

Date: 08/03/19  
Our Ref: RFI2617  
Your Ref: FOI Request – West Oxfordshire District Council  
Tel: 0300 1234 500  
Email: [foi@homesengland.gov.uk](mailto:foi@homesengland.gov.uk)



Homes  
England

[REDACTED]  
By Email Only

Windsor House  
50 Victoria Street  
London  
SW1H 0TL

Dear [REDACTED]

**RE: Request for Information – RFI2617**

Thank you for your recent email, which was processed under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA). For clarification, you requested the following information:

*In a press release yesterday WODC (West Oxfordshire District Council) announced that it had been given £150,00 by Homes England. "The money will help support additional community engagement"*

*This appears to be an admission that the current engagement has been poor. It has certainly been controlling, manipulative and run by people not skilled in this area.*

Can you advise me please:-

1. *What has this money been allocated towards*
2. *Are you giving advice to WODC on how to run a successful community engagement*
3. *How will you be monitoring that this money has been used effectively.*

**Response**

I am able to confirm that Homes England hold some recorded information that falls within the scope of your request.

We are able to confirm, in response to question 1, that in bidding for capacity funding for 2018/19, West Oxfordshire District Council identified community engagement as a key area they would like to use capacity funding for.

I am able to confirm that Homes England does not hold the information detailed in your request for questions 2 and 3. This is because there is no legal or business reason for Homes England to do so.

In order to conclude that the information is not held, we have searched with our Midlands Delivery team who would have the requested information if held.

The FOIA does not oblige a public authority to create information to answer a request if the requested information is not held. The duty under section 1(1) is only to provide the recorded information held.

The full text of section 1 in the legislation can be found here:

<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2000/36/section/1>

**Advice and Assistance**

We have a duty to provide advice and assistance in accordance with Section 16 and Section 45 (Code of Practice) of the FOIA.

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To comply with this duty we are able to inform you of the following points which should provide assistance with the rest of your request.

- 1) Homes England has not advised the Council on how to run a successful community engagement.
- 2) Homes England monitors how local authorities (including West Oxfordshire District Council) use any capacity funding they are awarded through this programme. This is monitored through dialog with local authorities by requesting information on how they intending to use the funding and then further how they are actually using the funding. Homes England then reports the findings to the internal Garden Village Programme Board.

We are also able to inform you that the funding referred to is capacity funding provided by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government which is intended to support local authorities that are involved in taking forward projects that form part of the Garden Towns and Villages Programme.

Capacity funding is primarily intended to enable the local authority to build its capacity in bringing forward garden towns & village projects, recognising the resource need likely to be incurred by these large and complex projects.

The funding can be used for a variety of purposes, for example to appoint additional staff resource to manage these projects, commission consultancy support where appropriate, create materials to help with public engagement, etc.

The need for and use of capacity funding varies from project to project. The distribution of the funding is administered by Homes England.

### **Right to Appeal**

If you are not happy with the information that has been provided or the way in which your request has been handled you may request an internal review by writing to;

The Information Access Team  
Windsor House  
50 Victoria Street  
London  
SW1H 0TL

Or via email [foi@homesengland.gov.uk](mailto:foi@homesengland.gov.uk)

You may also complain to the Information Commissioner however, the Information Commissioner does usually expect the internal review procedure to be exhausted in the first instance.

The Information Commissioner's details can be found via the following link

<https://ico.org.uk/>

Please note that the contents of your request and this response are also subject to the Freedom of Information Act 2000. Homes England may be required to disclose your request and our response accordingly.

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Yours sincerely,

**Information Access Team**

for Homes England.