COUNCIL
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CABINET PORTFOLIO SUMMARY REPORT

REPORT OF	**Councillor George Davies**
CABINET PORTFOLIO FOR	**Housing & Community Safety**
CO-ORDINATING CHIEF OFFICER	**Mark Smith, Head of Environment**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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

1.0   GOOD QUALITY HOUSING

So far this year, 378 new properties have been completed, which is more than double the number of new homes for the same period last year. This includes a total to date of 30 affordable homes ('Help to Buy' units). In addition, planning approval has been granted for 112 new homes on Sevenoaks in Rock Ferry, which the Council's developer partner Lovell aims to be on site with in the current financial year.

Earlier this year, a successful bid to Central Government has enabled the Council to appoint specialist domestic abuse workers. This will allow us to deliver dedicated support to young people who are experiencing, or at risk of domestic abuse; and victims of domestic abuse who may have mental health or substance misuse problems.

In addition to the recruitment of these workers, the bid also proposed the securing of dispersed units of accommodation to enable women who no longer need the level of support provided in the Refuge, to move on to greater independence in the community.

The Selective Licensing Scheme has now identified almost all properties which require a license and legal action is being taken against those landlords or agents who have not obtained a license. This number is likely to rise as compliance checks are now underway to ensure properties are free from hazards and licensing conditions are complied with. Since April 2016, 94 compliance checks have been completed. Most of these have been higher risk properties resulting in significant intervention by the Council to improve standards.

2.0 WIRRAL'S NEIGHBOURHOODS ARE SAFE

The Community Safety Partnership has commissioned 4 additional Help Programme Courses for Wirral. These courses are run by the Merseyside Community Rehabilitation Company and they are intended to deliver behavioural change for perpetrators.

The Partnership has also commissioned Wirral Connect to work with Tomorrow's Women Wirral to train a number of victims of domestic abuse to become Peer Mentors to other victims. The programme is going exceptionally well and has already exceeded their target of the number of Peer mentors they have trained.

This is directly linked into a delivery objective of ensuring Wirral's neighbourhoods are safe, as a number of these Peer mentors will become Community Champions. Community Champions will offer a clear community based domestic abuse resource and offer victims a place where they can go to discuss their situation – as often victims will not wish to report DA to statutory services for fear of losing their children, property, etc.

Involve NW and their Talking Steps initiative continues, and provides Domestic Abuse One to One support. Through this programme we work with the most vulnerable individuals where children are involved in the family setting as either witnesses or victims of Domestic Abuse. In the past 6 months 51 clients with 92 children have been supported. The case studies of the support are incredibly powerful and helping to give these children real support so that they are not irreparably damaged by their exposure to DA.

The Community Safety Partnership is working with ROC Restore to take over the coordination of its Restorative Justice (RJ) programme which was previously overseen by Merseyside Police. The scheme is voluntary based and seeks to have RJ undertaken by community members.

The aim is to bring together victims and perpetrators of low-level crime, anti-social behaviour and nuisance in a meeting where trained volunteers use restorative or reparative approaches to agree on a course of action for those involved.

Detailed work continues to take place to develop Integration project between Police and Council. Further information will be available to Council in the coming months.