

## **Item 10 - Question Time**

### Response to Mrs M Davidson

We have examined the detail of the agreement between the UK Government and Shetland Islands Council on housing debt.

There are some specific issues affecting Shetland's housing debt and the relationship to the development of the oil industry in the 1970's. Examining Highland's profile of Council house building and historic housing debt indicates that the Council has a similar case to Shetland in areas where we have built council housing to support oil related industries. The Administration is currently raising these issues with the Scottish and UK Governments in order to make a strong case for similar treatment for the Highlands. The Leader has discussed the issue with the Cabinet Secretary for Finance, Employment and Sustainable Growth and with the Minister for Local Government and Planning in the Scottish Government. The Depute Leader held constructive meetings with the Secretary of State for Scotland on 25 February and with the Chief Secretary to the Treasury on 28 February 2014. Contact has also been established with Shetland Islands Council to discuss the terms of the agreement in more detail. These meetings have suggested further information to be gathered with a view to preparing a business case for similar treatment of part of Highland Council's housing debt.