

2019.11.12

9 Deputy I. Gardiner of St. Helier of the Minister for Economic Development, Tourism, Sport and Culture regarding the Jersey Innovation Fund: (OQ.272/2019)

Further to recent reports that most of the loans from the Jersey Innovation Fund have been repaid on time, will the Minister consider revising and reopening the fund, in order to support local start-ups?

Senator L.J. Farnham (The Minister for Economic Development, Tourism, Sport and Culture):

Turning back to the Innovation Fund, from the beginning I think the principle was absolutely right, but it was difficult, due to the lack of political and public appetite for the kind of risk that is associated with these kinds of ventures. I think the short answer is that there are no plans to reopen the existing fund. However, access to funding for start-ups and/or to develop growth and productivity in businesses, I think, is essential in our future economy. That work is now being undertaken by the Future Economy Group with the economic framework. The answer to the Deputy's question is there are no plans to reopen the existing fund, but there are plans to introduce a new type of funding.

3.9.1 Deputy I. Gardiner:

Can the Minister advise how much money remains in the fund now?

Senator L.J. Farnham:

The fund is closed, so technically there is no money remaining, but if my memory serves me correctly, I think £5 million was allocated and just over £2 million was utilised.

3.9.2 Deputy I. Gardiner:

Just to clarify, is it the £2 million was utilised and £3 million goes back to funds from the date the fund is in use, or the £3 million remains somewhere aside from this fund, the £3 million that was unused?

Senator L.J. Farnham:

The £3 million was returned, as I understand it, to the Treasury. I am not sure whether it went into reserves, or contingency. I am happy to find out. I will liaise with the Minister for Treasury and Resources and come back to the Deputy, but it certainly was not utilised by the fund and it was returned.