

**COUNCIL**  
**16 OCTOBER 2017**

<b>REPORT OF</b>	Councillor George Davies
<b>CABINET PORTFOLIO</b>	Housing and Community Safety
<b>CO-ORDINATING CHIEF OFFICER</b>	Mark Smith, Strategic Commissioner - Environment

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

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

**1 ENSURING WIRRAL'S NEIGHBOURHOODS ARE SAFE**

Wirral residents told us that keeping Wirral safe, tackling antisocial behaviour and crime, should be our number one priority. We listened, and recently launched an innovative, radical and ambitious new service designed to make Wirral a safer place.

The Safer Wirral Hub will integrate related staff and resources from Wirral Council, Merseyside Police and Merseyside Fire and Rescue to provide a joined up, effective community safety services for the people of Wirral.

Building safer neighbourhoods is beyond the ability of the police or the Council alone and requires this stronger partnership approach within and across all partner agencies and communities.

We know there was already good joined up working across partners to improve community safety. This development will build on this further due to the integration of council staff and staff from other organisations into policing operations and a new way of directing their work.

I believe this is a hugely important step. It will help make Wirral safer, it will help tackle the issues our residents tell us are a problem and – even in times of cuts to funding – it is an imaginative and radical plan to deliver a better service to our residents.

The development has been welcomed by Police and Crime Commissioner Jane Kennedy and Merseyside Police Chief Constable Andy Cooke. You can read more about the Safer Wirral Hub in [Wirral View](#), the [Wirral Globe](#) and the [Chester Standard](#).

## **2 GOOD QUALITY HOUSING THAT MEETS RESIDENTS NEEDS**

In just the first three months of this financial year, we have seen 50 new affordable homes built in Wirral, funded through the 'Help to Buy' initiative. We are determined to build on this performance, and will be submitting a bid to the Housing Infrastructure Fund in the near future.

Bringing empty properties back into use also remains a priority for us and I am pleased to report fantastic performance in this area, with 665 properties improved and brought back onto the market in the first quarter of this year. This is testament to the hard work of all agencies involved and will go a long way to ensuring Wirral families are able to benefit from a choice of good quality housing.

We continue to concentrate resources on making sure Wirral residents are able to live in safe, pleasant homes. Our Selective Licensing scheme goes from strength to strength, with thousands of homes across the borough being improved in recent years. An example of where we take action to ensure landlords provide good quality housing was highlighted recently, where thanks to the work of our officers a landlord was fined £18,000 for not making the improvements their property required.

You can read more about the case in [Wirral View](#) and in the [Liverpool Echo](#).

## **3 ZERO TOLERANCE TO DOMESTIC ABUSE**

During Quarter One, a new Peer Mentor Coordinator has been appointed to support and develop the work of the Domestic Abuse Community Champions. A new focus for this work will be on targeting Children's Centres to identify young parents and families which may be at risk of abuse. Work is also progressing in partnership with Wirral Change to improve the engagement with and support for the Black and Minority Ethnic communities in Wirral.

There is a continued focus to increase the awareness and reporting of domestic abuse. This will increase the number of referrals to the Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC). The increase in levels of reporting and referral will increase the possibility of early intervention, which will help provide more intensive, impactful support to vulnerable families at an early stage before problems escalate.