

Date: 15/08/2019
Our Ref: RFI2734
Your Ref: FOI Request – Sales of social rent voids by stock holding
Tel: 0300 1234 500
Email: foi@homesengland.gov.uk



Homes
England

██████████
By Email Only

Windsor House
Homes England – 6th Floor
50 Victoria Street
London
SW1H 0TL

Dear ██████████

RE: Request for Information – RFI2734

Thank you for your recent email, which was processed under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA).

For clarification, you requested the following information:

1. The numbers of social rent voids sold to market by London councils/ALMOs (Bexley, Bromley, Merton and Richmond transferred all of most of their council housing to housing associations so this may not apply to them)

a. Numbers sold by year, from 2011/12 to 2018/19 or the latest (financial/calendar) year when records are available.

b. Did councils also need permission from the Regulator of Social Housing/Homes England to sell social rent voids? (I assume they did)

c. The total capital receipts from sales by borough. (If available, total and by year if recorded that way)

d. If recorded, the number/estimate of new 'low cost rent' homes built or planned using such receipts, at different rent levels: existing rates using social rent formula, maximum 'target' social rent, 'affordable' rent, or more recently, London Affordable Rent.

(Possibly using other finance sources too, though changing regulations affect what these receipts can be mixed with; grant; Right to Buy receipts; Housing Revenue Account borrowing etc. Any brief explanation on this would be appreciated but isn't necessary).

Explanation: stock holding councils often sell off some social rent homes as they become void - instead of re-letting them at social rent – usually homes judged too expensive to repair and/or high value homes that would enable more than one-for-one replacements. My assumption is that most councils sell some stock but at least plan to replace losses in low cost rent.

Response

I am able to confirm that Homes England does not hold the information detailed in your request. 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 Programmes 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.

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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 of the FOIA. To comply with this duty we are able to advise that Homes England does not operate in the Greater London Area and that Homes England and the Regulator of Social Housing became two separate entities on 1 October 2018. We therefore recommend that you direct your request to:

Regulator of Social Housing:

enquiries@rsh.gov.uk

Referrals and Regulatory Enquiries team - FOI request

1st Floor – Lateral

8 City Walk

Leeds

LS11 9AT

And/or

Greater London Authority:

mayor@london.gov.uk

Public Liaison Unit

Greater London Authority

The Queen's Walk

London

SE1 2AA

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

Homes England – 6th Floor

Windsor House

50 Victoria Street

London

SW1H 0TL

Or by email to 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/>

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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.

Yours sincerely,

Information Access Team

For Homes England