

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE MINISTER FOR HOUSING
BY DEPUTY H. JEUNE OF ST. JOHN, ST. LAWRENCE AND TRINITY
QUESTION SUBMITTED ON MONDAY 21st SEPTEMBER 2026
ANSWER TO BE TABLED ON MONDAY 28th SEPTEMBER 2026**

Question

“Following the adoption of the Environment, Housing and Infrastructure Scrutiny Panel's [Amendment to the Proposed Budget \(Government Plan\) 2026–2029](#) regarding developing policy mechanisms to address empty residential properties, will the Minister –

- (a) outline what analysis has been undertaken on empty homes to date, including any data gathered on the number, location and type of vacant properties in the Island;
- (b) advise which policy mechanisms have been explored to bring empty homes back into use, which of these have been selected for further development, and which, if any, have been ruled out; and
- (c) indicate when the findings of this work will be published, and what the next steps and timetable will be following publication?”

Answer

a) Analysis undertaken to date includes the 2022 Action on Vacant Properties work, casework carried out through the Empty Homes Service (EHS) between 2023 and 2024, and a desktop review undertaken in July 2026 of a subset of addresses previously identified as potentially relevant to unresolved ownership *and bona vacantia* considerations.

The 2021 Census recorded 4,027 vacant dwellings, representing 8.3% of Jersey's housing stock. However, this figure should not be interpreted as the number of long-term empty homes requiring policy intervention. The 2022 Action on Vacant Properties report distinguished between overall vacancy and a smaller group of potentially long-term vacant homes and produced an illustrative estimate of approximately 900 properties that might be of policy relevance, whilst acknowledging significant limitations in the available data.

The EHS was established in January 2023 to improve understanding of long-term empty homes. During its operation, approximately 300 reports of potentially vacant properties were received. These reports were considered through a combination of ownership checks, site observations and reviews of possible next steps. The evidence gathered through the service suggested that vacancy was often associated with specific barriers, including poor property condition, heritage considerations, unresolved ownership, succession and probate matters, redevelopment activity, and other financial, practical or legal barriers to occupation.

The October 2023 EHS update report included a geographical analysis of 260 properties reported to the service. Of these, 88 were in St Helier, 42 in St Peter, 29 in St Ouen, 25 in St Saviour, 19 in St Clement, 17 in St Lawrence and 15 in St Brelade, with smaller numbers reported elsewhere. The update identified concentrations in the north and west of St Helier, St Peter and locations along the south coast. It also noted that St Peter and St Ouen had been reported more often than might have been expected when compared with 2021 Census vacancy patterns.

The first 100 EHS case reviews identified 38 cases involving listed buildings and 36 cases involving properties considered to be in poor condition. However, vacancy was rarely attributable to a single issue.

Many cases involved a combination of factors, including heritage considerations, poor condition, redevelopment proposals, ownership matters and wider planning considerations. The evidence also demonstrated that reported properties were not necessarily representative of properties requiring intervention, as many were associated with sale, inheritance, refurbishment, redevelopment or other activity indicating a potential route back into occupation.

A desktop review undertaken in July 2026 of a subset of EHS addresses previously identified as potentially relevant to unresolved ownership or *bona vacantia* considerations found that many had since been sold, inherited, occupied, refurbished, redeveloped, actively marketed or were otherwise associated with activity inconsistent with persistent vacancy. While the review was limited and did not establish occupation in every case, it indicated that many properties had an existing route back into use, with only a smaller number potentially warranting further consideration where ownership remained unclear or unresolved.

The evidence gathered to date indicates that persistent vacancy is concentrated within a relatively small number of complex cases rather than being a widespread issue across Jersey's housing stock.

(b) A range of policy mechanisms have been explored through the Action on Vacant Properties programme, the EHS and subsequent review work. These include:

- vacancy data collection and monitoring;
- a community reporting mechanism;
- the EHS;
- planning, heritage and land-condition interventions using existing powers;
- engagement with the Receiver General in ownership-failure cases;
- acquisition and redevelopment by States-owned entities;
- Empty Dwelling Management Orders (EDMOs);
- compulsory purchase powers;
- rates-based measures; and
- a new empty homes tax.

The most recent review focused on three areas for potential further consideration.

First, consideration was given to whether existing planning, heritage, enforcement and land-condition powers may be relevant in relation to vacant listed buildings, heritage-at-risk properties and properties in poor condition. Any further work in this area would depend on engagement with the Minister for Planning and Regulation, the availability of resources and whether intervention would be proportionate in individual cases.

Second, EDMOs were considered as a potential mechanism for properties that are persistently vacant, where ownership is known and there is no clear evidence of sale, refurbishment, redevelopment or another route back into use. The review concluded that the available evidence does not currently establish how many Jersey properties would be suitable for such a regime or whether the likely benefits would justify the legislative, operational and financial implications of introducing a new statutory power. The option therefore remains under consideration but is not being progressed at this stage.

Third, consideration was given to the development of a referral pathway with the Receiver General for a limited number of ownership-failure cases. Existing evidence suggests that this route may assist where unresolved ownership or succession issues are preventing a property from returning to use. One historic

EHS case has already progressed through this route and is now being redeveloped for occupation as a family home.

Of the three options considered, the Minister for Housing concluded that the development of a referral pathway with the Receiver General represented the most proportionate and potentially effective option for further exploration.

The evidence does not currently support broad intervention across vacant homes generally. Previous work did not support the introduction of a new empty homes tax because of uncertainty regarding effectiveness and the significant administrative requirements that would be associated with such an approach.

(c) The findings of the July 2026 desktop review, together with consideration of the previous work undertaken through the Action on Vacant Properties reports and the EHS, were provided to the Minister for Housing as part of internal policy advice. That advice was intended to inform consideration of whether any further intervention in relation to empty homes was justified and, if so, what form it should take.

No standalone publication of this work is currently planned.

Having considered the available evidence, the Minister for Housing concluded that the development of a referral pathway with the Receiver General represented the most proportionate and potentially effective option for further exploration. This reflects the evidence gathered to date, which suggests that persistent vacancy is concentrated within a relatively small number of complex cases, including some where unresolved ownership or ownership failure may be preventing a property from returning to use.

The next step is therefore to explore the practical development of that referral pathway and to identify whether any remaining cases may warrant referral. Further validation of historic EHS casework would also be required before any additional policy development, legislative proposals or operational interventions are considered.

Should this work identify matters that warrant further policy development or ministerial action, the Minister for Housing would be pleased to update the Environment, Housing and Infrastructure Scrutiny Panel and the States Assembly accordingly.