

CABINET PORTFOLIO SUMMARY REPORT

REPORT OF	Councillor Stuart Whittingham
CABINET PORTFOLIO FOR	Housing and Planning

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report is an update from the Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Housing and Planning to Members of the Council on matters relevant to the portfolio.

Tackling empty properties

At a time when Wirral, in common with many places, is looking to increase the availability of good quality housing, having perfectly good properties around the borough sat empty and unoccupied is not a good look. Bringing these empty properties back into use for the benefit of those who need accommodation is therefore a big priority and we have been empowering the Housing Renewal Team to take action to address the issue. In the first quarter of 2019, this is paying dividends with the number of ‘completions’ on empty homes exceeding the target – 1,249 against a target of 1,186. This means a significant increase in the supply of much needed housing, a reduction in the level of homelessness in the borough and a contributory factor in regenerating neighbourhoods.

Home adaptations

We continue to make excellent progress on carrying out works on properties that allow people to remain in their own home – and retain their independence – when they become frailer and in need of more assistance. The number of home adaptations that were carried out in Wirral in 2018-19 was 2,732, far in excess of the target, and in the first quarter of this year the adaptations team have started strong again, with 702 people helped against the target number of 638. Home adaptations can range from minor pieces of work such as installing grab rails or shower seating, to more major works like installing stairlifts and ramps and widening doorways.

Homelessness

The Liverpool City Region Housing First pilot scheme began this summer and despite still being the ‘test and learn’ phase 46 clients have already engaged with the initiative, with nine people being found accommodation - two of which have been in Wirral, with two more having been made suitable offers.

At the same time, we are currently carrying out a homelessness review which will help us put together a new homelessness strategy. At the same time, a review of the city region Common Allocations Policy, which is used to ensure social housing is allocated fairly and objectively to those in most housing need, is taking place. The Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Review and Strategy will be going for final sign off to Cabinet in February 2020.