



Ministry of Housing,
Communities &
Local Government

**Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local
Government**

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Mr James Evans
Via email

Date: **20 February 2018**

Dear Mr Evans

Freedom of Information Act 2000 - 3487923

Thank you for your request for information which was received on 19 September 2017. Please accept our sincerest apologies for the lateness of our reply.

Your request was:

1. Could you tell me if following the Local Government Select Committee Inquiry into the Community Rights:

Q1. Do DCLG hold or not hold information on any requests made by DCLG or received by DCLG from local authorities or relevant bodies on the right to challenge as outlined in the Localism Act?

Q2. Has the DCLG made any requests, but does not hold any responses?

Q3. Have any summaries (partial or complete) of the numbers of challenges been attempted whether created by DCLG or a third party, and could they be shared?

Q4. If the information is not held, can you confirm that it was held at the time of response to the select committee or afterwards, and the reason it has since become unavailable?

2. In the Government response to the Communities and Local Government Select Committee Inquiry into the Community Rights (Recommendation 12) it is noted: 'We have recently contacted all groups that have received specialist support through both the Community Right to Challenge and Community Ownership and Management of Assets programmes asking them about the impact of the support they received on their organisation and what they have achieved since. This includes questions as to whether they have submitted an expression of interest under the Community Right to Challenge, whether they have taken part in a procurement exercise and whether they have won a contract.'

Q5. How many groups received specialist support referred to in the response?

Q6. During what date range were the groups contacted?

Q7. Is the basis for the information forming the response to the select committee able to be shared? This would include number of responses received, the groups contacted, impact of support and achievements since and action taken by DCLG.

Q8. Is an example of the correspondence able to be shared, including the list of questions sent?

Q9. If the information is not held, can you confirm that it was held at the time of response to the select committee or afterwards, and the reason it has since become unavailable?

3. In the Government response to the Communities and Local Government Select Committee Inquiry into the Community Rights (Recommendation 13 para 31) it is noted: 'We will work with local commissioners to examine the impact of the Community Right to Challenge and to consider other means to achieve its broad policy aims'.

Q10. Has an examination of the impact of the Community Right to Challenge been undertaken following the government response?

Q11. If so, on what date and which commissioners were involved?

Q12. If the information is not held, can you confirm that it was held at the time of response to the select committee or afterwards, and the reason it has since become unavailable?

Your request has been considered under the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

I can confirm that the information requested is held by the Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government and we are able to provide you with this information.

Some of the information in the attached documents has been redacted, however. This information is exempt from disclosure under section 40(2) of the FOI Act as it is personal, about another individual and, as that person could not reasonably expect that his or her personal information would be disclosed, doing so would breach the Data Protection Act.

Further information has been redacted because it is exempt under section 41 of the FOI Act as it is information provided to us in confidence and disclosing it would amount to a breach of confidence for which legal action reasonably could be brought against the Department.

In response to your individual questions:

1. Could you tell me if following the Local Government Select Committee Inquiry into the Community Rights:

Q1. Do DCLG hold or not hold information on any requests made by DCLG or received by DCLG from local authorities or relevant bodies on the right to challenge as outlined in the Localism Act?

Requests were made, however these were undertaken informally as a follow up to our 2013 and 2014 review of users of the Community Right Programme that was delivered by Locality and Social Investment Business. This included following up on progress with groups to ascertain how they have benefitted from the assistance received from the support programme and undertaking analysis of case studies.

Q2. Has the DCLG made any requests, but does not hold any responses?

Yes, requests were undertaken through informal meetings and telephone conversations. We hold no formal survey responses.

Q3. Have any summaries (partial or complete) of the numbers of challenges been attempted whether created by DCLG or a third party, and could they be shared?

See attached summary of our statistical findings correct up to Feb 2016. The spreadsheet also contains a summary of our 2013 & 2014 surveys that were undertaken – requested below.

Q4. If the information is not held, can you confirm that it was held at the time of response to the select committee or afterwards, and the reason it has since become unavailable?

Information was held for the periods 2013 & 2014 - contained in the attached.

2. In the Government response to the Communities and Local Government Select Committee Inquiry into the Community Rights (Recommendation 12) it is noted: 'We have recently contacted all groups that have received specialist support through both the Community Right to Challenge and Community Ownership and Management of Assets programmes asking them about the impact of the support they received on their organisation and what they have achieved since. This includes questions as to whether they have submitted an expression of interest under the Community Right to Challenge, whether they have taken part in a procurement exercise and whether they have won a contract.'

Q5. How many groups received specialist support referred to in the response?

Up until March 2015, 369 groups were supported through the Challenge support programme, including 227 who accessed financial assistance.

Q6. During what date range were the groups contacted?

Surveys of the Community Right to Challenge support programme users were undertaken in 2013 and 2014. Follow up to these surveys were carried out informally over 2015 and 2016.

Q7. Is the basis for the information forming the response to the select committee able to be shared? This would include number of responses received, the groups contacted, impact of support and achievements since and action taken by DCLG.

Results of the survey for Community Right to Challenge is attached.

Q8. Is an example of the correspondence able to be shared, including the list of questions sent?

An example list of questions sent to Community Right to Challenge users is attached. These are not the final drafted questions, however. The final draft would have been completed and held by the organisation commissioned to deliver the support programme. The attached draft would have been close to what was used.

Q9. If the information is not held, can you confirm that it was held at the time of response to the select committee or afterwards, and the reason it has since become unavailable?

Not applicable.

3. In the Government response to the Communities and Local Government Select Committee Inquiry into the Community Rights (Recommendation 13 para 31) it is noted: 'We will work with local commissioners to examine the impact of the Community Right to Challenge and to consider other means to achieve its broad policy aims'.

Q10. Has an examination of the impact of the Community Right to Challenge been undertaken following the government response?

Yes. An internal light touch review was undertaken by Officials.

Q11. If so, on what date and which commissioners were involved?

The Community Right to Challenge review sought the views of local authorities, parishes and community groups over the summer of 2015. This included hosting a roundtable attended by representatives from local authorities and the VCS, speaking directly with groups who have used the Community Right to Challenge and analysis of case studies. The review was undertaken by Officials.

Q12. If the information is not held, can you confirm that it was held at the time of response to the select committee or afterwards, and the reason it has since become unavailable?

Not applicable.

Complaints procedure

If you are unhappy with this response, we will review it and report back to you. (This is called an internal review.) If you want us to do this, let us know by return email within two months of receiving this response. You can also ask by letter addressed to:

Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government
Knowledge and Information Access Team
1st Floor NW, Fry Building
2 Marsham Street
London, SW1P 4DF

If you are unhappy with the outcome of this internal review, you can ask the independent Information Commissioner to investigate. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at email address xxxxxxxx@xxx.xxx.xx or use their online form at ico.org.uk/concerns or call them on 0303 123 1113.

Yours sincerely

Ashwin Jolly
Deputy FOI Business Partner