



**SPECIFICATION FOR LEICESTERSHIRE RURAL HOUSING ENABLER  
CONTRACT**

**MELTON BOROUGH COUNCIL (on behalf of Leicestershire Rural Housing  
Group)**

**TENDER DOCUMENT TWO**

**DRAFT**

## 1 Introduction

Leicestershire Rural Housing Group (LRHG) is seeking to commission a suitably qualified and experienced Strategic Partner (SP) to deliver a Rural Housing Enabling Service across the County. The contract will initially be for 1 year, with the possibility of it being extended for a further 12 months.

The Leicestershire Rural Partnership (LRP) brings together public, private and voluntary stakeholders to improve services and support rural communities and businesses. The vision of the LRP is set out in the Leicestershire Rural Framework.

The Leicestershire Rural Housing Group is made up of the 6 rural district and borough councils, the County Council and 3 Registered Providers with specialist knowledge of rural affordable housing. The members are:

- Blaby District Council
- Charnwood Borough Council
- Emh group
- Harborough District Council
- Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council
- Leicestershire County Council
- Melton Borough Council
- North West Leicestershire District Council
- Nottingham Community Housing Association
- Platform Housing

## 2 Background

The Leicestershire Rural Housing Group is a well established partnership with a history of successfully delivering on priority 4 of the LRP Rural Framework – affordable homes in rural areas through the outcomes of:

- A robust county-wide evidence base of rural affordable housing need
- Increased availability of affordable homes where there is a need.

Leicestershire is a predominantly rural county with approximately a third of residents living within rural areas. The pressures of high house prices and low wages within many rural areas can make it difficult for the younger generation to remain within the communities that they grew up in and for families on low and moderate incomes to live in rural areas. People are living longer and remaining independent in their homes for longer; therefore, retaining younger people and families within rural communities is crucial to ensuring that villages stay vibrant and sustainable. Many of the rural areas have a low amount of smaller dwellings and bungalows, making it difficult for the older generation to remain in their communities. It is important that there is

appropriate provision of quality housing to meet a range of housing needs for people of all ages in rural areas.

Whilst there are many common themes across the county, each district has their own challenges and priorities. The Rural Housing Enabling Service needs to respond to the specific needs within the individual districts and boroughs.

### 3 Scope

The main objective of this service is:

#### **Site Finding**

The Service Provider will be expected to work with the partnership in the identification of possible locations for deliverable sites for development, with priority given to rural exception sites, to meet evidenced unmet housing need. This should include:

1. Parish walks with any or all of the following: parish and/ or borough/district councillors, local authority enabling officers and registered provider (RP) partners.
2. Establishing and building relationships with the local community and parish and borough/district councillors, to identify land owners sympathetic to delivering housing for local people.
3. Undertake desktop site finding covering each borough/district area.
4. Liaison with the local planning authority including pre-application discussions, about the suitability of sites to gauge how design, scale and layout can impact on the development.
5. If a site is identified, hold a consultation event to introduce the proposals to the local community.
6. If a site is developed, continue to promote the scheme and liaise with the local community and parish council
7. Raising the profile of affordable housing need and introducing land owners to RP partners, to facilitate delivery.

#### In the event of no sites found:

The service provider is to undertake surveys of settlements and/or parishes, as agreed with the district/borough councils, to provide a robust evidence base of affordable housing need by settlement if the parish area contains more than one settlement, unless otherwise directed by the individual local authority. Surveys may be requested in order to:

- Tie into a Neighbourhood Plan being carried out in the community
- Respond to an opportunity for development identified by an RP partner

- Provide information for a local authority where current evidence of need is out of date or has not previously been undertaken

The service provider must set out how they intend to undertake both the primary and secondary research for market and affordable housing requirements, and in particular, what methods they will use to ensure all sections of the community, who may be in housing need, will be reached.

The results of the research are to be fed back to the local authority and parish councils by means of a report, indicating the needs identified; the supply currently available to meet the need and any trends that have been identified in the survey area. The final reports are to have sections on types, size and tenure of dwellings needed, with a separation between the affordable housing for rent and different affordable home ownership requirements (stating how these requirements have been determined). The report needs to be agreed with the local authority prior to publication to meet individual district/borough requirements, eg. a report for each settlement rather than the whole parish for some.

At the start of the contract, the prescribed format for any surveys and final reports are to be agreed with each individual local authority and reviewed on an annual basis.

All districts and boroughs will expect the service provider to attend parish council meetings prior to a survey being undertaken, to explain the process and encourage the parish council to engage in the process and where possible, to obtain minuted support for the surveys.

#### 4 Statement of Requirements

The main outputs from the service are expected to be:

- Information on a minimum six potential new deliverable rural sites for housing in the county (a minimum of one in each local authority area), where there is written evidence of a willing landowner; written evidence of the site being acceptable in principle by the relevant local planning authority; is in a priority location for the relevant local authority, with an identified housing need; and there are no obvious deliverability/design constraints
- Initiation of projects that will increase the numbers of affordable housing dwellings in the rural areas of the county
- An increased profile of affordable rural housing need in the parishes, boroughs and districts within the county
- Up to date and relevant information on rural affordable housing need in the county by way of a minimum of six rural housing need surveys (a minimum of one in each local authority area), in the event the minimum number of new deliverable sites are not found

## 5 Quality Requirements

Consultants will be required to clearly and thoroughly demonstrate the following:

- a) a detailed understanding of the challenges and opportunities for the delivery of rural affordable housing
- b) knowledge of the rural areas of Leicestershire county and the different local authority areas within the county
- c) an understanding of development processes for affordable housing and how the rural housing enabling service can contribute to supporting and facilitating increased affordable housing supply
- d) they possess the knowledge and skills required to engage with and work alongside different groups such as borough, district and parish councillors; neighbourhood plan groups; local communities and community led development; local authority planning departments; registered providers and developers. This includes awareness of the sensitivities around local issues and political priorities and dealing with conflicting opinions on delivery of affordable housing
- e) they are capable of working effectively within the affordable/social housing sector in rural areas

## 6 Security/Data Protection

The appointed Service Provider will be responsible for ensuring the security of any information collected and collated relating to the service delivery, is in line with the Data Protection Act (2018) and the General Data Protection Regulations (2018).

## 7 Modern Slavery, Child Labour and Inhumane Treatment

Tackling modern slavery requires Providers to be aware of the risk areas where modern slavery is most likely to occur and to have a plan to address those risks.

Potential Providers:

- shall adopt a whistle-blowing policy which enables your staff to blow the whistle on any suspected examples of modern slavery.
- shall not use, nor allow its Subcontractors to use forced, bonded or involuntary prison labour;
- shall not require any Supplier Staff or Subcontractor Staff to lodge deposits or identify papers with the Employer and shall be free to leave their employer after reasonable notice;
- warrant and represent that it has not been convicted of any slavery or human tracking offenses anywhere around the world;
- warrant that to the best of its knowledge it is not currently under investigation, inquiry or enforcement proceedings in relation to any allegation of slavery or human tracking offenses anywhere around the world;
- shall make reasonable enquires to ensure that its officers, employees and Subcontractors have not been convicted of slavery or human tracking offenses anywhere around the world;

- shall have and maintain throughout the term of each Contract its own policies and procedures to ensure its compliance with the Modern Slavery Act and include in its contracts with its subcontractors anti-slavery and human trafficking provisions;
- shall implement due diligence procedures to ensure that there is no slavery or human trafficking in any part of its supply chain performing obligations under a Contract;
- shall not use, nor allow its employees or Subcontractors to use physical abuse or discipline, the threat of physical abuse, sexual or other harassment and verbal abuse or other forms of intimidation of its employees or Subcontractors;
- shall not use or allow child or slave labour to be used by its Subcontractors;
- shall report the discovery or suspicion of any slavery or trafficking by it or its Subcontractors to the Council and the [Modern Slavery Helpline](#).

## 8 Monitoring Arrangements

The day to day work will be self-managed by the appointed provider. An inception meeting will be held with the Rural Housing Group and thereafter quarterly contract management steering group meetings at one of the council's offices or held virtually. Progress meetings will be held with individual district/ borough councils at their own offices and a frequency of their discretion. Day to day liaison will be with the appointed officers at the borough and district councils. If, at 6 months into the contract, no sites have been found, the district/borough councils may request housing need surveys to be undertaken instead.

## 9 Budget and Payment methodology

The budget for this project is up to £45,200.

There will be staged payments as follows:

- Fixed 60% of total annual contract costs (as per what is stated in the Pricing Schedule (document five) paid quarterly in arrears, subject to receipt of invoice from the service provider
- 40% paid upon provision of the minimum number (six) of new deliverable sites found and development projects are initiated.

Payments of the 60% will be made in quarterly instalments following the meetings of the project monitoring group and the 40% paid following confirmation of satisfactory progress against the contract objectives, with the first quarterly payment being after the 6 month contract review between the LHRG and the service provider. If resources are required to be diverted to rural housing need surveys, the remaining 40% will be paid upon completion of the minimum number (six) of these.

## 10 End of Contract

Any unfinished negotiations at the end of the contract period are to be handed over to affordable housing registered provider partners in the Leicestershire Rural Housing Group.