

**CABINET PORTFOLIO SUMMARY REPORT**

<b>REPORT OF</b>	Councillor George Davies
<b>CABINET PORTFOLIO FOR</b>	Housing and Planning
<b>CO-ORDINATING CHIEF OFFICER</b>	Paul Satoor – Corporate Director for Business Management

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

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

**1 GOOD QUALITY HOUSING THAT MEETS RESIDENTS' NEEDS**

I want to start my update to Members this month with our Local Plan, which Members are aware is incredibly important. The Government have confirmed Wirral must use the older ONS projections in calculating our housing need, which means we must develop a Local Plan which allows for a minimum of 803 homes to be built every year.

It's disappointing the Government want us to use the higher figure but despite this I am determined that we will do everything in our power to protect Wirral's most beautiful natural locations. As we go through the process of developing the Local Plan, we are becoming more convinced it is possible to develop even more brownfield sites.

I want to assure the Chamber our focus will be firmly on those brownfield sites for the newly built homes – areas which have already had development on them – and on maximising the use of this land to provide as many homes as possible and protect Green Belt from unwanted and unneeded building.

It's also important to highlight that although we will look to maximise development opportunities in brownfield sites we will not compromise on quality and we will ensure that the approach of creating sustainable and vibrant communities for all is at the heart of everything we do.

Members will be aware I made a commitment to ensuring Members of all parties are able to fully participate in the development of our Local Plan. I am pleased we have already taken steps to deliver on that promise, and I am encouraged that Members are taking the opportunity to get involved in this vital process.

I think it's also important I provide Members with an update on our wider performance within this portfolio. The below points give Members a good summary of where we are as we work towards delivering our Pledges.

- 271 homes, which includes 182 Help to Buy units were completed by the end of 2018. In the past three months, 54 units started on site, bringing a total of 218 units started on site for the year to date. This is a lot higher than was anticipated due to greater investment confidence from Registered Providers.
- Homes England approved the Housing Infrastructure Fund award to support housing development at Wirral Waters in November 2018. The funding will enable some 1,000 new homes to be built on brownfield sites as a first phase of residential development. A grant funding agreement is being progressed with Homes England.
- Energy Projects Plus's "ECHO" scheme for low income households who are vulnerable, cold or living in fuel poverty resulted in 28 replacement boilers installed in Wirral households in this quarter.

I want to highlight to Members our continuing work to create new affordable homes in Wirral. Just last month, I was pleased to attend the opening of a £6 million rent scheme, named Livingstone Park, which will provide 15 two- and three-bedroom houses and 34 one and two bedroom apartments off land on St Peter's Road adjacent to Cammell Laird 1907 Football Club.

These kinds of developments are incredibly important as we find ways to help families in Wirral get the attractive, safe homes they need. Read more in the [Wirral Globe](#).

Finally, Members will be aware of an important planning decision which was taken recently. Andrew Gibson House will be transformed into over 100 plush apartments with views across to Liverpool.

Originally constructed over a century ago for the widows of sailors and men lost at sea, most of the building on Seabank Road in Wallasey will now be retained and converted.

The house itself, which has lay derelict for a decade and was in "serious jeopardy", will become 34 apartments, with three further blocks built within the grounds to bring the total number of homes to 136.

Read more in the [Wirral Globe](#).