



Co-operative Councils

Innovation Network

COMMUNITY WEALTH BUILDING

Rochdale Borough Council

Asset transfer unlocks the door for a new Supported Living development in Rochdale

BACKGROUND

In April 2014, PossAbilities CIC was formed and the delivery-arm of Rochdale Council's ('RMBC') Adult Social Care department was 'spun-out' into this new independent social business. At that stage the Cherwell Centre, which provided a base from where PossAbilities provided a range of support services was leased to the organisation for a period of ten years. The rent was set at One Peppercorn.

THE PROPOSAL

Adjacent to the Cherwell Centre is a piece of land belonging to the Council and in 2017 PossAbilities submitted a proposal to construct accommodation for vulnerable people eligible for support from adult care. The development of the supported living units and their close proximity to the Cherwell Centre, its social lounge and its garden and farm facilities providing a range of community benefits.

The Council's analysis in 2016 pointed to the need for a greater range of housing options for people with learning disabilities within borough, so this proposal gained support and in 2017 RMBC gave approval for a community asset transfer through a new 99 year lease at a reduced market value for both the existing land and the adjacent area, along with a £1,530k loan to fund the development of the Cherwell Village apartments.

THE CURRENT POSITION

This transfer paved the way for development of 17 one-bedroom apartments, which are now almost complete and due to open in August 2021 adding a residential element to PossAbilities' offer. It's a development that is domestic in scale and with its immediate access to the other facilities on-site, will help individuals to increase independence and thereby reduce cost pressures on Rochdale's Adult Social Care.

The Council has nomination rights for these apartments and are in the process of referring tenants who will shortly begin to move in.

The Cherwell complex now consists of:

- The Cherwell Village Apartments - 17 supported living units, with high levels of assistive technology and moderate levels of support.
- The Cherwell Garden and Farm - a zoned community garden where people enjoy work, leisure, training and volunteering opportunities.
- The Social Lounge which provides a 364 day a year drop in facility PossAbilities Headquarters and day centre offering professional support and advice along with day time activities.

To get a glimpse of the impact of this development at an individual level please view Ryan's story at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nxwLY-sQ9vQ>

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