

Housing 21 is seeking 'Expressions of Interest' (EOI)

From experienced providers with a proven track record of acting as a **Cohousing Enabler & Facilitation Partner**, to support local community engagement for a Cohousing Pathfinder project in the East Midlands

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Expression of Interest Response requirements

Invitation to quote – close date & time	Monday 16th November – midday
Individual clarification calls via Microsoft Teams are available with the Cohousing Partnership Manager by emailing:- dawn.carr@housing21.org.uk A date and time will be arranged for calls to take place for approx. 30 minutes on either Wednesday 4th November 2026 or Wednesday 11th November 2026	
Quotes must be returned to	Dawn.carr@housing.21.org.uk
For all clarification questions- contact	Dawn.carr@housing21.org.uk
Contract Duration	Work is not guaranteed and will be commissioned on a project-by-project basis and may extend for up to five years.
Aspirational Contract Start date	December 2026 (one year contract initially)

Section 1- Introduction to Housing 21

Thank you for expressing an interest in this opportunity.

Housing 21 are a leading provider of safe, quality and affordable properties for older people, empowering you to live independently with on-site care or support. . We have more than 60 years' experience and operate in 215 local authority areas, managing 24,000 properties and providing over 49,000 hours of in-house social care each week. www.housing21.org.uk.

We are pleased to offer the following distinct service offers to customers:

Retirement Living: In Retirement Living, residents enjoy the privacy and independence of their own property, with the support of an on-site Local Housing Manager during the week and a communal lounge to socialise with family, friends and neighbours. The Local Housing Manager supports residents whilst ensuring the management of the building, including organising repairs.

Extra Care: Residents in our Extra Care schemes may need a little more help or be planning for the future. They still enjoy the privacy and independence of their own property, the support of an on-site manager and communal facilities including a lounge, bistro and salon. But here, they have the reassurance of on-site Care Workers are available 24/7 for planned and emergency care, enabling couples of differing care needs to remain living together. Like Retirement Living, the on-site Housing or Housing and Care Managers support residents with the management of the building and scheduling of repairs. You can find out more about Retirement Living and Extra Care directly from our residents:

- Retirement Living Extra Care

And Cohousing: Cohousing is the most recent initiative for Housing 21 which aims to promote the benefits of living as part of a community, but with the privacy of individual homes.

Cohousing is a new initiative for Housing 21 where residents help to shape the design of the scheme

We are proud to be one of the first housing associations to produce a Cohousing Strategy, which outlines how we plan to deliver cohousing schemes for older people. In particular, we are keen to focus on areas of deprivation and of diverse ethnic backgrounds, where accessing quality, purpose-built housing can often be more of a challenge.

Our strategy underpins the following good practice principles we believe will support its success:

- **Partnerships**: Partnerships are essential to delivering meaningful social value in cohousing developments. By working collaboratively, stakeholders can create inclusive, sustainable, and resilient communities that reflect local needs and aspirations. Strategic partnerships with architects, community groups, contractors, local authorities, and housing developers can enhance social value outcomes in the development of cohousing schemes in urban areas of the UK. The roles of each partner, their contributions to social value, and approaches to engagement and evaluation can be as follows: -

- **Architects: - Architects promote wellbeing and inclusion through design** i.e. they lead participatory design processes, ensure inclusive and sustainable design, and foster placemaking.
- **Community Groups: - Community groups enhance social cohesion and cultural identity** i.e. provide local knowledge, deliver social programmes, and support integration with the wider neighbourhood,
- **Contractors: - Contractors create economic opportunities and reduce environmental impact.** Some examples include offering local employment and training, support community initiatives, and implement sustainable construction practices.
- **Local Authorities: - Local authorities ensure alignment with strategic priorities and enable access to resources,** i.e. aligning developments with wider policy, providing land or funding, and supporting monitoring and evaluation.
- **Housing Developers: - Housing developers support affordability, stewardship, and long-term sustainability.** This can be achieved through enabling the delivery of innovative housing design, sharing innovation and best practice and supporting resident governance

Cohousing

Our flagship cohousing scheme for older people, Rupali Court, is located in Lozells, one of Birmingham's most diverse cultural areas, and was developed by Housing 21 in partnership with Legacy WM and Triangle Architects

Rupali Court is a pioneering cohousing pilot, bringing together an inclusive community of residents to create a supportive, connected way of living. The scheme has been developed with a strong focus on community, wellbeing, and mutual support. This launch marks an exciting milestone as residents have now begun to move in and shape the community together.

The key features of the scheme are as follows: -

- 25 one- and two-bedroom apartments for social rent.
- Shared spaces: communal kitchen, residents' lounge, multi-faith room, garden, and allotments.
- Designed with input from a local residents' group to reflect cultural needs (e.g. Muslim ritual ablution room).
- Aims to foster interdependence, reduce loneliness, and promote ageing in place.

Section 2 Core Specification for the proposed project

2.1. Context:

Housing 21 is seeking a **Cohousing Enabler and Facilitation Partner** who can work alongside Housing 21, future residents and local stakeholders to support the development of thriving and sustainable cohousing communities, as part of the **East Midlands Cohousing Pathfinder Programme**

The aim of the pathfinder project is to develop, test and refine a replicable model for affordable, resident-led cohousing that enables local people to participate in the design, formation, governance and stewardship of their communities.

The partnership should balance three equally important objectives:

1. Strategic partnership development
2. Supporting Housing 21 to deliver a viable and inclusive cohousing scheme.
3. Empowering local people to become an informed, confident and self-organising cohousing community capable of influencing and shaping their future neighbourhood.

The programme will:

a) Strengthen partnerships between communities, local authorities and housing providers.

b) Build resident-led cohousing communities.

c) Develop inclusive and culturally responsive engagement methods.

d) Generate evidence relating to wellbeing, social value and community resilience.

e) Create practical tools and learning that can support future cohousing developments across Housing 21 and the wider housing sector

The local Cohousing Enabler and Facilitation Partner will work alongside Housing 21, future residents and local stakeholders to support cohousing communities.

The Pathfinder Programme aims to develop, test and refine a replicable model for affordable, resident-led cohousing in urban settings, through projects in **Derby, Leicester and Nottingham**.

The purpose of the Cohousing Enabler and Facilitation Partner is not simply to support engagement activities, but to help local people become a confident, self-organising and resident-led cohousing community capable of shaping, governing and sustaining its future.

The successful partner will work alongside Housing 21, local stakeholders and prospective residents to support the formation of sustainable cohousing communities. The aim is to develop empowered communities that are capable of influencing, shaping and ultimately stewarding their communities over the long term. The role combines strategic partnership development, community formation and resident capacity building.

We are particularly interested in providers with:

• A strong track record of working with diverse and ethnically diverse communities.

• Knowledge of the housing needs and challenges facing people aged 55+ in Derby, Leicester and Nottingham.

• Experience of supporting the development and ongoing formation of cohousing or community-led housing projects.

While respondents may have wider expertise in community-led housing, the focus of this commission is the formation, facilitation and long-term sustainability of cohousing communities within the Housing 21 programme utilising the UKCN Community Coaching Toolkit

2.2. Project objective of the Expression of Interest task

The core objective of the Cohousing Enabler and Facilitation Partner is to support Phase 1 of the development of resident-led cohousing communities,as part of the Housing 21 East Midlands Cohousing Pathfinder Programme.

2.3 Core specification requirements

The minimum core specific requirements that have been selected to measure the outcome of delivery, as identified below:-

2.3.1 Strategic Partnership Objectives

The successful partner will help establish the relationships and collaborations required to support the delivery and long-term success of cohousing within the East Midlands.

Key responsibilities include:

Required Outputs from the successful partner	**Support from Housing 21** *Please refer to Appendix 1*
Housing 21 requires • Acting as a trusted intermediary between strategic partners, communities and Housing 21 to build confidence, shared ownership and long-term strategic commitment to the programme • Building and maintaining effective partnerships with local authorities,	• **Thought Leadership** – proven delivery of pilot project Rupali Court and sector credibility • **Investment and Financial Capacity –** a rolling annual contract based on results and investment in the development of cohousing for over 55's

health and social care organisations, voluntary and community sector partners, universities, community-led housing organisations and other relevant stakeholders. • Identifying opportunities to strengthen local support, influence policy development and create pathways for future cohousing projects across the region.	• **Dedicated Development Expertise** – a range of project expertise lead by the Cohousing Partnership Manager • **Technical and Professional Services –** Architects, Surveyors • **Procurement and Contractor Management –** ensuring compliance and best value for money • **Governance and Risk Management –** through Board decisions and strategic development committees • **Partnership Development and Brokerage** • Housing 21 acts as a trusted broker with local strategic stakeholders
Outcome: Strong strategic partnerships are established that support community-led development, long-term sustainability and wider replication of the cohousing model.	

2.3.2 Community Formation Objectives

The successful partner will support the formation of inclusive, engaged and resident-led cohousing communities.

Key responsibilities include:

Required Outputs from the successful partner	Support from Housing 21
• Raising awareness of cohousing and engaging prospective residents. • Facilitating community conversations that help residents develop shared values, aspirations and a collective vision for their future community. • Supporting inclusive participation from diverse communities, ensuring opportunities to engage are accessible and culturally responsive.	• **1 year membership to UK Cohousing Network** • **Community Facilitation and Capacity Building** This includes funding and supporting specialist facilitation partners who can provide dedicated support to local cohousing groups and ringfenced support for cohousing groups

• Enabling residents to influence key aspects of community life, including governance, shared spaces, activities and neighbourhood integration	• **Communication support** – Press releases, communication materials, video etc • **Social Value Framework for Cohousing** – including evidence, data and research

Outcome: Active resident groups are established with a strong sense of identity, purpose and ownership of their future cohousing community.

2.3.3 Capacity Building and Legacy Objectives

The successful partner will develop the skills, confidence and governance arrangements required for residents to become effective long-term stewards of their communities.

Key responsibilities include:

Required Outputs from the successful partner	Support from Housing 21
a) Delivering activities that build resident knowledge of cohousing, leadership, governance, decision-making and community organisation. b) Supporting the development of appropriate resident-led governance structures, community charters and stewardship arrangements. c) helping residents become increasingly self-organising and capable of supporting long-term community stewardship and governance d) Capturing learning, outcomes and best practice to inform future cohousing developments and contribute to the creation of a transferable Housing 21 cohousing model.	**a) UCKN/Housing Cohousing Community Coaches Toolkit** **b) Peer support –** from Rupali Court residents **c) Action learning set –** with other organisation/groups currently developing a Cohousing community

Outcome: Residents are equipped with the capability, confidence and governance structures needed to sustain their community, while generating evidence and learning that can support future cohousing programmes.

Key indicators for Black and Minority Ethnic Housing needs (taken from Housing Diversity Network)

- Demographic mapping Monitor housing quality by ethnicity, age and place
- Design culturally sensitive homes – Faith and communal norms reflected in policy
- Promote representation and leadership, from ethnically diverse communitiesin housing associations

Success by the End of Phase 1

By the end of Phase 1, the successful partner will have supported the establishment of active and engaged resident-led cohousing groups across Derby, Leicester and Nottingham.

These groups will have developed a shared vision, established strong community relationships, and begun to implement appropriate governance arrangements, with the confidence, skills and capability required to become long-term partners in shaping, governing and stewarding their future cohousing communities

To summarise, by the end of Year 1 Housing 21 expects:

- Cohousing groups established in Derby, Leicester and Nottingham
- Resident-led meetings taking place regularly
- Agreed community vision, values and principles
- Increased resident confidence and leadership
- Stronger local partnerships and stakeholder support
- Community governance arrangements emerging
- Improved awareness of cohousing within local communities
- A growing body of evidence and learning to support future cohousing development

2.4 Monitoring and reporting

a. **Quarterly Monitoring & Evaluation**
The contract value will be paid quarterly upon satisfactory receipt of our quarterly monitoring form template, example included in EOI Pack.

b. **Engagement Activities**

Effective inclusive engagement that may include: -

- Co-designing workshops with residents and community stakeholders.
- Volunteering and skills training initiatives led by contractors.
- Public events and cultural programming with community groups.
- Regular liaison meetings with residents, local authorities and developers
- Facilitation of other Cohousing site visits

c. **Social value**

Social value outcomes should be tracked using clear metrics provided by Housing 21, which may include

- % of local labour used
- the demographics of the workforce involved in the project
- Number of community-led initiatives
- % of homes at social rent
- Volunteer hours contributed

d. **Case Studies**

Our marketing team may occasionally coordinate the collection of case studies and testimonials, examples include:

- Video testimonials
- Written case studies
- Briefing documents/Lessons learnt

2.5 Output requirements -Key Performance Indicators (KPI's)

Key performance Indicator	Requirement	Frequency
1	To engage & support the Cohousing Group	Specific KPI's to be mutually agreed at contracting stage, i.e. number of local people contacted, conversion into active members of the cohousing group, number of events created, number of community events attended
2	Regular quarterly reporting on the outcomes set out in the core requirement	
3	Regular project team meetings with the Cohousing Partnership Manager	Times may vary so as an example within a three-month period of contract commencement

Failure to successfully achieve the above performance reporting, may result in contract cancellation.

Section 3- Quote Assessment Consideration

Information received from this exercise will be used for review to choose a suitable provider(s)based on the Assessment criteria set out below. Top scoring providers (quality and price) may be invited to a subsequent conversation with key Housing 21 personnel, which may include residents in view of refining information to final form.

Responses will be assessed against the criteria below. Housing 21 reserves the right to retain details of the second and third highest scoring providers for future related commissions where appropriate.

Providers are requested to develop their' own form of response', detailing responses to the following criteria :

Assessment Criteria	Weighting
1. CV including minimum personal qualification information. Minimum qualification requirements may include the following, or equivalent • **Community engagement experience -** A strong local connection and proven experience of inclusive community engagement is essential. As examples, this may include training in: ▪ Community Led Housing ▪ Asset based community development ▪ Study and questionnaire design ▪ Participatory research ▪ Community Regeneration	10%
2. Experience of delivering Community-Led Housing, Cohousing or Community Regeneration Please provide evidence of previous experience supporting community-led housing, cohousing, community development, neighbourhood regeneration, community organising, participatory research, asset-based community development or similar initiatives. Include examples of outcomes achieved and lessons learned	10%
3. Introduction and Communication approaches. We invite you to provide no more than a three minute video for you to introduce yourself and to demonstrate your key innovative ideas in this area and how you aim to engage with the community to deliver the **core specific requirements**. Please mention any local partners that you intend to work with.	50%
4. Past case study demonstrating past capability to successfully deliver of a contract of similar nature	20%

We are particularly interested in people with experience of asset-based development and/or participatory research in ethnically diverse communities and/or Knowledge of the housing needs and challenges facing people aged 55+ in Derby, Leicester and Nottingham.	
Day Rate with VAT (assume an 8-hour day). Housing 21 anticipates commissioning approximately 96 days during the first year of the contract, equivalent to approximately two days per week	10%

Important information

- This is not a formal tender. Outcome award is not expected to exceed UK Threshold for the contract duration, so this opportunity is being supported by both advert and emailing networks to seek quotes.
- Responses will be scored against the following consideration:

Score	
0	Vague response. Unclear
1	Vague response gaps in presenting ability, capacity and or experience
2	Satisfactory response
3	Good response-lacked supporting information
4	Excellent response - fully comprehensive and innovative response with good supportive information

Summary

At Housing 21, we are proud to be an inclusive organisation centred around respect and inclusion. We ask all our employees, residents and partners to support us in achieving inclusivity by adhering to our Respect and Inclusion Charter, which has four key principles:

- We treat everyone with dignity and respect
- We create an environment where everyone can be themselves
- We seek out diverse perspectives and hear all voices
- We seek to understand other cultures, practices and experiences

These principles are explained further in our respect and inclusion video.

We particularly welcome contractors who will adhere to our charter, who have “similar, shared aspirational goals” and who demonstrate the highest, most courteous standards of behaviours with customers. Our three guiding principles are:

21	Being a modern and forward-looking organisation
Better	Never being complacent and striving for continuous improvement
Experience	Seeking to provide great experience and customer service to residents

Important note - Award of work -

- Will be below the UK threshold and is therefore not subject to formal tendering requirements
- Will be supported by Housing 21 terms and conditions
- Will not commence until receipt of the signed contract which **must be** received within 30 days of the award notification being issued.
- Will be supported by publication of a below threshold details notice[1]

Thank you for your time and interest in this opportunity.

[1] Public Procurement Act 2023 Section 87 Regulated below-threshold contract: notices (3) As soon as reasonably practicable after entering a notifiable below-threshold contract, a contracting authority must publish a contract details notice