

REPORT OF	Councillor George Davies
CABINET PORTFOLIO	Housing and Community Safety
CO-ORDINATING CHIEF OFFICER	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

The Safer Wirral Hub is now officially open, providing Wirral residents with a more joined up and efficient service than ever before. We hope and expect this new approach will give us the ability to tackle crime and anti-social behaviour with more resources and more impact than any single agency could deliver alone.

During the second quarter of this year, we have seen a 9% reduction in anti-social behaviour incidents reported, although we have seen an increase in the number of crimes reported to the police. Despite this, Wirral has maintained its position as having the lowest crime rate in Merseyside and has seen the lowest increase in crime of any Community Safety Partnership in the region.

2 GOOD QUALITY HOUSING THAT MEETS RESIDENTS NEEDS

I am delighted the Cabinet last month agreed to start consultation on an extension of our successful selective licensing scheme. Wirral residents demand – and deserve – to live in good quality, safe and attractive housing. The availability of private rented accommodation has more than doubled in Wirral in the last 10 years and while we know that many of these properties are of an excellent standard, managed by responsible landlords, there are others that aren't up to scratch.

We will not tolerate Wirral residents being forced to live in poor conditions by irresponsible landlords. This licensing scheme is a good way for us to tackle this issue and, where a landlord does not live up to their responsibilities to their tenants, we will not hesitate to take action against them.

Selective Licensing, which requires landlords to agree to a range of conditions around the standards of their accommodation, is being extended through some of Wirral's more deprived communities, after helping to drive up the quality of rented accommodation in parts of Birkenhead.

The four new areas proposed are Hamilton Square, Seacombe St Pauls, Birkenhead West and Birkenhead Central. These would join Egerton North, Birkenhead South, Seacombe Library and Egremont Promenade South as Selective Licensing areas.

Read more in [Wirral View](#).

I am also pleased to report continuing excellent performance in improving housing for our residents. Within the current financial year, we have seen 145 new affordable homes built in Wirral, providing opportunities for people to get on the housing ladder in safe, pleasant and attractive new homes.

We are also intervening in the private sector to ensure Wirral residents can live in safe and healthy homes. 166 homes during the past six months have had hazards removed to make them safer, warmer and healthier houses for our more vulnerable residents.

3 ZERO TOLERANCE TO DOMESTIC ABUSE

WIRRAL Council united with colleagues across Merseyside on Saturday, November 25, to mark International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women and Girls. The day signalled the start of a 16-day campaign of activism to raise awareness of domestic abuse.

Council buildings including Wallasey Town Hall, Birkenhead Town Hall, and the Floral Pavilion, New Brighton, glowed orange to support the UN campaign and people were urged to wear orange to show solidarity.

On November 25 Wirral also supported White Ribbon Day, when people were asked to wear a white ribbon and take the White Ribbon Pledge to end male violence against women. An awareness raising campaign across Merseyside will focus on how people need to talk about what is often a hidden problem and seek help.

Read more in [Wirral View](#).