

## Questions and answers

Issue no. 1

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This document aims to provide answers to the wide range of questions that have been put to the Council, including some that were asked before the consultation began and others that have been asked at the drop-ins or by correspondence during the first week.

The questions have been grouped under eight subject headings, each of which begins with a brief introduction. Many individual questions – including some of those raised in discussion at the drop-ins – have been about aspects of the same subject, so in most cases the questions in this document stand for groups of questions that have been asked in different ways.

A series of formal questions and answers between individual residents and the Council's Executive have been published separately and these can be viewed on the Council's website at [www.cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk](http://www.cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk).

In certain cases, where these formal questions and answers have covered questions raised at the drop-ins or otherwise received by the consultation team, the text of the written answers from the Executive has been quoted or referenced in the answer below.

Subsequent releases of this document will provide additional information and answer additional questions received by the consultation team.

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## **1. The Council's decision-making process**

### **Introduction**

This section deals with questions about the process that has resulted in Richmond Court being chosen as the service hub. The process consisted of the main stages shown below, each of which is represented by one or more of the Key Documents available in this consultation.

#### **Stage 1**

Following publication of the Government's Rough Sleeping Strategy – No One Left Out – in 2008, all local authorities were asked to review their approach to, and services for single homelessness and rough sleeping. The Government's Specialist Adviser (Rough Sleeping) visited Chester in August 2009 and provided a number of recommendations, set out in **Key Document 1**.

#### **Stage 2**

In 2009 the Council commissioned a strategic review of rough sleeping by consultants JenkinsDuval, who reported in February 2010. Their report is **Key Document 2**.

#### **Stage 3**

During 2009-2010 the Council's Housing Solutions team had been working on a wider Homelessness Strategy for the period 2010-2015. This was approved by the Council in March 2010. It incorporated the recommendations of the JenkinsDuval report and is **Key Document 3**.

#### **Stage 4**

In 2010-2011 the Council's Supporting People team carried out an assessment of housing related support needs for a range of groups across the borough including homeless people. The Needs Assessment is **Key Document 4**. It provided the basis for the Supporting People Commissioning Plan approved by the Council in September 2011.

#### **Stage 5**

In line with the Supporting People Commissioning Plan, and informed by extensive research into, and consultation on, the most appropriate model of service provision, the Council drew up an Output Specification – summarised in **Key Document 5** – that provided the basis for the procurement of the service through a process of competitive tendering that ended in June 2012.

#### **Stage 6**

The contract was awarded to Foundation Enterprises North West (FENW) on the basis that their final bid submission – summarised in **Key Document 6** – scored highest against the Council's selection criteria. The FENW bid included the proposal to bring Richmond Court into use as the hub of the service.

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**Q1.1**

**How and by whom was '... the decision to locate the homeless hub at Richmond Court, Boughton' made?**

**A1.1**

The 'decision' to locate the hub for the homelessness service at Richmond Court was in fact the outcome of a series of separate decisions by the Council and the team behind the FENW bid over the course of the process described above. The key decisions in the process could be described as follows:

- The Council's decision to approve the Homelessness Strategy in March 2010
- The Council's decision to commission Supported Housing and Related Services for Homeless People in 2011 through an obligatory competitive tendering process
- The decision by the team (from Forum Housing Association and Chester and District Housing Trust) behind the FENW bid to offer Richmond Court as their service hub when preparing their bid in February 2012
- The Council's decision to award the contract to FENW in June 2012

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**Q1.2**

**Why was it necessary to change the existing service? Why could the present service providers not continue to provide the service from the existing buildings?**

**A1.2**

The thinking and best practice for homelessness services develops and changes over time. The early reports from 2009-2010 described above confirmed that services in Cheshire West and Chester did not measure up to the most up to date and effective approaches to tackling and preventing repeat homelessness.

The Council began a process to define a service capable of meeting and exceeding current best practice. This meant rethinking the Council's strategic approach as well as the types of accommodation and support offered to people in acute housing crisis.

The specification was based on up to date guidance from central Government, Shelter and Homeless Link as well as locally based primary research with service users and current service providers. The specification also drew on the lessons learnt from the Government's Places of Change programme\* and the draft guidance on Psychologically Informed Environments eventually published in February 2012\*. The objective was, and is, for the new service model to deliver a step-change improvement in services and outcomes.

\* copies of reports on the Places of Change programme and Psychologically Informed Environments can be obtained from the consultation team at Campbell Hall or from the Council's Supplier Management team on 01244 973332

By definition, the existing service did not meet some of the requirements of the Council's service specification, including the facilities available in some of the existing buildings. The present service providers were however fully involved in and consulted on the process, guidance and thinking behind the development of the new service model and specification.

The value of the contract and the scale of change required meant that the contract had to be put out to open tender. It was made clear in the Council's documentation to applicants that between four and six organisations would be invited to take part in the competitive dialogue stage of the procurement process.

Chester Aid to the Homeless, the organisation providing a large part of the existing service, was one of the ten organisations who applied for the new contract, submitting a pre-qualification questionnaire (PQQ). Following the evaluation of the PQQs, five organisations were invited to take part in the next stage of the process.

Chester Aid to the Homeless did not score highly enough to be short listed for this next stage and were therefore not invited to submit a final tender.

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### **Q1.3**

**What other locations were considered and why were they rejected in favour of Richmond Court?**

### **A1.3**

In preparing their bid, Foundation Enterprises North West considered a number of locations and models for different elements of the borough-wide service, concluding that Richmond Court represented the best option not only for meeting part of the accommodation requirement but also in providing the organisation with a service 'hub' from which to co-ordinate services as a whole.

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### **Q1.4**

**There have been rumours that the Council has always wanted Richmond Court to be the location and that this result was engineered by the Council. What is the basis for these rumours?**

### **A1.4**

'Approximately 18 months ago, the Council conducted a property search ... to identify whether, in addition to the current service locations, there were buildings available in the borough with the potential to meet an outline specification. Richmond Court was identified as one of two such premises the other being Lightfoot Lodge, Lightfoot Street, Hoole. While this search identified potential sites, it was acknowledged that other sites may be available which are not known to the Council. This included the potential to refurbish the existing provider premises to meet the specification. The Council wished to ensure that the widest choice of options could be considered.

'The procurement exercise was the means to identify and decide on a preferred location. Therefore, when the formal procurement route was commenced the Council explicitly stated in the documentation that it was open to accommodation proposals from all prospective providers so long as it met the specification of being within walking distance of the city centre.'

(N.B. this answer is taken from the answer to a written question to the Council's Executive on 5<sup>th</sup> September 2012)

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#### **Q1.5**

**Will the process leading to the award of the contract be referred to the Council's Scrutiny Committee? How will the contract be monitored and by whom? What will happen if anything goes wrong and what will happen at the end of the five years of the contract?**

#### **A1.5**

'... there is no intention for the matter to be referred to the Scrutiny Committee but the Public Accounts Committee has been asked to investigate how the Council can consult more effectively with the public within the constraints of the procurement regulations. Furthermore, the Executive has put in place a cross-party Members Homeless Strategy Implementation Task Group with the specific terms of reference "to oversee the implementation of the new contract and to assess what role all local organisations supporting homeless people will have in the future".

(N.B. this part of the answer is taken from the answer to a written question to the Council's Executive on 5<sup>th</sup> September 2012)

In addition to the overarching role of the Members' Task Group there is a Partnering Board with overall responsibility for implementation of the contract and a range of contractual mechanisms to ensure that contractual undertakings are delivered. As with other supported housing contracts, the Council's Supplier Management team will manage the contract against agreed performance and quality standards.

The Council will need to decide in good time before the end of the contract how it will commission the services to be provided after the contract period.

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## **2. Consultation**

### **Introduction**

The Council has consulted widely on its overall approach to homelessness over the last three years. Some of this consultation is described in the Key Documents. This has enabled stakeholders and interested parties to contribute to and help shape the specification of the service. The specification has set the framework for the competitive tendering process and the outcomes to be achieved by the successful bidder.

Within the successful bid by Foundation Enterprises North West the mobilisation plan included provision for community consultation during the period prior to the start of the contract. Before this could happen three public meetings took place where local residents asked a range of questions and expressed concerns. The Council then agreed to take the lead in a local consultation process, which is now taking place.

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#### **Q2.1**

**Why is the Council not consulting us about whether the service should be based here at Richmond Court?**

#### **A2.1**

The Council commissioned the new service without stipulating in the specification where the service should be based. Having accepted the service provider's bid, which included the use of Richmond Court as a service hub, the Council has now entered a contractual commitment. It would not be reasonable to consult residents on whether or not the proposal should go ahead after the contract has been awarded (further details on this point are given in the written questions to and answers from the Council's Executive).

The Council's aims in leading this consultation are first, to provide local residents with information on the proposed use of Richmond Court; second, to provide them with opportunities to engage with the service provider and discuss any concerns so that these can be properly addressed; and third, to provide them with details of the background to the proposals and decision-making process. The Council has given a commitment to this, and to taking account of the views expressed through this consultation.

If, having received the information available via the consultation, people wish to object to the proposals, including the Richmond Court location, or to the decision-making process, this can be done either by using a consultation response form or by making a complaint using the Council's complaints procedure. It may also be possible

to apply for a judicial review of the Council's decision-making process, but this may require independent legal advice.

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**Q2.2**

**Why should we take part in this type of consultation, i.e. on the Council's terms, rather than a consultation on whether the Richmond Court proposals should go ahead? And why is this being done through drop-ins rather than public meetings?**

**A2.2**

One of the main aims of this consultation is to provide residents with information, so that they can understand what has been proposed for Richmond Court and respond in an informed way.

The consultation is therefore an opportunity for residents to find out how this has come about and what the proposals are, not just by reading the printed material but also by talking to people involved in providing the service and by asking questions. The idea of the drop-ins is that they will provide opportunities for individual residents to ask questions on a one-to-one basis and the twelve weeks will allow time for feedback and follow-up.

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### **3. The new approach to services for homeless people**

#### **Introduction**

The way in which the new approach has been developed is documented in the Key Documents provided and summarised as part of the consultation material. The new approach places the emphasis on first, recognising and understanding the causes of homelessness and seeking to prevent it wherever possible; second, bringing people who need it into the service at an early stage and providing them with the personal support they need at that time; third, helping them to resettle in permanent accommodation, where necessary with ongoing support. And to the extent that this service model proves effective, it will in turn contribute to the prevention of homelessness, breaking the cycle of repeat homelessness in which individuals can and do become trapped under present arrangements.

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#### **Q3.1**

**It is well known that some people choose to live on the streets and some individuals have too many problems to manage living independently or outside an institution. What makes you think this approach will work with everyone?**

#### **A3.1**

The new service model draws on experience and best practice from around the country and starts from the assumption that no one should be beyond the reach of a good service. This means that the individual service user is the focus of the service.

The other important feature of the new service model is that it will only be successful, and it will only be seen as successful, if it produces good outcomes – for individuals and for society as a whole. The contract will be monitored – and paid for – according to how far it achieves good outcomes.

When high quality accommodation with support is available, a street-based lifestyle that involves aggressive begging or other anti-social behaviour is not an acceptable choice. The service will work closely with community safety and the Police to identify problems like this and take enforcement action where necessary.

The service model has to meet the following requirements:

Design – it is designed to prevent people from needing to sleep rough in the first place, to divert those who are sleeping rough away from the streets as quickly as possible and to support people into the right kind of accommodation for them to prevent them returning to the streets in the future.

Client group – the service must be able to support people with complex and multiple needs, vulnerable people without settled accommodation or access to support, vulnerable people moving out of institutions and vulnerable people at risk of becoming homeless.

Accommodation – there must be some emergency accommodation, some temporary or transitional accommodation and routes into permanent accommodation. All accommodation within the service must be of a high quality, meeting the criteria for ‘places of change’ (i.e. accommodation geared to a process of recovery rather than just basic accommodation) and offering a ‘psychologically informed’ environment, that is, meeting standards of dignity and privacy and offering a safe and secure living environment that promotes physical and mental health.

This is based on research which shows that every aspect of a service, from the physical space to the training of staff, should be designed purposefully to maximise the positive psychological impact of the service for both staff and service users.

Street Outreach – there must be a borough-wide reach to the service, making contact with clients and rough sleepers to bring them into the service, to refer them back to their own local authority area\*, to engage with other services where appropriate and to encourage changes in behaviour where this creates problems for other people.

Entry into service – everyone brought into the service will enter via the Council’s Gateway system which first, provides a single point of referral for all service agencies and second, supports the type of needs and risk assessment used by the service provider in taking referrals.

Structured support – the service must offer structured assessment and support that focuses in each individual case on the potential for, and routes towards, effective and lasting recovery.

Meaningful activities – the service must ensure that structured support includes the availability of meaningful activities aimed at learning, health improvement and access to work. The service has established partnerships with providers of education, training, employment, health and accommodation services. These will be developed continually to improve the quality and effectiveness of the service.

Move on and resettlement – each service user or client within the service must work to a structured programme of move on and resettlement with a support plan. Where service users have no local connection, the priority will be to support that person to reconnect with and return to an area where appropriate support networks are available.

\* Currently, around 60% of rough sleepers in Chester are not from the local area. It is important to reduce this proportion and ensure that Chester does not attract homeless people from elsewhere. This has been incorporated into the contract as a required outcome.

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### **Q3.2**

#### **How does this new service model differ from the existing service?**

### **A3.2**

The new service is geared to personal recovery right from the point of someone's entry into the service, rather than offering accommodation (emergency or temporary) as an end in itself. This – the pursuit of good outcomes for individuals – informs the whole approach behind the service.

The main differences are as follows:

- Resources will be devoted to a more proactive outreach service, aiming at early contact and interception, actively bringing people who need it into the service or reconnecting them with where they have come from at the earliest possible stage
- The service has to provide for a diversity of personal needs and achieve a diversity of personal outcomes – so the range of accommodation and the range of support services are more diverse in the new service model
- The service will not use exclusions or bans that return people to the streets if they are causing problems. Difficult behaviour will be either dealt with within the service or referred to the appropriate agency (e.g. emergency services)
- The quality of the accommodation and service environment will be of a high standard and geared to encouraging self-respect and recovery – this is what is meant by a 'place of change' standard – in line with contemporary best practice, government guidance, and research on Psychologically Informed Environments
- There will be a higher level of ongoing investment in staff development and training than has been possible under the current service model
- The service will be borough-wide (through the use of the Outreach Mobile Service) rather than just being delivered from the borough's urban centres
- The mobile outreach service will operate at times that maximise the likelihood of engaging with even the hardest to reach rough sleepers

- There are no plans for the service to offer a 'wet' facility, although safe, sensible, social drinking will be allowed within the accommodation
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### **Q3.3**

**What will replace the present day care and wet provision in the city centre and where will the present users of these services congregate without these facilities?**

### **A3.3**

Discussions are currently taking place between the Council and other agencies to assess the potential impact of a decision by the current service provider to close the present day care and wet provision in the city centre. These services are not funded by the Council and do not form part of the service specification for the new contract. Further information on this will be provided in the next release of this document.

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### **Q3.4**

**What about the number of bed spaces in the new service model? Will there be more, less or the same capacity as the present service? What projections have been done on future demand?**

### **A3.4**

There are currently 112 bed spaces within the service and there will be at least 88 bed spaces in the new service. However, the new service is designed to be more effective in reconnecting and resettling service users so that they are able to live independently. This reflects the very different emphasis of bringing people into the service to achieve recovery and resettlement as quickly as practicable.

More detailed information on current and projected service demand is being prepared for the next release of this document.

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### **Q3.5**

**How will the transition to the new model be managed and how will services be provided between 26 November, when the new contract starts, and whenever Richmond Court opens?**

### **A3.5**

From 26 November 2012, the new service will be managed by Foundation Enterprises North West (FENW). The existing provision at Roodee House and Stoak Lodge will be maintained until existing residents have been relocated to more suitable accommodation within the new service, including Richmond Court once it becomes available. Existing staff who are eligible will transfer into the new service on 26 November 2012.

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#### **4. The new service provider**

##### **Introduction**

Foundation Enterprises North West (FENW) is a new organisation formed by Forum Housing Association and Chester and District Housing Trust to deliver the service. Staff currently employed by the existing service providers will be able to transfer to FENW and take up posts within the new service.

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##### **Q4.1**

**How can you provide services to a client group you have no experience of?**

##### **A4.1**

It is not true to say that FENW have no experience of the client group. Forum Housing Association have forty years experience of working with the most excluded young people (aged 16-25) in society including rough sleepers, street homeless, drug and alcohol misusers, care leavers, ex-offenders and others. Forum Housing Association score the highest possible rating in the supported housing Quality Assessment Framework making them a leading service provider in this field.

Chester and District Housing Trust ran the present and former borough's statutory homelessness service for eleven years, 20% of their homes are allocated to homeless people and they were selected to be a pathfinder organisation for a recent Government programme to provide 'enhanced housing options' i.e. linking tenants to employment opportunities.

In addition to this background, FENW will be taking on the staff employed in the existing service under employment legislation. Their skills, together with their knowledge and experience of local needs, will be deployed within the new service and given greater scope by the improved facilities and new management model.

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##### **Q4.2**

**What if demand for services increases during the contract period or there are unforeseen financial pressures? Who bears the risk – FENW or the Council?**

##### **A4.2**

Based on current overall projections of demand, FENW bears the risk of managing the fluctuations that can be expected to occur during the life of the contract. There

is an agreed contingency plan to enable the service to cope with severe weather conditions. If overall projections of demand were to be exceeded to an unforeseeable degree this could lead to negotiation between FENW and the Council of a potential variation under the relevant clauses in the contract.

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## **5. Service users**

### **Introduction**

The service is aimed at single people who are homeless and/or at risk of becoming homeless. The current profile of users of the existing service includes a wide range of people, including some with complex needs and many with degrees of vulnerability. One of the key principles of the new service is to provide a service that can identify and respond to service users' individual support needs through a needs and risk assessment. These assessments will help to determine which accommodation is most suitable for individuals coming in to the service.

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#### **Q5.1**

**What does the initial needs and risk assessment consist of and how will you decide who is suitable for admission to Richmond Court?**

#### **A5.1**

The professional standards for the initial needs and risk assessment are set out in the Quality Assessment Framework which is supported by the Government's Department of Communities and Local Government and maintained by Sitra (a leading trade association for supported housing). Forum Housing Association, who will lead on this aspect of the service for FENW, achieves the highest level of compliance with these standards. Individual assessments will be carried out by qualified staff at the point of accepting referrals and these assessments will be updated continually as knowledge and experience of the client accumulates.

The only base criteria are that the person concerned should be at least 16 years of age and in an acute housing crisis (i.e. without the service the person is likely to sleep rough). It is not anticipated that any further base criteria will be set. Decisions on admissions will in each case be a professional judgement taking account of the assessed needs and risk presented by the individual and the availability of accommodation within the service.

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#### **Q5.2**

**What are "complex needs"?**

#### **A5.2**

The Council defines complex needs individuals in this context as people who: are rough sleepers or believed to be at risk of becoming rough sleepers in the immediate

future; are likely to sleep on the streets; and have other needs which may include (this list is illustrative, not exhaustive):

- substance misuse
- mental distress
- having experienced violence, or threats of violence
- having experienced other forms of abuse (including emotional, sexual, financial and/or verbal abuse)
- having debts or other financial issues
- having a history of homelessness and unsettled housing
- having a history of institutionalisation
- being in receipt of a community care service or appearing to be in need of one and
- whose needs have not been, or are unlikely to be, met via existing housing and support services

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**Q5.3 What will be the average period of residence? If service users are just 'passing through' what reason will they have to respect the area and its residents?**

**A5.3**

It is impossible to estimate the average period of residence at this stage, but it is anticipated that the minimum period is likely to be a few days and the maximum period up to two years. The period of residence will depend very much on the individual and the kind of support they may need to be able to resettle permanently.

The ethos of Richmond Court will involve wanting to be seen as part of the local community, supporting and contributing to the life of the neighbourhood. It is expected that residents will want to share in this ethos and support it.

Nationally, the previous and current government have invested around £90 million in new homeless provision through the Hostels Capital Improvement programme. The specification for the new service in Cheshire West and Chester drew on the lessons learnt from the programme and seeks to replicate its outcomes. The government's evaluation of the programme suggests that the approach improved the relationship of services and service users with local communities.

Further information on this is available from the consultation team or via the internet at: <http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/housing/placeschange>.

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## **6. Service Policies**

### **Introduction**

The detailed service policies that will be specific to Richmond Court are in the process of being written. They will be based on the best practice that has been established within the supported housing sector and FENW will be drawing on the existing portfolio of policy documents that Forum Housing Association and Chester and District Housing Trust already work to. In part these policies have been shaped by the experience of the service providers and reflect their knowledge of what works; in part they will be tailored to meet the service specification set by the Council; importantly, however, some of the specific service policies for Richmond Court may also be shaped by this consultation – if local residents wish to influence how the service is delivered in the local community and see that their concerns are being, and will be, addressed.

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#### **Q6.1**

**Who will be in charge on site at Richmond Court and how and at what times will the building be staffed?**

#### **A6.1**

The service model is based on having a minimum of two members of staff on site at all times although the Accommodation Team and Outreach Walk Team will also use Richmond Court as their operational base.

In addition there will be staff from partner service agencies and variable numbers of volunteers and work placements complementing core staffing at different times.

There will be a designated officer in charge on duty at all times and the service as a whole will be the responsibility of the Service Manager, whose appointment may not be confirmed until the New Year.

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#### **Q6.2**

**How will the Outreach Mobile service work? Will the bus be based at Richmond Court and how frequently will it be coming and going, e.g. with new referrals?**

#### **A6.2**

The vehicle providing the Outreach Mobile service will not be based at Richmond Court and will have a borough-wide remit. Use of the vehicle will be determined by

local intelligence, providing outreach contact (and safe seat facilities) to complement the work of partner agencies and colleagues on the Outreach Walk team.

The vehicle will also be used to transport service users to the accommodation within the service and to daytime activities. It will not generally be used for night-time referrals to Richmond Court. It is not anticipated that the vehicle will be coming and going frequently to and from Richmond Court, although this will be monitored.

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### **Q6.3**

**What kind of tenancy agreement will the residents have? Will there be conditions of residence?**

### **A6.3**

Residents at Richmond Court will have a form of tenancy agreement called a licence agreement. This will set out their conditions of residence and their rights. Conditions of residence will include a requirement to follow the agreed recovery plan for the individual and to observe 'house rules'. These will include acceptable behaviour in the vicinity of the service. Enforcement of the conditions of residence may take several forms including assertive approaches and, according to the circumstances, restorative approaches and/or reconciliation.

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### **Q6.4**

**What are your policies on smoking, drinking and drug-taking on (or near) the premises?**

### **A6.4**

FENW will comply with the law as far as drug use is concerned and will not tolerate the use of non-prescribed drugs on or in the vicinity of the premises. Residents will be allowed to drink in their rooms in accordance with Government guidelines on safe, sensible and social drinking but there will not be a 'wet' room as such for communal use. Residents will be allowed to smoke in their rooms but not in the communal areas of the building. A designated smoking area in the grounds of the building will be provided.

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## **7. The Location**

### **Introduction**

Richmond Court is considered a suitable location for several reasons. First, it is within walking distance of the city centre and the services and facilities available there; second, the site has the space to provide the facilities required for it to operate as an intelligence and operations hub for the new service as well as providing a quantity of emergency and temporary accommodation; third, the site is already owned by Chester and District Housing Trust and can be converted to its proposed use as a service hub that meets best practice 'place of change' and Psychologically Informed Environment standards at a reasonable cost.

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#### **Q7.1**

**However you describe the service model, you will still be receiving homeless people, some of whom will have complex needs and some of whom may be drug users and/or offenders, into emergency accommodation located in a residential area. How can this be done without posing a risk to local residents?**

#### **A7.1**

The proportion of service users with complex needs (see Q/A5.2 above) is expected to be small. Everyone coming in to the service will have been subject to an individual needs and risk assessment and placed within the service accordingly. It will be a condition of residence that each individual works to a recovery plan and supports the ethos of Richmond Court as a positive presence in the community. The building will be a managed facility run by professional staff who will be mindful of the concerns expressed by local residents and who will want Richmond Court to get off to a good start and over time establish a reputation for excellence.

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## **8. Other questions**

### **Introduction**

The questions and answers under the headings above cover the broad range of issues that have been raised to date. The following question has also been raised by a number of local residents who have visited the drop-ins.

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#### **Q8.1**

**Why was Richmond Court taken out of use as sheltered accommodation and why is it not being brought back into use for this client group?**

#### **A8.2**

In 2008, following a review of older people's housing that involved local authorities, housing associations and service providers across the Cheshire region, Chester and District Housing Trust began a programme, in consultation with the former Chester City Council, to decommission the sheltered housing schemes in its ownership which still had shared bathing facilities.

Richmond Court was the last but one of eight such schemes in the programme. Each resident was offered the option of a temporary move until such time as new housing to a new specification could be provided but the majority moved directly to an alternative permanent home.

The refurbishment of the accommodation at Richmond Court for the purpose of this contract will involve providing a shower 'pod' in each bedroom. This would not meet the current specification standard for new older people's housing nor allow for the level of adaptation generally required by this client group. The high cost of meeting this specification is likely to have meant that Richmond Court would otherwise have remained 'mothballed'.

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