



OFFICIAL REPORT
AITHISG OIFIGEIL

Meeting of the Parliament (Hybrid)

Wednesday 2 June 2021

Session 6



The Scottish Parliament
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

© Parliamentary copyright. Scottish Parliamentary Corporate Body

Information on the Scottish Parliament's copyright policy can be found on the website - www.parliament.scot or by contacting Public Information on 0131 348 5000

Wednesday 2 June 2021

CONTENTS

	Col.
NATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS 2021	1
<i>Statement—[Shirley—Anne Somerville].</i>	
The Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills (Shirley-Anne Somerville)	1
ECONOMIC RECOVERY	14
<i>Motion moved—[Kate Forbes].</i>	
<i>Amendment moved—[Liz Smith].</i>	
<i>Amendment moved—[Daniel Johnson].</i>	
<i>Amendment moved—[Lorna Slater].</i>	
The Cabinet Secretary for Finance and the Economy (Kate Forbes)	14
Liz Smith (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)	20
Daniel Johnson (Edinburgh Southern) (Lab)	24
Lorna Slater (Lothian) (Green)	28
Willie Rennie (North East Fife) (LD)	30
Fergus Ewing (Inverness and Nairn) (SNP)	33
Douglas Lumsden (North East Scotland) (Con)	35
Paul Sweeney (Glasgow) (Lab)	37
Kenneth Gibson (Cunninghame North) (SNP)	40
Jamie Halcro Johnston (Highlands and Islands) (Con)	42
Paul McLennan (East Lothian) (SNP)	45
Pauline McNeill (Glasgow) (Lab)	47
Michelle Thomson (Falkirk East) (SNP)	49
Tess White (North East Scotland) (Con)	51
Jenni Minto (Argyll and Bute) (SNP)	53
Maggie Chapman (North East Scotland) (Green)	56
Colin Smyth (South Scotland) (Lab)	58
Murdo Fraser (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)	61
The Minister for Business, Trade, Tourism and Enterprise (Ivan McKee)	64
BUSINESS MOTION	69
<i>Motion moved—[George Adam]—and agreed to.</i>	
PARLIAMENTARY BUREAU MOTIONS	71
<i>Motions moved—[George Adam].</i>	
The Minister for Parliamentary Business (George Adam)	71
DECISION TIME	73

Scottish Parliament

Wednesday 2 June 2021

[The Convener opened the meeting at 14:00]

National Qualifications 2021

The Presiding Officer (Alison Johnstone):

Good afternoon. I remind members that social distancing measures are in place in the chamber and across the Holyrood campus. Please observe those measures, including when you enter and exit the chamber, and please only use the aisles and walkways to access your seats and when you move around the chamber.

The first item of business is a statement by Shirley-Anne Somerville on national qualifications 2021. The cabinet secretary will take questions at the end of her statement. There should therefore be no interventions or interruptions.

14:00

The Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills (Shirley-Anne Somerville): I welcome this opportunity to provide an update on the awarding of qualifications this year.

It is a privilege, as well as a huge responsibility, to have returned to the portfolio at such a critical time for Scottish education. The exceptional level of collaboration in supporting our learners, particularly during the pandemic, has been striking. I am determined that such constructive engagement be maintained.

Ensuring that our young people are kept safe and are able to achieve fair and credible grades in spite of the most challenging of school years has been, and remains, this Government's absolute priority. I take very seriously the anxiety and concern that some young people, parents and teachers have voiced about the approach that is being taken—an approach that I and key stakeholders across our system firmly believe to be the fairest possible for our young people, in the challenging circumstances that result from the pandemic.

In responding to the concerns that I have heard, my statement will restate key principles about the model, provide detail on the support that is available to learners, set out how this year's appeals process will work to support learners, acknowledge work to safeguard opportunities for this year's learners to progress to further and higher education, and provide an update concerning the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development review of the curriculum.

The disruption that has been generated by the Covid-19 pandemic has caused this year's national 5, higher and advanced higher exams to be cancelled. The national qualifications 2021 group was established in October 2020, with representatives of teachers, learners and parents working alongside local authorities, the Scottish Qualifications Authority and the Government to ensure that the hard work of learners can be fairly acknowledged. The group agreed and co-produced the model for this year, using its members' insight and expertise. Education partners continue to support the approach.

Let me be clear about the assessment process itself. At the heart of the model are teachers' and lecturers' professional judgments, which are based on what learners have demonstrated that they have attained. Those judgments alone, based on learners' work, will this year determine the grades that young people receive. Those grades will be based not on historical data or on use of an algorithm, but on what each individual learner has demonstrated that they know, understand and can do, through the work on which they have been assessed in school or college. That is the key difference this year, compared with what happened last year. My key message to reassure learners is this: your grades will be judged by your teachers, based on your work.

I am enormously grateful for the efforts of our teachers, lecturers and others in schools and colleges who are implementing the model in order to ensure fairness for all learners. To provide evidence of how the model is being implemented locally, Her Majesty's inspectors of education today published a review of local authority quality-assurance processes. The key findings from the review provide independent evidence that the model is working well in practice, with local authority officers, headteachers, teachers and SQA co-ordinators having collaborated to ensure that young people's efforts are appropriately recognised, and with local authorities having supported schools to implement the model to reflect their local contexts while working within a national framework.

Despite the best efforts, a very small number of learners who completed courses have over recent weeks, in particular, experienced significant disruption that has meant that they have been unable to complete their assessments. Contingency arrangements, on which the national qualifications 2021 group is publishing details today, are in place for later certification for that group.

I fully appreciate that there are people who disagree with the model that has been put in place. However, to them I say that teachers, learners, and parents and carers have been

listened to, and that the model is the result of that. Awarding qualifications would always be challenging under the current circumstances, but we believe that the model that we have is the fairest solution in the interests of young people. That is not just my conclusion; it is that of the national qualifications 2021 group, too.

That is not to dismiss in any way the concerns and anxiety that have been expressed by some learners and parents who are experiencing implementation of the model at first hand. As a result, I am announcing today a package of support measures for those learners. Many of the supports are available now, and others will be added in the coming weeks. To date, we have provided more than £400 million in additional funding to local authorities to support schools to cope with and recover from the effects of Covid. That includes more digital devices, additional staffing and wider support.

We have continued to support schools and local authorities to deliver their vital role in supporting children and young people's mental health and wellbeing. However, we recognise that young people might need further support, so a letter will be sent to the home address of every learner who is taking national qualifications, outlining the support that is available and providing links to online resources and helpline numbers.

Learners may well have questions regarding their progression beyond school. For those who will continue within education, the SQA, the Universities and Colleges Admissions Service and college and university advice lines will be there to provide support. Learners who are moving into employment can draw support from Skills Development Scotland's advisers. We are also working with YoungScot, whose people will, as experts in successfully communicating with learners, promote the support that is available, through their social media feeds and website.

Every effort has been made to ensure that the hard work of learners is fairly acknowledged in the first instance, with learners getting the right result first time, but the appeals process is an important final stage in the certification process. The SQA will today publish details of that process. I confirm that the approach will, for the first time, include a direct right of appeal for learners, which I am sure will be welcomed by learners and their representatives.

It is right that in these exceptional times, there is, for those who consider that they have not received the right result, a broad mechanism through which to appeal, and that the mechanism is free at the point of use. To ensure fairness and credibility, the grounds for appeal are disagreement with the centre's quality-assured academic judgment, contested administrative or

procedural error within the SQA or the examining centre, and appeals that are related to the Equality Act 2010, including on assessment arrangements.

Education stakeholders have been clear that demonstrated attainment is a key principle in ensuring the credibility and fairness of qualifications. Appeal decisions will therefore be evidence based and symmetric, which means that grades can move down, move up or stay the same, depending on the review of the evidence.

I recognise that some stakeholders are not supportive of that position and seek an approach in which grades cannot go down. Although I am sympathetic to the position of learners this year, awards must ultimately be based on the actual attainment of pupils. That means that the subject specialist who looks at an appeal must be able to give their true judgment of a pupil's attainment and to move the grade in line with the evidence. In that way, the appeals system will be fair, consistent and credible.

Without symmetry, there would not be a full and fair review of the evidence. That could be perceived as being unfair to other learners and could raise questions about the credibility of this year's qualifications. In adopting a symmetrical approach to appeals, judgments at appeal will be made based only on an individual learners' work, not on an algorithm or the school's past performance. Although formal processing of appeals will not start until learners have received their results on 10 August, learners will be able to indicate their intention to appeal from late June, when provisional results are submitted. Support will be in place for learners over the period.

Our learners also need reassurance that, having received their grades, those who wish to continue their learner journey will be able to do so. We understand that the changes to the SQA process last year and this year might impact on students who are looking to undertake courses in Scotland's colleges and universities in the new academic year. We will, via the Scottish Funding Council, continue to provide additional support to our institutions to ensure that students are able to take up places that they would not have secured without additional places being made available.

In 2020-21, the SFC provided universities with an additional 1,297 places for students who had been impacted by the SQA changes. In 2021-22, we will continue to fund those places while also having made provision for more additional places—currently estimated to be around 2,500—for new students. Colleges have also been supported to deliver additional flexibility within their courses.

The Covid-19 pandemic has presented unprecedented challenges for our education

system. It has sparked debate about the future of assessment and qualifications and about the best way to recognise learners' achievements and equip them with the skills that they require to succeed on whatever path they choose.

Members will be aware that we extended the remit of the OECD's review—to analysis of Scotland's approach to assessment and qualifications and to development of options to enhance our approach. That work is on-going and will be published by the OECD in early autumn. However, I confirm that the OECD will publish its main report on the review of curriculum for excellence before then, on 21 June 2021. I look forward to discussing its findings with Parliament before the summer recess.

I relish the prospect of exploring a wide range of reform opportunities that will further improve Scottish education, but my immediate focus remains on ensuring that we do right by all the learners who are taking national qualifications this year. I reassure Parliament that everything is being done to ensure that the hard work of learners is recognised fairly, at a time that will, naturally, be anxious and stressful for many learners and their families. I ask members to acknowledge the merits of the approach that is being taken and to play their part in reassuring and supporting learners during these challenging times.

The Presiding Officer: The cabinet secretary will now take questions. I will allow around 20 minutes for that, after which we will move to the next item of business.

Oliver Mundell (Dumfriesshire) (Con): I thank the cabinet secretary for advance sight of her statement.

Last year's exam chaos was unacceptable, but the failure to learn lessons is unforgivable. For us to be in a worse position now than at this time last year is a betrayal of our young people. We have seen inconsistent approaches from school to school, never mind local authority to local authority; confusion over what counts as evidence of attainment; and pupils being told that exams were cancelled then facing exams in all but name. However, worst of all, we have had confirmation today that SQA assessment papers are widely available online, on an industrial scale. On what planet is that evidence of a fair or robust system, and how on earth does the cabinet secretary explain the astonishing naivety and incompetence of the SQA?

Shirley-Anne Somerville: As I have said, I appreciate that people will like or dislike parts of my statement on different grounds. However, to say that this has been a failure is unfair not on me or on the Government—I do not expect that that is

Oliver Mundell's problem here—but on the other stakeholders who have worked on the national qualifications 2021 group.

I point out that the Educational Institute of Scotland said recently that the alternative certification model gives individuals

“the best opportunity to demonstrate what they have learned”,

while the general secretary of School Leaders Scotland, Jim Thewliss, noted earlier in May:

“The system that replaced the exams was never going to be perfect but all the way along no one has come up with a better way of doing it than the alternative certification model.”

I appreciate that people might not like the system that is in place but, having looked at the issue very seriously, the national qualifications 2021 group has concluded that this is the best and fairest option for our young people. The Government has not come up with this system, although we have worked very hard on it with stakeholders and others.

I realise that other aspects are causing concern out there, such as the issue of materials being made available online, which has previously been discussed in the chamber. However, I point out that teachers and lecturers have the flexibility to decide how and when to use materials and that there is not just one examination paper. That is very different from what happens in a usual year. The SQA has provided a wealth of materials that teachers can choose to use or not to use. Incidents of materials being shared are, of course, taken seriously, but this is very different from what might happen in a normal year, when, for example, one particular exam question might be taken on board.

Michael Marra (North East Scotland) (Lab): I thank the cabinet secretary for giving us sight of her statement in the past hour.

Just minutes ago, I was contacted by an angry mother, whose story is the latest of very many that I have heard. Her daughter is in the midst of taking 28 exams over 35 days—her friends have even more—and many of those exams have been scheduled for the same day. That situation is typical.

Following last year's SQA scandal, the Government was instructed—in September, nine months ago—that young people must have the opportunity of appeal. On six different occasions, the SQA promised the publication of a robust appeals process but, time and again, it has missed its deadlines to publish the process and give teachers, families and young people the clarity and certainty that they deserve. The publication of the process, which we have not yet seen, is well

over a month late and there are just over 20 days until teachers must submit the grades of their pupils.

Many young people have already completed the assessments, and the statement today confirms that those are high-stake examinations. Exam papers have been shared and exams have been retaken to improve grades and, through all that, teachers are struggling on to do the best for their pupils.

Despite the acute public interest, there is no real process in the cabinet secretary's statement, and I do not see why it has not been provided. However, we agree that the appeals process has to be in the hands of the pupil, because the alternative is schools appealing against their own judgment.

The Presiding Officer: Ask a question, please.

Michael Marra: What support will be put in place to ensure that young people can access their right of appeal? What evidence will be required for a young person to lodge an appeal, given that, for many, the opportunity to collate their own evidence has already passed? Please remember that many of the most disadvantaged pupils are among those who might wish to avail themselves of the process. How will young people know that their assessment process has disadvantaged them, given that the assessment processes are so wildly varied, in a thousand different ways, across hundreds of schools?

Shirley-Anne Somerville: There is variability across hundreds and thousands of schools because, otherwise, we would have central diktat from central Government, and Michael Marra would rightly point out that that is not the way to run an education system. Therefore, we have variability to ensure that schools can best put in place what is right for them and, most particularly, for their pupils. It is very important that schools are supported in that process, to ensure that there are national standards and guidelines.

I spoke about the work that HMIE has done and published today to provide reassurance about the standards and to ensure that there is variability that will support flexibility while remaining within national standards.

I strongly disagree with Michael Marra. Nothing that is coming from the Scottish Government or the SQA requires high-stake examinations. That is not how the system has been designed by the group that has been in charge and responsible for co-producing that work with the Scottish Government. An individual might have more assessments than they would have had set exams, but that is because teachers and schools are breaking exams down into smaller assessments to ensure that pupils are supported during that process.

Michael Marra talks about the support that is available. In my statement, I mentioned the letter that will be going out to learners, which is an integral part of the support that we will offer, but it is only one part of it. I also mentioned the grounds of appeal that will be available and further details on those will come from the SQA today. The evidence for appeals will be that which has already been collected for the exams.

Ross Greer (West Scotland) (Green): I thank the cabinet secretary for advance sight of her statement. The lack of a no-detriment approach to appeals means that young people and their teachers will be taking a perverse gamble this year. Schools will submit the strongest evidence that they have in support of the initial grade. Why would they have stronger evidence that is suitable for an appeal but which they chose not to submit in the first place? It seems that the risk of downgrading is increased by an appeals process that is reliant just as much on demonstrated rather than inferred attainment and based on evidence that is likely to be weaker than that which was originally submitted.

I notice that the cabinet secretary mentioned that the national qualifications group signed off on the certification model. Has the whole national qualifications group signed off and endorsed that appeals process? Will young people be given the same opportunity, which teachers and parents already have, to ask questions directly of the SQA? Why does it appear that exceptional individual circumstances, such as immediate family bereavement due to Covid, will not be considered as grounds for appeal?

Shirley-Anne Somerville: There is a lot to cover in those questions, and I will try and get through as much as I can.

In my statement, I mentioned the symmetrical approach and I believe that that is the fairest way forward. Evidence of learners' attainment will be judged against national standards, which ensures that learners will receive grades as consistently as possible in the circumstances. It is very important that grades are based on demonstrated attainment.

I appreciate that some people are concerned about the risk of downgrading. Downgrading is exceptionally rare. In 2017, eight people from 13,998 appeals were downgraded; in 2018, seven people from 13,063 appeals were downgraded; and, in 2019, one person from 11,138 appeals was downgraded. Even if downgrading is considered—rare though that is—we will ensure that a downgrading decision is further reviewed by the SQA to ensure that it is the right decision for the learner. The issue is taken very seriously, but I assure people that downgrading happens very rarely.

Beatrice Wishart (Shetland Islands) (LD): One constituent told me that the model is the worst one that could ever have been used. It has led to stress, uncertainty and assessment after assessment, with no study leave. Pupils have told me that they have 16 assessments this week. It is a nightmare for teachers, too. Liberal Democrats have called for the reform of the SQA for years. There are no excuses left.

Last week, I asked about fast access to mental health support. The cabinet secretary says that this is a naturally stressful time, but does she accept that the mismanagement of this year's exams has increased stress levels? Will pupils be given extra support to help with extra anxiety?

Shirley-Anne Somerville: I absolutely take on board the response from Beatrice Wishart's constituent. I assure her that those thoughts have also been fed back to me directly from some young people, parents and teachers. However, I also have to take on board the work that has been done by the NQ 2021 group, which remains supportive of the model that has been developed. That includes support from education stakeholders such as the EIS and the Association of Directors of Education in Scotland, which believe that the model is right and is the fairest mechanism that is available.

I appreciate that, in the education portfolio, there is not one ready answer that will be agreeable to all stakeholders, but I assure Beatrice Wishart and others that I have listened very carefully to people who have concerns about the model and to all stakeholders. I still believe, as does the NQ 2021 group, that the model is the fairest option that is available, and that we can reassure young people that they will get grades based on demonstrated attainment in a fair and credible way.

The Presiding Officer: I am keen to take all members who have requested to ask a question, so I would appreciate it if we could have shorter questions and responses.

Clare Adamson (Motherwell and Wishaw) (SNP): I pay tribute to the work of our schools, teachers and pupils at this difficult time. I am concerned about the volume of correspondence in my mailbox, as there are high levels of anxiety among parents and carers about the on-going assessments. How can the Scottish Government ensure equity and quality control across different assessment models?

Shirley-Anne Somerville: I will follow on from what I said to Beatrice Wishart. I am determined to ensure that the system is fair and credible. I believe, as does the NQ 2021 group, that every qualification should be based on demonstrable evidence in order for the system to be fair and credible.

The alternative certification model allows schools and colleges to have wide discretion on the type of assessments that can be undertaken. That ensures that the assessments are fit for purpose for their learners. For example, they can look at the range, timing and duration of the tasks that are available. Given that that system is in place, we can be reassured that there is equity and quality control, because of the national standards that underpin the system, to ensure that young people will get the grades to which they are entitled at the end of the process.

Pam Gosal (West Scotland) (Con): Will the new appeals process give universities and colleges time to prepare for additional students? It is all very well creating additional spaces, as the cabinet secretary referred to in her statement, but that process takes time. I have spoken directly to universities this week, and they have raised concerns about the timeframe for reopening. What reassurances can she provide to universities and colleges across Scotland that the Government will work with them to provide a route map for reopening safely?

Shirley-Anne Somerville: I assure Pam Gosal that we are in close contact with colleges and universities about the process and how it will impact on them. I thank Universities Scotland and the universities for the work that they are doing to reassure potential students about the support that is available as they go through the process.

We are working carefully with the sector to ensure that universities can safely reopen for students and for staff, bearing in mind the public health limitations that we are under. We are determined to work with them to achieve that.

Alasdair Allan (Na h-Eileanan an Iar) (SNP): I think the cabinet secretary for what she said about supporting students' mental health at what she will acknowledge is a difficult time. How will that support be provided? Will mental health support be provided by schools or will the SQA itself take on part of that role?

Shirley-Anne Somerville: That is an important point, which I have looked at carefully. It is important that we support our young people through the process and that they know how to access that support. Much support will come through schools—for example, from the mental health counsellors who are available in secondary schools. The Scottish Government has supported that provision in the past.

We are also working to provide support for staff so that they can support their students. New online learning resources will be published later this month, and we are working with the mental health in schools working group to develop new

resources that will provide support for school staff, parents and learners.

Provision is already in place in schools, and we will also provide new material to support pupils when their provisional grades are announced, at the end of the month.

Martin Whitfield (South Scotland) (Lab): The SQA has now posted the appeals process for 2020-21 on its website. It runs to only two lines and lacks detail about the evidence that children will need. It seems that the process will pit the child against the teacher who carried out the initial assessment, the school and the local authority. Does the cabinet secretary agree with her predecessor, who said on 24 March that the appeals process would satisfy the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, or does she agree with the Scottish Youth Parliament and the Children and Young People's Commissioner Scotland, who has said that the alternative certification model does not comply with children's human rights?

Shirley-Anne Somerville: I believe that the appeals process does comply with the UNCRC, particularly with regard to the direct right of appeal. To try to portray that as pitching pupil against school is exceptionally unfair and shows a lack of understanding of why the best way to provide for the rights of a child—or, in this case, a young person—is by giving them a direct right of appeal.

Pupils should have that direct right of appeal. They will be able to use that right in circumstances that they choose, based on the grounds for appeal set out by the SQA. A pupil's first port of call should be a discussion with their teacher and school about their grades and the reasons behind them, but they should also be supported to take forward an appeal on the grounds that the SQA has determined.

Stuart McMillan (Greenock and Inverclyde) (SNP): The pandemic has shone a spotlight on the fundamental role of exams and on whether the way in which Scotland has certified attainment in the past is right for the future. The Scottish Government has said that it will look at that. Will the cabinet secretary say how that work will be taken forward?

Shirley-Anne Somerville: As I said in my statement, the OECD has undertaken two pieces of work and was asked to expand its work to focus more deeply on the approach to assessment and qualifications in the senior phase of the curriculum. That has been informed not only by what happens here but by international good practice. That will be an integral part of the work that we and others will look at to determine the way forward.

I am sure that we must learn lessons from what has worked well and we must take the opportunity

of a post-Covid world to ensure that our system is fit for purpose now.

Both OECD reports are an important opportunity, which I certainly do not want to lose sight of, to allow reform, if that is what the evidence suggests might be required. There will not be one single solution to this, but I look forward to taking part in the process with members here and with stakeholders to see what that future might look like.

Meghan Gallacher (Central Scotland) (Con): The cabinet secretary has claimed that teachers are able to exercise their professional judgment in producing estimated grades for pupils. That contradicts the SQA website, which states:

"Our key message to learners is that your grades will be judged by your teachers ... based on your assessment evidence".

Who has provided the right advice: the cabinet secretary or the SQA?

Shirley-Anne Somerville: With the best will in the world, I think that we are in danger of splitting hairs and therefore misinterpreting what I am saying and what the SQA is saying. There is professional judgment in the assessment process—that is a central feature of the process. For example, in contrast to an examination diet, where teachers are not able to have professional judgment in place, this year teachers have direct control of the assessment process and the associated outcomes. Of course, as I have mentioned in the past, there are national standards to ensure a fair and consistent application of the process. However, teachers have an important role to play this year that they would not have in a normal year.

Rona Mackay (Strathkelvin and Bearsden) (SNP): Can the cabinet secretary confirm that the SQA is aware that there was criticism of communication to pupils, parents and teachers last year and that decisions taken this year must be communicated with enough time for implementation by schools?

Shirley-Anne Somerville: It is important that the SQA, or any other Government agency, looks at the lessons that it needs to learn around how well we communicate to ensure that we are communicating in the right way to the right people at the right time. That is certainly something that I am determined to do, and I am sure that the SQA is determined to do likewise.

I mentioned the letter that will be going out to all learners, which will be very important. However, other work will also be done with key stakeholders to ensure that they are getting the message about the support that is out there and the work that can be done with pupils, parents and teachers to ensure that they know what is happening, why it is

happening and when it is happening, and that they know about the support that is available during that process.

Claire Baker (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab): Can the cabinet secretary indicate when the appeals process will be completed, given the impact that that will have on applications for further or higher education? Student places are dependent on qualifications, so can pupils be confident that they will get their results in time?

Shirley-Anne Somerville: Absolutely, they can. We will ensure that the results process will be undertaken on a priority basis so that those waiting for a result for a place in, for example, a college or university will be given priority. When people are making an appeal, they will have the opportunity to say that that is, indeed, the case, and the SQA will therefore know the importance of it. Obviously, learners will know their provisional results at the end of June, and conversations can start then with schools about the reasoning behind why the learners have received those grades. As I said, support is available during that process, but the final grades will be received and determined in time, as will the appeals.

Gillian Martin (Aberdeenshire East) (SNP): My question is also about appeals. Pupils and parents will want to know who is in charge of considering the appeals. Can the cabinet secretary confirm that the people undertaking consideration of the appeals are experienced teachers with classroom experience and a clear understanding of the particular environment and circumstances in which the pupils' assessments were done?

Shirley-Anne Somerville: I appreciate that, last year, there was a great deal of concern, understandably, that decisions were taken based on algorithms or past school performance. This year, I can absolutely assure Gillian Martin that those who will be undertaking the appeals process are SQA appointees who are subject-specific teachers who know their subjects, will be able to work through the assessments and, using their professional judgment, will come to a view on the appeals on that basis. I can give the assurance to Gillian Martin and to young people that the appeals will be based on the understanding and professional judgment of teachers.

The Presiding Officer: That concludes the ministerial statement. I will allow a moment for members to move. I ask that they take care to observe the social distancing measures that are in place in the chamber and across the campus, including when entering and exiting the chamber.

Economic Recovery

The Presiding Officer (Alison Johnstone): The next item of business is a debate on motion S6M-00165, in the name of Kate Forbes, on economic recovery.

14:35

The Cabinet Secretary for Finance and the Economy (Kate Forbes): It is impossible to overstate the devastating impact that the past 14 months have had on every aspect of our lives—the pandemic has shaken our society and economy to their core. Although our collective efforts, in tandem with the success of the vaccination programme, have been instrumental in suppressing the virus, our fight to overcome it continues. I emphasise that it has been “our fight”—that is, a shared fight. The pandemic has affected everybody.

Today, in my first speech as the Cabinet Secretary for Finance and the Economy, I want to thank businesses and workers for their sacrifices. Their livelihoods have been on the line for more than a year. The essential restrictions have saved lives, but not without cost. The Government owes a great debt of gratitude to everybody who has put the needs of the country ahead of their own financial or business interests, and I thank them for that.

I also want to pay tribute to Fiona Hyslop and Fergus Ewing, both of whom worked night and day to represent the interests of Scottish workers and businesses. Over the past year, I watched them up close as they met Scottish businesses on an almost hourly basis, listening to and acting on their worries and fears. I put on record my recognition of and thanks for their work.

Willie Rennie (North East Fife) (LD): What can the finance secretary say to my constituents involved in the tourism and golf sectors who are dependent on international visitors from countries such as China and America? The businesses in those sectors might be allowed to reopen under the current restrictions, but the fact is that those visitors are not coming. Will those businesses continue to get support until international travel is encouraged once again?

Kate Forbes: As Willie Rennie might expect, I will come on to business support, and I will go into a bit of detail then. However, he is right in saying that those businesses that depend more on international travel will be impacted for longer. There is a point to be made about the kind of businesses that we continue to support. However, as the person who has to find the budget for that, I note that there has been no further consequential

support for businesses. Those are the challenges that we have to weigh up.

Scotland's economic performance quantifies the sacrifices of the nation's businesses and workers. Although the Scottish economy grew by 2.1 per cent in March 2021, it remains 5.4 per cent below the level that it was at in February 2020. In addition, although the latest output figures indicate that we are taking tentative steps towards recovery, some sectors have clearly been hit harder than others—Willie Rennie mentioned some of them—and businesses continue to face considerable challenges as we emerge from lockdown. For example, the output from our accommodation and food sector remains 70 per cent below its pre-pandemic level. However, there are glimmers of hope, with the latest survey data showing that around 74 per cent of businesses in the accommodation and food sector were trading in mid-May, which is up from around 34 per cent at the end of April.

With Scotland's unemployment rate at 4.3 per cent and the United Kingdom's at 4.8 per cent, it is clear that our labour market continues to depend in part on the furlough scheme, which was still supporting 325,000 Scottish jobs in March.

In recent weeks, much has been said about economic recovery, but the challenge is stark. I want to clearly outline our vision for Scotland's economy and the steps that we are taking.

Before I do so, I want to speak to the many businesses that are still focused on survival. It is crucial to get businesses open safely and back to full profitability, and work is on-going to look at how we move to more normality later in the summer or earlier in the autumn. Supporting businesses has been and will continue to be a focus for the Government. Businesses in Scotland have directly benefited from £3.6 billion of support, which is more than a third of total Covid-19 funding.

Pauline McNeill (Glasgow) (Lab): The cabinet secretary is aware of the concerns of the taxi trade. Representatives of the trade have spoken highly of a meeting that they had with her the other day, in which they felt that she acknowledged their concerns. However, will the cabinet secretary clarify what financial support will be available? There is some confusion about that.

Kate Forbes: I thank Pauline McNeill for that question, which is a perfect cue for what I am about to say.

On support for business, we are also the only country in the United Kingdom to provide 100 per cent non-domestic rates relief for all retail, leisure, aviation and hospitality premises all year, thereby reducing businesses' cost base so that they can invest in restarting.

We will continue to listen to businesses to understand their challenges and how best to support them. That is why we have allocated up to an additional £40 million for the culture sector, including £25 million for a further round of funding for businesses that previously received support from the performing arts venues relief fund—

Liz Smith (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con): Will the cabinet secretary give way?

Kate Forbes: I would like to make a bit of progress on the substance, and then I will happily bring in the member.

I was talking about the performing arts venues relief fund and the culture organisations and venues recovery fund for businesses that were eligible but did not receive funding originally. Those funds are being administered by Creative Scotland and will be launched soon.

We have also allocated up to £62 million for taxi drivers and operators, bringing the total support for the taxi sector during the pandemic to more than £90 million. All drivers who previously received a £1,500 grant under the taxi and private hire driver support fund will receive a second payment this month. Taxi operators will then be contacted by their local authorities and will receive tiered grants, which will take their total support up to £10,000. Following discussions with sector representatives, a small number of the very largest operators will now be paid up to £15,000. We will work with the sector to explore the potential for additional support for booking offices, which are an important part of the sector.

Later today, we will publish details of up to £12 million of support that will be provided to businesses in the local authority areas that will not move from level 2, as the First Minister announced yesterday. In short, businesses that were expecting to open or to see reduced restrictions as a result of moving to level 1 but which will now remain at level 2 will receive weekly support similar to that under the strategic framework business fund. There will also be additional discretionary funding.

Liz Smith might want to come in now.

Liz Smith: I am extremely grateful to the cabinet secretary for giving way, and I warmly congratulate her on her expanded role and portfolio.

Only four fifths of the money in the strategic framework business fund was actually allocated. Businesses had concerns that they were not able to access some of the money that was there. I invite the cabinet secretary to comment on that.

Kate Forbes: The vast majority of the £3.6 billion was paid out directly to businesses. There was also discretionary funding, which might be

what the member is alluding to. That had very few strings attached and was for local authorities to distribute to businesses that we had categorised as falling through the cracks—I think that all members in the chamber agreed on that. Some local authorities have paid out all of that funding, which is why we are supplementing the discretionary fund, as I have announced today. Other local authorities are still sitting on unspent money. I encourage them to use that funding for businesses that need support. I think that that might have been what the member was alluding to.

I realise that my time is running away from me, Presiding Officer.

I very much hope that, as the First Minister said yesterday, one day soon, all the restrictions will be a thing of the past. With such freedom comes the opportunity to restore and rebuild our economy. Our mission as a Government is to create the best conditions for entrepreneurs to seize the opportunities to produce, invent and scale up, and in so doing create secure and satisfying jobs that pay a fair wage. That is the foundation stone of our society, and getting that right will combat poverty, lead to better health and social outcomes, and generate the public revenue to invest in the best public services.

Therefore, what kind of economy we rebuild matters. Putting wellbeing at its heart is not just morally the right thing to do; it will unlock creativity and confidence, which in turn will help our businesses to innovate and grow, making them more globally competitive. *[Interruption.]* I would love to take an intervention, but I think that I am quite short on time, and I would like to get through the substance of my speech.

To achieve our aim, we need to have a resilient, innovative and growing business base. That is why the Government is absolutely committed to being pro-prosperity, pro-growth and pro-business, and a true champion for our job creators. To that end, in the first six months of the parliamentary session we will deliver a new 10-year national strategy for economic transformation that will set out the steps to create the best conditions for entrepreneurship to flourish.

We recognise the crucial role that industry leaders, businesses, trade unions, economists and other stakeholders will play in shaping and guiding that strategy. So, as we set out in our 100 days plan, we will establish a new council for economic transformation to draw on their experience and expertise. We will go further; pioneers and entrepreneurs will be the bedrock of that transformation. We will deliver a national challenge competition that will provide funding of up to £50 million to the project or projects that have the greatest potential to transform Scotland.

The topic of harnessing all our collective talents and strengths brings me to perhaps the most important part of my speech. To anybody who wants to play their part in rebuilding our country, I issue an open invitation to join us in leading that economic recovery. Our vision is nothing short of one of economic transformation, and that must be a national endeavour. Wherever someone works, and in whatever capacity, if they think that they can serve our country as we face the prospect of rebuilding, this is their personal invitation. Our strength is in our united vision to work together—across party lines, sectors and regions—to rebuild. We must unashamedly use the experience, expertise and ingenuity of Government, businesses, trade unions and workforces to deliver greater, greener and fairer prosperity.

I welcome the new Opposition spokespeople to their roles. Rightly, there will be the opportunity for scrutiny; I expect and welcome that. However, I also hope that there will be the opportunity for constructive sharing of suggestions and ideas. This is therefore an official invitation to the entrepreneurs and the thinkers, the job creators and the hard workers: we need you; work with us to make Scotland thrive.

I turn to some of the specific actions that we will take in order to deliver our vision. We know that the transition to net zero is one of Scotland's greatest economic opportunities. Pursuing a green recovery will accelerate that transition, to make sure that we are investing in a sustainable future.

The 26th United Nations climate change conference of the parties—COP26—which is to be hosted in Glasgow in November, is a once-in-a-generation opportunity to put the transition to net zero at the heart of all that we do. It is essential that the transition is just, which means that, as we reduce our emissions and respond to a changing climate, the journey is fair and creates better opportunities for everybody, regardless of where they live, what they do, and who they are.

In sectors such as oil and gas, we will work with businesses to ensure that they and their employees are part of that transition.

Liam Kerr (North East Scotland) (Con): On that point—

Kate Forbes: I do not know how much time I have left.

The Presiding Officer: You have a little time in hand, cabinet secretary.

Kate Forbes: Okay.

Liam Kerr: I am grateful to the cabinet secretary for giving way. How many of the 100,000 jobs that are supported by the oil and gas industry does she think it acceptable to put at risk in order to strike a deal with the Scottish Green Party?

Kate Forbes: It is not acceptable to put any jobs at risk, and I say absolutely unashamedly that our approach to the just transition is not just to save the jobs that we have—as important as that is—but to create the jobs of the future, so that Scotland leads the way when it comes to pioneering new solutions to the challenges that we face.

Helping Scottish businesses to develop new products and services is key to capturing the economic value from our low-carbon investments. After being pioneered in Scotland, those products and services can be exported to the rest of the world. Supporting the internationalisation of our business base is one of the most effective tools that we have.

We know that, to achieve a successful recovery, we must ensure that no one is left behind. That is why we are focusing heavily on employability and skills, thereby ensuring that our workforce is trained and ready to take on the jobs of the future. This year, we will invest more than £1 billion in driving forward our national mission for jobs, and will equip our workforce with the future skills that it needs by providing an additional £500 million over this parliamentary session to support new jobs and reskill people.

Although no one has been left untouched by the pandemic, there is no doubt that younger people have already paid a heavy price. We cannot and will not allow that to affect their life chances, which is why we have been working with employers and young people to deliver the young persons guarantee.

However, getting people into work and retaining jobs are not enough. The guiding principles of fair work are central to that economic recovery and they must be a hallmark of our wellbeing economy. To make that a reality, we will work with employers to ensure that people who are already facing barriers to the labour market—including disabled people, minority ethnic people and women—are supported to contribute to our recovery. The £20 million rural entrepreneur fund, which will be key, will help to reposition the rural economy and place it at the forefront of Scotland's green recovery.

As well as investing in businesses to enable them to thrive, investing in improving the communities in which we all live will pay dividends. We will continue to work with our tourism sector, which provides significant numbers of jobs and economic benefit for the whole country. The recovery work is being guided by the national tourism strategy, with the aim of getting the sector back on track to being a 21st century leader in sustainable tourism.

Digital technology also needs to be at the forefront of growth. I have committed to reopening the digital boost fund, backed by £25 million, to provide technology support and training for small and medium-sized businesses in the first 100 days of this Government.

The actions that we take today will shape our economic recovery for the next decade and beyond. These are challenging times, but with the challenges come opportunities to reshape our economy and make it more resilient, sustainable and prosperous. It is undoubtedly a challenge, but I want to work in partnership with anybody who shares our vision to see Scotland flourish.

I move,

That the Parliament recognises the significant and ongoing impact of COVID-19 restrictions on the Scottish economy; acknowledges the economic and financial hardship faced by businesses, communities and individuals due to efforts to suppress the virus; agrees on the urgent need to create the conditions for a sustainable economic recovery that delivers fairer and greater prosperity in Scotland across all regions and sectors; recognises that a thriving economy, with secure and meaningful employment opportunities, has an impact on long-term health and social outcomes; agrees that economic recovery must be a national endeavour supported by the collective action of public, private and third sectors, and calls for cross-party collaboration to achieve this.

14:51

Liz Smith (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con): It takes only a cursory glance at the key economic statistics that were released in Scotland last week to recognise the extent of the challenge that the cabinet secretary has just outlined. Although there have, as she indicated, been some limited signs of growth, the Scottish Fiscal Commission is still telling us that it will be 2024 before the economy recovers to its pre-pandemic levels. That has huge implications for people's jobs and their real disposable incomes.

In her last budget speech before the Scottish election, Kate Forbes said that the key guiding principles behind economic policy must be "certainty and stability", that businesses and communities deserve nothing less and that we should always have people's jobs at the forefront of our minds because employment is a critical component of that economic recovery. We agree entirely with the point about certainty and stability, even if we have fundamental differences of opinion about the details of some aspects of economic policy, particularly on tax and enterprise.

The budget that Kate Forbes delivered followed the biggest dividend for the Scottish Government since devolution, with revenue returns up 11 per cent on the previous budget. However, that does not hide the fact that many businesses are still seriously struggling and are in desperate need of

support, including many in the small business sector, which is rightly seen as the backbone of so many of our communities. Scotland needs those businesses to survive, which is why it is imperative that the Scottish Government act immediately to remove any delays. I do not think that it is helpful to have a debate about whose fault the delays are; they must be removed so that people can access the money that they need.

The statistics that the Scottish Government published just three weeks ago regarding the strategic framework business fund clearly show that £80 million of support was unspent by the time the fund closed on 22 March. As Pauline McNeill has said, the statistics also show that there was confusion about who was entitled to specific payments. Promises were made to the business community, but the Scottish Government did not deliver.

At First Minister's question time last week, Douglas Ross demanded that the Scottish Government respond immediately to the concerns of business groups across Scotland that have become increasingly anxious about its approach to the business sector. I heard the cabinet secretary say this morning, as I have heard her say several times, that there are lots of plans to be developed in the first 100 days. I accept that, but I think that there is far more than just the first 100 days that matters. The business community wants much longer-term economic policy commitments and it is, quite rightly, pointing to the need for a much more coherent strategy.

There is a lesson to be learned from the Higgins report, which political parties in the Parliament signed up to. The principles in it are about new incentives, not disincentives, when it comes to Scotland's future investment and economic growth. The report also made it clear that the right balance needs to be struck between increased autonomy for Parliament and shared responsibilities for good governance.

Of course, good governance is dependent on transparency and accountability. As I said last week after the First Minister's statement, there are important lessons to be learned from the Auditor General about what happens when transparency and accountability are lacking. In his recent report, the Auditor General was critical of the fact that the Scottish Government had not provided the necessary level of clarity when it came to establishing whether the taxpayer is getting good value for money. That lack makes it much more difficult for Parliament to effectively scrutinise Scottish Government policy. The shambles that we saw with Prestwick airport, Burntisland Fabrications and the ferries, to name just three examples, should not have happened. Indeed, it

would not have happened if there had been better transparency and accountability.

Why does that matter? It matters not just because £130 million of taxpayers' money has been written off, but because it is an issue of the essential trust between Government and the public, and between Government and business. Members who were present in the previous session of Parliament know that witnesses who gave statements to our committees—in particular, the Public Audit and Post-legislative Scrutiny Committee—highlighted just how important it is to have really good working relationships not just across Scottish Government departments, but between Westminster and Holyrood. A holistic approach is very welcome; I will come in a minute to the invitation that the cabinet secretary has extended to the political parties.

When it comes to things such as the Scottish Government working with the UK Government on business capitalisation and forbearance, we are very interested to know what the Scottish Government will do to ensure that businesses can work with it.

Kate Forbes: A point that businesses often make to me, which I understand has been made today, is about the need for further support. One of the challenges that we face with our consequential funding this year is that the guarantee that was in place last year has been removed: as well as being increased, funding can be clawed back, as has already happened in the education portfolio. Will the Tories join me in calling for that guarantee, which was very helpful last year, to be reinstated this year?

Liz Smith: The Tories will call for anything where there is good co-operation between the Holyrood and Westminster Governments. That is absolutely critical and I hope that it has been mentioned by the advisers to the Scottish Government, one of whom is Chris Stark, who is an adviser on climate change. We need to be really clear about the shared endeavours that we must have if there is to be economic recovery and a green agenda.

On taking up the cabinet secretary's offer of co-operation across the parties, what do we want from the Scottish National Party? First and foremost, we want to see an enterprise bill that would, in order to deliver and create the right jobs across Scotland, establish lasting partnerships between the Governments, local authorities, education providers, skills providers and businesses, whose work on the ground will be crucial to the economic recovery, as the cabinet secretary hinted in her speech.

We also want hastened progress on a circular economy bill, which the SNP had to postpone last

year and is seen by so many stakeholders as being absolutely crucial to the green recovery. We want investment-led infrastructure projects that can combine green objectives with jobs, and we want digital enterprise, effective full-fibre broadband and diverse skills, which we would seek to support with the retrain to rebuild accounts. We want rates relief for businesses and maintenance of the poundage rates until the 2023 revaluation, a more tapered scheme for the small business bonus and no new Covid business regulations before 2023, in order to allow businesses to get back on their feet as quickly as possible.

I return to Kate Forbes's comments about certainty and stability. She is absolutely right about those two fundamental principles, which are exactly what business wants. I am sure that the business dialogues that she has undertaken have been telling her exactly that.

In that context, I ask her to consider the following. First, what certainty and stability can there possibly be in the prospect of yet another referendum on Scottish independence, when we know that basic questions about currency, economic borders and the size of the fiscal black hole have not been answered?

Those questions are fundamental to businesses as they plan ahead, but all they get is the constant constitutional rumbling and uncertainty that dominates what the SNP says. Ministers say, "If only we had all the powers we need." Actually, we now have many more powers, and businesses want us to use them wisely and with full transparency and accountability, just as the Auditor General has demanded.

We get constant jibes from the SNP that the better together parties are an unholy coalition that is frustrating Parliament. However, we now have a new variety of better together—namely, the unholy coalition of the SNP and the Greens. Forgive our cynicism, but that coalition is much more to do with the drive for independence than it is to do with economic growth.

The coalition with the Greens could be a looming disaster for the Scottish economy, because the Scottish Green Party's plans for a universal basic income, as set out in its manifesto, could cost the Scottish economy £58 billion in one year alone and would raise taxes for all Scots. We know from a Scottish Government freedom of information response that the highest payment level of UBI would lead to each tax band having to increase by 39p to 49p in the pound.

We also know that the Scottish Green Party's plans for a wealth tax have been described by the Institute of Directors as a blunt instrument that would end up stymieing entrepreneurialism, and

we know that the Greens want to completely kill off the oil and gas sector, about which my colleague Liam Kerr asked a question. That would put at risk more than 100,000 jobs in a sector that is worth £11.6 billion to the Scottish economy. *[Interruption.]* I will not give way, because I am in my final minute.

During the election campaign, Patrick Harvie said that ending oil and gas production within a decade would be the price of the coalition deal with the SNP. However, there is little detail when it comes to outlining the collective effect and the effective cost of that policy commitment in respect of people's jobs and Scotland's economic welfare.

Our amendment is absolutely clear about the need to protect people's jobs in the sector, especially in the north-east, and about working as partners within the £16 billion North Sea transition deal. The SNP-Green amendment is, of course, really all about independence. We know that that means lack of clarity and stability for Scottish businesses. That is why we will speak up on behalf of businesses in Scotland.

I move amendment S6M-00165.4, to leave out from "and calls for" to end and insert:

"; recognises the importance of Scotland's energy sector, including the oil and gas industries to the Scottish economy and the over 100,000 jobs that it supports; calls for the Scottish Government to be a partner in the £16 billion North Sea Transition Deal, and further calls for all of Scotland's parties and both the Scottish and UK governments to work together to make rebuilding the Scottish economy the number one priority in the immediate aftermath of the COVID-19 health pandemic."

15:02

Daniel Johnson (Edinburgh Southern) (Lab):

I welcome the cabinet secretary to her expanded role and Liz Smith to her new role, and I look forward to our constructive engagement across the chamber.

Let me begin that engagement with a set of questions. What do we mean by "recovery"? What interventions are required by that recovery? How will we know when that recovery has been achieved? How much will it cost? Indeed, what will it cost if we fail to achieve that recovery? Those are the relevant questions for the debate, and our relentless focus must be on them throughout this parliamentary session.

That is because it is becoming abundantly clear that the health crisis is precipitating an economic crisis. The number of Scots out of work has quadrupled, and the number seeking relief from council tax has doubled. In the depths of lockdown, the economy shrank by a quarter. Despite the relaxation of restrictions in recent months, it is predicted that our economy's output will recover to only two thirds of its pre-pandemic

output. Gross domestic product is just a number, but economic consequences are counted in jobs, felt by families that struggle to pay their bills and seen in “To let” boards up and down our high streets. The lives and early careers of a generation of young people are set to be defined by the economic fallout of Covid-19.

We cannot allow our recovery to be narrowly defined in terms of infection rates, numbers in hospital and mortality rates. It is clear that those are the most serious measures of the pandemic, but the shock waves of Covid-19 are far wider, and they are social and economic. Recovering the lost jobs and businesses in high streets, offices and factories will not be quick or easy, and it will be measured not in days or weeks but in years.

That is why the debate is important and why we must work together to use the Parliament’s powers to support our economy, stimulate job creation and ensure investment. Our fastest route to recovery will be through the co-ordinated actions of all our Governments.

Furlough has, without doubt, saved the economy from catastrophe. Economic recovery will require similar bold action from every tier of government but, if we are to meet the challenge of economic recovery, we must learn the lessons of the interventions that have been made to date.

There is no doubt that the Scottish Government has committed considerable resource and attention to supporting the economy through the pandemic. Without those actions, the situation in front of us would be far bleaker. However, the Government cannot claim that it has got everything right. We have already heard that, financially and practically, mistakes have been made. In the last financial year, the money available to the Scottish Government swelled by £10 billion. A broad range of funds and interventions were brought forward, but the reality for many businesses is that it has been difficult to access those funds. Some 21,000 applications to the strategic business fund were rejected and, as was mentioned, almost one fifth of what was available in that fund was unspent when it closed towards the end of March. All MSPs will have had casework from frustrated businesses and charities that were rejected multiple times for multiple funds. The response from ministers in this place has been to point to the discretionary fund but, invariably, those businesses were rejected from that, too.

The pace of the Scottish Government’s response has also been a source of frustration to many. Barnett consequentials have been slow to be passed on to areas of need, whether through local authorities, third sector organisations or businesses.

Has the process of passing on Barnett consequentials been sufficiently transparent? I would reinforce that point, too, on top of the points about transparency that were made by Liz Smith. Without budget revision, we have to take the Government’s word that it is allocating and spending money generated by UK Covid initiatives—

Kate Forbes: Will the member give way?

Daniel Johnson: In a moment. These observations are not made with a sense of rancour but more in hope of candour from the Government. We must ensure that support is more straightforward to access and that funds are not being underspent, and we must have robust accountability for how and when consequentials are passed on. I am sure that, as a former accountant, the finance secretary would agree with me that transparent and robust measures, and robust outcomes, are essential. I am happy to take her intervention on that point.

Kate Forbes: On that very point, in fact, both Daniel Johnson and Liz Smith have quoted figures and then criticised a lack of transparency. The very fact that they are able to quote those figures demonstrates how important it has been for us to be transparent by publishing those figures, in the hope that they will be interpreted accurately and that it will be recognised that a third of overall Covid funding has gone directly to business. The amount is huge, it is substantial and it is comparative with the amount that has been spent on the health service.

Daniel Johnson: I welcome that intervention. I look forward to meeting the cabinet secretary to discuss how that transparency can be improved, because there certainly are criticisms from the Auditor General. Indeed, I am aware of that from my initial discussions with the Scottish Parliament information centre about the lack of transparency regarding how Barnett consequentials have been passed down.

We must be clear and honest about the situation that is faced by employers across the private, public and third sectors. Intervention through lockdown may have solved immediate cash-flow issues, but many employers across all sectors have been incurring costs, in terms of deferred rent, leased equipment and insurance policies, which have all loaded debt on to balance sheets across the economy.

The recovery will be difficult and costly for many to navigate. The Government has to prioritise assisting employers as they build back, and it must provide stimulus to get the economy moving again. That is why Scottish Labour has proposed repurposing Scottish Enterprise as a business recovery agency that ensures focus on those

efforts. It is why we have advocated stimulus measures, such as a high street voucher, to kick-start the economy. We have argued that the Scottish National Investment Bank's objectives should be refocused and amended to ensure that it delivers what is needed as we seek to build back our shattered economy. Those are the types of actions that the Scottish Government must take. If and when it does, we stand ready to work with and support it.

As we consider economic recovery, perhaps it is most important to consider where we are starting from. Let us not kid ourselves that things were great before the pandemic. Our economy was simply not working for too many Scots. Poverty and inequality have blighted our economy for far too long. We have had far too little investment, and our productivity growth has been stagnant. After 14 years of an SNP Administration, on each of these measures we lag behind the other countries of the United Kingdom. We have the lowest domestic product growth and the highest number of people who are unemployed and claiming benefits of all the devolved nations.

We need bold action to achieve economic recovery, but we cannot go back to the way things were. As we rebuild and recover, we must renew and improve our economy, so that it works for all. Above all, we must strive to eliminate inequality; to provide high-wage, high-productivity jobs; to create investment and prosperity; and to ensure that they are retained here in Scotland. We need a co-operative economy, where everyone has a stake. Those are measurable things, and we must set clear targets and report against them. We call on the Scottish Government to do just that. That is what is contained in the Labour amendment today, and I am pleased to move it.

In closing, I will make one final observation. During the past week and this, we have heard a number of new members making their first contributions, and it makes me reflect on my first speech in the chamber five years ago. Back then, David Cameron was in number 10 as Prime Minister, not as a lobbyist. Obama was still President of the US and Trump was just an aspiring reality television star. So much seems to have changed.

When I made that speech, politics was dominated not by constitutional issues but by economic issues such as recovery from the crash, austerity, the rise of automation, equality in the workplace and productivity stagnation. Things happened, and we got stuck after a certain vote. Those issues did not go away, so what actions did this place take? Over the coming five years, we cannot afford to lose focus again. Economic recovery will not be quick, easy or cheap. Let us

all commit to focusing on that economic recovery that our country needs.

I move amendment S6M-00165.2, to leave out from "recognises that a thriving economy" to end and insert:

"urges the Scottish Government to review and learn lessons from its economic response to the pandemic to date, which has seen delayed allocation of Barnett consequential and underspend in key business support funds; emphasises the need for ongoing support and the requirement for a further stimulus, in particular to the hospitality, tourism and retail sectors, in order to restart the economy; recognises the impact that a thriving economy has on wider health and social outcomes; considers that long-term economic recovery must be measured in jobs, wage growth, reduced income inequality, investment and productivity; acknowledges that, prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, efforts by the Scottish Government had failed to address low productivity and stagnant growth in wages and jobs in comparison to other areas of the UK, and affirms that recovery must address and tackle these broad measures and that the recovery effort will likely last the duration of the current parliamentary session and require the constant focus of the Scottish Government, working with trade unions and organisations in the public, private and third sectors."

15:11

Lorna Slater (Lothian) (Green): We are living in unprecedented times with a global pandemic that has the potential to cause a global recession, while the biosphere of earth continues to break down and its ability to support life decreases every year. Even before the pandemic hit, the mismanagement of the UK economy had led to exponential growth in the use of food banks. We saw the same exponential growth in the wealth of the already rich. The rich were getting richer ever faster as the poor got poorer. Then the pandemic hit an NHS and population that had no reserves and no extra capacity, and it has devastated us.

As far back as 2016, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development was calling for countries to ease up on austerity and invest, but the UK did not listen. Well, now it is time—and past time—to listen.

I support the motion's recognition of the hardships that have been faced and its calls for a sustainable recovery, secure jobs and long-term thinking that will lead to a thriving economy.

Liam Kerr: Will the member give way?

Lorna Slater: It is my second speech in the chamber and I would like to finish, thank you.

Recovery means building a new economy that puts the wellbeing of people at its heart and does not threaten our very existence. It is possible to build such an economy and, actually, it is relatively straightforward.

There has been a myth around for some time now that public investment drives out private investment. In my experience of more than 20 years in engineering, manufacturing and industry, I can tell members that the opposite is true. A lack of Government investment makes companies nervous about investing. We can see that in the UK economy's failure to recover from the 2008 crash under austerity policies as quickly as countries that invested more significantly did.

We now have a window of opportunity to build new industries, and to plan and create a new economy to ensure that the jobs are there when we need them to be. Pretending that we can keep extracting oil and gas from the North Sea indefinitely is climate change denial as well as denial of economic reality.

Liam Kerr: Will the member take an intervention on that point?

Lorna Slater: Go on.

Liam Kerr: Does the member still want to shut down the oil and gas sector within the next two to five years, as she stated last year?

Lorna Slater: I will answer that question in my speech.

In 2019, the European Commission reported that the UK led the European Union in giving subsidies to fossil fuel companies. Oil companies have known about climate change since 1977 and, despite that, they have lobbied relentlessly for subsidies and handouts while routinely paying their executives salaries of £10 million to £20 million a year. The UK Government's North Sea transition deal will see billions more being handed over to those companies to support the development of technologies that they hope will allow them to continue to dig up and burn fossil fuels and to dodge their responsibilities and any serious commitments to reducing emissions.

That is not a transition; it is more good money going after bad, which is why we will not support Liz Smith's amendment today. Let us not give oil and gas companies more public money to do what they should have been doing decades ago. The corporations are not the victims here. Let us see that their workers and the communities who depend on them do not become victims either. If we can all agree that investment, secure jobs and new industries are needed, then what each of us brings to the table is our model for exactly what we should be investing in and what kind of economy and future that investment will create.

People do not exist to serve the economy; people are the economy. It should serve people to their benefit. We need to rethink how we think about the economy. The economy is not an abstract thing; it is a real thing. It is not in conflict

with our safety or this living world; the economy is how we meet our needs on the planet that we have. The economy is about how we provide for each other.

My amendment to the motion sets out the basis that I would like to see for our recovery from the pandemic and the new economy that we need to build. What does a new economy look like? It looks like tens of thousands of new jobs in renewable energy and more than 75,000 new jobs upgrading homes and building zero carbon homes. It looks like more than 16,000 new jobs upgrading Scotland's railways to deliver affordable, reliable services more like those that our European neighbours enjoy and reliable, affordable bus services everywhere. It looks like liveable city and town centres not given over to cars but safe for kids to play in and people to cycle, wheel and walk in, which encourage people to linger and enjoy and to spend money at local businesses. It looks like thousands of new jobs in sustainable agriculture, forestry and tourism.

All those things are three-way wins: they improve the lives of the people of Scotland, they create tens of thousands of jobs and they reduce our emissions. This is how we lay the groundwork for a just transition to a net zero carbon economy: using proven technology that already exists, prioritising people's wellbeing and properly investing to develop the potential of Scotland's resources and people. I urge members to support the creation of those new jobs and the building of a long-term, thriving net zero economy by supporting my amendment.

I move amendment S6M-00165, to insert after "social outcomes;"

"believes that Scotland's economic recovery must lay the groundwork for a just transition to a net-zero economy; understands the significant opportunities for creating jobs in green sectors such as renewable energy, public transport, energy efficiency and the natural environment; recognises the need for a major increase in public investment in Scotland and across the UK in these sectors to secure a green economic recovery;"

15:17

Willie Rennie (North East Fife) (LD): I congratulate Lorna Slater on her passionate speech, and I welcome the other party spokespeople to their positions. I also congratulate the cabinet secretary on her enhanced role. It is worth mentioning Fiona Hyslop and Fergus Ewing, too, and the contributions that they made. I enjoyed working with them. We did not always agree, but I appreciated their openness, participation and willingness to listen when I raised concerns with them.

Deputy Presiding Officer, you know that I like a good photo opportunity. We also know that the

Government likes a good photo opportunity. The difference is that mine cost a few pounds, whereas the Government's cost millions and that is a cost to the taxpayer. If we look at a company such as BiFab, that photo opportunity cost £38 million for 1,500 jobs, and what has happened to BiFab? It has collapsed and we have lost that money. We do not know how much of it we will get back, and those jobs have disappeared. There is also the Lochaber aluminium smelter, where there has been £575 million of financial backing on the promise of 2,000 extra jobs, none of which have appeared.

The cabinet secretary made no mention of those two issues in her opening remarks, which was disappointing because they are major and important issues as part of our economic and industrial strategy. I have been asking parliamentary questions about that, some of which Ivan McKee answered today. The 2,000 jobs that were initially promised from the GFG Alliance tie-up have now been reduced to 70 jobs.

Kate Forbes: I should make it clear that I am recused in relation to those issues, because of the ministerial and constituency conflict. However, does the member not recognise that Fergus Ewing's intervention saved countless jobs that were on the line five years ago?

Willie Rennie: That is typical of this Government. At the time, they blow it up and say, "We've saved 1,500 jobs at BiFab and we will create an additional 2,000 jobs at Lochaber," but what happens is quite the opposite: the money is lost, the jobs do not return, the workers are let down and the Government's reputation is tarnished. *[Interruption.]* I cannot take another intervention just now; I have just taken one.

We have been here before with the Ferguson Marine shipyard. The ferries are still not ready, at twice the cost. In recent weeks, we have heard about the disaster to do with ferries to the islands: people and communities in the islands have been let down because of the Government's failure to deliver on its industrial strategy. Prestwick is another example, and then there was Sinofortune and the £10 billion deal five years ago that turned out to be nothing, with the company ending up owning just a pub in Oxford.

This Government's reputation on industrial strategy and relations is in tatters. The Government needs to change. It still believes that jobs will come to Lochaber, despite the fact that GFG Alliance is trying to sell its plants in the West Midlands, Teesside, Essex, Rotherham, Scunthorpe and Wales. All those companies are being sold off, yet the Government still tries to convince us that the jobs are coming.

The Government's strategy needs a major reworking and rebranding. We need a proper industrial strategy, not more talking shops such as were announced today. *[Interruption.]* I will not take an intervention just now.

We need proper co-operation with the UK Government. The Scottish Government should stop treating the UK Government as the enemy and start treating it as an ally; then it might get the co-operation and change that is needed if we are to deliver a strategy for creating jobs in this country.

The Minister for Business, Trade, Tourism and Enterprise (Ivan McKee): I do not understand what the member is saying. Is he saying that we should not intervene at all? He criticises us for intervening and says that we should not do so.

I could give the member a whole list of situations in which the UK Government has refused to co-operate with us, whether we are talking about the shared prosperity fund, the levelling up fund or green ports—there has been situation after situation. The issue to do with co-operation does not lie with us; it lies with the UK Government.

Willie Rennie: That is exactly what is wrong with this Government: it is always ready to blame another Government and it never accepts responsibility for its actions. That is why it is becoming a blowhard Government. It is more interested in making overblown statements about jobs for the future than it is in taking action today. It is not an activist Government if it does not create jobs; it is just talk. It is talk, talk, talk, without ever creating jobs.

We need a change from this Government. We need a proper industrial strategy that involves the unions, the workforce and businesses that know exactly what they are doing. We need to end the talking shops and create the strategy for the future.

In my final 30 seconds, let me turn to a point of consensus. We need to recognise that significant investment has been made over the past year to protect the economic scaffolding and connect employers to their employees so that there can be a fast recovery. That investment has made sure that people could comply with the guidance and the rules. However, we are in danger—in the last mile—of losing the benefits of all that good work and investment. We need to ensure that the financial support continues until businesses are ready to open again. If businesses' markets are not there for them and they cannot make profits or create opportunities, there is no point in their opening. My plea to the Government is that it works with the UK Government to create the

finance that is necessary to support businesses such as the golf tourism businesses in my constituency, so that they can be ready to grow when the threat of the virus lifts. That is the best way to make sure that we can recover from the pandemic.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: We move to the open debate.

15:24

Fergus Ewing (Inverness and Nairn) (SNP): It is 14 years since I last spoke from the back benches, so members will forgive me if I am a bit rusty.

I thank Willie Rennie for the first two sentences of his speech. However, in the latter part of his speech—that is, the rest of it—I am afraid that he was about as close to the real facts of the situation as the famous ski jumper Eddie the Eagle was to the medal rostrum at the winter Olympics. What he did not mention is that, in providing assistance to protect jobs at Dalzell and Fort William, we gained security for our provision of a guarantee. He said that that money is gone—in fact, that is wrong. I am sorry, Willie, but that is not just inaccurate but wrong. The security is provided.

He also did not mention that the trade unions themselves do not want this to be a political football; they want us to work together. It is for ministers to answer, as ably they will at the end of this debate. However, for our part, Fiona Hyslop and I worked unstintingly with everybody involved over the past year, including the unions and the UK Government.

Although I had not meant to deal with that issue, I thought that, out of fairness, I should not duck it. I will conclude on that subject by saying that I make no apology for having been involved in preventing the loss of the steel industry in Scotland and the closure of an aluminium smelter that is close to celebrating its centenary. With the robust, buoyant worldwide market for commodities—in particular, minerals—the prospects of continuing those businesses by whatever means are, in my opinion, reasonable, and it is that on which we should focus.

Willie Rennie: Will the member take an intervention?

Fergus Ewing: Well, okay.

Willie Rennie: It will be very quick. Where are the 2,000 jobs?

Fergus Ewing: I believe that there will be more jobs in time, but that will happen only because we prevented the closure and loss of the smelter. Had it closed, it would never have reopened. Had Dalzell not been kept in business by Mr Gupta and

the GFG, those jobs would have been gone forever, and not just those jobs, as Mr Rennie knows—or should know—but all the supply-chain jobs as well.

We are debating the economy this afternoon, and one key element of a vibrant economy is good, safe and reliable transport links. For the past 22 years—and, indeed, before then, because I have been around a bit—I have been campaigning for the dualling of the A9 from Perth to Inverness and of the A96, as well as for improvements to rail, air and public transport.

I note in passing today's excellent news of the approval of planning permission for the new railway station at Inverness airport, with Government investment of £14 million. That is excellent news for the Highland economy.

I very much welcome Mr McKee to his post and recognise the close engagement with business that he has had over the years. Will he, in his closing remarks, agree that it would be extremely useful to get a detailed statement from the transport minister as to the plans to implement the dualling of both roads, and will he agree to come before Parliament in the autumn to provide those details?

Progress has been made. We have seen the Kincairdie to Dalraddy section completed, and the Luncarty to Pass of Birnam section is expected to be complete by this winter. In February, Transport Scotland announced the next phase of dualling from Tomatin to Moy, and the start of the £115 million construction contract.

The dualling of that road is essential to the economy, and it is essential for safety. This may not be widely known, but the risk of serious head-on collisions is far greater on non-dualled roads because there is no crash barrier. Many of us will know people who have lost loved ones through head-on collisions. For safety, therefore, surely the people in the Highlands are entitled to the dualled links that every other city in Scotland has. Some argue that they are bad for the environment, but I would say this: we are not anti-roads; we are anti-emissions. We will still need roads for low-emission vehicles to drive on, so it seems to me that that argument is fallacious.

Above all, we need the decent transport links that the Highland economy requires in order to continue to thrive and grow. Over the next short while, I will speak up on behalf of my constituents in order to continue the good work that the Scottish Government has done and to convert the promises and pledges into action.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: I call Douglas Lumsden. Members might wish to be aware that this is Mr Lumsden's first speech in the chamber.

15:30

Douglas Lumsden (North East Scotland)

(Con): I welcome you to your new role, Presiding Officer, and I congratulate the cabinet secretary on her new role. As a former leader of Aberdeen City Council, I always felt that she and I had a fairly constructive relationship, despite ours being one of the lowest-funded councils in Scotland. I look forward to that relationship continuing.

I am truly honoured to be here representing North East Scotland, and I would like to thank the numerous people who helped me to get elected to the Scottish Parliament: my campaign team, who worked tirelessly throughout the election; my family, for their patience; and three Conservative stalwarts who are no longer with us. They are June Morrison, Jill Wisely and Bill Berry, all of whom encouraged and mentored me but who sadly passed away before seeing me in our Parliament.

It goes without saying that I want to thank the voters in North East Scotland for putting their faith in me, and I assure you and them that I will fight every day of the week to ensure that the voice of the north-east of Scotland is heard loud and clear in this Parliament. I will also fight every day against any attack on jobs in the north-east by an SNP-Green coalition.

We, in this Parliament, are answerable to our constituents, who now rely on us to create the conditions for sustainable economic recovery across Scotland. The decisions that we make will impact the lives of every citizen, every business and every community in Scotland, so it is important that we get our approach right and do not leave any citizen, business or community behind.

During the pandemic, at this critical time, we have a moral duty to work together across not only the Parliament, but the UK. We should work with the UK Government simply because it is in Scotland's best interests to use the resources of our United Kingdom to create the conditions for a sustainable economic recovery that delivers for Scotland and its people.

I remember being asked during the run-up to the election why I wanted to be an MSP. The answer was easy: I want to make life better for every person living in Scotland; I want to see our economy thrive; I want to see meaningful employment; and I want to see improvements in education and healthcare. To that end, I believe in aspiration for the people of Scotland, and that we should all strive to make people's lives better and give them the opportunities that they deserve—opportunities that my family have had.

I remember when my parents took up their opportunity to buy their council house and own

something substantial for the first time in their lives. My parents worked long hours and gave me the opportunity to go to university—something that had not been done in our family before.

My daughter has just finished third year of medical school, and I want to make sure that she and all medical students can have the opportunity to help patients with their medical needs in a safe and properly funded NHS.

My son finished school this week, and I want to help to build an education system for all Scotland's children and young people that is second to none, to ensure that everyone gets the best start in life and the opportunity to pursue their career dreams, whether through a vocational route or via college or university.

My niece and nephew are both deaf. One is at school and one is struggling to get a job, because many employers still do not understand that having a disability is not a barrier to work and that, given the right support and opportunities, people with disabilities make fantastic and dedicated employees. I owe it to them to knock down barriers that infringe on people with disabilities.

Every day since my arrival, I have heard politicians on the Labour benches telling us that they will work with anybody to deliver for the people of Scotland. I only hope that Anas Sarwar is as good as his word, because I come from Aberdeen and I still represent the UK council of the year for 2020. Aberdeen City Council is a coalition of Conservative and Labour members that has put the interests of its people first. I can honestly say that, following Covid-19, Aberdeen City Council has worked tirelessly on economic recovery for the city by working with its people, businesses and communities. I find it unbelievable that the Labour council leader in Aberdeen, Jenny Laing, is still suspended by the Labour Party despite winning local councillor of the year not once, but twice: in 2017 and 2020. Given Labour's refusal to acknowledge its own talent—because those councillors dare to work with the Conservatives to deliver for the people in Aberdeen—it is no wonder that we Tories are ahead of Labour in all three Aberdeen constituencies.

Of course, we all want to work together to bring about real change to people's lives, but we also have to reflect on and work within the tools that we currently have to ensure prosperity for all. We also need a reality check, because the Scottish Government excels at spin but fails miserably in reality. One example of what I mean is the headline in *The Herald on Sunday* at the weekend. Eleven years ago, SNP spin predicted 28,000 low-carbon jobs, but the miserable reality is that only 1,400 jobs have materialised.

The Conservatives are always happy to support cross-party collaboration to make Scotland better, and we will work with the Scottish Government to achieve those aims, but if Scotland is to create the conditions for a sustainable economic recovery, the Scottish Government requires to concentrate less on spin and more on reality.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: I call Paul Sweeney, who will make his first speech to the Parliament.

15:36

Paul Sweeney (Glasgow) (Lab): Thank you, Presiding Officer. I congratulate Mr Lumsden on his first speech in the chamber, and the cabinet secretary on her position in the new Government.

As I rise to give my first speech in the chamber of the Scottish Parliament, I recall a formative political experience. I was sitting in bed at Yorkhill hospital as a 10-year-old, transfixed by the opening ceremony of the Scottish Parliament on television as it unfolded up on the Mound in 1999. The excitement and optimism of that day remains vividly etched in my mind, as do Sheena Wellington's rousing rendition of "Is there for honest poverty" and Donald Dewar's exhortation that the establishment of the Parliament must not be merely an end, but

"a means to greater ends."

Perhaps my political affiliation was inevitably influenced from that moment onwards, as I watched one great Labour achievement come to fruition from another.

It was not merely the spectacle of that day that influenced my interest in politics, but the experience of growing up in a family that bore the brunt of the industrial turmoil of Clydeside in the 1990s and the anxiety of unemployment as redundancy struck the shipyards and took my father's job, along with those of many hundreds of others. Seeing that happen to an industry that was synonymous with Glasgow's purpose burned into me a sense of anguish. The decline of the work, which was the pride of generations, was presided over by an aloof political establishment that was indifferent to its fate. The economic dogma of the free market, which served the interests of a distant few, mattered more than the dignity and wealth of Glaswegians.

I also realised that that decline was not inevitable, that there is no such thing as honest poverty and that Government could reverse it with a sense of clear mission, innovation and determination. One of the first actions of the Labour Government and of this new Parliament was to save the Govan shipyard from closure.

That act not only restored my dad's livelihood but would later give me work, too.

Although a burning passion for Glasgow and everything that it represents was instilled in me from a young age, I could scarcely have imagined that, just a few years later, I would have the precious opportunity to represent that teeming, turbulent, tremendous city in Parliament, first as an MP in the House of Commons, and now as a member of the Scottish Parliament.

William McIlvanney described Glasgow as

"the right hand knocking you down and the left hand picking you up, while the mouth alternated apology and threat."

His character Laidlaw said that what he loved about Glasgow was that

"It's not a city, it's a twenty-four-hour cabaret."

If it is not already like that this week, I am sure that it will be by Saturday night and that Pauline McNeill will be offering us a song or two down at the pub.

It is certainly a city of contrasts—a tumultuous mix of triumph, hilarity, misery and tragedy. Having the honour of representing and helping its persevering and passionate people in the Parliament has revealed to me a whole new level of understanding about their needs and how Government policy so often misunderstands, underestimates and ill serves them.

Until someone finds themselves at the mercy of an oppressive and inhumane policy, or unexpectedly advocating for those who do, it is easy to just assume that the system works. The realisation that it does not is what drives my motivation to improve my city and my community. My initial naivety might have given way to an even greater resolve and fervour to help the vulnerable and oppressed, and I hope that my conviction is widely shared by colleagues across the chamber.

That conviction was certainly shared by my two predecessors, James Kelly and Johann Lamont, who were formidable advocates for our communities—from expunging draconian legislation that criminalised working-class football fans to speaking out against the Government's illegal failure to house the homeless of Glasgow. Patricia Ferguson and the late Maria Fyfe also inspired me through their fearless pursuit of social justice for the people of Milton and Springburn, where I grew up.

This intergenerational moral crusade has never been more urgent, but this Parliament and this Government is barely keeping pace. In the half decade that it has taken to set up a modest £10 a week child payment, child poverty has risen by 50,000. By the Government's estimations, the £10 a week child payment will reduce the number of

children who live in poverty by just 20,000. Meanwhile, in Glasgow alone, more than 30,000 children live in poverty. That is not only an intolerable situation but an indictment of a lack of ambition and political will. We are consciously planning an economy that fails tens of thousands of children. I will not stand by while that happens, and neither will my colleagues. We cannot tolerate that any more.

The late Jimmy Reid once looked up at a block of high-rise flats in Glasgow and observed that behind every window could be a Nobel prize-winning scientist, an Olympic athlete or perhaps a First Minister, but—you know what?—they will never get the opportunity because of where they were born and the circumstances in which they were brought up. From birth, they have been denied their potential.

As a nation and as a community, that tacitly accepted sabotage of young people's lives is the greatest loss to us all. In many cases, it is literally a life sentence. I have seen that at first hand when working with Peter Krykant at the overdose prevention pilot in Glasgow, where we witness daily the impact of social alienation and trauma on so many young lives. We can only hope that they will still be alive tomorrow, having been failed by a state that prioritises criminalisation over compassion.

There is nothing inevitable about that economic and social trauma. It can be fixed if we—the 129 of us here—are willing to take a lead. After all, this is the Parliament that was forged in the furnaces of Ravenscraig and welded together on the banks of the Clyde. Our mission is to build up our industries, not to simply stand by and observe their decline.

It was heartbreaking for me to watch the convener of the Caley railway works in Springburn break down in tears in this building two years ago as he realised that he would be the last in a long line of trade union leaders that stretched back 163 years to the dawn of the railway industry, because Government ministers failed to do what was necessary to preserve those precious skills and jobs. The Parliament failed those workers and it failed my community. What is the meaning of home rule if our industries are ruled by faceless men in boardrooms far from Scotland and our Government is not prepared to defend them, but simply indulges in shallow public relations that later end in failure? I will not stand by and let the same happen to the McVitie's workers in Tollcross and neither will my colleagues.

As Edwin Morgan said, we are adept at indulging in convenient Scottish fictions. Unless the Parliament urgently becomes more alive to the alienation, exploitation and hardship that is faced by millions of Scots, and unless we who have the

privilege of working in this chamber test our Parliament's ability to address those ills more strenuously than ever, our country will never reach its full potential.

There is a tremendous challenge in front of us all and it is an endeavour that I will be relentlessly and humbly focused on over the next five years.

15:44

Kenneth Gibson (Cunninghame North) (SNP): I congratulate Mr Lumsden and Mr Sweeney on their excellent opening speeches. I also congratulate you on your new post, Presiding Officer, and the cabinet secretary on hers.

Our focus for the past year has rightly been on battling the pandemic, but I am optimistic that we can now focus on delivering Scotland's economic recovery. The human cost of the pandemic is immeasurable. I know that I speak for all of us when I say that our thoughts remain with those who have lost loved ones or who are still suffering. Others have seen jobs and businesses—perhaps built up over a lifetime—disappear. Those in vulnerable sectors such as hospitality, tourism and the arts have been hit particularly hard. Young people were denied a normal experience of work and study because of the virus.

Both for economic reasons and to help with social isolation and mental health, it is important to reopen cultural venues and performance spaces. The importance of doing so, in partnership with the sector and with public health experts and supported by funding, cannot be underestimated.

The First Minister has made it clear that Scotland's economic recovery is paramount and her plan for the first 100 days is now being implemented. More than £1.2 billion has been committed since March to drive recovery, and the Scottish ministers are focused on building a stronger, internationally competitive, resilient and sustainable economy with a focus on creating new, high-quality green jobs.

I know that the islands of Arran and Cumbrae in my constituency, as well as mainland North Ayrshire, will find the £25 million tourism recovery fund invaluable. The £25 million digitalboost grant fund, which provides technology, support and training, will also make a real difference to the small and medium-sized businesses that are critically important to our economy. Support from new high-tech start-ups and the city region and regional growth deals are also critical, as is non-domestic rates relief.

To assist people back into fair and sustained work, the Scottish Government has extended fair start Scotland for a further two years to 31 March 2023. In North Ayrshire and elsewhere, that will

assist in meeting the anticipated increase in demand from the most disadvantaged people in our communities. Growing up in an area of multiple deprivation is hugely detrimental, and that initiative continues to help those constituents who need it.

Unfortunately, as we emerge from this dark period, it is becoming painfully clear that other serious matters are having an impact on our economic recovery. Scotland was taken out of the European Union against its will. Had the UK's departure from the EU in January not been dwarfed by a global pandemic, its impact would be much more apparent. The Culture, Tourism, Europe and External Affairs Committee of the previous parliamentary session heard each week from the financial sector, hauliers and farming and fishing representatives about how their industries had been adversely affected and how their pleas for assistance and extensions had often been ignored or downplayed by UK ministers.

By the end of April—only four months into the brave new post-Brexit world—new barriers to trade had already cost exporters more than £1,100 million and Birmingham's Aston University found that UK services and exports from 2016 to 2019 were cumulatively £113 billion lower than they would have been if the remain side had won the EU referendum, a figure amounting to some £1,800 per person across the UK. The impact on employment and prosperity was wholly negative.

European structural funds have boosted Scotland's economic development for decades, investing £5.6 billion in myriad projects. Before Brexit, the Scottish ministers published a plan for a shared prosperity fund while the UK Government sadly failed to engage or work with the devolved nations. The UK Government has now imposed a levelling up fund for infrastructure projects that bypasses any Scottish Parliament involvement, denying Scotland around £400 million in expected funding. Those funds should be used to benefit Scotland's high streets and communities, and they should be devolved to this Parliament so that it can work with local authorities and other partners to deliver the most effective long-term benefits.

The UK Government already has many economic levers that are beyond our control. It can borrow massively on the money markets and can work with the Bank of England on interest rates and inflation. Those rates must be kept low to secure robust economic recovery. Inflation is already up, driven by skills shortages that the Scottish Government has committed to addressing. We also have rocketing, double-digit house price rises and increases of between 5 and 15 per cent globally in the cost of raw materials. That impacts on our ability to deliver infrastructure projects, from new homes to harbours, within

budget. Those are real issues that have a real impact on employment, supply chains and local economies—we cannot speak of economic recovery without addressing them.

The Renewables UK report, "Charging the Wrong Way" revealed that Scottish energy producers are disadvantaged because power stations pay 16 times more than the European average for using our transmission system, which leads to the bizarre situation in which Scotland risks becoming a net energy importer despite having a quarter of Europe's wind and tidal energy resources and a tenth of its wave energy potential. Our still-vital oil and gas industries will continue to support tens of thousands of highly paid and skilled Scottish jobs over the next decade as we transition to greener, cleaner energy.

Scotland was the first country to declare a climate emergency, and our recovery is designed to balance the economy, jobs, sustainability and the environment. I applaud the fact that Scottish ministers did not take a break from dealing with climate change during the pandemic—no country can afford to take a year off from that. Not everyone in the chamber wants to hear this, but Governments really are capable of dealing with multiple issues and delivering across a wide policy portfolio simultaneously.

The past 15 months have been a time of sacrifices, a time to mourn and a time to re-evaluate and press the reset button for many of us. As a nation, we must learn from the pandemic and grasp the opportunity to reshape our economy in a way that we were perhaps unable to do before. The Scottish Government's framework for its first 100 days and beyond will result in a fair, sustainable and green economic recovery.

The First Minister has piloted Scotland successfully through the pandemic, and it is now clear that, even in times of crisis, Scotland can take responsibility for its own affairs. We will see how Scotland recovers, and I am excited about the road that lies ahead beyond that.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: I call Jamie Halcro Johnston, who will be followed by Paul McLennan. You have six minutes, Mr Halcro Johnston.

15:50

Jamie Halcro Johnston (Highlands and Islands) (Con): Thank you, Presiding Officer. I congratulate you on your new role—it is good to see that the Orkney takeover is continuing at pace—and I welcome the contributions that we have heard from new members across the chamber making their maiden speeches today: Mr Sweeney's and, of course, my Conservative colleague Douglas Lumsden's excellent

contribution. Over the past couple of weeks, we have seen just some of the new experience and enthusiasm that has entered the Parliament. It is a positive injection of energy and a reminder that, although there are plenty of us who have returned, this is—or, at least, it can be—a fresh start.

The pandemic has been a hammer blow to our economy in a way that is entirely without precedent in modern times, and there might still be worse to come. We therefore should and must, as an institution, be looking to improve on the previous session and be more responsive, more proactive and more engaged with our constituents and Scotland's businesses by listening to them better.

Throughout the pandemic, I have spoken regularly to businesses and representative bodies in my region and further afield. Each has wanted to be listened to and have clarity when decisions are being made, and not to have a Government with the ability to foresee the unforeseeable but one that works in the open and takes account of the cost of adapting to a changing situation—that is not an unreasonable demand.

Across my Highlands and Islands region, we have seen a particularly harsh impact from the pandemic on the hospitality and tourism sectors. As the cabinet secretary will be aware, the Highlands and Islands region is more reliant on those sectors than most parts of Scotland are. While the Government and Parliament discuss recovery, businesses in Scotland are living the reality of it. I have been impressed with the ability of many businesses in my region in particular to bounce back—to adapt, start afresh and get down to the work that needs to be done—but many challenges remain.

As a region with more small, remote and island communities, we can see starkly just how co-dependent small local supply chains are. Where a business fails, whole communities can feel the aftershocks, and those communities have played their part, even when the virus's local prevalence and risk were lower than in the more populated parts of the country. However, it is disappointing that regional analysis—a more serious examination of differential impacts—seems to be almost entirely lacking. The experience of disadvantage and economic shocks will not be felt in the central belt in the way that it is in the Highlands and Islands or even in the south of Scotland.

Kate Forbes: Jamie Halcro Johnston and I represent a lot of the food and drink industry in the Highlands, and beverage is a key export for Scotland. Looking at some of the figures today, we can see that the figures for Scottish exports of beverages were down by 26 per cent to EU markets in the first three months of the year

versus 2018, but were down only 1 per cent to non-EU markets. The Highlands and Islands are paying a price for the Brexit choices as well.

Jamie Halcro Johnston: I appreciate what the cabinet secretary is saying, and of course the response is: we have seen constitutional upheaval over the past few years; do not foist more of it on Scotland.

In many ways, our rural and island communities are less resilient. Although the belated acceptance by the Scottish Government that different levels of restriction could be applied locally was positive, it did not change the fact that many venues spent long periods legally able to open but without the customers to practicably do so. Of course, that left many ineligible for vital support.

We are also at a blank when it comes to the future. I welcome the fact that, in her priorities for government speech last week, the First Minister seemed to have adopted the Scottish Conservatives' proposal for rapid retraining courses, but we also need to know how the enterprise bodies are being directed to assist businesses at risk. What plans does the Scottish Government have for future support?

As others have highlighted, our recovery is a cause that needs more collaboration than most—and not just within the chamber but more widely with businesses, individuals and communities.

The cabinet secretary has set out a motion calling for such a collaborative approach on economic recovery, bringing together the public, private and third sectors, as well as the parties in the chamber, with common purpose. I support those sentiments. However, I say gently to her that such a call cannot be credible when we have SNP ministers—including the First Minister—telling anyone who will listen that breaking up the United Kingdom is

“essential to secure a recovery”.

The First Minister claimed that independence planning was put “on hold” during the pandemic. It was not. We know that because her Government took the time to release a draft independence referendum bill before the election.

That comes as an even greater threat at a time when we have benefited enormously from the combined strength of the UK economy and our combined strength as a country. The security and stability of being part of the UK has not been so obviously apparent since the financial crash of 2008. We have relied on that joint security—a functioning central bank and a broad economy—to deliver the furlough scheme, without which we would have found ourselves in a depression unprecedented in modern times. Some 1 million Scottish jobs were protected because of that

support. We have also benefited from a world-leading vaccination scheme, and the size and purchasing power of the UK meant that we were able to do things differently.

Those are not minor talking points; that support has changed the scope of this pandemic and the outlook for our country for years to come. To deny that is not just the ordinary back and forth of politics, it is genuine revisionism.

Today, I have spoken a great deal about hospitality and tourism, but the reality is that many sectors have been shaken to their foundations. Retail is coming back, but there has been a real, and potentially enduring, change to our town centres. Transport—from large commercial air links to self-employed taxi drivers—has suffered enormously.

Recovery will not be an overnight process. In some sectors, it will likely take years—some may never fully recover. We need the Scottish Government to properly listen to and adequately support business. We cannot afford Scotland's economic recovery to be put in jeopardy by SNP ministers without a clear vision for what is needed or a clear focus on how that will be delivered.

Scotland's businesses and the jobs that they support cannot afford another five years of a distracted SNP Government with its eye off the ball when it comes to Scotland's economy.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: Before I call Mr McLennan, I encourage members who are using Surface and other mobile devices to make sure that they are on mute during the debate.

15:57

Paul McLennan (East Lothian) (SNP): I welcome you to your post, Presiding Officer, and commend those members who have made their first speeches today.

Yesterday, we had a very informative debate on health recovery in Parliament and we are all aware of the importance of the recovery in our health and social care sector. Tomorrow, we will discuss the recovery in our education sector. Today, I want to focus on the actions and ambitions of our economic recovery and on our aspirations for this parliamentary session and beyond.

The recently announced council for economic transformation is welcome. As I mentioned in my first speech last week, I will be replicating that approach in East Lothian.

I want to focus on a few key actions that the Scottish Government is undertaking that will benefit my constituents. First, I will cover tourism and town centres. There are 5,000 jobs in the tourism industry in East Lothian and £260 million

is generated from tourism in the county each year. The launch of the £10 million Scotland Loves Local fund will benefit our town centres and villages all over East Lothian. The continuation of the small business bonus rate scheme is incredibly helpful, as is the non-domestic rates relief scheme.

I know that this next statement will no doubt court controversy: East Lothian is Scotland's golf coast. Its 21 fantastic courses all over the county attract many visitors from all over the world. The tourism sector provides career opportunities and career paths. I want to work with local colleges and VisitScotland to grow and build those opportunities.

The cabinet secretary mentioned the importance of food and drink. That is a very important sector in East Lothian, where, in 2016, the first sector-based business improvement district was successfully established. That pulled together the food and drink sector in East Lothian, with an aim of increasing not only Scottish and UK sales but exports. The process of balloting for the renewal of the BID is under way, with a report due on 1 July. I wish those involved all the best. Brexit has had an impact—we have just heard from the cabinet secretary about that—particularly on the seafood sector in East Lothian. The UK Government needs to sort out the mess before markets are lost for good.

I want to touch on another sector that has not been mentioned in the debate so far but which is very important in East Lothian: the voluntary and social enterprise sector. Our voluntary sector is a major employer in Scotland, employing more than 100,000 people and contributing £6 billion to our economy. The sector works with 1.4 million volunteers across Scotland. The sector supports people to become active in our economy through the employability schemes that it delivers, including programmes for disability employment. I will shortly meet the Volunteer Centre East Lothian to discuss how I can work with it to build capacity. Throughout the pandemic, in East Lothian and across Scotland, the voluntary sector has generated an amazing sense of community. We can all work with the sector to help it to create sustainable employment opportunities.

At any time, it is essential to an economy to have a skilled and flexible workforce, but that is even more the case as we recover from the pandemic. I welcome the fact that, in this financial year, the Scottish Government will invest more than £1 billion to drive forward our national ambition for jobs. That includes £125 million for skills and employment support, including the young persons guarantee and the national transition training fund. That is alongside £230 million for Skills Development Scotland. I will seek

an early meeting with SDS to ensure that we are addressing the skills gaps that exist in East Lothian, and I will engage with Queen Margaret University and colleges in East Lothian, and with employers in the county.

East Lothian has traditionally had relatively low unemployment rates, but the job density figures can be improved on. Covid has resulted in many people working from home, and some will continue to do so when we come out of the pandemic. East Lothian Council needs to be a strong facilitator of economic development opportunities, and digital connectivity is essential. The Scottish Government will provide capital investment of nearly £100 million to improve digital connectivity in 2021-22. East Lothian and Scotland need to make the most of high-growth sectors such as technology and, in doing so, take forward the recommendations of the Logan review in order to give us that competitive edge.

The infrastructure investment plan and the Scottish National Investment Bank provide opportunities to invest £26 billion during this session of Parliament. That is a national mission with local impact. It will allow Scotland to invest in sustainable green jobs and to build an economy with wellbeing at its heart. Scotland is a leader in foreign direct investment and, through the Scottish Government inward investment plan, it will continue to be so.

Economic recovery is at the heart of what the Scottish Government is focused on. It is about attracting investment, from here at home and overseas; building on opportunities to start and develop businesses; building sustainable green jobs; and building and supporting vibrant town centres and tourism industries. Working in collaboration with business, education, skills and third sector colleagues, we can look forward to our economy growing and thriving in the months and years ahead.

16:02

Pauline McNeill (Glasgow) (Lab): I congratulate all the new members who have made first speeches—they have certainly raised the bar in the Parliament. I also congratulate all the new ministers and cabinet secretaries, and I pay tribute to Fiona Hyslop and Fergus Ewing. We sometimes had our differences, but they have shown dedication to public service that should be recognised by the whole Parliament.

Yesterday, I asked the First Minister for a specific recovery plan for Glasgow. As a city with regional status, it is dependent on sectors such as hospitality, retail and tourism, and it has had the most severe and difficult restrictions placed on it. As a city region, Glasgow makes up a third of the

economy of Scotland. It cannot fail, and ministers need to show that they understand its significance. I believe that that should be done through a specific recovery plan that is led by ministers and which involves the city administration as well as industry and commerce.

Glasgow businessman and philanthropist Lord Haughey has predicted that 17,000 jobs will be lost in the west of Scotland when furlough comes to an end, although sadly it might be more than that. Glasgow has endured a longer lockdown than any other city in the United Kingdom and has had to contend with the second-slowest roll-out of first doses of the vaccine while the virus has been at the highest level. That complacency must end in Glasgow.

I have engaged with as many sectors as possible to understand the impact on business. In particular, the restrictions have been significant for the hospitality sector. Football has reduced, because people could not come from neighbouring authorities when Glasgow was in level 3. That meant that, for many businesses, it was hardly worth opening. It is important to understand that point. Stuart Patrick, the chief executive of Glasgow Chamber of Commerce, emphasised that when he said today in *The Herald*:

“In Glasgow we have seen the impact of a misalignment between re-opening restrictions and financial support.”

He went on:

“When the Scottish Government previously announced both Moray and Glasgow were to be held in Level 3 it said an extra weekly grant of up to £750 would be made available, although ... the majority of businesses were receiving nearer to £500 per week”,

which is a lot less. In fact, in a previous column, he wrote that 90 per cent of businesses would not be receiving that £750 to deal with the losses that they incurred.

The hotel sector is dying on its knees. Even for COP26 in November—as I have checked today—its occupancy figure is so far at only 48 per cent. It is important to understand that Glasgow, being a driver of our economy, must merit some special attention.

Kate Forbes: The member may or may not be aware of the city centre recovery task force, which I will convene, and of the work that we have done closely with Stuart Patrick and his task force to provide specific attention to Glasgow.

Pauline McNeill: I welcome that, but I hope that the cabinet secretary takes the point that Stuart Patrick made—that 90 per cent of businesses do not receive £750, because they are open, albeit that no one can travel to them. I highlight the importance of Glasgow as a metropolitan city, because so many people come to it.

Obviously, the music sector will be the last to open up. On behalf of musicians, I have asked for a meeting with Government advisers Gregor Smith and Jason Leitch in order to clarify the evidence on the ban on singing. I was outed earlier as having an interest in that by my colleague Paul Sweeney in his tremendous speech. However, in all seriousness, I think that most of us know many struggling musicians who have been trying to manage some of the most severe hardship of their lives. It was embarrassing that Scotland was the only country to ban background music. I make no apology for interrogating the science on the topic. If singing is to continue to be banned for the reasons that it was banned nine months ago, I want to be sure that we have got that right.

Last month, two venues—Barrowlands and Saint Luke’s—lit up their premises with signs warning that 39,000 jobs could soon be lost due to the restriction on Scotland’s music, night-time and cultural sectors. Night-time economy businesses have said:

“As a direct result of ending all financial support without ending the restrictions that make businesses in our sector unviable, the Scottish Government is in effect betraying Scotland’s young workers and Scotland’s cultural sector and condemning thousands of businesses to bankruptcy”.

Backing that up, a poll conducted by the Night Time Industries Association of its members in April this year showed that the average debt amassed by venues due to the coronavirus pandemic had reached £150,000, which is equivalent to several years of profit in normal times.

I will finish by pointing out that many other sectors also require inclusion to achieve recovery. Glasgow airport is a key hub of connectivity for business, the movement of freight, and city breaks, and we need to make sure that, when it is safe to travel, Scotland’s connectivity is protected. As members have heard, airport chief executives Gordon Dewar and Derek Provan have been pleading for more engagement with the Government.

On behalf of the taxi trade, I thank the cabinet secretary for today’s clarification of grants and support. However, I think that more discussion will be required about the transition to net zero and low-emission zones because, obviously, buying new vehicles is going to be a huge burden.

As a Glasgow MSP, I unashamedly make calls for Glasgow. However, a special recovery plan is required because that will be good not just for Glasgow but for Scotland’s recovery.

16:08

Michelle Thomson (Falkirk East) (SNP): I, too, extend my thanks to those who have given their first speeches today.

The motion for debate contains the term

“the urgent need to create the conditions for a sustainable economic recovery”.

The term “sustainable”, when placed before “economy”, “business” or “development”, forms phrases with which we are familiar, but they are so ubiquitous that they mean different things to different people. I shall therefore use the term “sustainable economic development”, which is about the strategic pursuit of our economic goals in ways that do not compromise our natural resources and ecosystems for future generations. As we know, some people describe that in three pillars: economic, environmental and social.

For too many people, the pursuit of sustainable economic development is often expressed in terms of stopping various activities. However, we must place as much focus on ensuring, through entrepreneurial and innovative approaches, that we build a whole economic and business system that delivers ambitious and sustainable economic development.

I am on the record calling for an ambitious, audacious agenda, and I commend the Scottish Government for the first 100 days plan. The Scottish Government understands that we have complex economic and business systems. With extended supply chains and significant interdependencies, the issues must be addressed at national level rather than as if it was only about individual businesses or actions. Simple solutions are likely to be simply inadequate.

Let us briefly consider people and their many roles. Whether as consumers, workers, taxpayers or business owners, people drive the economic system, and a sustainable system will help to create sustainable lives. I will focus on one aspect—workers. They need to be skilled in their occupations, and because trade is globally interdependent, the skills of our workers must be judged internationally as excellent. That is why I asked in my first speech that we pursue international benchmarking and fully commit to initiatives such as WorldSkills.

I commend the Scottish Government for its plans to support women in business, but consideration must be given to systems as well as to activities. There remain deeply held cultural prejudices that hold back many women and, therefore, development. For example, justifiable concerns have been raised that the algorithms that are being developed for artificial intelligence simply replicate existing prejudices that inhibit the rise of talented women.

Another way of looking at elements of our system is to look sectorally. If we take as an example music, which is another area that I am interested in as part of the arts, its value in terms

of culture and wellbeing is well understood, but there is still too little understanding of its value in terms of gross value added. Of course, GVA excludes voluntary activity, which contributes a huge amount to the musical activity of our nation.

What is to be done? We have made an excellent start and I praise the understanding of Kate Forbes and Ivan McKee. I know that they want to develop sustainable economic development for Scotland. Perhaps they will consider the following. First, could we consider bringing together academia, business and Government in national centres of excellence to focus on sustainable innovations by economic sectors?

Secondly, we need to find a way to better target public funding to support entrepreneurial activity that is focused on building elements of the sustainable economy. Current approaches, such as those that are driven by Innovate UK, are too restrictive and formulaic. Perhaps both of those points will be addressed in the plans for the council for economic transformation.

Thirdly, we need to provide investment to enable our education sector to engage with international movements that are aimed at driving up standards of vocational education and training.

Finally, we need to ensure that we have an environment where it is much more difficult for people to exploit the economic system. Our Parliament needs to start talking about our financial ecosystem rather than leaving it to the lax governance of the Tories at Westminster. That is a theme to which I intend to return.

The Presiding Officer (Alison Johnstone): I call Tess White. This will be Ms White's first speech in the chamber.

16:13

Tess White (North East Scotland) (Con): Thank you for the introduction, Presiding Officer, and I congratulate you on your new role. I also congratulate the cabinet secretary on her wider role.

I thank Douglas Ross for appointing me as the shadow minister for just transition, employment and fair work. I am also honoured to represent the people of the north-east.

I am not a career politician. I arrive in politics at a pivotal point. I have worked on the leadership teams of global energy companies, creating jobs and long-term employment, planning their future direction and executing their clean energy plans internationally. I have worked with the chief executive officers of companies, as well as Governments. I have worked with trade unions as

well as employees. I have represented industry and I have also challenged it.

Although the world of business is not always a role model, during my time I have learned four key things that bring success in any organisation: diversity of thought; keeping an open mind; respect and dignity; and building on shared values to realise a vision.

This is one of the most diverse Parliaments in the world, and that is a good start. The true benefit of embracing diversity and inclusion in any big organisation is the resulting creativity, innovation and lasting value. I have been listening very carefully to those who argue for reform of this Parliament, and I can see the case for that, to effect the change that the country requires. After just four weeks, I can already see silos, groupthink and entrenched ideologies, none of which is beneficial to Scotland.

I have learned that meaningful change needs to be planned carefully. A focus on a compelling logical and emotional case is essential. Well-communicated common goals can be powerful bridges.

Kate Forbes and others have described the economic recovery and its sustainability as a national endeavour, and I would agree with that, but we have to better define our national organisation. I have learned that organisations well run can be more than the sum of their parts. The more enlightened organisations harness the benefits of all their parts, beyond geographies, shareholders and stakeholders, and thrive as a result of their combined resilience. I believe that we can make our whole organisation, including Scotland's people and the resulting national economy, greater than the sum of its parts.

Covid has shocked us to the core. At times such as these, we pull together by recognising that we have far more in common with one another than things that divide us. Without the UK Government's interventions, we would not have a comprehensive vaccine programme, our employees would not be protected by the furlough scheme and businesses would not be protected with safety nets. It is harmful for Scotland not to work as part of a team. The whole of the UK is greater than the sum of its parts.

Working together, we can invest wisely in education, skills training and job creation; in fostering innovation and entrepreneurship; in building sustainable and affordable housing; in providing schools and community hubs at the centre of new developments; and in creating an environment where businesses want to invest, so that they, their employees and their communities will flourish.

We have harnessed the wind and the tides to create energy. We can use our natural resources without damaging our planet, but in order to keep the lights on, we need to work together on this transition safely and sensibly. That requires certainty and stability in a time of massive flux.

We need to recognise the size and contribution of the oil and gas sector, and the risks and opportunities that the transition to a greener economy brings. The north-east transition deal will facilitate a fair journey that will safeguard skills and talent for the future green revolution. That must be done in partnership with the key stakeholders, such as the energy companies, the UK and Scottish Governments, and the people of the north-east. It must also guarantee security of energy supply for the UK and Scotland, keeping the lights on, sourcing it locally and delivering net zero. However, the transition cannot happen in isolation, and it needs to be planned and phased in.

We must recognise the challenges that a post-Brexit world brings to the other major industries in the north-east—namely, agriculture and fishing—and to those businesses in the hospitality sector that have been decimated by Covid and its aftermath. We will push for the support that they need to ride out this economic tsunami.

Today, I choose to look to a brighter future. In the maiden speeches, I can see the hope from Lorna Slater—although what she set out today seems slightly impractical and harmful to the people of the north-east—the humanity that was spoken of by Pam Duncan-Glancy and the reality that was described by Dr Sandesh Gulhane.

I believe that the increased diversity of this chamber can lead to innovation of thought and positive relationship building for the benefit of the people of Scotland. I dedicate myself to that goal.

The Presiding Officer: I call Jenni Minto to make the last contribution in the open debate. This is Ms Minto's first speech in the chamber.

16:19

Jenni Minto (Argyll and Bute) (SNP): I add my congratulations to you in your new role, Presiding Officer, and to the cabinet secretary on her expanded role.

Argyll and Bute is Scotland's most beautiful constituency, and it is home to the most committed and dynamic people. I feel extremely privileged to have been elected to represent them in Scotland's Parliament. I put on record my thanks to the electorate of Argyll and Bute for putting their trust in me, and I promise to work very hard for them.

I also give my heartfelt thanks to my fantastic activists across the constituency, who are led by

Marie-Claire Docherty and supported by Keir Low and Heather Wolfe, and to my husband, Les Wilson, my wider family and my friends. I would not be here if it were not for their encouragement and love.

I am following in the footsteps of Michael Russell, who is one of Scotland's most accomplished politicians. I have known him for many years, and I thank him for his advice and friendship. My first political event with him was at the 2014 independence referendum hustings in Bowmore on Islay. Little did I expect to be stepping into his MSP shoes seven years later. His shoes are big, and they come in many guises: wellies, hiking boots and brogues. They are as diverse as Argyll and Bute.

In Michael Russell's last speech in the Parliament, he quoted this from Edwin Morgan's poem "Open the Doors!":

"We give you our consent to govern, don't pocket it and ride away.
We give you our deepest dearest wish to govern well,
don't say we have no mandate to be so bold."

The same poem says:

"What do the people want of the place? They want it to be filled with thinking persons as open and adventurous as its architecture."

I am honoured to be part of the most representative thinking and adventurous persons' Parliament that Scotland has ever elected. We who sit in the Parliament have a huge opportunity to shape Scotland and "to be so bold."

In the 10 days prior to the election, I travelled around Argyll and Bute, met many individuals and organisations, and heard from them about how Covid and Brexit had impacted on their lives and businesses and what they needed for a sustainable and resilient recovery. Argyll and Bute is one of the economic jewels of Scotland's crown. It has a world-class food and drinks industry that exports to every corner of the globe. With its natural resources, it will be a renewable energy powerhouse. Its spectacular scenery, history and culture draw visitors from all over the world, and its people and businesses are woven through each of those. We need to embrace their lived experience and talents to strengthen our communities and economy.

However, Argyll and Bute also needs a robust infrastructure. We have seen across Scotland—Fergus Ewing talked about this earlier—that, with infrastructure investment, population rises and economic development soars. The same must happen in Argyll and Bute. We need to be bold.

A permanent solution must be found quickly for the Rest and Be Thankful, and we need a reliable and versatile ferry fleet. Everyone—farmers, fishers, whisky distillers, hauliers, small

businesses, tourists and residents—depends on being able to travel throughout Argyll and Bute safely and easily. I know that the Minister for Transport has brought a new energy to solving those challenges, and I look forward to working closely with him to find solutions.

The Scottish Government is focusing on transitioning our economy to a sustainable one to meet net zero targets by 2045. Kintyre is an ideal location for wind farms; it has been described as “wind turbine heaven”. The communities recognise the climate emergency and the part that their area will play in Scotland’s reaching net zero, but they want some of the economic wealth to remain in Kintyre to benefit them, too. I want to work with the Scottish Government to ensure that that happens.

Across Argyll and Bute, social enterprises and development trusts are building affordable homes, creating sustainable businesses, employing people, investing in their communities and driving economic development. Tobermory Harbour Trust describes that as “profit for progress”. Many entrepreneurs have created world-renowned products: the wings on Harry Potter’s golden snitch were made in Lochgilphead; vegan cheese is manufactured in Rothesay; and, as I live on Islay, I cannot, of course, ignore the water of life—whisky.

I began by saying that Argyll and Bute is Scotland’s most beautiful constituency. It is. Tourism is a major economic driver, but like tourism across Scotland, tourism in Argyll and Bute has been impacted dreadfully by the pandemic. I am pleased that the Scottish Government, in its first 100 days, will launch a £25 million fund for tourism and a new campaign to promote Scotland. The SNP’s manifesto committed to supporting rural businesses and encouraging young people to remain in their communities by launching the £10 million Scotland loves local initiative to support local businesses, by listening to our farmers to develop sustainable farming support and by providing £30 million to support island communities through the national islands plan. All those are bold initiatives that put Argyll and Bute’s people and economy at the front and centre of Scotland.

I am not sure whether members can see my shoes, but they are not Michael’s. They are made from tweed from the Islay Woollen Mill that was designed to commemorate the centenary of world war one. The colours represent the sea, the land and the people. In my view, woven together, they create a perfect fabric—the fabric of Scotland. It is those natural resources that Argyll and Bute will contribute to Scotland’s economy as we recover and be oh so bold.

The Presiding Officer: We move to closing speeches. I call Maggie Chapman, who may speak for six minutes.

16:26

Maggie Chapman (North East Scotland) (Green): I thank the Government for bringing the debate to the chamber. I am sorely tempted to respond directly to some of the more pointed comments that have been made by some members about the Scottish Greens and our commitment to delivering the structural change that is required to tackle the climate emergency. However, I will not respond—other than to say that I will take no lessons on “certainty and stability” from the party that has brought us the shambles that is Brexit.

I will not say more than that, because creating the kind of future that we need is much more important than any one of our political parties. We have made enormous strides in Scotland in recognising the need to reconfigure in order to transform our economy. I am delighted to see the new focus on community wealth building, on wellbeing economy approaches and on ensuring that the economy serves the Scottish people and not the dictums of some defunct economist or an entrenched, but so outdated, ideology.

I was elected in the north-east. Yes—the oil and gas region of Scotland chose a Green to be one of their representatives, because people in the north-east, perhaps unlike some of my colleagues in the chamber, recognise that the climate emergency is real, and they recognise the urgent need for a just transition from the oil and gas economy.

Covid recovery offers us the ideal opportunity to prefigure what that just transition could look like. I will speak briefly about how we will make the transition and the principles on which it should be based. It should be a transition that means that Aberdeen—including the 100,000 workers whom Liam Kerr is concerned about—avoids the fate of the coal communities that were trashed by Thatcher’s energy transition of the 1980s. It should be a transition that means that Dundee benefits in a way that it did not benefit from North Sea oil and gas, and it should be a transition that means that Grangemouth, at the other end of the pipeline, is never again held hostage by the ego of one man.

We have seen, in Covid and in past energy transitions, what happens when we fail to plan—we plan to fail—so we need a plan. *[Interruption.]* No, I will not take an intervention. I am sorry.

We need a plan that has broad social support and which has been produced with leadership by the workers, communities and partners who need a just transition so badly. We might think that we know what the solutions are, but we must do

everything that we can do to make the transition one that is citizen led and which brings all of us into the debate—not one that is designed to protect elite interests. We need a just transition that is democratic and which includes workers, citizens, trade unions, local authorities, universities and a broad section of civic society to identify needs and to develop plans for investment and training.

We need a system that co-ordinates skills and innovation systems to provide the jobs and technology that we know we need. We need the test beds for the sorts of technology that will allow us to decarbonise heat and agriculture.

We know what the economy of the future must look like. It must be based on care, on creativity and on co-operation. My colleague Lorna Slater talked about the opportunities for care for the planet, including a renewables-led transformation, massive jobs creation in energy efficiency, innovation to deliver a net zero energy system and a transformation of our transport so that it relies on clean electricity.

However, in the time of Covid it has become clearer that we must invest in care and humanity and create a culture and an economy that put care for individuals and communities at their heart. The national care service will be a crucial part of that, but we must go well beyond such services; we need the care ethic to replace the profit motive.

We know that the economy of the future will also be built on creativity. We need to harness the technical skills of workers and academics to make Scotland the home of the green industrial revolution. We need to think carefully about how we can harness creativity so that a just transition harnesses the ideas that we need in order to reconfigure and transform our society. For example, we must not just replace a dirty and socially exclusive transport system that is based on the car with one that has the same problems but runs on clean energy. We need to build public and demand-responsive transport, and we need creativity to make that work, especially in rural areas.

We need to do all that with the power of co-operation. That is why it is important that we are democratic. We cannot leave things to the market that failed the coal-mining communities in the energy transition of the 1980s, and which has failed during the era of Covid. We need a national mission to create a zero-carbon economy that is based on care, creativity and co-operation. We need to align our public spending with that mission. We need to use the Scottish National Investment Bank, Skills Development Scotland and our universities and colleges to support that transition. We need our citizens, workers, trade

unions and democratic institutions to be at the forefront, leading the just transition.

Only then will we have any hope of delivering the kind of economic recovery not only that we need but that all our citizens deserve.

I commend the Scottish Greens' amendment in Lorna Slater's name.

16:32

Colin Smyth (South Scotland) (Lab): I congratulate new members on the excellent first parliamentary speeches that we have had the privilege of hearing today. Douglas Lumsden and Tess White championed their North East Scotland region's economy, and Jenni Minto thoughtfully shared the impact of the pandemic on the businesses of Argyll and Bute, as well as the positive opportunities that exist there for sectors including food and drink. I might slightly disagree that it is the most beautiful constituency in Scotland—it might be the second most beautiful part to represent.

My colleague Paul Sweeney spoke passionately about the economic devastation that has hit his home city of Glasgow—from the shipyards to, more recently, the Caley railway works. He also reminded us that it does not have to be that way if we in Parliament and the Government make the right choices when it comes to our economic future.

I recall making my first speech, five years ago, also during an economy debate. The quality of first speeches might have improved since mine, but it is clear from the contributions that we have heard that the economic challenges remain.

I give new members one piece of advice: they should not be drawn into a false sense of security. Everyone listens intently and politely to a first speech, but their second speech is when the heckling begins—or maybe that was just for my second speech.

I congratulate the cabinet secretary, Kate Forbes, on her new role, which encompasses business and the economy as well as finance. I pay tribute to the work of Fergus Ewing and Fiona Hyslop, who were her predecessors. I genuinely wish Kate Forbes and her new finance team well. It is in all our constituents' interests that they succeed in the years ahead.

I suppose that I am biased, but I say that it is especially good to see a fellow rural MSP at the helm on those issues, because although not a single part of the country—urban or rural—has not felt the economic impact of the pandemic, we know that the structure of Scotland's rural economy amplifies the economic effects of Covid. Jobs in rural communities are often

disproportionately reliant on tourism and hospitality, on self-employment and on the small businesses and microbusinesses that were rightly described by Liz Smith as the backbone of so many of our communities.

Those sectors, which are so important to communities and livelihoods across rural Scotland, have been hit particularly hard by the pandemic. They were among the first businesses to be shut down. Tourism, in particular, is likely to be the last that will be able to operate as normal because incoming international travel is still significantly curtailed, as Willie Rennie rightly highlighted.

Pauline McNeill, too, was right to highlight the impact on hospitality and how the restrictions that remain in place are not being fully reflected in the level of support that is being given to the sectors. That is why the Labour amendment highlights the need for greater financial support for sectors including hospitality and tourism, along with retail.

Early in the pandemic, the Fraser of Allander institute identified the threat that the closure of such businesses posed to rural Scotland, and noted that

“Rural communities are particularly exposed to the economic impacts of the measures put in place to reduce the spread of the coronavirus”.

It concluded that,

“as this crisis unwinds, appreciating and responding to differences across the country will be crucial.”

Although the Covid crisis has exacerbated many of the economic challenges that we face in urban and rural Scotland, it did not create them. The cabinet secretary said that we look forward to the day when

“all the restrictions will be a thing of the past”,

but the challenges will not disappear simply as a result of lifting the restrictions. A return to more normality in our lives will not be enough for our rural economies, which have for too long been beset by low wages, weak productivity, fragile job markets, an ageing population and depopulation, especially of our young people.

To go back to the old normal will not be enough for any part of Scotland’s economy. That is perhaps best exemplified by the retail sector. If we walk through any town centre at the moment, the fastest-growing market that we will see is in providers of “To let” signs. Shop closures have, sadly, accelerated in the past year, but our high streets have been in long-term decline.

In the short term, we need an immediate fiscal stimulus package to encourage people back safely into our shops, and to prevent lockdown behaviours from embedding permanently. That is why, during the election, Labour proposed a plan

for a high street voucher scheme. I strongly urge the Government to deliver that plan.

Equally, we need to tackle the longer-term underlying problems and provide a more level playing field for bricks-and-mortar shops in relation to online retailers by properly reforming business rates and providing digital training for small and medium-sized businesses. Planning to regenerate and revitalise town centres and investing in new ways to bring people back on to our high streets will be key.

I will highlight briefly one example of how to breathe new life into our town centres, which can be seen in the work of Midsteeple Quarter in the town of Dumfries. It is a community benefit company that anyone can join and it is literally taking back the High Street shop by shop. It is beginning to invest in the mix of uses that our town centres need—retail, community space and housing—and, crucially, it is responding to the needs of the community. The co-operative principle is that local people have the innovative solutions for their town and should have a local stake in its future through community ownership.

One way in which the Scottish Government can ensure that “Building back better” is more than just a slogan is by supporting such initiatives. Another is to be clear about what our economic aims will be as we begin to rebuild. Labour’s amendment sets out some of those aims. The ambitions that we should focus on are job creation, wage growth, reduced income inequality, investment and improved productivity.

I doubt whether the Government will disagree in principle with any of those ambitions, but more urgent action is needed. That has not always been evident in every step of the Government’s response to the pandemic. As Daniel Johnson rightly highlighted, time and again Barnett consequential have gone unallocated, business support funds have sat unspent as applications were rejected, and powers of the Parliament have gone unused.

As Willie Rennie said, millions have been spent on interventions that have, in many cases, not delivered the jobs that were promised. We cannot afford to keep on making the same mistakes. We need an economic recovery that creates not just growth and jobs but inclusive growth and secure well-paid jobs as part of the journey to a net zero economy. That has to be the focus of the Government, the Parliament and the country for the next five years and beyond, rather than going back to the old arguments.

As we face up to the uncertainty of what a third Covid wave might mean, lives and livelihoods are still on the line and businesses are still on the brink. Although we all hope that the vaccination

programme is winning the race against the virus, and that the worst of the health crisis is behind us, we know that we are still in the middle of an economic crisis. We have the power to tackle that crisis and genuinely to build back better, if we make the right choices by supporting businesses to get through the crisis and by investing to create a stronger, more inclusive, more resilient and greener economy.

Scotland deserves a Parliament that is relentlessly focused on the issues that will matter over the next five years. That means a Parliament that will always put the recovery first.

16:40

Murdo Fraser (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con): I remind members about my entry in the register of members' interests in relation to my property interests and the income that I derive from them.

As other members did, I commend everyone who made their first speech in the chamber in this debate. Douglas Lumsden, Paul Sweeney, Tess White and Jenni Minto all made interesting speeches and were passionate about the communities that they serve and what has brought them to the Parliament. I look forward to hearing much more from them in future. Like Colin Smyth, I hope that they have not been lulled into a false sense of security by the warm reception that they all received for their first speeches.

I congratulate the cabinet secretary on her newly expanded role. I also pay tribute to Fiona Hyslop and Fergus Ewing, who have stepped down from Government. I enjoyed a very good relationship with them both in their respective roles over the years. Having heard Fergus Ewing's first speech from the back benches in 14 years, I very much look forward to hearing a lot more from him in the months and years to come. I am sure that, in the future, he and I will find much on which we can agree.

Let me turn to the substance of the debate. In effect, the issues that have been discussed relate to two areas: the short-term issues that need to be addressed and the long term. Let me first consider the short-term issues. A number of members talked about the lack of certainty and the inability to forward plan, which are affecting businesses. For example, Pauline McNeill talked about the impact on hospitality businesses in Glasgow. She referred to business representative Stuart Patrick, who expressed serious concern about hospitality businesses being told on a Friday that they could not reopen on the following Monday morning, as they were expecting to do, and the implications of that when staff had been rostered to come in and stock had been purchased, sometimes at a cost of thousands of pounds, when the maximum

compensation was a grant of £750 a week, which came nowhere near what was required to compensate employers for their losses.

Even though we are moving towards a greater relaxation of restrictions, which is welcome, such problems still exist. There are problems for the events sector, for example, given that events require substantial advance planning—six months or a year ahead, or longer. Events for this summer have been cancelled and venues do not know whether they can plan for the autumn and winter with any certainty. Last Friday, I visited Perth concert hall, which was providing concerts in association with Radio 3. It is a 1,200-seat-capacity venue, but it can seat only 100 people under the current social distancing rules. It is simply not viable for such venues to open at the moment and their concern is that they cannot plan an autumn or winter season with any certainty because they do not know what the rules will be at that time.

Willie Rennie: The member is making a good point, which is worth repeating. Does he support the proposed initiative to have Government-backed insurance for the events sector, to ensure that the sector can have the confidence to plan events and proceed? If events have to be called off now, they will never happen.

Murdo Fraser: Willie Rennie makes a good point, which the management of Horsecross Arts raised with me last week. I understand that it is impossible to get commercial insurance to cover the risks at present, and if there is a way in which the Government here or at the UK level can co-operate to provide some sort of insurance back-up, that would be welcome and it would provide the assurance that venues and the sector require.

The issues are similar in the wedding sector, which I am sure is close to the cabinet secretary's heart. Although restrictions have been reduced in areas that have gone to level 1, many wedding venues in areas such as Perthshire and Fife, which are an important part of the local economy, are still finding that there is uncertainty for people who want to book a wedding this summer—or who have rebooked a wedding that was postponed last year—given that there are still restrictions on the size of weddings and, for example, on people's ability to have live music. That is still a problem for the sector.

There needs to be on-going business support. Willie Rennie made the point about golf tourism in relation to businesses that can trade but whose business has, in effect, disappeared. I have heard that from organisers of holiday tours in Perthshire, because their business is driven almost entirely from overseas and that market has disappeared. They are permitted to operate, but they do not have any customers, and they are really struggling

to get the support that they need. On-going business support therefore needs to be there to ensure that those businesses are maintained.

We also need to ensure that not only businesses but workers are supported. People who have lost jobs or seen their hours reduced will need on-going support until their work picks up. There is a specific issue in the private rented sector. A tenants hardship fund was established, which was welcomed. However, according to figures from the Scottish Government, it is undersubscribed. I have had tenants say to me that it has been undersubscribed because the criteria are too strictly drawn. They have applied to get money from the hardship fund but, because their credit scoring is low, they are not eligible to get the support—their credit scoring being low because they have lost jobs or hours because of Covid. The Government should look at that.

I will also say a little bit about the longer-term challenges. There is a degree of consensus about what needs to be done to ensure that we have sustainable, secure and well-paid jobs in the future. Work patterns will change. For example, more people will work from home, which will be good news for climate change, as there will be fewer emissions from people travelling. However, we will need to have good-quality broadband. We will also need to have changes in the way that town centres operate, as Colin Smyth fairly said. Some people who worked in retail will not have jobs in retail. At the same time, hospitality is struggling to recruit people to work in, for example, the catering and chef sector. Workforce retraining will therefore be essential, which is why we put forward the idea of the retrain to rebuild account.

Perhaps the biggest point of disagreement—and probably the only point of serious disagreement—in this debate was around the oil and gas sector. Liam Kerr, Douglas Lumsden and Tess White reminded us about the importance of that sector, particularly to the north-east of Scotland, which is worth more than £11 billion to the economy and supports more than 100,000 jobs. Everybody accepts that there has to be a transition away from oil and gas. The key question is whether it is, as Tess White said, a safe and sensible transition or the sort of guillotine that the Green Party seems to want in the next two to five years.

That is the key choice for the Government: does it support our amendment, which supports a safe and sensible transition, or does it support the Greens, who seem to want to cut those jobs off at very short notice? Yes, there will be jobs in renewables. However, as Douglas Lumsden fairly said, promises that have been made about the number of jobs in renewables in the past simply have not materialised; 28,000 jobs were promised, but just 1,400 were delivered. That is an area

where the Scottish Government needs to do much more to ensure that there is a future for those currently working in the sector.

Kate Forbes: Will the member take an intervention?

Murdo Fraser: If I have time, I will give way.

Kate Forbes: Another sector for which we need a future in the rural economy is agriculture. I have just seen a quote from farmers who remain very fearful that they are about to be chucked under the bus as a result of the Australian deal. What is Murdo Fraser's response to them in the light of his interest in long-term and sustainable rural economies?

The Presiding Officer: I ask Murdo Fraser to respond to that and then wind up.

Murdo Fraser: Of course, we need to have trade deals that look after our domestic interests. However, we also have to make sure that we do not have local authorities in Scotland—such as SNP-run Fife Council and SNP-run South Ayrshire Council—pressing for a 75 per cent reduction in the consumption of meat products. That will hit Scottish farmers and it is something that the SNP Government needs to pay attention to, because farmers will be damaged if their councils here are pressing for a cut in meat consumption.

Much more needs to be done to support business in the short term, and there needs to be a consensus about the way forward in the longer term. The energy sector is an important part of that—an energy sector in a transition, with jobs supported and not axed. That is the point that Liz Smith makes in our amendment, and I commend it to the chamber.

The Presiding Officer: I call Ivan McKee to wind up the debate.

16:50

The Minister for Business, Trade, Tourism and Enterprise (Ivan McKee): Thank you, Presiding Officer. I welcome you to your post.

I am delighted to stand here with my expanded portfolio—as I am now the business minister—to respond to the debate for the Government. As many others have done, I will take the opportunity to thank Fergus Ewing and Fiona Hyslop. They have been a great support to me over the past years as I have found my feet as a minister, and it is great to have worked with them. Like Murdo Fraser, I look forward very much to their speeches from the back benches, now that they are unshackled from the responsibilities of Government.

I also want to thank those who have made their first speeches today. We heard from Tess White

and Douglas Lumsden and from Jenni Minto, who gave us a guided tour of Michael Russell's footwear—I am not sure that that part was welcome. She also urged us to be bold, made some welcome literary references and gave us a tour of her beautiful Argyll and Bute constituency.

I note the passionate speech by Paul Sweeney, a fellow Glasgow representative. It is always great to welcome members who have industrial experience in their background, and Paul Sweeney brings that to the Parliament. Clearly, he is as passionate as I am about reindustrialisation and the great city of Glasgow. As the cabinet secretary has already said, we are embarked on a national endeavour and there is an open invitation to members to take part in that conversation and bring forward their ideas. I am sure that Paul Sweeney will have a lot to contribute in that regard.

Fergus Ewing made a speech from the back benches. He is passionate about connectivity in the Highlands and Islands, and I will ensure that my colleague the Minister for Transport takes on board his point about the dualling of transport links there. I am sure that he is watching and that he will come along to the chamber to comment on those aspects in due course.

Jamie Halcro Johnston accepted the damage that has been done by Brexit, which was very nice of him, but it is clearly not very nice for the businesses that have been damaged in that way. It is a real indictment of the UK Government, which is run by the party of which he is a member and which has brought such damage to Scottish businesses and the Scottish economy.

Paul McLennan advocated for East Lothian and talked about the importance of tourism, which I now have responsibility for. I will say a wee bit more about that later in my speech, along with some words on the importance of the skills agenda.

Pauline McNeill, another Glasgow member, talked with great force about the importance to the recovery plan of the city that we both represent. She should have no doubt that I engage regularly with the city government, Stuart Patrick of the Glasgow Chamber of Commerce and businesses across the city who are closely watching the impact of furlough unwinding and fully understand the damage that could be inflicted on Glasgow's economy. We need to deal with that as part of our recovery plan.

Michelle Thomson talked about innovation funding, which, again, is on our radar. We are working through the best approach in that regard, given that much of it comes from the UK Government. She also talked about the importance of engaging with sectoral groups. She

can rest assured that that already happens to a great extent through our strong network of industry leadership groups, two of which—or perhaps more, now—I am closely involved in. That vehicle is there because, as the cabinet secretary said, the Scottish Government recognises the huge importance of engaging with businesses, business people, entrepreneurs, representatives of sectors and academics who are involved in those sectors to make sure that we work together in building the recovery that we all want to see.

Daniel Johnson: The minister has name-checked many of the sectors that other members have mentioned, but I wonder whether he could deal with the substantive point. For as long as we have restrictions and no long-term clarity about what they will be and whether they will remain, it is difficult for many businesses to operate. Many businesses in tourism and retail need that long-term certainty. Can the minister say how the Government plans to put in place that certainty for those businesses as they try to get back on their feet?

Ivan McKee: Daniel Johnson has made the same point that Murdo Fraser made. That is the luxury of Opposition, but it displays a naivety about the situation that we are in, because the reality is that the virus is unpredictable and we know that the numbers of the virus—*[Interruption.]* Let me speak.

Of course, the situation that businesses are in depends on the situation with the virus; Daniel Johnson and Murdo Fraser know that and the rest of the Parliament understands that. We work very hard to make sure that we communicate as much information as we can and that the information is as accurate and close to the situation as possible but, although he is talking about that, Anas Sarwar knows as well as I do that the reality is that the virus has taken a turn for the worse in our city of Glasgow, so it has to be addressed. *[Interruption.]* I want to make some progress.

It is very important that that situation is addressed as part of the four harms agenda. Of course, we support business as best we can and give as much information as we can but, as everybody will agree, we also need to recognise the direction that the virus takes. When it takes a turn for the worse, we need to react accordingly and nobody would suggest otherwise.

Liz Smith: Will the minister take an intervention?

Ivan McKee: I want to make some progress first, but I will come back to that.

Maggie Chapman and Murdo Fraser talked about the just transition. This Government is hugely focused on that, and we seek to work with all members around the chamber to take it

forward. Along with the rest of the Government, I engage with businesses in the oil and gas sector and its supply chain, and it is very clear that, across that sector, there is an absolute focus on and deep understanding of the need for that transition and for it to be a just transition. I have had the pleasure of working with oil and gas businesses on international trade missions, when they have been moving over to building products that they can supply to international markets in the renewable energy sector—that is hugely important. The Government is committed to working for that just transition and with the sector to make sure that we transition by addressing climate change issues and also protecting and, as the cabinet secretary said, increasing the number of jobs in the energy sector in Scotland. *[Interruption.]* I want to make some progress.

Colin Smyth made a very important point about the rural aspect and why the recovery must address all parts of Scotland. That approach is central to our work on the investment strategy so far and will be central to our economic transformation strategy as we take it forward.

Liz Smith made a few points. First, like an old Tory, she is trying hard to be the voice of business but she is working in an environment in which the Tory party has trashed the relationship with business. Boris Johnson, her Tory Prime Minister, told business to “go forth and multiply”, which was extremely unhelpful to the approach that she is trying to take. She talked about us working closely with the UK Government—I have already addressed that point—but, in item after item and policy area after policy area, be it the shared prosperity fund, the levelling up fund, the subsidy control regime, trade deals or green ports, the UK Government is refusing to engage with us constructively. When Liz Smith gets up, perhaps she could undertake to ask Steve Barclay why he has refused, time after time, to respond to my letters requesting a conversation about where we are going with green ports and why the UK Government is preventing a roll-out in Scotland.

Liz Smith: I am grateful to the minister for taking an intervention. He has said several times that the SNP Government is listening to what businesses are saying. One key thing that businesses are saying is that they do not have the certainty or the stability that they are looking for. Does he agree that that is a serious problem for the business community?

Ivan McKee: I have already made the point clearly that we give the business community as much certainty and stability as we can but, when the virus takes a turn for the worse, of course we have to respond to that, and anybody who looks at that constructively would agree.

Liz Smith mentioned the constitution. We believe that Scotland should be independent and that Scotland's future is as a normal independent country. We believe that that is the best route to generate the investments, opportunities and jobs that Scotland needs in order to make progress in the world. Other countries of Scotland's size that have far fewer natural and human resources are much wealthier and more successful than we are. We believe that the reason for the gap between us and those countries is precisely that we are not independent. However, I thank Liz Smith for raising the issue and talking about the substantive issues, because it is a recognition on her part and the Tory Government's part that the time is coming when we will have that debate for real—when we will have the next independence referendum, despite what she and her Prime Minister say.

Tourism has obviously felt the impact of the pandemic, but we are working closely with the sector and I have had several meetings with its representatives over the past two weeks to take forward a list of priority actions that will boost recovery, including the £25 million that we are spending across a range of actions to support the recovery plan, as agreed with the sector.

As the cabinet secretary outlined, we stand at a junction. We have identified the need for a national endeavour. We are calling for those who want to contribute ideas, energy and enthusiasm to come forward as we pull together the council for economic transformation and as we build and write, over the coming weeks, our 10-year plan for the transformation of Scotland's economy. We want to build on the great sectors that we have and on Scotland's wealth: we are rich in resources, skills and natural assets. We have many world-leading sectors and we want to build on the opportunities to translate those into a fairer and wealthier Scottish economy, with wellbeing, fair work and net zero at its heart. As the cabinet secretary did, I invite those who want to be part of that work to join us in those conversations. I look forward to coming back to the chamber to talk in more detail about that at a future date.

Business Motion

17:01

The Presiding Officer (Alison Johnstone):

The next item of business is consideration of business motion S6M-00199, in the name of George Adam, on behalf of the Parliamentary Bureau, setting out a business programme.

Motion moved,

That the Parliament agrees—

(a) the following programme of business—

Tuesday 8 June 2021

2.00 pm Time for Reflection

followed by Parliamentary Bureau Motions

followed by Topical Questions (if selected)

followed by First Minister's Statement: COVID-19 Update

followed by Scottish Government Debate: Tackling Poverty

followed by Committee Announcements

followed by Business Motions

followed by Parliamentary Bureau Motions

5.00 pm Decision Time

followed by Members' Business

Wednesday 9 June 2021

2.00 pm Parliamentary Bureau Motions

2.00 pm Portfolio Questions:
Net Zero, Energy and Transport;
Rural Affairs and Islands

followed by Scottish Government Debate:
Addressing the Climate Emergency

followed by Business Motions

followed by Parliamentary Bureau Motions

followed by Approval of SSIs (if required)

5.00 pm Decision Time

followed by Members' Business

Thursday 10 June 2021

12.00 pm Parliamentary Bureau Motions

12.00 pm First Minister's Questions

2.00 pm Parliamentary Bureau Motions

2.00 pm Portfolio Questions:
Health and Social Care

followed by Scottish Government Business

followed by Business Motions

followed by Parliamentary Bureau Motions

5.00 pm Decision Time

Tuesday 15 June 2021

2.00 pm Time for Reflection

followed by Parliamentary Bureau Motions

followed by Topical Questions (if selected)

followed by Scottish Government Business

followed by Committee Announcements

followed by Business Motions

followed by Parliamentary Bureau Motions

5.00 pm Decision Time

followed by Members' Business

Wednesday 16 June 2021

2.00 pm Parliamentary Bureau Motions

2.00 pm Portfolio Questions:
Social Justice, Housing and Local
Government;
Constitution, External Affairs and Culture

followed by Scottish Government Business

followed by Business Motions

followed by Parliamentary Bureau Motions

followed by Approval of SSIs (if required)

5.00 pm Decision Time

followed by Members' Business

Thursday 17 June 2021

12.00 pm Parliamentary Bureau Motions

12.00 pm First Minister's Questions

2.30 pm Parliamentary Bureau Motions

2.30 pm Portfolio Questions:
Justice

followed by Scottish Government Business

followed by Parliamentary Bureau Motions

5.00 pm Decision Time

(b) that, for the purposes of Portfolio Questions in the week beginning 14 June, in rule 13.7.3, after the word "except" the words "to the extent to which the Presiding Officer considers that the questions are on the same or similar subject matter or" are inserted.—[George Adam]

Motion agreed to.

Parliamentary Bureau Motions

The Presiding Officer (Alison Johnstone):

The next item of business is consideration of motions S6M-00208, S6M-00209 and S6M-00207, on approval of Scottish statutory instruments. I ask George Adam, on behalf of the Scottish Government, to speak to and move the motions.

17:01

The Minister for Parliamentary Business (George Adam):

The Health Protection (Coronavirus) (International Travel etc) (Scotland) Amendment Regulations 2021 make further amendments to the Health Protection (Coronavirus) (International Travel) (Scotland) Regulations 2020. The regulations are amended so that a person who tests positive for coronavirus earlier than the day on which they take a day 2 or day 8 test under the regulations must continue to isolate only until the end of the 10th day following the day on which the earlier test was taken; to exempt aviation and maritime crew from the requirement to stay in managed accommodation if they have travelled in an acute risk country or territory in the course of their work; to add to schedule 3A a category of “specified competitions” at which participating persons are exempted from the requirement to stay in managed accommodation when they travel to, through or from acute-risk countries or territories to take part in that competition; and to add Ethiopia, Oman, Qatar and Somalia to the acute-risk countries and territories in schedule A2 and remove Mauritius and Portugal from that list.

In addition, the regulations amend the expiry provisions of the principal regulations, the Health Protection (Coronavirus, Public Health Information for Passengers Travelling to Scotland) Regulations 2020 and part 2 of the Health Protection (Coronavirus) (Pre-Departure Testing and Operator Liability) (Scotland) Regulations 2021, so that they each expire on 20 September 2021.

The regulations came into force on 20 March 2021.

The Health Protection (Coronavirus) (Restrictions and Requirements) (Local Levels) (Scotland) Amendment (No 18) Regulations 2021 amend the Health Protection (Coronavirus) (Restrictions and Requirements) (Local Levels) (Scotland) Regulations 2020 to allow places of worship to reopen in level 4 areas. As a result of that change, the restrictions on leaving home in level 4 areas and entering or leaving a level 4 area are adjusted to ensure that it is possible to leave home and travel to someone’s usual place of worship.

The regulations also make clear that it is possible to leave home in level 4 areas, travel into and out of level 3 and 4 areas and gather for the purpose of picketing. The regulations set out changes to the level that applies to Na h-Eileanan an Iar, which moves from level 4 to level 3. All other areas remain in the same level.

Finally, the regulations make a minor adjustment to correct some inaccurate cross-references that were included in the most recent amending instrument.

The regulations came into force on 24 March 2021.

The final regulations that I have to talk about are the Health Protection (Coronavirus) (Restrictions and Requirements) (Local Levels) (Scotland) Amendment (No 18) Amendment Regulations 2021. The regulations amend the Health Protection (Coronavirus) (Restrictions and Requirements) (Local Levels) (Scotland) Amendment (No 18) Regulations 2021 to bring forward the coming into force date of the relevant provisions that allow places of worship to reopen in Level 4.

The regulations came into force on 25 March 2021.

Motions moved,

That the Parliament agrees that Health Protection (Coronavirus) (International Travel etc.) (Scotland) Amendment Regulations 2021 (SSI 2021/158) be approved.

That the Parliament agrees that Health Protection (Coronavirus) (Restrictions and Requirements) (Local Levels) (Scotland) Amendment (No. 18) Regulations 2021 (SSI 2021/166) be approved.

That the Parliament agrees that Health Protection (Coronavirus) (Restrictions and Requirements) (Local Levels) (Scotland) Amendment (No. 18) Amendment Regulations 2021 (SSI 2021/168) be approved.—[George Adam]

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

Decision Time

17:05

The Presiding Officer (Alison Johnstone):

There are seven questions to be put as a result of today's business.

The first question is, that amendment S6M-00165.4, in the name of Liz Smith, which seeks to amend motion S6M-00165, in the name of Kate Forbes, on economic recovery, be agreed to. Are we agreed?

Members: No.

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

17:05

Meeting suspended.

17:10

On resuming—

The Presiding Officer: Members should cast their votes now.

For

Adam, George (Paisley) (SNP)
 Adam, Karen (Banffshire and Buchan Coast) (SNP)
 Adamson, Clare (Motherwell and Wishaw) (SNP)
 Allan, Dr Alasdair (Na h-Eileanan an Iar) (SNP)
 Arthur, Tom (Renfrewshire South) (SNP)
 Baillie, Jackie (Dumbarton) (Lab)
 Baker, Claire (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab)
 Balfour, Jeremy (Lothian) (Con)
 Beattie, Colin (Midlothian North and Musselburgh) (SNP)
 Bibby, Neil (West Scotland) (Lab)
 Boyack, Sarah (Lothian) (Lab)
 Briggs, Miles (Lothian) (Con)
 Brown, Keith (Clackmannanshire and Dunblane) (SNP)
 Brown, Siobhian (Ayr) (SNP)
 Callaghan, Stephanie (Uddingston and Bellshill) (SNP)
 Cameron, Donald (Highlands and Islands) (Con)
 Carlaw, Jackson (Eastwood) (Con)
 Carson, Finlay (Galloway and West Dumfries) (Con)
 Choudhury, Foysol (Lothian) (Lab)
 Clark, Katy (West Scotland) (Lab)
 Coffey, Willie (Kilmarnock and Irvine Valley) (SNP)
 Constance, Angela (Almond Valley) (SNP)
 Denham, Ash (Edinburgh Eastern) (SNP)
 Dey, Graeme (Angus South) (SNP)
 Don, Natalie (Renfrewshire North and West) (SNP)
 Dornan, James (Glasgow Cathcart) (SNP)
 Dowey, Sharon (South Scotland) (Con)
 Dunbar, Jackie (Aberdeen Donside) (SNP)
 Duncan-Glancy, Pam (Glasgow) (Lab)
 Ewing, Annabelle (Cowdenbeath) (SNP)
 Ewing, Fergus (Inverness and Nairn) (SNP)
 Fairlie, Jim (Perthshire South and Kinross-shire) (SNP)
 Findlay, Russell (West Scotland) (Con)
 FitzPatrick, Joe (Dundee City West) (SNP)
 Forbes, Kate (Skye, Lochaber and Badenoch) (SNP)
 Fraser, Murdo (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 Gallacher, Meghan (Central Scotland) (Con)

Gibson, Kenneth (Cunninghame North) (SNP)
 Gilruth, Jenny (Mid Fife and Glenrothes) (SNP)
 Gosal, Pam (West Scotland) (Con)
 Gougeon, Mairi (Angus North and Mearns) (SNP)
 Grahame, Christine (Midlothian South, Tweeddale and Lauderdale) (SNP)
 Gray, Neil (Airdrie and Shotts) (SNP)
 Greene, Jamie (West Scotland) (Con)
 Griffin, Mark (Central Scotland) (Lab)
 Gulhane, Sandesh (Glasgow) (Con)
 Hamilton, Rachael (Ettrick, Roxburgh and Berwickshire) (Con)
 Harper, Emma (South Scotland) (SNP)
 Haughey, Clare (Rutherglen) (SNP)
 Hepburn, Jamie (Cumbernauld and Kilsyth) (SNP)
 Hoy, Craig (South Scotland) (Lab)
 Hyslop, Fiona (Linlithgow) (SNP)
 Johnson, Daniel (Edinburgh Southern) (Lab)
 Halcro Johnston, Jamie (Highlands and Islands) (Con)
 Kerr, Liam (North East Scotland) (Con)
 Kidd, Bill (Glasgow Anniesland) (SNP)
 Lennon, Monica (Central Scotland) (Lab)
 Leonard, Richard (Central Scotland) (Lab)
 Lochhead, Richard (Moray) (SNP)
 Lockhart, Dean (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 Lumsden, Douglas (North East Scotland) (Con)
 MacDonald, Gordon (Edinburgh Pentlands) (SNP)
 MacGregor, Fulton (Coatbridge and Chryston) (SNP)
 Mackay, Rona (Strathkelvin and Bearsden) (SNP)
 Macpherson, Ben (Edinburgh Northern and Leith) (SNP)
 Marra, Michael (North East Scotland) (Lab)
 Martin, Gillian (Aberdeenshire East) (SNP)
 Mason, John (Glasgow Shettleston) (SNP)
 Matheson, Michael (Falkirk West) (SNP)
 McAllan, Màiri (Clydesdale) (SNP)
 McArthur, Liam (Orkney Islands) (LD)
 McKee, Ivan (Glasgow Provan) (SNP)
 McLennan, Paul (East Lothian) (SNP)
 McMillan, Stuart (Greenock and Inverclyde) (SNP)
 McNair, Marie (Clydebank and Milngavie) (SNP)
 McNeill, Pauline (Glasgow) (Lab)
 Minto, Jenni (Argyll and Bute) (SNP)
 Mochan, Carol (South Scotland) (Lab)
 Mundell, Oliver (Dumfriesshire) (Con)
 Nicoll, Audrey (Aberdeen South and North Kincardine) (SNP)
 O'Kane, Paul (West Scotland) (Lab)
 Rennie, Willie (North East Fife) (LD)
 Robison, Shona (Dundee City East) (SNP)
 Roddick, Emma (Highlands and Islands) (SNP)
 Ross, Douglas (Highlands and Islands) (Con)
 Rowley, Alex (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab)
 Sarwar, Anas (Glasgow) (Lab)
 Simpson, Graham (Central Scotland) (Con)
 Smith, Liz (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 Smyth, Colin (South Scotland) (Lab)
 Somerville, Shirley-Anne (Dunfermline) (SNP)
 Stevenson, Collette (East Kilbride) (SNP)
 Stewart, Alexander (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 Stewart, Kaukab (Glasgow Kelvin) (SNP)
 Stewart, Kevin (Aberdeen Central) (SNP)
 Sweeney, Paul (Glasgow) (Lab)
 Swinney, John (Perthshire North) (SNP)
 Thomson, Michelle (Falkirk East) (SNP)
 Todd, Maree (Caithness, Sutherland and Ross) (SNP)
 Tweed, Evelyn (Stirling) (SNP)
 Villalba, Mercedes (North East Scotland) (Lab)
 Webber, Sue (Lothian) (Con)
 Wells, Annie (Glasgow) (Con)
 White, Tess (North East Scotland) (Con)
 Whitfield, Martin (South Scotland) (Lab)

Whitham, Elena (Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley) (SNP)
 Whittle, Brian (South Scotland) (Con)
 Wishart, Beatrice (Shetland Islands) (LD)
 Yousaf, Humza (Glasgow Pollok) (SNP)

Against

Chapman, Maggie (North East Scotland) (Green)
 Greer, Ross (West Scotland) (Green)
 Harvie, Patrick (Glasgow) (Green)
 Mackay, Gillian (Central Scotland) (Green)
 Ruskell, Mark (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Green)
 Slater, Lorna (Lothian) (Green)

The Presiding Officer: The result of the division on amendment S6M-00165.4, in the name of Liz Smith, on economic recovery, is: For 109, Against 6, Abstentions 0.

Amendment agreed to.

The Presiding Officer: The next question is, that amendment S6M-00165.2, in the name of Daniel Johnson, which seeks to amend motion S6M-00165, in the name of Kate Forbes, on economic recovery, be agreed to. Are we agreed?

Members: No.

The Presiding Officer: There will be a division.

The vote is now closed.

Brian Whittle (South Scotland) (Con): On a point of order, Presiding Officer. My screen froze and I was unable to vote. I would have voted yes.

The Presiding Officer: I will ensure that the clerks record your vote.

Alex Cole-Hamilton (Edinburgh Western) (LD): On a point of order, Presiding Officer. I was not able to log in. I would have voted yes.

The Presiding Officer: I will ensure that that is recorded.

Natalie Don (Renfrewshire North and West) (SNP): On a point of order, Presiding Officer. I am having technical issues. I would have voted no and I ask that that be logged.

The Presiding Officer: That will be done.

For

Baillie, Jackie (Dumbarton) (Lab)
 Baker, Claire (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab)
 Balfour, Jeremy (Lothian) (Con)
 Bibby, Neil (West Scotland) (Lab)
 Boyack, Sarah (Lothian) (Lab)
 Briggs, Miles (Lothian) (Con)
 Cameron, Donald (Highlands and Islands) (Con)
 Carlaw, Jackson (Eastwood) (Con)
 Carson, Finlay (Galloway and West Dumfries) (Con)
 Choudhury, Foyso (Lothian) (Lab)
 Clark, Katy (West Scotland) (Lab)
 Cole-Hamilton, Alex (Edinburgh Western) (LD)
 Dowey, Sharon (South Scotland) (Con)
 Duncan-Glancy, Pam (Glasgow) (Lab)
 Findlay, Russell (West Scotland) (Con)
 Fraser, Murdo (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 Gallacher, Meghan (Central Scotland) (Con)

Gosal, Pam (West Scotland) (Con)
 Greene, Jamie (West Scotland) (Con)
 Griffin, Mark (Central Scotland) (Lab)
 Gulhane, Sandesh (Glasgow) (Con)
 Hamilton, Rachael (Ettrick, Roxburgh and Berwickshire) (Con)
 Hoy, Craig (South Scotland) (Con)
 Johnson, Daniel (Edinburgh Southern) (Lab)
 Halcro Johnston, Jamie (Highlands and Islands) (Con)
 Kerr, Liam (North East Scotland) (Con)
 Lennon, Monica (Central Scotland) (Lab)
 Leonard, Richard (Central Scotland) (Lab)
 Lockhart, Dean (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 Lumsden, Douglas (North East Scotland) (Con)
 McArthur, Liam (Orkney Islands) (LD)
 McNeill, Pauline (Glasgow) (Lab)
 Mochan, Carol (South Scotland) (Lab)
 Mundell, Oliver (Dumfriesshire) (Con)
 O'Kane, Paul (West Scotland) (Lab)
 Rennie, Willie (North East Fife) (LD)
 Ross, Douglas (Highlands and Islands) (Con)
 Rowley, Alex (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab)
 Sarwar, Anas (Glasgow) (Lab)
 Simpson, Graham (Central Scotland) (Con)
 Smith, Liz (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 Smyth, Colin (South Scotland) (Lab)
 Stewart, Alexander (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 Sweeney, Paul (Glasgow) (Lab)
 Villalba, Mercedes (North East Scotland) (Lab)
 Webber, Sue (Lothian) (Con)
 Wells, Annie (Glasgow) (Con)
 White, Tess (North East Scotland) (Con)
 Whitfield, Martin (South Scotland) (Lab)
 Whittle, Brian (South Scotland) (Con)
 Wishart, Beatrice (Shetland Islands) (LD)

Against

Adam, George (Paisley) (SNP)
 Adam, Karen (Banffshire and Buchan Coast) (SNP)
 Adamson, Clare (Motherwell and Wishaw) (SNP)
 Allan, Dr Alasdair (Na h-Eileanan an Iar) (SNP)
 Arthur, Tom (Renfrewshire South) (SNP)
 Beattie, Colin (Midlothian North and Musselburgh) (SNP)
 Brown, Keith (Clackmannanshire and Dunblane) (SNP)
 Brown, Siobhian (Ayr) (SNP)
 Callaghan, Stephanie (Uddingston and Bellshill) (SNP)
 Chapman, Maggie (North East Scotland) (Green)
 Coffey, Willie (Kilmarnock and Irvine Valley) (SNP)
 Constance, Angela (Almond Valley) (SNP)
 Denham, Ash (Edinburgh Eastern) (SNP)
 Dey, Graeme (Angus South) (SNP)
 Don, Natalie (Renfrewshire North and West) (SNP)
 Doris, Bob (Glasgow Maryhill and Springburn) (SNP)
 Dornan, James (Glasgow Cathcart) (SNP)
 Dunbar, Jackie (Aberdeen Donside) (SNP)
 Ewing, Annabelle (Cowdenbeath) (SNP)
 Ewing, Fergus (Inverness and Nairn) (SNP)
 Fairlie, Jim (Perthshire South and Kinross-shire) (SNP)
 FitzPatrick, Joe (Dundee City West) (SNP)
 Forbes, Kate (Skye, Lochaber and Badenoch) (SNP)
 Gibson, Kenneth (Cunninghame North) (SNP)
 Gilruth, Jenny (Mid Fife and Glenrothes) (SNP)
 Gougeon, Mairi (Angus North and Mearns) (SNP)
 Grahame, Christine (Midlothian South, Tweeddale and Lauderdale) (SNP)
 Gray, Neil (Airdrie and Shotts) (SNP)
 Greer, Ross (West Scotland) (Green)
 Harper, Emma (South Scotland) (SNP)
 Harvie, Patrick (Glasgow) (Green)
 Haughey, Clare (Rutherglen) (SNP)
 Hepburn, Jamie (Cumbernauld and Kilsyth) (SNP)
 Hyslop, Fiona (Linlithgow) (SNP)

Kidd, Bill (Glasgow Anniesland) (SNP)
 Lochhead, Richard (Moray) (SNP)
 MacDonald, Gordon (Edinburgh Pentlands) (SNP)
 MacGregor, Fulton (Coatbridge and Chryston) (SNP)
 Mackay, Gillian (Central Scotland) (Green)
 Mackay, Rona (Strathkelvin and Bearsden) (SNP)
 Macpherson, Ben (Edinburgh Northern and Leith) (SNP)
 Martin, Gillian (Aberdeenshire East) (SNP)
 Mason, John (Glasgow Shettleston) (SNP)
 Matheson, Michael (Falkirk West) (SNP)
 McAllan, Màiri (Clydesdale) (SNP)
 McKee, Ivan (Glasgow Provan) (SNP)
 McLennan, Paul (East Lothian) (SNP)
 McMillan, Stuart (Greenock and Inverclyde) (SNP)
 McNair, Marie (Clydebank and Milngavie) (SNP)
 Minto, Jenni (Argyll and Bute) (SNP)
 Nicoll, Audrey (Aberdeen South and North Kincardine) (SNP)
 Robison, Shona (Dundee City East) (SNP)
 Roddick, Emma (Highlands and Islands) (SNP)
 Ruskell, Mark (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Green)
 Slater, Lorna (Lothian) (Green)
 Somerville, Shirley-Anne (Dunfermline) (SNP)
 Stevenson, Collette (East Kilbride) (SNP)
 Stewart, Kaukab (Glasgow Kelvin) (SNP)
 Stewart, Kevin (Aberdeen Central) (SNP)
 Swinney, John (Perthshire North) (SNP)
 Thomson, Michelle (Falkirk East) (SNP)
 Todd, Maree (Caithness, Sutherland and Ross) (SNP)
 Tweed, Evelyn (Stirling) (SNP)
 Whitham, Elena (Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley) (SNP)
 Yousaf, Humza (Glasgow Pollok) (SNP)

The Presiding Officer: The result of the division on amendment S6M-00165.2, in the name of Daniel Johnson, on economic recovery, is: For 51, Against 65, Abstentions 0.

Amendment disagreed to.

The Presiding Officer: The next question is, that amendment S6M-00165.3, in the name of Lorna Slater, which seeks to amend motion S6M-00165, in the name of Kate Forbes, on economic recovery, be agreed to.

Amendment agreed to.

The Presiding Officer: The next question is, that motion S6M-00165, in the name of Kate Forbes, on economic recovery, as amended, be agreed to. Are we agreed?

Members: No.

The Presiding Officer: There will be a division.

The vote is now closed.

Pam Duncan-Glancy (Glasgow) (Lab): On a point of order, Presiding Officer. My app did not work and I would like to register that I would have voted yes.

The Presiding Officer: We will ensure that that is recorded.

Brian Whittle: On a point of order, Presiding Officer. Once again, my app has frozen. I would have voted yes.

The Presiding Officer: We will ensure that that is recorded.

Kaukab Stewart (Glasgow Kelvin) (SNP): On a point of order, Presiding Officer. Sorry, but my app did not work. I would have voted yes.

The Presiding Officer: We will ensure that that is recorded.

Sharon Dowe (South Scotland) (Con): On a point of order, Presiding Officer. My app did not work either. I would have voted yes.

The Presiding Officer: We will ensure that that is recorded.

For

Adam, George (Paisley) (SNP)
 Adam, Karen (Banffshire and Buchan Coast) (SNP)
 Adamson, Clare (Motherwell and Wishaw) (SNP)
 Allan, Dr Alasdair (Na h-Eileanan an Iar) (SNP)
 Arthur, Tom (Renfrewshire South) (SNP)
 Baillie, Jackie (Dumbarton) (Lab)
 Baker, Claire (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab)
 Balfour, Jeremy (Lothian) (Con)
 Beattie, Colin (Midlothian North and Musselburgh) (SNP)
 Bibby, Neil (West Scotland) (Lab)
 Boyack, Sarah (Lothian) (Lab)
 Briggs, Miles (Lothian) (Con)
 Brown, Keith (Clackmannanshire and Dunblane) (SNP)
 Brown, Siobhian (Ayr) (SNP)
 Callaghan, Stephanie (Uddingston and Bellshill) (SNP)
 Cameron, Donald (Highlands and Islands) (Con)
 Carlaw, Jackson (Eastwood) (Con)
 Carson, Finlay (Galloway and West Dumfries) (Con)
 Choudhury, Foysol (Lothian) (Lab)
 Clark, Katy (West Scotland) (Lab)
 Coffey, Willie (Kilmarnock and Irvine Valley) (SNP)
 Cole-Hamilton, Alex (Edinburgh Western) (LD)
 Constance, Angela (Almond Valley) (SNP)
 Denham, Ash (Edinburgh Eastern) (SNP)
 Dey, Graeme (Angus South) (SNP)
 Don, Natalie (Renfrewshire North and West) (SNP)
 Doris, Bob (Glasgow Maryhill and Springburn) (SNP)
 Dornan, James (Glasgow Cathcart) (SNP)
 Dowe, Sharon (South Scotland) (Con)
 Dunbar, Jackie (Aberdeen Donside) (SNP)
 Duncan-Glancy, Pam (Glasgow) (Lab)
 Ewing, Annabelle (Cowdenbeath) (SNP)
 Ewing, Fergus (Inverness and Nairn) (SNP)
 Fairlie, Jim (Perthshire South and Kinross-shire) (SNP)
 Findlay, Russell (West Scotland) (Con)
 FitzPatrick, Joe (Dundee City West) (SNP)
 Forbes, Kate (Skye, Lochaber and Badenoch) (SNP)
 Fraser, Murdo (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 Gallacher, Meghan (Central Scotland) (Con)
 Gibson, Kenneth (Cunninghame North) (SNP)
 Gilruth, Jenny (Mid Fife and Glenrothes) (SNP)
 Gosal, Pam (West Scotland) (Con)
 Gougeon, Mairi (Angus North and Mearns) (SNP)
 Grahame, Christine (Midlothian South, Tweeddale and Lauderdale) (SNP)
 Gray, Neil (Airdrie and Shotts) (SNP)
 Greene, Jamie (West Scotland) (Con)
 Griffin, Mark (Central Scotland) (Lab)
 Gulhane, Sandesh (Glasgow) (Con)
 Hamilton, Rachael (Ettrick, Roxburgh and Berwickshire) (Con)
 Harper, Emma (South Scotland) (SNP)
 Haughey, Clare (Rutherglen) (SNP)
 Hepburn, Jamie (Cumbernauld and Kilsyth) (SNP)

Hoy, Craig (South Scotland) (Con)
 Hyslop, Fiona (Linlithgow) (SNP)
 Johnson, Daniel (Edinburgh Southern) (Lab)
 Halcro Johnston, Jamie (Highlands and Islands) (Con)
 Kerr, Liam (North East Scotland) (Con)
 Kidd, Bill (Glasgow Anniesland) (SNP)
 Lennon, Monica (Central Scotland) (Lab)
 Leonard, Richard (Central Scotland) (Lab)
 Lochhead, Richard (Moray) (SNP)
 Lockhart, Dean (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 Lumsden, Douglas (North East Scotland) (Con)
 MacDonald, Gordon (Edinburgh Pentlands) (SNP)
 MacGregor, Fulton (Coatbridge and Chryston) (SNP)
 Mackay, Rona (Strathkelvin and Bearsden) (SNP)
 Macpherson, Ben (Edinburgh Northern and Leith) (SNP)
 Marra, Michael (North East Scotland) (Lab)
 Martin, Gillian (Aberdeenshire East) (SNP)
 Mason, John (Glasgow Shettleston) (SNP)
 Matheson, Michael (Falkirk West) (SNP)
 McAllan, Màiri (Clydesdale) (SNP)
 McArthur, Liam (Orkney Islands) (LD)
 McKee, Ivan (Glasgow Provan) (SNP)
 McLennan, Paul (East Lothian) (SNP)
 McMillan, Stuart (Greenock and Inverclyde) (SNP)
 McNair, Marie (Clydebank and Milngavie) (SNP)
 McNeill, Pauline (Glasgow) (Lab)
 Minto, Jenni (Argyll and Bute) (SNP)
 Mochan, Carol (South Scotland) (Lab)
 Mundell, Oliver (Dumfriesshire) (Con)
 Nicoll, Audrey (Aberdeen South and North Kincardine) (SNP)
 O'Kane, Paul (West Scotland) (Lab)
 Rennie, Willie (North East Fife) (LD)
 Robison, Shona (Dundee City East) (SNP)
 Roddick, Emma (Highlands and Islands) (SNP)
 Ross, Douglas (Highlands and Islands) (Con)
 Rowley, Alex (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab)
 Sarwar, Anas (Glasgow) (Lab)
 Simpson, Graham (Central Scotland) (Con)
 Smith, Liz (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 Smyth, Colin (South Scotland) (Lab)
 Somerville, Shirley-Anne (Dunfermline) (SNP)
 Stevenson, Collette (East Kilbride) (SNP)
 Stewart, Alexander (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 Stewart, Kaukab (Glasgow Kelvin) (SNP)
 Stewart, Kevin (Aberdeen Central) (SNP)
 Sweeney, Paul (Glasgow) (Lab)
 Swinney, John (Perthshire North) (SNP)
 Thomson, Michelle (Falkirk East) (SNP)
 Todd, Maree (Caithness, Sutherland and Ross) (SNP)
 Tweed, Evelyn (Stirling) (SNP)
 Villalba, Mercedes (North East Scotland) (Lab)
 Webber, Sue (Lothian) (Con)
 Wells, Annie (Glasgow) (Con)
 White, Tess (North East Scotland) (Con)
 Whitfield, Martin (South Scotland) (Lab)
 Whitham, Elena (Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley) (SNP)
 Whittle, Brian (South Scotland) (Con)
 Wishart, Beatrice (Shetland Islands) (LD)
 Yousaf, Humza (Glasgow Pollok) (SNP)

Against

Burgess, Ariane (Highlands and Islands) (Green)
 Chapman, Maggie (North East Scotland) (Green)
 Greer, Ross (West Scotland) (Green)
 Harvie, Patrick (Glasgow) (Green)
 Mackay, Gillian (Central Scotland) (Green)
 Ruskell, Mark (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Green)
 Slater, Lorna (Lothian) (Green)

The Presiding Officer: The result of the division on motion S6M-00165, in the name of Kate Forbes, on economic recovery, as amended, is: For 111, Against 7, Abstentions 0.

Motion, as amended, agreed to,

That the Parliament recognises the significant and ongoing impact of COVID-19 restrictions on the Scottish economy; acknowledges the economic and financial hardship faced by businesses, communities and individuals due to efforts to suppress the virus; agrees on the urgent need to create the conditions for a sustainable economic recovery that delivers fairer and greater prosperity in Scotland across all regions and sectors; recognises that a thriving economy, with secure and meaningful employment opportunities, has an impact on long-term health and social outcomes; believes that Scotland's economic recovery must lay the groundwork for a just transition to a net-zero economy; understands the significant opportunities for creating jobs in green sectors such as renewable energy, public transport, energy efficiency and the natural environment; recognises the need for a major increase in public investment in Scotland and across the UK in these sectors to secure a green economic recovery; agrees that economic recovery must be a national endeavour supported by the collective action of public, private and third sectors; recognises the importance of Scotland's energy sector, including the oil and gas industries to the Scottish economy and the over 100,000 jobs that it supports; calls for the Scottish Government to be a partner in the £16 billion North Sea Transition Deal, and further calls for all of Scotland's parties and both the Scottish and UK governments to work together to make rebuilding the Scottish economy the number one priority in the immediate aftermath of the COVID-19 health pandemic.

The Presiding Officer: The next question is, that motion S6M-00208, in the name of Michael Matheson, on approval of a Scottish statutory instrument, be agreed to.

Motion agreed to,

That the Parliament agrees that the Health Protection (Coronavirus) (International Travel etc.) (Scotland) Amendment Regulations 2021 (SSI 2021/158) be approved.

The Presiding Officer: The next question is, that motion S6M-00209, in the name of John Swinney, on approval of an SSI, be agreed to.

Motion agreed to,

That the Parliament agrees that the Health Protection (Coronavirus) (Restrictions and Requirements) (Local Levels) (Scotland) Amendment (No. 18) Regulations 2021 (SSI 2021/166) be approved.

The Presiding Officer: The final question is, that motion S6M-00207, in the name of John Swinney, on the approval of an SSI, be agreed to.

Motion agreed to,

That the Parliament agrees that the Health Protection (Coronavirus) (Restrictions and Requirements) (Local Levels) (Scotland) Amendment (No. 18) Amendment Regulations 2021 (SSI 2021/168) be approved.

Meeting closed at 17:26.

This is the final edition of the *Official Report* for this meeting. It is part of the Scottish Parliament *Official Report* archive and has been sent for legal deposit.

Published in Edinburgh by the Scottish Parliamentary Corporate Body, the Scottish Parliament, Edinburgh, EH99 1SP

All documents are available on
the Scottish Parliament website at:

www.parliament.scot

Information on non-endorsed print suppliers
is available here:

www.parliament.scot/documents

For information on the Scottish Parliament contact
Public Information on:

Telephone: 0131 348 5000

Textphone: 0800 092 7100

Email: sp.info@parliament.scot



The Scottish Parliament
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba