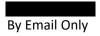# Homes England

Making homes happen

Date: 04/06/2020
Our Ref: RFI2988
Tel: 0300 1234 500
Email: infogov@homesengland.gov.uk

By Email Only

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

Dear ██████,

RE: Request for Information – RFI2988

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

I wish to submit a request for some of the organisation's information around the internal plans and strategy documents around ICT.

The ICT documents I require is the most recent update.

I wish to obtain the following documents:

1. *ICT/IM&T/IS Strategy- The IT department strategy or plans, highlights their current and future objectives.*

2. *ICT Org Chart- A visual document that present the structure of the IT department, please include name and job titles. If this can't be sent please work towards a structure with job titles.*

3. *ICT Annual or Business Plan- Similar to the ICT strategy but is more annually focused.*

4. *ICT Capital Programme/budget- A document that shows financials budget on current and future projects.*

If some of these documents are not valid, please state when the 2019 ICT documents are planned to be published.
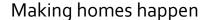
Response
We can confirm that we do hold some of the requested information.

1) ***ICT/IM&T/IS Strategy***
   Please find attached Annex A, Homes England's digital team strategy for April 2020-March 2021.

2) ***ICT Org Chart***
   Please find attached Annex B. It should be noted that Homes England is currently undergoing structural change. A more recent organisational chart which reflects the future proposed structure is currently in draft form and awaiting Senior Leadership to approve. We currently anticipate the new structure to be in place by

![Homes England logo]

Homes
England

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August 2020. You may wish to re-submit this part of your request after this date for more recent information.

Section 40 – Personal information
We have redacted information on the grounds that in constitutes third party personal data and therefore engages section 40(2) of the FOIA.

To disclose personal data, such as names, contact details, addresses, email addresses and personal opinions could lead to the identification of third parties and would breach one or more of the data protection principles.

Section 40 is an absolute exemption which means that we do not need to consider the public interest in disclosure. Once it is established that the information is personal data of a third party and release would breach one or more of the data protection principles, then the exemption is engaged.

The full text in the legislation can be found on the following link;
https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2000/36/section/40

3) *ICT Annual or Business Plan*
As per our response to question 2, a new iteration of the Digital Business Plan is currently in draft form and should also be completed by August 2020.

Please find attached Annex C, a copy of the current Digital Business Plan. We have reviewed the contents of the current Annual Business Plan in so far as they apply to ICT services as the document also covers other services and therefore most of its contents are outside the scope of your request. We have redacted some information under the exemptions listed below.

Section 40 – Personal information
We have redacted information on the grounds that in constitutes third party personal data and therefore engages section 40(2) of the FOIA.
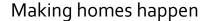
Section 43 - Commercial interests
Under section 43(2) Homes England is not obliged to disclose information that would, or would be likely to, prejudice the commercial interests of any party.

Information contained within the Business Plan 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.

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

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.

Date: 04/06/2020
Our Ref: RFI2988
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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.

Arguments in favour of withholding:
- The redacted information details the work being undertaken to identify and remedy potential vulnerabilities in Homes England's current systems. It would be contrary to Homes England's commercial interests for this information to be public knowledge. It would not be in the public interest for this information to be disclosed as this could make Homes England and its systems less secure, impairing its ability to perform its statutory functions and deliver its objectives.

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.

The full text of in the legislation can be found on the following link;
https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2000/36/section/43

4) **ICT Capital Programme/budget**
We can confirm that the digital programme budget for 2020/21 is £740,000.

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

Or by email to infogov@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/

Making homes happen

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,

The Information Governance Team
For Homes England

Homes England

Digital Vision and Strategy
Our Why, How and What

April 2020 -March 2021

Mission Statement
(Why)

Our engaged, skilled and diverse team #makehomeshappen by delivering amazing web and technology services fit for the digital age. We are a catalyst for Homes England in its mission to intervene in the market to ensure more homes are built in areas of greatest need.

We exist as a team to enable, empower and inspire people with great technology products and services.

Ways of Working
(How)

As a team, we embrace and exemplify the Homes England Way. This is reflected in our Digital ways of working. These ways of working reinforce rather than replace and the Homes England Way, amplifying those aspects that particularly pertain to Digital work.

In our work…

- We get the basics right
- We do the right thing
- We delight our users and lean into their issues
- We are agile
- We deliver services, not things
- We innovate and experiment
- We relentlessly improve what we deliver and how we deliver it

As a team…

- We share, collaborate and work in the open
- We trust, empower and support each other
- We positively challenge ourselves and others
- We welcome challenge, dissent and new ideas from wherever they come
- We celebrate successes and heroic failures

Our Norms

Our customers recognise our professionalism and value by how we react when difficult choices are demanded. Our norms are our default positions in such moments.

- We prefer to say "yes, if" or "yes, later" rather than "no"
- We prefer to empower than to direct
- We prefer to start small than to plan big
- We prefer to decide than to defer a decision
- We prefer finishing work in progress than adding more
- We prefer managed delivery over heroics
- We prefer good today over perfect later
- We prefer intentional design over reactive solutions
- We prefer to reduce technical debt than to add to it
- We prefer to be focused rather than busy

Whilst the items on the right have value in the right circumstances, we value the items on the left more. These are rules of thumb, not rules. This a guide and is not an exhaustive list.

Strategic Directions
(What)

Homes England is embarking on a Transformation programme, which has digital services, products and infrastructure as a key pillar. The business case for Transformation has the 3-4 year strategic roadmap for Digital services and technology enablers within it. It would therefore not be helpful to restate this roadmap or to present an alternative strategic roadmap in this document.

However, there are aspects of the capabilities, architecture, culture and practice of Digital that require specific direction and focus, to enable digital-age services to be realised at pace and scale. These strategic directions will be stable over a period of years and will stand with or without a separately funded Transformation business case. The strategic directions chart the overall the direction of Digital rather than the specific waypoints. Waypoints are defined elsewhere and will be realised to agile principles, rather than to an up-front plan.

These strategic directions will deliver the underpinning and enabling Digital services that the Agency requires to deliver the Homes England Strategic Plan.

Our strategic directions are as follows:

Less of this		More of this
Command and control	⇨	Empowered people and teams
Siloed, specialised teams	⇨	Multidisciplinary teams
Underinvestment in learning	⇨	Professional learning and development
A job in Digital	⇨	A career in Homes England
Key person risk	⇨	Sustainable skills and capabilities
Disengaged people	⇨	Engaged teams of motivated people
Reactive delivery	⇨	Balanced strategic and responsive delivery
Creating new strategies	⇨	Delivering and improving our strategies
Working hard and hoping for results	⇨	Measuring our results
Ad-hoc risk/issue management	⇨	Portfolio risk/issue management
Silos and mistrust	⇨	Working in the open and collaborating
Unknown capacity and WIP	⇨	WIP limits and visible WIP
Best-endeavours support	⇨	Mature, industry standard service support
Meeting requirements	⇨	Delighting our users
GDS-like products	⇨	GDS compliant products
Escalating technical debt and legacy risk	⇨	Managed reduction of technical debt and legacy risk
Finished products handed over to support	⇨	Continuous development and integration
Monolithic products	⇨	Modular, API-driven microservices architecture
Reactive point-solutions	⇨	Architecture vision, principles and governance

Less of this		More of this
Phone support	⇨	Tech bars and digital self-service
On-premise infrastructure	⇨	Cloud platform-as-a-service
Homes England Data Centres	⇨	Crown Hosting
Wide Area Network bearers	⇨	Internet as a bearer & SD WAN
Moat and Castle network architecture	⇨	Zero trust networking
Virtual Servers	⇨	Containers
Point to point system integrations	⇨	Reusable APIs
Poor quality, unmanaged data	⇨	Data architecture, governance and standards
Ownerless data	⇨	Data ownership
Diverse data stores	⇨	Common data platform
Spreadsheets and home-grown analysis tools	⇨	Analytics platform and data science
Untrusted data	⇨	Trusted, secure, quality data
Security assurance of products and services	⇨	Secure by design: assurance of process and practice
Reactive cyber security	⇨	Defensive cyber security
Information security incidents	⇨	Information security awareness

Objectives and Key Results

How we turn strategy into execution

Objectives and Key Results are a tool for explicitly linking execution (what we do) to strategy. Too often strategies are written and then set aside on the assumption that they will be achieved, or they are eclipsed by day-to-day priorities. Often progress towards a strategy is measured only after it is too late course-correct to achieve it. Often, in retrospect, we realise that a strategy did not fit the realities of delivery and may never have been achievable, yet because this is a retrospective realisation, there is no opportunity to devise a more achievable strategy.

OKRs are similar to management by objectives, but different in that they always numerically measurable. Progress towards OKRs is measured very regularly using progressive, quantitative metrics to allow course corrections to be made.

Key results are not initiatives or tasks, they are measures that tell if the tasks and initiatives are taking us closer to achieving an objective. If a key result has a binary outcome (e.g. do a thing, implement a thing) and cannot be progressively measured, it is better expressed as an initiative or task contributing to a Key Result.

An OKR objective is formulated like this:

We/I will (Objective) as measured by (this set of Key Results).

Objectives are memorable qualitative descriptions of what you want to achieve.

Objectives should be short, inspirational and engaging. An Objective should motivate and challenge the team

We hold ourselves and each other accountable to our objectives

Objectives and progress are in the open

Key Results are a set of metrics that measure your progress towards the Objective. For each Objective, you should have a set of 2 to 5 Key Results. More than that and no one will remember them.

"If it does not have a number, it is not a Key Result."

Key results are measured quarterly, with weekly check-ins on progress/confidence

The Key Results, if achieved, should collectively mean that the Objective has been achieved

Initiatives are the task and projects that will allow the Key Results to be realised

Initiatives are the steps or roadmap to achieving a Key Results.

Digital OKRs are managed through ██████

Initiatives

(What)

These initiatives are for Financial Year 2020/21 are guided by the Strategic Directions and will deliver the Objectives and Key Results. The OKRs are our measure of success, rather then ticking off initiatives

We will:

For our ways of working…

- Implement and mature OKRs as our method of linking strategy to execution
- Mature and embed user-centred service design in Digital
- Create the team, skills and processes to pilot and grow DevOps as a methodology
- Mature and embed Communities of Practice as the engine of professional excellence
- Ensure that our work is made visible and routinely, regularly prioritised
- Mature and embed multidisciplinary team working
- Make our services easy to find and easy to access
- Mature and embed the Technical Design Authority, technical communities and architecture vision to drive intentional design decisions
- Communicate regularly and consistently to teams through blogs/vlogs/weeknotes
- Align to best practice in Government and industry
- Communicate with our users regularly in clear, straightforward language

With our partners and stakeholders…

- Work in close collaboration with Transformation colleagues, including as part of their multidisciplinary teams and leadership.
- Build regular, productive engagement with MHCLG digital and wider Government
- Proactively and positively engage with our business stakeholders and partners

For our Digital Operations…

- Develop an improved Service Support Model - fit for the digital age
- Increase user self-service
- Improve assurance around business continuity and disaster recovery

- Develop an operational excellence framework of metrics and commence monthly reporting against them

For our team…

- Significantly reduce our reliance on contractors and consultants
- Implement our new operating model for a high performing team - right shape, right size
- Integrate dispersed digital teams within the business, into Digital
- Implement a skills and development framework for our people
- Continuously measure and improve empowerment, engagement and happiness
- Continuously measure and improve diversity
- Actively make time and space for fun

For our End-user Services…

- Continuously improve our understanding of user needs through user research
- Quantitively and qualitatively measure the quality of our services to drive continuous improvement
- Continuously measure and improve our customers' experience and satisfaction
- Extend our employee experience offer to include a modernised Collaboration Spaces experience
- Create improved front-of-house services to make our services more accessible and responsive
- Build awareness and skills around Office365 tools to drive business value and gain benefits
- Automate and accelerate business processes to release capacity for higher value work

For our Software Products...

- Mature and embed our implementation of GDS design principles & standards, and our architecture principles
- Embed user centred development
- Establish automation and automated testing in our everyday work
- Identify and progressively reduce our technical debt and legacy risk
- Pilot and implement Continuous Integration/Continuous Development practices Automate our testing and release processes
- Consolidate our coding languages and development platforms

For our Delivery...

- Establish a Digital delivery Roadmap
- Reboot our PMO to be optimised for agile delivery
- Prioritise our portfolio and backlog to operate within agreed WIP limits
- Make our work, progress, risks and blockers visible in order to manage flow and risks in real time
- Coordinate and integrate our portfolio with Transformation and the wider business
- Make our delivery management processes transparent to the business and responsive to business needs
- Design and implement a professional DevOps toolchain

With our Technology...

- Design, iterate and productionise our cloud platform
- Accelerate the migration of services to cloud, serverless and infrastructure as code
- Utilise pan-Government services, such as Notify and Verify
- Design and implement Transformation-enabling common platform services (e.g. identity)
- Rehost our on-premise infrastructure in Crown Hosting
- Relentlessly retire and replace legacy technology, tools and services
- Reduce vendor lock-in for WAN bearers, including use of internet as a bearer
- Improve the Bring Your Own Device (BYOD) experience, including Cloud Print

For our Data...

- Establish and mature a data architecture and data systems team
- Establish data architecture, standards and governance
- Establish and mature a central data science and strategic intelligence capability
- Design and launch a Common Data Platform
- Design and launch a data analytics Platform
- Integrate and cleanse legacy data on the Common data platform and put it to work as information

For our Security...

- Increase (and measure) user awareness of information security risks and mitigating user behaviours
- Regular metrics dashboard publishing Information Security and Cyber KPI's
- Improve the security of Microsoft 365 services through best practice and use of Microsoft security tools, including maturing our BYOD service
- Implement automation of security assurance for Continuously developed software products
- Define and document security assurance for a continuous delivery model
- Create a revised security model to support the migration from PSN
- Build preparedness for an increase in Cyber threat surface from increased internet-facing services
- Align InfoSec policy with overarching Cyber Defence Framework

"We can only see a short distance ahead, but we can see plenty there that needs to be done."
— Alan Turing, Computing machinery and intelligence

Homes England

DIGITAL

Legend	
■	Executive Director
■	Director
■	General Manager
■	Head of Team
■	Senior Specialist
■	Specialist
■	Analyst/EA/TC
■	Apprentice

Head of Service Delivery
Gateshead

Information Security Manager
Gateshead

Senior Software Development Manager
London

Head of Data and Digital
London
VACANT

Software Project Manager
Gateshead

Cyber Security Apprentice
Gateshead

IT Asset Management Co-ordinator
Gateshead

Information Security Officer
Gateshead

Digital Graduate
Gateshead

Digital Graduate
Gateshead

Interim Head of Platform & Infrastructure
Gateshead

Interim Head of Employee Engagement
Gateshead

Interim Service Support Manager
Gateshead

Senior Training/Support Officer
Bedford

Digital Operations Assistant
Gateshead

Assistant Director Delivery
Gateshead
VACANT

Assistant Director Technology
Gateshead
VACANT

Senior Business Analyst
London

Refreshed 02/05/2019

Homes England

Senior Software Development Manager
London

Senior Analyst Developer
London

Senior Analyst Developer
London

Senior Analyst Developer
London

Lead Analyst Developer
London

Systems Analyst
London

Software Development Manager
Gateshead

Lead Analyst Developer
Gateshead

Senior Business Analyst
London

Software Development Manager
London

Software Project Manager
London

Software Project Manager
London

Systems Analyst
London
VACANT

Senior Analyst Developer
London

Systems Analyst
Gateshead

Senior Analyst Developer
London

DIGITAL

Homes England

Interim Head of Platform & Infrastructure
Gateshead

Database Administrator
London

Database Administrator
London

Infrastructure Solution Architect
Gateshead

Cloud Solution Architect
Gateshead

Infrastructure Solution Architect
Gateshead

Infrastructure Solution Architect
Gateshead

Infrastructure Solution Engineer
Gateshead

DIGITAL

Homes England

Interim Service Support Manager
Gateshead

Service Support Officer
Gateshead

Service Support Officer
Gateshead

Service Support Officer
Gateshead

Apprentice Service Support Officer
Gateshead
VACANT

Service Support Team Leader
London

IT Service Support Officer
Gateshead

Service Support Officer
Gateshead

Service Support Officer
London

Service Support Officer
London
VACANT

IT Service Support Officer
London

Appendix 6: Delivering home ownership products activities

Why is this strategic objective important?

Home ownership is becoming increasingly unaffordable for millions of families across England. Decades of undersupply of housing alongside rising housing demand has seen average house prices increase faster than average incomes. Younger households on average incomes in high demand parts of England feel the impact of this particularly acutely.

Delivering home ownership products - Business Improvement Activities

	Activity	Key Deliverable/ Output	SRO	How this activity supports the objective
1	Help to Buy Agent and Servicing Provider Procurement.	Establish new contractual agreements for sales agents and new servicing operations further defined by transition state one/two of the Homes England digital transformation. ██████████████ ████████████████ ████████████████ ███████████████ ████████████████ █████████	████████	Supports the commitment of Homes England to effectively deliver home ownership products consistent with industry standards.

2	██████████████████████	██████████████████████ ████████████ ████████████████████ ████████████████ ████████████████ ████████████████████ ██████████████	████████	████████████████████ ████████████████
3	Create End to End Digital Transformation - Technology	Define a new digital and technology requirements to feed into Homes England digital plan to underpin product, process and technology improvements. Major output - Homes England ownership of security and data reducing duplication of processing and significant risk creating a white label approach without geographic boundaries.	████████	By providing a single consolidated sales platform, that is consistent with the Homes England wider digital transformation strategy.
4	Create End to End Digital Transformation - Design	Design process flows to support delivery of HtB and its management in the new operating model - major output is the streamlining of the customer experience and therefore the sentiment analysis and consolidated MI. Better collection of data at every stage in one system.	████████	Provide insight into customers' perspective; user experience and sentiments, to learn where improvements can be made. This is consistent with the overall vision of Homes England to devote more attention to optimising customer experience in a proactive manner.

2	Upgrade current finance system: mitigate the risk of key financial systems being unsupported by the supplier and improve user experience and reduce rekeying of information. This will include mobile apps requisitioning, approvals and receipting; further automation of sales invoicing and invoice to cash process; and compliance with 'Making Tax Digital' submission of online VAT returns including supporting documentation.	Upgraded system with functionality as described	███████	By improved efficiencies.

3	Transform finance systems and processes: replace current finance system, consolidated finance/HR, Payroll system with Expenses, requisitioning, ordering, procurement card as standard internal modules. More importantly the digital solution for Development, grants and Investments needs to align to finance system; upgrade/replace Estate Management Billing System with real time feeds to Finance System.	Finance system replaced and new processes implemented	███████	By improving efficiencies.
4	████████████████████ ████████████████ ███████████████ ████████████████ ████████████	████████████████ ████████████	███████	████████████

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17	Improve Digital CR: as part of the Digital business case include - Customer Relationship Management and case management systems will support new crossfunctional teams targeting managed interventions and partners in the market, single pipeline development and investment	Design and Build Prototype and test Prototype with users - this is in progress (Alpha version live), this will be an iterative approach and planning for this is in progress	████████████	Help keep track of our engagement with MPs and Officials as well as other partners, help share case studies, rather than duplicating areas, monitors all these areas, contacts etc.
18	Improve Digital Reporting: as part of the Digital business case include – Data, Management Information and Reporting with a particular focus on risk.	Design and Build Prototype and test Prototype with users - this is in progress (Alpha version live), this will be an iterative approach and planning for this is in progress	████████████	Through - quality data analytics, quality reporting and quality Risk analysis.

#			
	████████████████████████ ███			
14	Deliver an effective Digital function: continue to improve our core technology and streamlined prioritisation of majors and business as usual (minors and chores). Visibility of backlog and pipeline to be provided to the business and escalation of issues / roadblocks to be brought to the 'Business Improvement Board '. This is to include recommendations from the Land and Investment Discoveries.	Microsoft 365 (new version of Microsoft Office in the cloud), plus rollout of new devices	███████████	This action: supports the Employee Experience and Collaboration tools and on-boarding process; the Land and Investment solutions; and the BAU daily product support, keeping the lights on Provision of a first class safety, health and environmental support service to the wider agency.
15	████████████████████████ ███████████████	████████████████ ███████████████████ ██████████ \n\n ███████████████	███████████ ███████████	███████████████████████ ████
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