



Homes  
England

Date: 31/01/2020

Our Ref: RFI2876

Tel: 0300 1234 500

Email: [foi@homesengland.gov.uk](mailto:foi@homesengland.gov.uk)

Making homes happen

██████████  
By Email Only

Windsor House  
Homes England – 6<sup>th</sup> Floor  
50 Victoria Street  
London  
SW1H 0TL

Dear ██████████,

**RE: Request for Information – RFI2876**

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

*The request is regarding Homes England's Strategic Partnership Programme and the delivery of homes through the programme so far.*

*In January 2019, Homes England announced its third wave of strategic partners, taking the total number of partners in the programme to 23.*

*Could please provide me answers to the following?*

- 1) Could you provide me with the total number of homes partially or fully funded through the strategic partnership programme that have been started as of the 1 January 2020?*
- 2) How much money in total has Homes England handed out in grant to housing associations under the strategic partnerships programme as of the 1 January 2020?*
- 3) Could you provide me with a breakdown of the total number of homes partially or fully funded through strategic partnership programme that have been started by each of the 23 strategic partners currently signed up to the strategic partnerships programme as of the 1st January 2020? Can you break this down by each partnership and number of homes started?*
- 4) Could you provide me a breakdown of the total amount of grant each of the 23 strategic partners have been given by Homes England through the strategic partnership programme as of the 1<sup>st</sup> January 2020? Can you break this down by each partnership and total grant received?*

**Response**

We can confirm that we do hold some of the information that you have requested. We will address each of your points in turn.

- 1) *Could you provide me with the total number of homes partially or fully funded through the strategic partnership programme that have been started as of the 1 January 2020?***

Section 44 – Prohibitions on disclosure

The information requested forms part of National Statistics. It therefore cannot be disclosed in advance of the publication of National Statistics. This is specifically provided for under section 44(1)(a) of the

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FOIA as the disclosure is prohibited under any enactment. The relevant enactment for this information is the Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007.

Section 44 is an absolute exemption. This means that we do not have to consider the public interest in disclosure.

The full text of the exemption in the legislation can be found on the following link;

<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2000/36/section/44>

**2) *How much money in total has Homes England handed out in grant to housing associations under the strategic partnerships programme as of the 1 January 2020?***

We are able to inform you that we do hold the information that you have requested. However, we rely on section 22, exemption where information is intended for future publication under the FOIA.

Section 22 is a qualified exemption. This means that in order to withhold information under this exemption, we must consider the public interest in disclosure.

Public Interest Test – Factors in favour of disclosure

- Homes England is compliant with the government agenda of transparency and recognises the benefit of publishing the information, particularly when it concerns how Homes England undertakes its work.

Public Interest Test – Factors in favour of non-disclosure

- The total grant funding amounts given by Homes England under this programme are published in our annual reports;
- Releasing the requested information before it has been collated and prepared for release may result in inaccurate or misleading information being in the public domain. Without proper verification of the data we would be unable to provide context to ensure that it is not misunderstood;
- We cannot publish any figures outside of this publication date until the information has been properly ratified for the annual reports publication;
- Though we acknowledge the public interest in the information requested, we cannot identify a wider public interest in publishing the information ahead of schedule;
- The Home England annual reports can be found via the following link, and are published in around July of each year: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/homes-england-annual-report-financial-statements-201819>

Therefore after careful consideration we have concluded that at this time, the balance of the public interest favours the non-disclosure.



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- 3) Could you provide me with a breakdown of the total number of homes partially or fully funded through strategic partnership programme that have been started by each of the 23 strategic partners currently signed up to the strategic partnerships programme as of the 1st January 2020? Can you break this down by each partnership and number of homes started?**

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Section 44 is an absolute exemption. This means that we do not have to consider the public interest in disclosure.

The full text of the exemption in the legislation can be found on the following link;

<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2000/36/section/44>

- 4) Could you provide me a breakdown of the total amount of grant each of the 23 strategic partners have been given by Homes England through the strategic partnership programme as of the 1st January 2020? Can you break this down by each partnership and total grant received?**

Section 43 - Commercial interests

Under section 43(2) Homes England is not obliged to disclose information that would, or would be likely to, prejudice the commercial interests of any party.

Homes England has identified that the information requested, if released, would be likely to prejudice the effective operation of the Strategic Partnership programme.

The information requested relating to individual strategic partner grants engages section 43(2) of the FOIA as it is commercial in nature and its release would be likely to prejudice the commercial interests of Homes England and other interested parties to the information. Total figures for grant payments are published as per our response to question 2 above. Detailed figures relating to individual strategic partners are ongoing and are potentially subject to change through the financial audit process at financial year end. To release figures that are subject to change would be detrimental to both Homes England and our strategic partners as it would not be an accurate representation of the programme.

Section 43 is a qualified exemption. This means that once we have decided that the exemption is engaged, Homes England must carry out a public interest test to assess whether or not it is in the wider public interest for the information to be disclosed.

Arguments in favour of disclosure:

- Homes England acknowledges there is a general public interest in promoting accountability, transparency, public understanding and involvement in how Homes England undertakes its work and how it spends public money.



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Arguments in favour of withholding:

- Releasing this information would not be in the public interest as it would adversely affect the relationship between Homes England and current and future partners. There would be significant reputational, commercial and financial loss to Homes England and our partners if incorrect information is published that does not accurately represent the programme;
- Homes England have to support relationships with our strategic partners in order to achieve best value for public money and best possible delivery of Homes. Releasing working information ahead of the finalised grant data would prejudice this relationship and be detrimental to Homes England's reputation as a partner in the industry. This would be damaging to the public purse as we would not achieve best value for public money, and would undermine Homes England's position and ability to deliver against its objectives and targets in our Strategic Plan; and
- Homes England has been unable to identify a wider public interest in disclosing the information requested.

Having considered the arguments for and against disclosure of the information, we have concluded that at this time, the balance of the public interest favours non-disclosure.

However, once the general data has been published in the national statistics and annual reports and this information is complete, the commercial sensitivities may have passed in relation to releasing the detailed information you have sought per strategic partner.

The full text of in the legislation can be found on the following link;

<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2000/36/section/43>

**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 – 6<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Windsor House  
50 Victoria Street  
London  
SW1H 0TL

Or by email to [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/>



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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

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