

20.11.17

21 Deputy R.J. Ward of the Minister for the Environment regarding the Climate Emergency Fund (OQ.325/2020):

Will the Minister explain what spending there has been, if any, from the Climate Emergency Fund during 2019, and will he outline any spending and planned allocations for 2020?

Deputy J.H. Young (The Minister for the Environment):

There was no expenditure from the Climate Emergency Fund during 2019. The fund did not exist until the States decision of 2nd December 2019. The budget was approved for 2020. Where we are this year so far, the spend to date is £179,732. The projected spend by the end of 2020 is £536,988. The budgeted figure in the Government Plan, which is subject to approval of course, is £4,403,000. I have the breakdown but I will not give it now. Basically, what we spend this year is the preliminary on the carbon neutral strategy to get the whole process underway; preliminary early costs on the Sustainable Transport Policy, in particular the scheme called Strong Star; then a whole set of measures on the environment, which were commenced and approved in 2020, soil health, biosecurity, habitat management, marine science and so on. If the Deputy wants more detail, I can send that in detail to Members. But that is the situation.

4.21.1 Deputy R.J. Ward:

Can I ask the Minister what tangible changes he envisages seeing by the end of 2020 from this fund?

Deputy J.H. Young:

Although it is not my ministerial responsibility, the Sustainable Transport Policy is obviously the responsibility of my colleague the Minister for Infrastructure. But both our objectives are surged from this fund. So the allocations I am told for the Strong Start scheme are £82,000. I am told this is for schemes that are almost ready, if not ready. I will have to come back as to the start date, but that is a real concrete benefit. On the question of the carbon-neutral, had we not spent the money we would not be in a position to carry forward and have that citizens assembly next year. All the work is really accelerating. So I think that is progress. Will we have the soil health, biosecurity, habitat management, marine science, in place? Not yet. But we have had to go on recruitment approaches and a whole lot of preliminary work there. So there will be real tangible benefits this year. If the Deputy has the impression that this is not going anywhere, it is simply not true.

4.21.2 Deputy K.F. Morel:

I was just wondering, in any given year, if the funds within the Climate Emergency Fund are not spent, would the Minister advise as to whether they are carried over or reallocated elsewhere?

Deputy J.H. Young:

A simple question; yes, they are rolled over. That is the arrangement that was agreed in the terms of reference of the fund. Of course, as those terms of reference require, the new Government Plan sets out that rolling over on page 172. It sets it out on a year-by-year basis. This is obviously an ongoing fund that rolls over but every year the States are required to approve the authorisations of expenditure in the Government Plan. That is part of the rules.

4.21.3 Deputy R.J. Ward:

Is there flexibility within the fund for projects that may develop during the year, given that the response to climate change is such a fast-changing science. Opportunities arise very quickly in the development of technology.

Deputy J.H. Young:

Within the scope of the terms of reference for the fund and the allocations, which are very broad - not all Members might like that but they are very broad allocations - there should be the possibility to absorb them. For example, under the Sustainable Transport Policy called Strong Start, there is a chunk of money of £3,150,000. So I would like to think there is flexibility within that to do quite a lot.