



Homes
England

Date: 6 September 2022

Our Ref: RFI4000

Tel: 0300 1234 500

Email: infogov@homesengland.gov.uk

Making homes happen

██████████
By Email Only

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

Dear ██████████

RE: Request for Information – RFI4000

Thank you for your request for information which was processed in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA).

You requested the following information:

I would like to make a freedom of information request in order to find out how much was spent on the National Regeneration Agency roles undertaken as part of the work of Homes England and its predecessors (these are likely to predominantly relate to land acquisition and assembly and major development projects).

I would like yearly figures showing how much was spent in each financial year from 2002-3 up until the present.

If it is possible to break this funding down into programme headings i would also like to have this information.

We asked for clarification regarding your request and you responded as follows:

I am looking for information by funding programme, not at the level of specific sites or schemes. The purpose of this is to inform an urban planning text book explaining the quantum of regeneration funding and how this has changed over time. For example, it would be useful to know how much has been spent on:

- land acquisition*
- site assembly*
- gap funding*
- provision of social housing*

Funding for these activities would have been overseen by English Partnerships until 2008, the Homes and Communities Agency until 2018 and latterly Homes England. I would like to request all information held by Homes England, whether it is a direct record of Homes England spend or information which Homes England has but which was collected by either English Partnerships, the Regional Development Agencies or the Homes and Communities Agency.

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Where funding is from the RDAs could this please be disaggregated (as i already have yearly information on RDA spending and so need to avoid double counting).

In all of this i am assuming that Homes England has some historical information for the purpose of informing current assessments of need and business planning.

Response

We can inform you that we do hold some information in scope of your request. However, to comply with your request would exceed the appropriate limit for the cost of compliance. We therefore rely on section 12, exemption where the cost of compliance exceeds the appropriate limit under the FOIA.

The full text of the legislation can be found on the following link and we have quoted section 12 below for ease.

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

Section 12 - Exemption where cost of compliance exceeds appropriate limit

(1) Section 1(1) does not oblige a public authority to comply with a request for information if the authority estimates that the cost of complying with the request would exceed the appropriate limit.

(2) Subsection (1) does not exempt the public authority from its obligation to comply with paragraph (a) of section 1(1) unless the estimated cost of complying with that paragraph alone would exceed the appropriate limit.

(3) In subsections (1) and (2) "the appropriate limit" means such amount as may be prescribed, and different amounts may be prescribed in relation to different cases.

(4) The Minister for the Cabinet Office may by regulations provide that, in such circumstances as may be prescribed, where two or more requests for information are made to a public authority:

(a) by one person, or

(b) by different persons who appear to the public authority to be acting in concert or in pursuance of a campaign, the estimated cost of complying with any of the requests is to be taken to be the estimated total cost of complying with all of them.

(5) The Minister for the Cabinet Office may by regulations make provision for the purposes of this section as to the costs to be estimated and as to the manner in which they are to be estimated.

We have considered the current wording of your request and in its current scope we have determined that to establish where all elements of the information is held, to locate the information, retrieving the information and extracting the information would exceed the appropriate limit in terms of timeframes.

Under the terms of the Act we are not obliged to provide any information compiled in the course of our searches prior to concluding section 12 is engaged.



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Advice and Assistance

In compliance with the Section 45 Code of Practice (Paragraph 2.10) and to offer advice and assistance under section 16 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000, you may wish to consider narrowing the scope of your request.

As you may be aware, Homes England's predecessor body English Partnerships was the national regeneration agency. We do hold historic files from English Partnerships in relation to specific sites, developments, or funding but these would not be marked as being related to "regeneration". Therefore, to collate any information in relation to historic regeneration spend would involve a manual review of the files retained from English Partnerships. For context, this is an excess of 10,000 hard copy files that would have to be manually checked to ascertain whether the files related to regeneration or other agency activities. Any files then identified would have to be reviewed and any data related to funding amounts extracted and collated.

In relation to Homes England's (the Homes and Communities Agency) spend on regeneration, we are also unable to provide any information without a manual search of our internal electronic files. Homes England's focus as an organisation over recent years has not been on regeneration, and therefore none of our systems or reporting functions allow us to search against or collate information in relation to "regeneration". Furthermore, we do not hold high level figures for funding that have been marked as being for regeneration purposes. We have undertaken initial searches of our internal filing system and can advise that there are in excess of 17,000 files that would have to be manually checked and reviewed as described above.

You may be aware that our sponsor body, the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) is renewing the focus on regeneration, and therefore Homes England will become more involved in regeneration over the next few years. It may be that we begin to collate information on regeneration. However, at this time we do not collect the information in your request.

In relation to social housing, you may wish to contact the Regulator of Social Housing, who separated from Homes England in 2018. You may also wish to contact DLUHC, who as our sponsor body may hold high level figures for funding given to Homes England and our predecessor bodies.

Please note that due to the broad scope of your request we cannot confirm that any further request would not also exceed the section 12 cost limit at this time.

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. You can request an internal review by writing to Homes England via the details below, quoting the reference number at the top of this letter.

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Your request for review must be made in writing, explain why you wish to appeal, and be received within 40 working days of the date of this response. Failure to meet this criteria may lead to your request being refused.

Upon receipt, your request for review will be passed to an independent party not involved in your original request. We aim to issue a response within 20 working days.

You may also complain to the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) 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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