) (SNP)
 Brodie, Chic (South Scotland) (SNP)
 Brown, Gavin (Lothian) (Con)
 Brown, Keith (Clackmannanshire and Dunblane) (SNP)
 Burgess, Margaret (Cunninghame South) (SNP)
 Campbell, Aileen (Clydesdale) (SNP)
 Campbell, Roderick (North East Fife) (SNP)
 Carlaw, Jackson (West Scotland) (Con)
 Coffey, Willie (Kilmarnock and Irvine Valley) (SNP)
 Constance, Angela (Almond Valley) (SNP)
 Crawford, Bruce (Stirling) (SNP)
 Cunningham, Roseanna (Perthshire South and Kinross-shire) (SNP)
 Davidson, Ruth (Glasgow) (Con)
 Dey, Graeme (Angus South) (SNP)
 Don, Nigel (Angus North and Mearns) (SNP)
 Doris, Bob (Glasgow) (SNP)
 Dornan, James (Glasgow Cathcart) (SNP)
 Eadie, Jim (Edinburgh Southern) (SNP)
 Ewing, Annabelle (Mid Scotland and Fife) (SNP)
 Ewing, Fergus (Inverness and Nairn) (SNP)
 Fabiani, Linda (East Kilbride) (SNP)
 Fergusson, Alex (Galloway and West Dumfries) (Con)
 Finnie, John (Highlands and Islands) (SNP)
 FitzPatrick, Joe (Dundee City West) (SNP)
 Fraser, Murdo (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 Gibson, Kenneth (Cunninghame North) (SNP)
 Gibson, Rob (Caithness, Sutherland and Ross) (SNP)
 Goldie, Annabel (West Scotland) (Con)
 Grahame, Christine (Midlothian South, Tweeddale and Lauderdale) (SNP)
 Hepburn, Jamie (Cumbernauld and Kilsyth) (SNP)
 Hume, Jim (South Scotland) (LD)
 Hyslop, Fiona (Linlithgow) (SNP)
 Ingram, Adam (Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley) (SNP)
 Johnstone, Alex (North East Scotland) (Con)
 Keir, Colin (Edinburgh Western) (SNP)
 Kidd, Bill (Glasgow Anniesland) (SNP)
 Lamont, John (Ettrick, Roxburgh and Berwickshire) (Con)
 Lochhead, Richard (Moray) (SNP)
 Lyle, Richard (Central Scotland) (SNP)
 MacAskill, Kenny (Edinburgh Eastern) (SNP)
 MacDonald, Angus (Falkirk East) (SNP)
 MacDonald, Gordon (Edinburgh Pentlands) (SNP)
 Mackay, Derek (Renfrewshire North and West) (SNP)
 Mackenzie, Mike (Highlands and Islands) (SNP)
 Mason, John (Glasgow Shettleston) (SNP)
 Matheson, Michael (Falkirk West) (SNP)
 Maxwell, Stewart (West Scotland) (SNP)
 McAlpine, Joan (South Scotland) (SNP)
 McArthur, Liam (Orkney Islands) (LD)
 McDonald, Mark (North East Scotland) (SNP)
 McGrigor, Jamie (Highlands and Islands) (Con)
 McInnes, Alison (North East Scotland) (LD)
 McKelvie, Christina (Hamilton, Larkhall and Stonehouse) (SNP)
 McLeod, Aileen (South Scotland) (SNP)
 McLeod, Fiona (Strathkelvin and Bearsden) (SNP)

McLetchie, David (Lothian) (Con)
 McMillan, Stuart (West Scotland) (SNP)
 Milne, Nanette (North East Scotland) (Con)
 Mitchell, Margaret (Central Scotland) (Con)
 Neil, Alex (Airdrie and Shotts) (SNP)
 Rennie, Willie (Mid Scotland and Fife) (LD)
 Robertson, Dennis (Aberdeenshire West) (SNP)
 Robison, Shona (Dundee City East) (SNP)
 Scanlon, Mary (Highlands and Islands) (Con)
 Scott, John (Ayr) (Con)
 Smith, Liz (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 Stevenson, Stewart (Banffshire and Buchan Coast) (SNP)
 Stewart, Kevin (Aberdeen Central) (SNP)
 Sturgeon, Nicola (Glasgow Southside) (SNP)
 Swinney, John (Perthshire North) (SNP)
 Thompson, Dave (Skye, Lochaber and Badenoch) (SNP)
 Torrance, David (Kirkcaldy) (SNP)
 Walker, Bill (Dunfermline) (SNP)
 Watt, Maureen (Aberdeen South and North Kincardine) (SNP)
 Wheelhouse, Paul (South Scotland) (SNP)
 White, Sandra (Glasgow Kelvin) (SNP)
 Wilson, John (Central Scotland) (SNP)
 Yousaf, Humza (Glasgow) (SNP)

Against

Baillie, Jackie (Dumbarton) (Lab)
 Baker, Claire (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab)
 Baker, Richard (North East Scotland) (Lab)
 Beamish, Claudia (South Scotland) (Lab)
 Bibby, Neil (West Scotland) (Lab)
 Boyack, Sarah (Lothian) (Lab)
 Chisholm, Malcolm (Edinburgh Northern and Leith) (Lab)
 Dugdale, Kezia (Lothian) (Lab)
 Eadie, Helen (Cowdenbeath) (Lab)
 Fee, Mary (West Scotland) (Lab)
 Ferguson, Patricia (Glasgow Maryhill and Springburn) (Lab)
 Findlay, Neil (Lothian) (Lab)
 Gray, Iain (East Lothian) (Lab)
 Griffin, Mark (Central Scotland) (Lab)
 Harvie, Patrick (Glasgow) (Green)
 Henry, Hugh (Renfrewshire South) (Lab)
 Johnstone, Alison (Lothian) (Green)
 Kelly, James (Rutherglen) (Lab)
 Lamont, Johann (Glasgow Pollok) (Lab)
 Macdonald, Lewis (North East Scotland) (Lab)
 Macintosh, Ken (Eastwood) (Lab)
 Marra, Jenny (North East Scotland) (Lab)
 Martin, Paul (Glasgow Provan) (Lab)
 McDougall, Margaret (West Scotland) (Lab)
 McMahon, Michael (Uddingston and Bellshill) (Lab)
 McMahon, Siobhan (Central Scotland) (Lab)
 McNeil, Duncan (Greenock and Inverclyde) (Lab)
 McTaggart, Anne (Glasgow) (Lab)
 Murray, Elaine (Dumfriesshire) (Lab)
 Park, John (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab)
 Pearson, Graeme (South Scotland) (Lab)
 Pentland, John (Motherwell and Wishaw) (Lab)
 Simpson, Dr Richard (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab)
 Smith, Drew (Glasgow) (Lab)
 Smith, Elaine (Coatbridge and Chryston) (Lab)
 Stewart, David (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)

Abstentions

Urquhart, Jean (Highlands and Islands) (SNP)

The Presiding Officer: The result of the division is: For 83, Against 36, Abstentions 1.

Motion agreed to,

That the Parliament agrees the following programme of business—

Wednesday 23 November 2011

2.30 pm Time for Reflection
followed by Parliamentary Bureau Motions
followed by Scottish Government Debate: Carers Strategy
followed by Business Motion
followed by Parliamentary Bureau Motions
 5.00 pm Decision Time
followed by Members' Business

Thursday 24 November 2011

9.15 am Parliamentary Bureau Motions
followed by Scottish Government Debate: Maritime Safety and Coastguards
 11.40 am General Question Time
 12.00 pm First Minister's Question Time
 12.30 pm Members' Business
 2.15 pm Themed Question Time
 Health, Wellbeing and Cities Strategy
 2.55 pm Scottish Government Debate: Scotland's Contribution to UN Climate Summit

followed by Parliamentary Bureau Motions
 5.00 pm Decision Time
followed by Members' Business

Wednesday 30 November 2011

2.30 pm Time for Reflection
followed by Parliamentary Bureau Motions
followed by Scottish Government Business
followed by Business Motion
followed by Parliamentary Bureau Motions
 5.00 pm Decision Time
followed by Members' Business

Thursday 1 December 2011

9.15 am Parliamentary Bureau Motions
followed by Scottish Government Business
 11.40 am General Question Time
 12.00 pm First Minister's Question Time
 2.15 pm Themed Question Time
 Infrastructure and Capital Investment;
 Culture and External Affairs
 2.55 pm Scottish Government Business
followed by Parliamentary Bureau Motions
 5.00 pm Decision Time
followed by Members' Business

Parliamentary Bureau Motions

17:15

The Presiding Officer (Tricia Marwick): The next item of business is consideration of three Parliamentary Bureau motions. I ask Bruce Crawford to move motion S4M-01343, on the suspension of standing orders, motion S4M-01344, on the approval of a Scottish statutory instrument, and motion S4M-01345, on committee membership.

Motions moved,

That the Parliament agrees that Rule 9B.2.3 of Standing Orders be suspended for the purpose of allowing the Parliament to consider the legislative consent motion on the Terrorism Prevention and Investigation Measures Bill on Thursday 17 November 2011.

That the Parliament agrees that the Planning (Listed Buildings) (Amount of Fixed Penalty) (Scotland) Regulations 2011 [draft] be approved.

That the Parliament agrees that—

Alex Fergusson be appointed to replace Nanette Milne as a member of the Standards, Procedures and Public Appointments Committee;

Gavin Brown be appointed to replace Alex Johnstone as a member of the Finance Committee;

Mary Scanlon be appointed to replace Murdo Fraser as a member of the Public Audit Committee;

Annabel Goldie be appointed to replace Margaret Mitchell as a member of the Equal Opportunities Committee;

David McLetchie be appointed to replace John Lamont as a member of the Justice Committee;

Murdo Fraser be appointed to replace Gavin Brown as a member of the Economy, Energy and Tourism Committee;

Alex Johnstone be appointed to replace Jackson Carlaw as a member of the Infrastructure and Capital Investment Committee;

Jackson Carlaw be appointed to replace Mary Scanlon as a member of the Health and Sport Committee;

Margaret Mitchell be appointed to replace Ruth Davidson as a member of the Local Government and Regeneration Committee; and

John Lamont be appointed to replace Alex Fergusson as a member of the Rural Affairs, Climate Change and the Environment Committee.—[Bruce Crawford.]

The Presiding Officer: The questions on the motions will be put at decision time.

Decision Time

17:16

The Presiding Officer (Tricia Marwick): There are seven questions to be put as a result of today's business.

The first question is, that amendment S4M-01336.1, in the name of Michael McMahon, which seeks to amend motion S4M-01336, in the name of Alex Neil, on the regeneration strategy, be agreed to. Are we agreed?

Members: No.

The Presiding Officer: There will be a division.

For

Baillie, Jackie (Dumbarton) (Lab)
 Baker, Claire (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab)
 Baker, Richard (North East Scotland) (Lab)
 Beamish, Claudia (South Scotland) (Lab)
 Bibby, Neil (West Scotland) (Lab)
 Boyack, Sarah (Lothian) (Lab)
 Chisholm, Malcolm (Edinburgh Northern and Leith) (Lab)
 Dugdale, Kezia (Lothian) (Lab)
 Eadie, Helen (Cowdenbeath) (Lab)
 Fee, Mary (West Scotland) (Lab)
 Ferguson, Patricia (Glasgow Maryhill and Springburn) (Lab)
 Findlay, Neil (Lothian) (Lab)
 Gray, Iain (East Lothian) (Lab)
 Griffin, Mark (Central Scotland) (Lab)
 Harvie, Patrick (Glasgow) (Green)
 Henry, Hugh (Renfrewshire South) (Lab)
 Hume, Jim (South Scotland) (LD)
 Johnstone, Alison (Lothian) (Green)
 Kelly, James (Rutherglen) (Lab)
 Lamont, Johann (Glasgow Pollok) (Lab)
 Macdonald, Lewis (North East Scotland) (Lab)
 Macintosh, Ken (Eastwood) (Lab)
 Marra, Jenny (North East Scotland) (Lab)
 Martin, Paul (Glasgow Provan) (Lab)
 McArthur, Liam (Orkney Islands) (LD)
 McDougall, Margaret (West Scotland) (Lab)
 McInnes, Alison (North East Scotland) (LD)
 McMahon, Michael (Uddingston and Bellshill) (Lab)
 McMahon, Siobhan (Central Scotland) (Lab)
 McNeil, Duncan (Greenock and Inverclyde) (Lab)
 McTaggart, Anne (Glasgow) (Lab)
 Murray, Elaine (Dumfriesshire) (Lab)
 Park, John (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab)
 Pearson, Graeme (South Scotland) (Lab)
 Pentland, John (Motherwell and Wishaw) (Lab)
 Rennie, Willie (Mid Scotland and Fife) (LD)
 Simpson, Dr Richard (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab)
 Smith, Drew (Glasgow) (Lab)
 Smith, Elaine (Coatbridge and Chryston) (Lab)
 Stewart, David (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)

Against

Adam, Brian (Aberdeen Donside) (SNP)
 Adam, George (Paisley) (SNP)
 Adamson, Clare (Central Scotland) (SNP)
 Allan, Dr Alasdair (Na h-Eileanan an Iar) (SNP)
 Beattie, Colin (Midlothian North and Musselburgh) (SNP)
 Biagi, Marco (Edinburgh Central) (SNP)
 Brodie, Chic (South Scotland) (SNP)
 Brown, Gavin (Lothian) (Con)
 Brown, Keith (Clackmannanshire and Dunblane) (SNP)

Burgess, Margaret (Cunninghame South) (SNP)
 Campbell, Aileen (Clydesdale) (SNP)
 Campbell, Roderick (North East Fife) (SNP)
 Carlaw, Jackson (West Scotland) (Con)
 Coffey, Willie (Kilmarnock and Irvine Valley) (SNP)
 Constance, Angela (Almond Valley) (SNP)
 Crawford, Bruce (Stirling) (SNP)
 Cunningham, Roseanna (Perthshire South and Kinross-shire) (SNP)
 Davidson, Ruth (Glasgow) (Con)
 Dey, Graeme (Angus South) (SNP)
 Don, Nigel (Angus North and Mearns) (SNP)
 Doris, Bob (Glasgow) (SNP)
 Dornan, James (Glasgow Cathcart) (SNP)
 Eadie, Jim (Edinburgh Southern) (SNP)
 Ewing, Annabelle (Mid Scotland and Fife) (SNP)
 Ewing, Fergus (Inverness and Nairn) (SNP)
 Fabiani, Linda (East Kilbride) (SNP)
 Fergusson, Alex (Galloway and West Dumfries) (Con)
 Finnie, John (Highlands and Islands) (SNP)
 FitzPatrick, Joe (Dundee City West) (SNP)
 Fraser, Murdo (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 Gibson, Kenneth (Cunninghame North) (SNP)
 Gibson, Rob (Caithness, Sutherland and Ross) (SNP)
 Goldie, Annabel (West Scotland) (Con)
 Grahame, Christine (Midlothian South, Tweeddale and Lauderdale) (SNP)
 Hepburn, Jamie (Cumbernauld and Kilsyth) (SNP)
 Hyslop, Fiona (Linlithgow) (SNP)
 Ingram, Adam (Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley) (SNP)
 Johnstone, Alex (North East Scotland) (Con)
 Keir, Colin (Edinburgh Western) (SNP)
 Kidd, Bill (Glasgow Anniesland) (SNP)
 Lamont, John (Ettrick, Roxburgh and Berwickshire) (Con)
 Lochhead, Richard (Moray) (SNP)
 Lyle, Richard (Central Scotland) (SNP)
 MacAskill, Kenny (Edinburgh Eastern) (SNP)
 MacDonald, Angus (Falkirk East) (SNP)
 MacDonald, Gordon (Edinburgh Pentlands) (SNP)
 Mackay, Derek (Renfrewshire North and West) (SNP)
 Mackenzie, Mike (Highlands and Islands) (SNP)
 Mason, John (Glasgow Shettleston) (SNP)
 Matheson, Michael (Falkirk West) (SNP)
 Maxwell, Stewart (West Scotland) (SNP)
 McAlpine, Joan (South Scotland) (SNP)
 McDonald, Mark (North East Scotland) (SNP)
 McGrigor, Jamie (Highlands and Islands) (Con)
 McKelvie, Christina (Hamilton, Larkhall and Stonehouse) (SNP)
 McLeod, Aileen (South Scotland) (SNP)
 McLeod, Fiona (Strathkelvin and Bearsden) (SNP)
 McLetchie, David (Lothian) (Con)
 McMillan, Stuart (West Scotland) (SNP)
 Milne, Nanette (North East Scotland) (Con)
 Mitchell, Margaret (Central Scotland) (Con)
 Neil, Alex (Airdrie and Shotts) (SNP)
 Robertson, Dennis (Aberdeenshire West) (SNP)
 Robison, Shona (Dundee City East) (SNP)
 Scanlon, Mary (Highlands and Islands) (Con)
 Scott, John (Ayr) (Con)
 Smith, Liz (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 Stevenson, Stewart (Banffshire and Buchan Coast) (SNP)
 Stewart, Kevin (Aberdeen Central) (SNP)
 Sturgeon, Nicola (Glasgow Southside) (SNP)
 Swinney, John (Perthshire North) (SNP)
 Thompson, Dave (Skye, Lochaber and Badenoch) (SNP)
 Torrance, David (Kirkcaldy) (SNP)
 Urquhart, Jean (Highlands and Islands) (SNP)
 Walker, Bill (Dunfermline) (SNP)
 Watt, Maureen (Aberdeen South and North Kincardine) (SNP)
 Wheelhouse, Paul (South Scotland) (SNP)

White, Sandra (Glasgow Kelvin) (SNP)
 Wilson, John (Central Scotland) (SNP)
 Yousaf, Humza (Glasgow) (SNP)

The Presiding Officer: The result of the division is: For 40, Against 80, Abstentions 0.

Amendment disagreed to.

The Presiding Officer: The next question is, that amendment S4M-01336.2, in the name of Alex Johnstone, which seeks to amend motion S4M-01336, in the name of Alex Neil, on the regeneration strategy, be agreed to. Are we agreed?

Members: No.

The Presiding Officer: There will be a division.

For

Adam, Brian (Aberdeen Donside) (SNP)
 Adam, George (Paisley) (SNP)
 Adamson, Clare (Central Scotland) (SNP)
 Allan, Dr Alasdair (Na h-Eileanan an Iar) (SNP)
 Beattie, Colin (Midlothian North and Musselburgh) (SNP)
 Biagi, Marco (Edinburgh Central) (SNP)
 Brodie, Chic (South Scotland) (SNP)
 Brown, Gavin (Lothian) (Con)
 Brown, Keith (Clackmannanshire and Dunblane) (SNP)
 Burgess, Margaret (Cunninghame South) (SNP)
 Campbell, Aileen (Clydesdale) (SNP)
 Campbell, Roderick (North East Fife) (SNP)
 Carlaw, Jackson (West Scotland) (Con)
 Coffey, Willie (Kilmarnock and Irvine Valley) (SNP)
 Constance, Angela (Almond Valley) (SNP)
 Crawford, Bruce (Stirling) (SNP)
 Cunningham, Roseanna (Perthshire South and Kinross-shire) (SNP)
 Davidson, Ruth (Glasgow) (Con)
 Dey, Graeme (Angus South) (SNP)
 Doris, Bob (Glasgow) (SNP)
 Dornan, James (Glasgow Cathcart) (SNP)
 Eadie, Jim (Edinburgh Southern) (SNP)
 Ewing, Annabelle (Mid Scotland and Fife) (SNP)
 Ewing, Fergus (Inverness and Nairn) (SNP)
 Fabiani, Linda (East Kilbride) (SNP)
 Fergusson, Alex (Galloway and West Dumfries) (Con)
 Finnie, John (Highlands and Islands) (SNP)
 FitzPatrick, Joe (Dundee City West) (SNP)
 Fraser, Murdo (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 Gibson, Kenneth (Cunninghame North) (SNP)
 Gibson, Rob (Caithness, Sutherland and Ross) (SNP)
 Goldie, Annabel (West Scotland) (Con)
 Grahame, Christine (Midlothian South, Tweeddale and Lauderdale) (SNP)
 Hepburn, Jamie (Cumbernauld and Kilsyth) (SNP)
 Hume, Jim (South Scotland) (LD)
 Hyslop, Fiona (Linlithgow) (SNP)
 Ingram, Adam (Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley) (SNP)
 Johnstone, Alex (North East Scotland) (Con)
 Keir, Colin (Edinburgh Western) (SNP)
 Kidd, Bill (Glasgow Anniesland) (SNP)
 Lamont, John (Ettrick, Roxburgh and Berwickshire) (Con)
 Lochhead, Richard (Moray) (SNP)
 Lyle, Richard (Central Scotland) (SNP)
 MacAskill, Kenny (Edinburgh Eastern) (SNP)
 MacDonald, Angus (Falkirk East) (SNP)
 MacDonald, Gordon (Edinburgh Pentlands) (SNP)
 Mackay, Derek (Renfrewshire North and West) (SNP)
 Mackenzie, Mike (Highlands and Islands) (SNP)
 Mason, John (Glasgow Shettleston) (SNP)

Matheson, Michael (Falkirk West) (SNP)
 Maxwell, Stewart (West Scotland) (SNP)
 McAlpine, Joan (South Scotland) (SNP)
 McArthur, Liam (Orkney Islands) (LD)
 McDonald, Mark (North East Scotland) (SNP)
 McGrigor, Jamie (Highlands and Islands) (Con)
 McInnes, Alison (North East Scotland) (LD)
 McKelvie, Christina (Hamilton, Larkhall and Stonehouse) (SNP)
 McLeod, Aileen (South Scotland) (SNP)
 McLeod, Fiona (Strathkelvin and Bearsden) (SNP)
 McLetchie, David (Lothian) (Con)
 McMillan, Stuart (West Scotland) (SNP)
 Milne, Nanette (North East Scotland) (Con)
 Mitchell, Margaret (Central Scotland) (Con)
 Neil, Alex (Airdrie and Shotts) (SNP)
 Rennie, Willie (Mid Scotland and Fife) (LD)
 Robertson, Dennis (Aberdeenshire West) (SNP)
 Robison, Shona (Dundee City East) (SNP)
 Scanlon, Mary (Highlands and Islands) (Con)
 Scott, John (Ayr) (Con)
 Smith, Liz (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 Stevenson, Stewart (Banffshire and Buchan Coast) (SNP)
 Stewart, Kevin (Aberdeen Central) (SNP)
 Sturgeon, Nicola (Glasgow Southside) (SNP)
 Swinney, John (Perthshire North) (SNP)
 Thompson, Dave (Skye, Lochaber and Badenoch) (SNP)
 Torrance, David (Kirkcaldy) (SNP)
 Urquhart, Jean (Highlands and Islands) (SNP)
 Walker, Bill (Dunfermline) (SNP)
 Watt, Maureen (Aberdeen South and North Kincardine) (SNP)
 Wheelhouse, Paul (South Scotland) (SNP)
 White, Sandra (Glasgow Kelvin) (SNP)
 Wilson, John (Central Scotland) (SNP)
 Yousaf, Humza (Glasgow) (SNP)

Against

Baillie, Jackie (Dumbarton) (Lab)
 Baker, Claire (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab)
 Baker, Richard (North East Scotland) (Lab)
 Beamish, Claudia (South Scotland) (Lab)
 Bibby, Neil (West Scotland) (Lab)
 Boyack, Sarah (Lothian) (Lab)
 Chisholm, Malcolm (Edinburgh Northern and Leith) (Lab)
 Dugdale, Kezia (Lothian) (Lab)
 Eadie, Helen (Cowdenbeath) (Lab)
 Fee, Mary (West Scotland) (Lab)
 Ferguson, Patricia (Glasgow Maryhill and Springburn) (Lab)
 Findlay, Neil (Lothian) (Lab)
 Gray, Iain (East Lothian) (Lab)
 Griffin, Mark (Central Scotland) (Lab)
 Harvie, Patrick (Glasgow) (Green)
 Henry, Hugh (Renfrewshire South) (Lab)
 Johnstone, Alison (Lothian) (Green)
 Kelly, James (Rutherglen) (Lab)
 Lamont, Johann (Glasgow Pollok) (Lab)
 Macdonald, Lewis (North East Scotland) (Lab)
 Macintosh, Ken (Eastwood) (Lab)
 Marra, Jenny (North East Scotland) (Lab)
 Martin, Paul (Glasgow Provan) (Lab)
 McDougall, Margaret (West Scotland) (Lab)
 McMahon, Michael (Uddingston and Bellshill) (Lab)
 McMahon, Siobhan (Central Scotland) (Lab)
 McNeil, Duncan (Greenock and Inverclyde) (Lab)
 McTaggart, Anne (Glasgow) (Lab)
 Murray, Elaine (Dumfriesshire) (Lab)
 Park, John (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab)
 Pearson, Graeme (South Scotland) (Lab)
 Pentland, John (Motherwell and Wishaw) (Lab)
 Simpson, Dr Richard (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab)
 Smith, Drew (Glasgow) (Lab)

Smith, Elaine (Coatbridge and Chryston) (Lab)
 Stewart, David (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)

The Presiding Officer: The result of the division is: For 83, Against 36, Abstentions 0.

Amendment agreed to.

The Presiding Officer: The next question is, that motion S4M-01336, in the name of Alex Neil, on the regeneration strategy, as amended, be agreed to. Are we agreed?

Members: No.

The Presiding Officer: There will be a division.

For

Adam, Brian (Aberdeen Donside) (SNP)
 Adam, George (Paisley) (SNP)
 Adamson, Clare (Central Scotland) (SNP)
 Allan, Dr Alasdair (Na h-Eileanan an Iar) (SNP)
 Baker, Richard (North East Scotland) (Lab)
 Beattie, Colin (Midlothian North and Musselburgh) (SNP)
 Biagi, Marco (Edinburgh Central) (SNP)
 Brodie, Chic (South Scotland) (SNP)
 Brown, Gavin (Lothian) (Con)
 Brown, Keith (Clackmannanshire and Dunblane) (SNP)
 Burgess, Margaret (Cunninghame South) (SNP)
 Campbell, Aileen (Clydesdale) (SNP)
 Campbell, Roderick (North East Fife) (SNP)
 Carlaw, Jackson (West Scotland) (Con)
 Coffey, Willie (Kilmarnock and Irvine Valley) (SNP)
 Constance, Angela (Almond Valley) (SNP)
 Crawford, Bruce (Stirling) (SNP)
 Cunningham, Roseanna (Perthshire South and Kinross-shire) (SNP)
 Davidson, Ruth (Glasgow) (Con)
 Dey, Graeme (Angus South) (SNP)
 Don, Nigel (Angus North and Mearns) (SNP)
 Doris, Bob (Glasgow) (SNP)
 Dornan, James (Glasgow Cathcart) (SNP)
 Eadie, Jim (Edinburgh Southern) (SNP)
 Ewing, Annabelle (Mid Scotland and Fife) (SNP)
 Ewing, Fergus (Inverness and Nairn) (SNP)
 Fabiani, Linda (East Kilbride) (SNP)
 Fergusson, Alex (Galloway and West Dumfries) (Con)
 Finnie, John (Highlands and Islands) (SNP)
 FitzPatrick, Joe (Dundee City West) (SNP)
 Fraser, Murdo (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 Gibson, Kenneth (Cunninghame North) (SNP)
 Gibson, Rob (Caithness, Sutherland and Ross) (SNP)
 Goldie, Annabel (West Scotland) (Con)
 Grahame, Christine (Midlothian South, Tweeddale and Lauderdale) (SNP)
 Hepburn, Jamie (Cumbernauld and Kilsyth) (SNP)
 Hume, Jim (South Scotland) (LD)
 Hyslop, Fiona (Linlithgow) (SNP)
 Ingram, Adam (Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley) (SNP)
 Johnstone, Alex (North East Scotland) (Con)
 Keir, Colin (Edinburgh Western) (SNP)
 Kidd, Bill (Glasgow Anniesland) (SNP)
 Lamont, John (Ettrick, Roxburgh and Berwickshire) (Con)
 Lochhead, Richard (Moray) (SNP)
 Lyle, Richard (Central Scotland) (SNP)
 MacAskill, Kenny (Edinburgh Eastern) (SNP)
 MacDonald, Angus (Falkirk East) (SNP)
 MacDonald, Gordon (Edinburgh Pentlands) (SNP)
 Mackay, Derek (Renfrewshire North and West) (SNP)
 Mackenzie, Mike (Highlands and Islands) (SNP)
 Mason, John (Glasgow Shettleston) (SNP)
 Matheson, Michael (Falkirk West) (SNP)
 Maxwell, Stewart (West Scotland) (SNP)

McAlpine, Joan (South Scotland) (SNP)
 McArthur, Liam (Orkney Islands) (LD)
 McDonald, Mark (North East Scotland) (SNP)
 McGrigor, Jamie (Highlands and Islands) (Con)
 McInnes, Alison (North East Scotland) (LD)
 McKelvie, Christina (Hamilton, Larkhall and Stonehouse) (SNP)
 McLeod, Aileen (South Scotland) (SNP)
 McLeod, Fiona (Strathkelvin and Bearsden) (SNP)
 McLetchie, David (Lothian) (Con)
 McMillan, Stuart (West Scotland) (SNP)
 Milne, Nanette (North East Scotland) (Con)
 Mitchell, Margaret (Central Scotland) (Con)
 Neil, Alex (Airdrie and Shotts) (SNP)
 Rennie, Willie (Mid Scotland and Fife) (LD)
 Robertson, Dennis (Aberdeenshire West) (SNP)
 Robison, Shona (Dundee City East) (SNP)
 Scanlon, Mary (Highlands and Islands) (Con)
 Scott, John (Ayr) (Con)
 Smith, Liz (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 Stevenson, Stewart (Banffshire and Buchan Coast) (SNP)
 Stewart, Kevin (Aberdeen Central) (SNP)
 Sturgeon, Nicola (Glasgow Southside) (SNP)
 Swinney, John (Perthshire North) (SNP)
 Thompson, Dave (Skye, Lochaber and Badenoch) (SNP)
 Torrance, David (Kirkcaldy) (SNP)
 Urquhart, Jean (Highlands and Islands) (SNP)
 Walker, Bill (Dunfermline) (SNP)
 Watt, Maureen (Aberdeen South and North Kincardine) (SNP)
 Wheelhouse, Paul (South Scotland) (SNP)
 White, Sandra (Glasgow Kelvin) (SNP)
 Wilson, John (Central Scotland) (SNP)
 Yousaf, Humza (Glasgow) (SNP)

Against

Baillie, Jackie (Dumbarton) (Lab)
 Baker, Claire (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab)
 Beamish, Claudia (South Scotland) (Lab)
 Bibby, Neil (West Scotland) (Lab)
 Boyack, Sarah (Lothian) (Lab)
 Chisholm, Malcolm (Edinburgh Northern and Leith) (Lab)
 Dugdale, Kezia (Lothian) (Lab)
 Eadie, Helen (Cowdenbeath) (Lab)
 Fee, Mary (West Scotland) (Lab)
 Ferguson, Patricia (Glasgow Maryhill and Springburn) (Lab)
 Findlay, Neil (Lothian) (Lab)
 Gray, Iain (East Lothian) (Lab)
 Griffin, Mark (Central Scotland) (Lab)
 Henry, Hugh (Renfrewshire South) (Lab)
 Kelly, James (Rutherglen) (Lab)
 Lamont, Johann (Glasgow Pollok) (Lab)
 Macdonald, Lewis (North East Scotland) (Lab)
 Macintosh, Ken (Eastwood) (Lab)
 Marra, Jenny (North East Scotland) (Lab)
 Martin, Paul (Glasgow Provan) (Lab)
 McDougall, Margaret (West Scotland) (Lab)
 McMahon, Michael (Uddingston and Bellshill) (Lab)
 McMahon, Siobhan (Central Scotland) (Lab)
 McNeil, Duncan (Greenock and Inverclyde) (Lab)
 McTaggart, Anne (Glasgow) (Lab)
 Murray, Elaine (Dumfriesshire) (Lab)
 Park, John (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab)
 Pearson, Graeme (South Scotland) (Lab)
 Pentland, John (Motherwell and Wishaw) (Lab)
 Simpson, Dr Richard (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab)
 Smith, Drew (Glasgow) (Lab)
 Smith, Elaine (Coatbridge and Chryston) (Lab)
 Stewart, David (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)

Abstentions

Harvie, Patrick (Glasgow) (Green)
 Johnstone, Alison (Lothian) (Green)

The Presiding Officer: The result of the division is: For 85, Against 33, Abstentions 2.

Motion, as amended, agreed to,

That the Parliament acknowledges that in the current challenging financial climate it is imperative that there is a strategic vision for the regeneration of the most disadvantaged communities across Scotland; acknowledges the importance of regeneration to *The Government Economic Strategy* and the Scottish Government's ambition to create a more successful country, with opportunities for all of Scotland to flourish, and recognises that successful regeneration relies on a wide variety of organisations and agencies working together and an increased role for communities themselves to help them improve their circumstances, and further acknowledges that, where difficult choices must be made, regeneration spending should be targeted where it will bring most benefit to the wider community.

The Presiding Officer: The next question is, that motion S4M-01347, in the name of Dave Thompson, on minor standing orders rule changes, be agreed to.

Motion agreed to,

That the Parliament notes the Standards, Procedures and Public Appointments Committee's 1st Report 2011 (Session 4), *Minor Standing Orders Rule Changes* (SP Paper 25), and agrees that the changes to Standing Orders set out in Annexe A to the report that relate to committee substitutes and the Conveners Group quorum be made with effect from 17 November 2011.

The Presiding Officer: The next question is, that motion S4M-01343, in the name of Bruce Crawford, on the suspension of standing orders, be agreed to.

Motion agreed to,

That the Parliament agrees that Rule 9B.2.3 of Standing Orders be suspended for the purpose of allowing the Parliament to consider the legislative consent motion on the Terrorism Prevention and Investigation Measures Bill on Thursday 17 November 2011.

The Presiding Officer: The next question is, that motion S4M-01344, in the name of Bruce Crawford, on the approval of a Scottish statutory instrument, be agreed to.

Motion agreed to,

That the Parliament agrees that the Planning (Listed Buildings) (Amount of Fixed Penalty) (Scotland) Regulations 2011 [draft] be approved.

The Presiding Officer: The next question is, that motion S4M-01345, in the name of Bruce Crawford, on committee membership, be agreed to.

Motion agreed to,

That the Parliament agrees that—

Alex Fergusson be appointed to replace Nanette Milne as a member of the Standards, Procedures and Public

Appointments Committee;

Gavin Brown be appointed to replace Alex Johnstone as a member of the Finance Committee;

Mary Scanlon be appointed to replace Murdo Fraser as a member of the Public Audit Committee;

Annabel Goldie be appointed to replace Margaret Mitchell as a member of the Equal Opportunities Committee;

David McLetchie be appointed to replace John Lamont as a member of the Justice Committee;

Murdo Fraser be appointed to replace Gavin Brown as a member of the Economy, Energy and Tourism Committee;

Alex Johnstone be appointed to replace Jackson Carlaw as a member of the Infrastructure and Capital Investment Committee;

Jackson Carlaw be appointed to replace Mary Scanlon as a member of the Health and Sport Committee;

Margaret Mitchell be appointed to replace Ruth Davidson as a member of the Local Government and Regeneration Committee; and

John Lamont be appointed to replace Alex Fergusson as a member of the Rural Affairs, Climate Change and the Environment Committee.

People's Bible

The Deputy Presiding Officer (Elaine Smith):

The final item of business is a members' business debate on motion S4M-01030, in the name of Dave Thompson, on the people's Bible. The debate will conclude without any question being put.

Motion debated,

That the Parliament applauds the accomplishment of the *People's Bible* in travelling over 5,500 miles since June 2011 and recording 18,320 verses in over 60 towns and cities in Scotland, including Fort William and Portree; considers that the *People's Bible* has prompted Scots throughout society and across the country to discover and rediscover the *Bible*; looks forward to the Scottish finale at Stirling Castle in November; hopes that the *People's Bible* will be a catalyst for renewed interest in reading the *Bible*, and believes that the transformative and lasting impact of the King James *Bible* on Scottish language, culture and education can be mirrored in the influence of the *People's Bible* on the people of Scotland today.

17:22

Dave Thompson (Skye, Lochaber and Badenoch) (SNP): This year marks the 400th anniversary of the bestselling English language book of all time. It is estimated that a billion copies have been printed since 1611, and the man responsible for it was none other than the king of Scots, James VI of Scotland. In recognition of his work, the book is known as the King James Bible. The Bible's transformative influence is more entrenched in Scotland than just in relation to its multiple literary editions. The Bible is at the very heart of our history. It is the cornerstone of our society.

Neither our politics nor our culture, and neither our education nor our religion would be the same without the King James Bible. The sweeping scenes of Scotland's history have been performed on a scriptural stage against the backdrop of biblical belief. The Bible has directed our movements, our behaviours and our beliefs as a nation. It is the script at the heart of history and at the heart of Scotland's history.

Many have pored over it, reading, writing and realising that there is priceless treasure contained within its pages. The glorious speeches of the past few centuries envisioning democracy and equality are suffused in the cadences of the King James Bible. The Bible is the bedrock on which we have built our past, but will it be the foundations of our future?

The King James Bible is a prophet without honour in the country of its birth. It has all but disappeared from our schools, our media and our Parliament. The key player in our past, the great motivator of our people and the foundation stone

of our values and ideals is hardly anywhere to be seen. However, the question is, at what cost?

This year the Scottish Bible Society decided to bring the Bible back. In June, an initiative known as the people's Bible was launched. Its purpose was to produce a Bible written by the people for the people. This they have done, and earlier today a bound copy of Genesis was presented by representatives of the Scottish Bible Society at Westminster Abbey in the presence of the royal family.

The people's Bible has travelled the length and breadth of Scotland, with members of the public encouraged to handwrite two verses of the Bible, until all 66 books were written.

More than 5,500 miles have been covered since June, taking in an awesome 60 towns and cities in Scotland. What has been uncovered so far? One primary 7 pupil had never seen a Bible before. Another 20-something man stopped short when he saw the exhibition stand and asked, in all seriousness, "What is a Bible?" The Bible Society has found a new generation to whom they are bringing the Bible.

At the beginning of the last century, the American President, Theodore Roosevelt, heralded the Bible as

"the most democratic book in the world",

and so it still is. Scots from diverse backgrounds have penned their verses. Cameron Scott, the former "Big Brother" winner, wrote his verses in Orkney. A young girl from a council estate wrote hers in Glasgow. A grand total of more than 18,400 verses have been written in Scotland. Those verses, in the handwriting of the people who contributed to the project, will appear online for all to read in perpetuity. That thought caused one terminally ill gentleman to weep. He was overcome that his handwriting would be there for all to see, for all time.

The Scottish Bible Society claims that there has never been a better time to get into the Bible. With that in mind, it has republished the Bible in several new formats. There is one for new readers, selling at 99p and readable in an hour, and there is the old-style King James version, with a foreword by the Prince of Wales. Now, there is also the people's Bible. The Bible is accessible to all. It is the great leveller of society. Roosevelt's statement stands true.

The preface of the first edition of the King James translation reads:

"Translation it is that openeth the window, to let in the light".

Eighty years of struggle and several martyrs were the labour pains that birthed an English

edition of the Bible. Having the Bible in a comprehensible language is a privilege that we have forgotten. It is a prize that we no longer treasure. However, through the people's Bible, some people have discovered the Bible and others have rediscovered it. One lady in Dundee returned to church after writing her verses; another chose to check out Christianity for the first time.

No matter their background, people are being touched by the verses that they write. An ex-alcoholic who stumbled upon the people's Bible exhibition at the Mitchell library in Glasgow was on his way to buy a bottle of vodka. Persuaded to write a verse or two, he stopped and chatted to the volunteers. He bought a burger instead. Another gentleman walking along Princes Street in Edinburgh was invited to write a couple of verses. He obliged. His story spilled out to the volunteer—a story of brokenness, addiction and homelessness. He finished by saying that writing those verses was an acknowledgement that, in the midst of suffering, there was light.

The word of God has shaped the Scottish people, and the people's Bible has put the Bible back in Scotland's history books. The general public have come into touching distance of this historic and inspired book. As society dips and dives into secularism, as fewer go to church and as public institutions distance themselves from faith groups, the Bible has not lost its transformative impact on our nation and Scotland has not lost its need for the word of God.

17:28

John Mason (Glasgow Shettleston) (SNP): I congratulate Dave Thompson on securing the debate. I am slightly disappointed, however, that only two parties are represented as the chamber discusses what I believe to be an important subject.

We should pay tribute to the organisations whose aim is to make the Bible widely available in this country and overseas, including the Bible societies; Scripture Union, through which I came to personal faith; and the Gideons, who have presented me and, I am sure, many others with a New Testament such as the one that I am holding.

I thought that it might be useful to dispel a couple of myths or misunderstandings about the Bible and the Christian faith. The first is that, as some people think, the Bible is a set of rules and that we please God by obeying those rules. That is not quite true because, primarily, the Christian faith is about a relationship. We believe that, when God made the world, he had a close relationship with human beings, that that relationship was broken and that the reason why Jesus came was to restore that relationship.

It seems appropriate to read a verse out of the Bible in this debate. One I like, which I thought I would read, is part of Jesus's prayer in John, chapter 17, verse 3:

"Now this is eternal life: that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent."

Jesus was emphasising the fact that a relationship is our highest aim in the Christian faith: to know God as our father. The Bible shows us how we should live when we have that relationship.

Another misunderstanding of the Bible is that God in the Old Testament is very harsh but in the New Testament is somehow different and more loving. When we look at the Bible we see that God is portrayed as loving all the way through, not just to his people but to all human beings. One story I find particularly moving is that of Jonah. Members might be aware that he was the one who was swallowed by the whale. God tells Jonah to go to an evil city called Nineveh to warn the people that they will be punished. Jonah goes and preaches and they turn to God. The result is that God is very pleased, but Jonah is very angry. That is a perhaps slightly amusing example of how the Bible often tells us that the prophets were imperfect human beings. At the end of that book, God shows that he is concerned about all the people, not just the Jews, and about the wider creation, even including the animals. In the final verse of that book, God says to Jonah:

"But Nineveh has more than 120,000 people who cannot tell their right hand from their left, and many cattle as well. Should I not be concerned about that great city?"

I find that tremendously encouraging and moving, because I believe that that is also a message for today. Just as God cared for Nineveh, he cares for the great cities of Glasgow, Edinburgh, Aberdeen and Dundee and all the smaller ones, too. I find that message from the Bible tremendously encouraging.

17:32

Murdo Fraser (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con): I commend Dave Thompson for his motion and congratulate him on securing this evening's debate. As he said, even in this secular world the Bible is still the most influential book in world history and it is still a bestseller across the globe. This is the 400th anniversary of the King James Bible and although Dave Thompson is technically correct to say that he was king of Scots, by the time the King James Bible appeared he had become king of the United Kingdom—or Great Britain, technically speaking, in those times. After going down to London, he famously made only one return visit to Scotland. No doubt he was too busy overseeing the creation of the new Bible.

The people's Bible was a joint venture between the Scottish Bible Society and the Bible Society in England and Wales and it was an opportunity for the entire Bible to be written by hand, with individuals each contributing a pair of verses and making their mark in history. It was heartening to see the tour made by the people's Bible across Scotland over the year.

In my region, it went through Perth and Kinross, to Clackmannanshire and to various stops in Fife. Its last stop in Scotland was on 13 November in Stirling castle, appropriately enough, because Stirling castle has many connections with James VI. He was raised and educated there so it was right that it was the last stop for the people's Bible and the last chance for members of the public to get involved before the completed version was presented in Westminster abbey. I pay tribute to all the organisers and the individuals throughout Scotland and the rest of the UK who took part and contributed verses to this worthwhile initiative.

The Scottish Bible Society and its counterpart south of the border are to be commended for their outward-looking and innovative venture. They are aware that many people in Scotland are not connected actively to the Church or to religion and the Scottish Bible Society is trying to address that by thinking of new and exciting ways to bring scripture to the public and to a wider audience across the country. The people's Bible was an energetic and exciting idea to raise public awareness of that very important book.

Other initiatives have taken place during the year. Later this month, the Perth branch of the Scottish Bible Society is holding a Bible-reading marathon over three days—three complete 24-hour periods. I have been asked to participate for an hour, which I am happy to do. Over the course of the three days, the Bible will be read from start to finish in a public place—on the steps of the North church in the centre of Perth. It will be important for people in Perth to witness that; it will reflect the importance of the Bible and the importance of the anniversary that we are celebrating as this year comes to a close.

Dave Thompson said that perhaps the Bible was better known to previous generations than it is to many people today. Various academics have told me that, whereas with previous generations of students they could include biblical references in their lectures that would automatically be understood, many students today just look on blankly.

John Mason mentioned his favourite passages in the Bible. I have always based my approach to politics on the prophet Samuel's dealings with King Agog of the Amalekites. If any members are not familiar with the passage to which I refer, I suggest that they look it up—1 Samuel, chapter

15. It is better read in the original King James version, where the language is so much better.

I close by commending the Scottish Bible Society for all its work, and I again thank Dave Thompson for giving us the opportunity to discuss these issues.

17:36

Nigel Don (Angus North and Mearns) (SNP):

I, too, commend Dave Thompson for bringing the issue before us. Rather than repeat what has been said before, as is usual, I will add a few thoughts.

When I went back and considered how the King James Bible came to be written, I found, of course, that it was steeped in practical politics. Henry VIII was of one political persuasion, and supposedly of one religious persuasion. He was followed by Mary, of another. Then, with Elizabeth, they seemed to be back where they had started. Nobody was terribly happy with the translations of the Bible that they had, or with what those translations told them about the way in which kings—and, for that matter, queens—were supposed to interact with the public. Everybody could see an opportunity to get things rewritten—although there were some genuine textual concerns as well. King James therefore stepped in and did a good thing. He said to use the familiar language from the Geneva Bible and the Bishops' Bible—if it worked and was right—but to be prepared to make changes if necessary.

We would have had a wonderful version, but for the fact that the archbishop—one Richard Bancroft—decided that he had to have the last word. That is apparently why in 1 Acts, chapter 20 the word “bishopric” found its way into the translation. I do not remember seeing it recently.

There were no footnotes, which is something that parliamentary draftsmen and Government report writers might bear in mind. If it cannot go in the basic text, perhaps it should not be in a footnote. That would be quite a good rule. Also, there were no pictures. That perhaps suggests that more modern versions were to come, because there have always been people who cannot read. There still are.

The authorised version was supposed to replace the Bishops' Bible in the readings of the Church of England, but it was never actually authorised and only got there because the other one was no longer published. Apparently, it took until 1674 before it replaced the version used in Scotland.

Others have mentioned the book's influence. It must have been the most influential version of the most influential book in the most influential language in the world. It remains so.

I note that people are hand writing the people's Bible. I have not contributed and I begin to realise why, as I attempt to read my handwriting. It would be most unreasonable to inflict it on other people. I think that we should stick to a printed copy, and I hope that other people's handwriting has been better than mine.

Let us reflect on what the Bible gives us. It is the Almighty's dealings with his creation—and, in particular, with his people. It is a history book. Uniquely, it marks the change from BC to AD, or CE, as I think we now have it. Life actually changed then. It speaks about a long-term plan; it speaks about a completed task; and, mercifully, it tells us that our relationship with the Almighty is not dependent on our own efforts. It is the best news that we have in print and it is far better than anything that will ever come out of this place, in Government policy or otherwise. I commend it to the good people of Scotland as something well worth reading. I thank all those who have brought it to our attention.

17:39

The Minister for Learning and Skills (Dr

Alasdair Allan): I thank Dave Thompson, as others have done, for bringing the debate to Parliament. It has been a credible way of commemorating not just the people's Bible project but the important anniversary that we celebrate.

An Old Testament preacher once memorably told his student:

“Of making many books there is no end, and much study is a weariness of the flesh.”

Ironically, his comment is preserved in a book.

A few hundred years later, an author called Luke explained the reason for his two-volume work in the following terms:

“It seemed good to me also, having had perfect understanding of all things from the very first, to write unto thee in order, most excellent Theophilus, that thou mightest know the certainty of those things, wherein thou hast been instructed.”

A Roman prisoner called Paul, anticipating his imminent execution, asks his younger disciple Timothy to

“bring with thee ... the books, but especially the parchments.”

It is obvious that from its earliest days the Christian church has recognised the importance of written texts to its life and witness, in particular the scriptures of the Old and New Testaments.

Nigel Don indicated some of the history of how the Bible came to be written in the vernacular in this country. This year marks the 400th anniversary of the King James version of the Bible. The desirability of a new translation of the

Bible was first raised in 1601 by the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland in Burntisland, attended by James VI. A few years later, he commissioned the production of a new translation.

Of course, that was not the beginning of biblical scholarship in Scotland. The monastic tradition goes as far back as Iona, and in the scriptoria of our monasteries the Bible was copied out by hand, in much the same way as in the project that we are celebrating today.

James VI had an inclusive and moderate approach to biblical scholarship—an approach that he did not apply to all his areas of policy as king. His publication became known as the King James—or authorised—version of the Bible.

Nigel Don referred to the absence of footnotes in the King James edition. My understanding is that that was a deliberate policy to exclude the possibility of debate about the interpretation of certain verses of the Bible.

It is difficult to overstate the importance of the King James Bible, and the Bible more generally, to the English-speaking world. Dave Thompson and John Mason spoke powerfully of the effect that the Bible had on their faith. The King James edition's robust narrative style and the power and beauty of its poetry have given a rich legacy to the English language, along with many familiar phrases and expressions, such as "a coat of many colours", "the powers that be" and "fight the good fight".

The Bible in general, and the King James version in particular, has had and continues to have a significant impact on Scottish history and culture. I wish to illustrate that by referring to a couple of areas in which the King James Bible has had an influence.

The first is education. Scotland's ancient universities were established, in part, to encourage the systematic study of Christian teaching generated particularly by the study of biblical texts.

Later, the reformation of 1560 had profound implications for Scottish culture and especially for education. I realise that the way in which I phrased that omitted to describe Edinburgh as an ancient university. I hope that no one objects.

The reformation gave expression to a particularly dangerous idea, which was the right to question the authority and teaching of the church in light of the teaching of the Bible—a right that could be exercised only if there was widespread access to education.

It is interesting to note that the ideal of a national system of education, from parochial schools to universities, was set out by John Knox and others in "The First Book of Discipline". The

revolutionary ideal—a kirk and a school in every parish—took many years to implement; nevertheless it expressed a recognition of the importance of education, both for its own sake and to give everyone the opportunity to read the Bible. It also fostered a respect for education and learning that, as others have observed, resulted in 18th century Scotland boasting the highest standard of literacy in Europe.

The emphasis in the reformation on education and the right to challenge authority, whether the authority of the church or others, was a significant factor in the development of the enlightenment in Scotland.

The Scottish enlightenment was centred in the universities of Edinburgh, Glasgow and Aberdeen and its leading thinkers, such as David Hume, Adam Smith and Hugh Blair, taught Europe and America how to think and talk about the new areas of study, including economics, sociology and engineering.

Of course, the biblical tradition in Scotland has given rise to irreverent comment about the role of preaching in Scotland's culture, not least the apocryphal story of the Scottish preacher who indicated that his sermon would be on the verse

"And it came to pass",

with particular emphasis on the word "And". There is also the story of the man from Scotland who was found on a desert island after some years on his own. He had built not one but two churches with his own hand, and he explained to his rescuers that one was the church that he went to and the other was the church that he did not go to.

All that aside, and some of that mockery aside, as Voltaire commented:

"We look to Scotland for all our ideas of civilisation".

A bible in the vernacular has played an enormous role in that.

Of course, the other area, aside from religion itself, on which the Bible has influence in Scotland is literature. The implementation of the ideal of a national system of education produced the literate public that was needed for that.

We can see the prevalence of the Bible in something such as Burns's "Cottar's Saturday Night". As Murdo Fraser pointed out, there is allusion to the Bible throughout our literature.

James Robertson, in his short story "Bible Talk", comments:

"'In anither thirty year,' Tam said, 'maist folk willna ken the Bible. No like we dae. Naeboddy'll ken the language, the stories, the allusions. I honestly dinna ken hoo they'll mak sense o the warld. Literature, for instance. Hoo can ye read literature if ye dinna get aw thae allusions?'"

The Scottish Government recognises and values the transformative and lasting impact of the Bible in general and the King James version of the Bible in particular. For that reason, we welcome and recognise the work that the Scottish Bible Society and the Bible Society in England and Wales have done to promote the project.

Meeting closed at 17:47.

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