



Assurance Group
London Borough of Barnet,
2 Bristol Avenue, Colindale,
London NW9 4EW
1 August 2019
Our ref: 5501856

Thank you for your request received on 30 July 2019, for the following information:

1. The numbers of social rent voids sold 'to market' (at market prices to private buyers) by housing associations (HAs) in your area. Ideally from 2011/12 (when sales were encouraged by government/GLA policy) to 2018/19 or the latest (financial/calendar) year when records are available.

a. Total sales by HA/provider, by year if available, or if not, a total by provider for the period where information is available.

b. If known - whether HA's committed to replace voids sold to market in your borough. If they did, how many and what tenures/rent levels?

(My assumption is that associations don't formally commit to replace as regulations don't require this and they are likely to be delivering some new 'low cost' rent 'social or affordable' in new build schemes. But some may have given voluntary commitments to replace. If they did figures would be useful, and whether replacements were to be at existing social rent formula, maximum 'target' social rent, 'affordable' rent, or more recently, London Affordable Rent).

Note: this refers to sales of void social rent homes at market prices to private buyers, NOT to sales/transfers of social rent homes (void or tenanted) from one provider to another at Existing Use Value as part of stock rationalisations where homes remain at social rent units.

c. Whether the council objected to disposals on the open market.

i) If officers did to how many

ii) By which HAs/providers?

Explanation: regulations required HAs to get permission from the Regulator of Social Housing/Homes & Communities Agency (now Homes England) before selling any social rent voids to market. As part of this they had to consult Local Authorities, to seek their views. Councils couldn't stop sales. Only the MHCLG could. But councils did have to be consulted and may have objected to some sales.

Regulations changed from April 2017 when Housing Associations/Private Registered Providers were de-regulated. From then they no longer required permission from Regulator of Social Housing/ Homes England for disposals of social rent voids to market. But they still have to notify the Regulator.

This information is NOT currently available from the MHCLG. Their Statistical Data Returns (SDRs) record sales of social rent voids - for 'non-social use' or to 'open-market' or 'other' - by provider/year, but currently they don't publish local authority areas where the homes were sold. I am asking them for this information separately but they may not supply it, and councils should have

some information too ' at least from 2011/17 when regulations required HAs to consult them before disposals. The number of social rent voids sold to market by different providers varies considerably so boroughs must have been affected more than others in terms of net stock.

e. Can you briefly explain whether HAs are still required to consult the borough before sales, or notify the borough of sales, or not. (My assumption is that councils have not been consulted from April 2017 but they may still be notified. Anything on this would be appreciated). f. If recorded, it would also be helpful to get figures for NEW BUILD social rent and affordable rent homes in your borough, by housing association for the same period; totals for their own schemes and acquisitions from developers after Section 106 agreements. (This must often involve large numbers. If information is recorded it would help. If it would take too much time to collate, leave it out).

2. The numbers of social rent voids sold to market by your council/ALMO (if relevant. Bexley, Bromley, Merton and Richmond transferred all of most of their council housing to housing associations)a. Number sold by year, from 2011/12 to 2018/19 or the latest (financial) year when records are available

We have processed this request under the Environmental Information Regulations 2004.

Response

The council holds the information requested and it is attached/ the answers to your questions are below

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We would not be aware of the exact amount as it not something we monitor but our records show that we have been consulted with three Registered Providers, Christian Action in October 2014 to convert a ground floor flat into market sale , Orbit in June 18 to convert an affordable rented unit to market sale and then in March 2019 by Cherry Tree Housing to sell a HMO to market sale. The Council did not object to these as all were long term unlettable voids, all three RP's offer future lettings to Barnet. The HCA would have a record for disposals per local authority and each RP would have had to have shown evidence from the Local Authority to support the disposal.

When the de-regulatory measures of the Housing Act came into force on 06 April 2017, RPs no longer need to consent under s.172 or s.133 to dispose of social housing. Instead, RPs are only required to notify the HCA of the disposal of social housing dwellings.

London Borough of Barnet would expect all RP's to act within the perimeters of the Housing Act, and as far as we are aware RP's still inform us of any disposals.

The table below shows all the affordable housing completions since 2010.11 in Barnet (affordable – social, affordable rent and Intermediate)

Year	affordable completions
2010.11	326
2011.12	667
2012.13	298
2013.14	346
2014.15	329
2015.16	257

2016.17 308
2017.18 303
2018.19 211
total 3045

I understand that you may have been in direct contact with Barnet Homes for question 2.

Further information

If you are interested in the data that the council holds you may wish to visit Open Barnet, the council's data portal. This brings together all our published datasets and other information of interest on one searchable database for anyone, anywhere to access. <http://open.barnet.gov.uk/>

Advice and Assistance : Direct Marketing

If you are a company that intends to use the names and contact details of council officers (or other officers) provided in this response for direct marketing, you need to be registered with the Information Commissioner to process personal data for this purpose. You must also check that the individual (whom you wish to contact for direct marketing purposes) is not registered with one of the Preference Services to prevent Direct Marketing. If they are you must adhere to this preference.

You must also ensure you comply with the Privacy Electronic and Communications Regulations (PECR). For more information follow this Link www.ico.org.uk

For the avoidance of doubt the provision of council (and other) officer names and contact details under FOI does not give consent to receive direct marketing via any media and expressly does not constitute a 'soft opt-in' under PECR.

Your rights

If you are unhappy with the way your request for information has been handled, you can request a review within the next 40 working days by writing to the Information Management Team at: foi@barnet.gov.uk. Or by post to Information Management Team (FOI) London Borough of Barnet, 2 Bristol Avenue, Colindale, NW9 4EW

If, having exhausted our review procedure, you remain dissatisfied with the handling of your request or complaint, you will have a right to appeal to the Information Commissioner at: The Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire, SK9 5AF (telephone: 0303 123 1113; website www.ico.org.uk). There is no charge for making an appeal.