

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE MINISTER FOR INFRASTRUCTURE
BY DEPUTY C.S. ALVES OF ST. HELIER
ANSWER TO BE TABLED ON TUESDAY 26th JUNE 2018**

Question

Following the adoption of ‘Piquet House: cancellation of sale and future use’ (P.16/2014), with which the States decided not to sell Piquet House but instead to find a public or community use for the building, will the Minister explain why this decision has not been implemented; and will he provide members with an update on what plans, if any, exist to provide the building with a suitable public use?

Answer

In the period following the States approval of proposition P.16/2014, Jersey Property Holdings marketed the property for community use and progressed certain options with prospective community users. Significant progress was made with one particular organisation, but ultimately it was not possible to reach an agreement and that organisation withdrew.

The main stumbling block is the cost of refurbishing the building. This is estimated as ranging from £750,000 to £1,000,000 depending on the specification. This is beyond those community groups identified as potential leaseholders under the proposition and has made it impossible for a community user and Jersey Property Holdings to reach an accommodation.

In the absence of being able to dispose of the property in the open market, Jersey Property Holdings’ only other option is to fund the refurbishment through a capital bid. The level of rental income that could be negotiated with a community user would provide a low level of financial return when compared with the financial return that could be obtained by investing a capital receipt through the Common Investment Fund.

In 2017 a formal application was made by the Bailiff’s Chambers to the previous Minister for Infrastructure / Jersey Property Holdings for a Public use for the building, that being the first such application since P.16/2014 was approved.

Jersey Property Holdings has progressed that application, with floor plans for the conversion of the building having been drawn up, and an initial feasibility study completed. The cost of refurbishing and converting the building for the Public use has been estimated at £891,400, with the possibility of a further £89,140 for ‘consequential improvements’ arising from the Building Control application and approval process.

It is likely that the next stage of this project is to submit a bid to the Treasury for capital funding, in conjunction with submitting a planning application. Given the current allocation of funding for capital projects, the application, if successful, is unlikely to receive funding until the next Medium Term Plan cycle 2020 – 2023.