

CABINET PORTFOLIO SUMMARY REPORT

REPORT OF	Councillor George Davies
CABINET PORTFOLIO FOR	Housing and Communities
CO-ORDINATING CHIEF OFFICER	David Armstrong, Assistant Chief Executive

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report is an update from the Cabinet Portfolio Holder to Members of the Council on matters relevant to his portfolio.

1. GOOD QUALITY HOUSING THAT MEETS RESIDENTS' NEEDS

Since July 2015 I am pleased to say work has been ongoing to seek and secure national investment to support the work to improve the housing offer. Bringing empty homes back into use, improving housing conditions and the provision of new affordable homes continues to progress. 230 affordable homes have been delivered during 2015/2016. I am confident that outputs will increase as further developments go on site. This is evident in the further 84 units which have commenced on site and will complete in the near future.

I am also pleased to report that significant work has been undertaken against our target to improve 2,250 private sector properties by 2020, with just over 800 properties improved to date. A key factor in achieving this level in such a short time has been the success of our Selective Licensing programme. Applications from Landlords are exceeding expectations, with over 1,000 applications received so far. Finally I can report that 129 empties have been brought back into use: going a long way to improving the quality of housing available, the level of accommodation available for local people and also having a greater impact on neighbourhoods as place to live, invest and work.

2. ZERO TOLERANCE TO DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Domestic abuse is a significant public health issue; affecting one in three women and one in six men. It is a complex issue and as such a large number of partner agencies are involved in commissioning a wide range of services to tackle it. As the Cabinet Member with responsibility for leading on the 2020 pledge I am pleased to report on the progress that has taken place so far in tackling this complex issue.

We are working with 3rd sector and voluntary organisations such as Tomorrow's Women Wirral to provide a peer mentoring scheme to provide more support to

victims of domestic violence and Wirral Women and Children's Aid, which runs a refuge for women in abusive relationships and their families.

I am also pleased to report that a new scheme is in place designed to change behaviours and reduce repeat incidents from within the highest risk group of domestic abuse perpetrators in Wirral. This is one of many future schemes where the pooling of budgets with the Police, National Probation Service and the Council to create one integrated service providing more joined up support works.

Finally I would like to encourage everyone to support the recently launched domestic abuse communications campaign 'Be a Lover not a Fighter'. The campaign was launched officially on 8 February 2016 and will run through to April 2016, and this year it is concentrating on raising awareness of the effect that domestic abuse has on children who witness it.

3. WIRRAL'S NEIGHBOURHOODS ARE SAFE

The recent Ipsos Mori survey has highlighted that Feeling Safe is the most important healthy lifestyle factor Wirral residents.. What is clear is that we must look to do things differently and I am pleased to report that officers are currently working with police looking at even greater integration of services across the Wirral partnership. Some other recent initiatives which have been having a great impact on levels of crime and anti-social behaviour include:

- In December we erected signage and distributed 'Selecta Mark' property marking kits across a number of high vulnerability properties to reduce the risk of burglary.
- As part of Hate Crime Awareness week, over 40 separate agencies signed a new Information Sharing Protocol to assist in tackling Hate Crime across the Borough.

4. COMMUNITY SERVICES ARE JOINED UP AND ACCESSIBLE

Since October 2015 a lot of work has been carried out on producing a 3 year plan to create a new neighbourhood working model for Wirral. Wirral Partnership members have identified key priority areas within the 3 year plan, including:

- Equipping the third sector to support delivery of the Wirral Plan 2020
- Encouraging more residents to be supportive neighbours and to be more active within their neighbourhoods
- Influencing greater collaboration among partners, integrating service delivery against pledge outcomes
- Supporting more residents to influence decisions about their local areas
- Joining up community resources and capacity

We are currently early on in the process of briefing key stakeholders on the neighbourhood working plan, and I am happy with progress to date. I will report on progress of the plan following its presentation to Cabinet in March 2016.