

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE MINISTER FOR THE ENVIRONMENT
BY DEPUTY D.J. WARR OF ST. HELIER SOUTH
QUESTION SUBMITTED ON MONDAY 26th FEBRUARY 2024
ANSWER TO BE TABLED ON MONDAY 4th MARCH 2024**

Question

“Regarding the vacant homes with listed status, identified by the Empty Home Service, will the Minister advise what action, if any, he is taking to ensure that these heritage properties are not lost as a result of remaining un-occupied and not being maintained?”

Answer

It is important to state at the outset that the listing of a building or place does not impose any statutory obligations of maintenance upon owners.

Retaining historic buildings in a viable use is, therefore, key to their retention and ongoing maintenance. In this respect, the existing framework of policy and guidance, established by the Minister and provided by the bridging Island Plan and supplementary planning guidance about managing change in the historic environment, encourages and enables proposals that allow for the establishment and maintenance of viable uses which are compatible with the special interest of listed buildings.

In the case of listed vacant homes, my historic environment officers provide expert advice about how best they might be brought back into use in a way that sustains their special interest whilst meeting modern standards and expectations of a decent home.

Powers do exist, under the Planning and Building (Jersey) Law 2002, to require the proper maintenance of land and the repair of ruinous or dilapidated buildings to prevent damage to the amenities of the Island.¹ These powers relate to all buildings and land, and not just to those which may be listed; and are vested in the Chief Officer, not the Minister. They are also limited to the maintenance or repair of a building: they do not and cannot require a building’s occupation or use. Their use cannot require or guarantee, for example, the use of a vacant home as a consequence of it being repaired or maintained.

As Minister, it is my intention to explore how best to develop policy and guidance that might ensure a viable future for heritage at risk, including vacant listed homes. This might include the provision of specific support for owners of listed buildings, to better understand why listed homes might be vacant, and what issues need to be addressed to enable them to be brought back into use and maintained, together with the potential use of existing legal provisions. The effective implementation of any such package of measures may require the provision of additional financial and professional resources, which would need to be identified as an integral part of this work.

¹ Under Articles 86 and 84 [Planning and Building \(Jersey\) Law 2002](#) respectively.