

Robert Brown MSP's ANNUAL REPORT FROM THE SCOTTISH PARLIAMENT



Robert in Parliament

Robert was appointed as Deputy Minister for Education and Young People by Deputy First Minister Nicol Stephen MSP in June 2005. Robert had previously been Convener of the Scottish Parliament's Education Committee since 2003.

Robert has been responsible for steering through Parliament key Bills on modernising the law on adoption and fostering, better involvement of parents in children's education and establishing a Scottish Human Rights Commission.



Nicol Stephen welcomes Robert Brown to the Scottish Executive



Young artist Laura Mairs presents her painting to Robert Brown at the SQA Inspirational Art Tour with interim Chief Executive Tom Drake looking on.

Robert said: "Giving young people the best possible start in life is my top priority. That is why we have modernised so many schools, improved support for children with autism, learning difficulties or other special needs, and widened opportunities for sport, enterprise, music and drama. I hope the Youthwork Strategy being launched this spring will boost opportunities for young people to have challenging experiences outside school as well."

Free Central Heating Scheme to be expanded

Many people have made representations to Robert about limitations on the popular free central heating scheme. Now the Scottish Executive have announced that an extra £5 million is being put in to the scheme to extend the scheme to those over 60.



Turning up the heat-with Warm Homes

Robert Brown has been a strong supporter of the scheme. He is delighted at the new announcements which he believes will enable many people in the area have central heating replaced or upgraded.

Reform of Council Tax

The review of the Council Tax by Sir Peter Burt has now reported and will provide facts and figures for the debate on the future of the unfair council tax - which bears so heavily on many people, particularly pensioners.

Glasgow MSP Robert Brown commented: "We need a tax related to people's ability to pay. I think it is time to scrap the council tax and move over to a local income tax which will be much fairer. Sir Peter's report will help the debate."

Power to the People in Planning system

Major changes are to be made to planning laws in Scotland following the passage of the new Planning (Scotland) Act. The Act will give new rights to local people affected by planning applications to be consulted. It should end the situation where the amenity of local areas is overridden by the power of big developers.

Robert Brown has welcomed the reforms: "It is high time that local amenities like bowling and tennis clubs, playing fields and parkland were protected against takeover by commercial interests. Good communities need facilities as well as houses."



Dear Residents,

A Year of Delivery

During the year, I have had the opportunity to meet and work with many people and many members of Voluntary Groups across Glasgow region which comprises the great City of Glasgow, and the historic communities of Rutherglen and Cambuslang which I represent in the Scottish Parliament. It is inspiring to see all the good work done in so many fields of action.

2006 has been a year of delivery too for the Scottish Parliament -

- Huge progress on school modernisation and recruitment of more teachers across Glasgow and South Lanarkshire
- The opening of the railway line to Anniesland through the new Kelvindale station
- Work under way on the new Victoria Hospital
- The ban on smoking in public places
- New travel concessions for students, while older people continue to enjoy free bus travel
- Free eye and dental checks to support good health

I am glad to have played a part as Glasgow MSP and as a Minister in the Scottish Executive in delivering these commitments to help make Scotland and our local communities better places to live, work and grow up in.

I hope this Report will give you a flavour of my work throughout the year.

Best wishes,

Robert Brown

Growing Healthy

Glasgow MSP Robert Brown has welcomed major progress on action to promote good health - including free eye and dental checks, the ban on smoking in public places and the "Hungry for Success" programme to encourage children to understand the importance of good diet and exercise.

Robert said: "We have one of the worst health records in the Western world. I am particularly pleased with the way people have supported the smoking ban - it is difficult now, with smoke-free atmospheres in restaurants and pubs, to see why anyone would be against the smoking ban. It also avoids young people feeling they have to start smoking for social reasons."

"I have long campaigned for free eye and dental checks - prevention is better than cure if problems can be picked up early."

About Robert Brown

Robert Brown is List MSP for Glasgow Region which includes Glasgow City together with the Rutherglen and Cambuslang areas of South Lanarkshire. Robert lives in Rutherglen with his family.

Apart from education and young people issues, Robert has been closely involved with campaigns supporting people with visual impairment, human rights and with employment and economic issues. He was a member of the Social Justice Committee in the first Parliamentary session.