



Homes
England

Date: 19 April 2021
Our Ref: RFI3336
Tel: 0300 1234 500
Email: infogov@homesengland.gov.uk

Making homes happen

██████████
By Email Only

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

Dear ██████████

RE: Request for Information – RFI3336

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

This is a request under the Freedom of Information Act 2010 relating to Sage Housing. Please note the attached image, which summarises the corporate structure of Sage Housing group, which includes three registered providers and several other companies. I am interested in assistance and grants provided to all Sage companies and subsidiaries.

A. Can you provide details of all Homes England grant-funded homes for Sage, divided by year from 2013 to 2021? Please include:

1.
 - The value of grant to Sage
2.
 - The recipient of the grant (Sage Housing Group, Sage Rented Ltd etc.)
3.
 - Number of houses funded, broken town by tenure type (total, shared ownership, affordable rents, social rents)
4.
 - The programme or provision under which they were funded
5.
 - Whether homes are completed and inhabited

B. Details of all unsuccessful applications for grants by Sage Housing, by year from 2013 to 2021? Broken down, as above.

If details cannot be provided for each unsuccessful application, please provide aggregate totals applications and value by year.

C. Can you provide details of all other assistance or support received by Sage from Homes England, divided by year from 2013 to 2021? Including:

1.
 - Land disposal of land from Homes England to Sage, including site, sale value, Housing Capacity Units, Gross Area

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Date: 19 April 2021

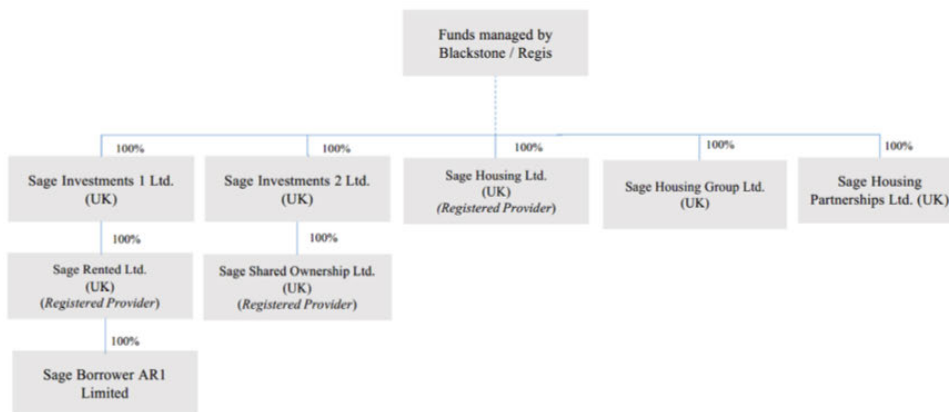
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2.
 - Details of consultancy, support or advice, for example for planning, including details of support provided, budget and expenses
3.
 - Funding for improvement of homes, infrastructure and communities where Sage was a stakeholder including details of support provided, budget and expenses

DIAGRAMMATIC OVERVIEW OF THE OWNERSHIP STRUCTURE OF THE BORROWER, SAGE RENTED LIMITED AND THE SAGE HOUSING GROUP



Response

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

A. Can you provide details of all Homes England grant-funded homes for Sage, divided by year from 2013 to 2021?

Please include:

- 1) The value of grant to Sage**
- 2) The recipient of the grant (Sage Housing Group, Sage Rented Ltd etc.)**
- 3) Number of houses funded, broken town by tenure type (total, shared ownership, affordable rents, social rents)**
- 4) The programme or provision under which they were funded**
- 5) Whether homes are completed and inhabited**

The information held by Homes England is provided in the following two tables. The first table shows total *allocations* for the whole programme period up to 2022/23, whilst the second table is a breakdown of actual homes *completed* from 2013 to 2021 with tenure information.



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Regarding Q5 – We can only provide information on completed homes and homes in receipt of grant confirmation up to this date. We do not hold information on whether the homes are inhabited as that falls outside our remit and information gathering.

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>

Funding Programme	Total grant allocation	Total Homes
Shared Ownership and Affordable Homes Programme	18,400,960	444
Right to Buy Replacement	5,634,000	132
Total	24,034,960	576

Grant recipient	Funding Programme	Tenure	Actual completions	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21
Sage Housing Limited	Shared Ownership and Affordable Homes Programme	Affordable Rent	25	11	14	0
Sage Housing Limited	Shared Ownership and Affordable Homes Programme	Affordable Home Ownership	60	-	31	29
Sage Housing Limited	Right to Buy Replacement	Affordable Rent	5	-	5	0
			90	11	50	29



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B. Details of all unsuccessful applications for grants by Sage Housing, by year from 2013 to 2021? Broken down, as above.

If details cannot be provided for each unsuccessful application, please provide aggregate totals applications and value by year.

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.

The information requested relating to unsuccessful applications 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.

Homes England has identified that the information requested, if released, would be likely to prejudice the effective operation of our funding schemes and relationships with third parties.

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; and
- Homes England acknowledges that there is a public interest in our scrutiny of applications to our funding schemes.

Arguments in favour of withholding:

- Releasing information that revealed Homes England's assessment and scoring of bids for funding would be likely to distort our internal decision-making process, making it a less competitive and robust process. This would not be in the public interest as public funds could be allocated in a way that would distort regional need for development;
- The consequences of releasing the data of unsuccessful applications for funding could damage our relationships with partners and put potential negotiations or future funding at risk. Releasing the information would be likely to negatively impact future development processes and proposals as interested parties may feel unable to provide all the relevant information necessary for fear of disclosure. This would impact the ability of Government officials to make effective, informed decisions regarding allocation of public funds. This would not be in the public interest as this could put potential homes in jeopardy and would undermine Homes England's position and ability to deliver against its objectives and targets in our Strategic Plan;
- Disclosing details of unsuccessful applications and therefore details of a third party's business proposals, processes and information not in the public domain may affect their relationship with other parties, including Homes England, and affect a party's reputation in the market. This would be likely to have a



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negative impact on the third party's ability to procure works or funding for ongoing development. Releasing information in relation to a third party in a competitive market would be likely to distort competition, making it a less competitive process. This would not be in the public interest as it would be likely to lead to third parties being unable to secure works for market value, or be successful in other funding applications. This would be likely to have a negative effect on future commercial activity and other lenders. This would not be in the public interest as it would negatively affect Homes England's position as the government's housing accelerator and our ability to create successful and trusting relationships with partners;

- Releasing the information could reveal financial information of a third party which may in turn affect their own commercial interests. The consequences of releasing data that is part of potential other funding applications could damage our relationships with partners and put these potential funding allocations at risk. If this information were in the public domain there could be expectations from the public and potential future partners about the value of sites and the value of potential works. This would mean that prices could be inflated and negotiating positions put at risk. This would not be in the public interest as this could put much needed potential homes in jeopardy; 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.

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

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

C. Can you provide details of all other assistance or support received by Sage from Homes England, divided by year from 2013 to 2021? Including:

- 1) Land disposal of land from Homes England to Sage, including site, sale value, Housing Capacity Units, Gross Area***
- 2) Details of consultancy, support or advice, for example for planning, including details of support provided, budget and expenses***
- 3) Funding for improvement of homes, infrastructure and communities where Sage was a stakeholder including details of support provided, budget and expenses***

We are 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 Affordable Housing, Development, and Land teams 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>



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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/>

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

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