

## LEADER'S ANNUAL REPORT 2016

### INTRODUCTION AND FINANCIAL CONTEXT

This is my third annual report as a Leader and I want to jump straight into that subject that is at the back of my mind on a daily basis - the likely budgets cuts we face and how we can protect services.

The main issue that has been consistent since the beginning of our administration in 2013 is the funding cuts and the challenge of finding savings year after year. Without mentioning the possible Local Government Reorganisation, uncertainty about finances is the biggest challenge facing us again for at least another three years.

To remind everyone of the scale of the cuts, our settlement from the Welsh Government at the beginning of our election year was approximately £100,685 million including the outcome grant; this year the settlement was £91,928m. Over the past three years (including this financial year until the end of next March) we have had to make savings of around £ 14 million. Whilst doing this we have still protected frontline services and have even invested in those where there are growth pressures such as Social Services.

The process of developing the last budget was intense and saw all members contribute in four full-day workshop sessions following a review of services in the summer. Originally we were looking for savings of over £ 5 million, for all the hard work we managed to find £ 3.9 million. Fortunately this was adequate for this year but with the need to find perhaps £ 9.7 million over the next three years it means that tough decisions will have to be made.

Although not a panacea, alternative methods of running services are being investigated by many Councils and a recent workshop on the topic was timely. Work has been ongoing with a sub group of the Town and Community Councils who have been helping with input into our partnership policy and partnership toolkit that will assist in establishing partnerships with Town and Community Councils or Social Enterprises. The golf course in Llangefni is a specific example of a facility that we could no longer afford to operate that is now run by the Llangefni Town Partnership. This type of arrangement is inevitable in the future if we want to protect and maintain the current level of services provided.

Work is being done to look at different ways of running our heritage attractions; at present we're also investigating different ways of running the Library Service and Youth Service. We will be consulting on a range of options that will hopefully help us in maintaining these important services.

One of the major changes last year was the restructuring of the senior leadership team down from 5 to 3. Dr Gwynne Jones began in post as Chief Executive last June and was followed by the Assistant Chief Executives Dr Caroline Turner and Mrs Annwen Morgan at the end of 2015. Caroline is

responsible for the internal business of the Council (and has been designated as the Director of Social Services) while Annwen is responsible for our partnership work. Although I do not have to remind Members that the restructuring has brought significant savings it is important to note for any external audience that is reading this report that we are making savings at all levels of Council management.

## **CORPORATE PLAN**

In this part of the report I will outline the progress that has been made on our Corporate Plan. This is a long-term improvement plan, which drives a programme of continuous improvement and strategic developments that will improve the performance and efficiency of the Council.

Before talking about the Corporate Plan it is important to note the day to day work the Council is responsible for. The most common comment I hear when discussing savings and how we can protect our frontline services is 'what do we get for our Council tax'- The Council educates approximately 10,000 pupils in 48 primary and 5 secondary schools, runs the library service, culture and youth services, social services and it looks after and protects our vulnerable adults and children. We run six residential homes, maintain the county's roads and footpaths, collect domestic waste and recycling waste, run a Housing Service, Town and Country Planning and licensing provision, public protection through environmental health and trading standards services, administer benefit payments, economic development and tourism, run four leisure centres and manage our maritime assets.

The priorities of our Corporate Plan and the progress that has been achieved against these are discussed below.

### **Transform Older Adult Social Care**

Recently an agreement has been reached with Pennaf Housing Association to build Extra Care homes in Llangefni. There are plans to build additional extra care homes in the north and southeast of the island. Although we are seeing progress on this priority with Llangefni, finding sites and partners has been problematic in other areas. This work is still proceeding and we should review this priority in the development of our next Corporate Plan.

The improvement of the range and availability of community-based services for older people is coming along well. Our age well centres are firmly established and the Llaisiau Lleol (Local Voice) project in the Seiriol area is developing well. Currently there are 37 sites providing an opportunity for adults to socialize and support each other. These include good turn schemes, over 50 groups, falls prevention projects, age-well centres and memory cafés.

Our internal home care provision has focused on re-enablement to help people recover after coming home from the hospital or periods of illness, the aim is for them to regain their independence and stay in their homes as long

as possible . This is in line with the aspiration of the plan.

The aim of co-operating more closely with the Health Service is developing gradually. Nurses are located here at the headquarters of the Council and social workers are located in the field in surgeries and health centers. In addition to this, the department has worked closely with the Health Trust to develop the Môn Enhanced Care model to keep the fragile out of hospital.

## **Regenerating our Communities and Developing the Economy**

The priority of taking our planning responsibilities seriously to promote major developments is effective, alongside this priority the Energy Island project's aim of promoting the island as a centre of excellence for energy development is maturing with a number of significant developments rapidly becoming a reality.

The informal consultation on Wylfa Newydd prior to PAC 2 has just finished and planning applications for site preparation and clearance and improvements to the A5025 from Valley to the site are expected by the end of the year. The formal consultation (PAC 2) will begin in July. Planning applications for associated developments sites are expected next year and the main application for the station itself is scheduled for submission to DECC by February 2017. The Horizon offices on the site have been extended recently to house 150 employees there. 20 new apprentices have been employed recently.

Land and Lakes is a project that is associated with Wylfa Newydd. The planning application and associated s106 agreement for worker accommodation and a holiday park has now been completed. The company is currently negotiating terms with Horizon.

Although Wylfa is the foundation of the Energy Island project there are three other significant power projects in the pipeline too. Orthios has attracted investment from Chinese company Sino-Fortune to build a biomass plant and eco food production park on the former site of Anglesey Aluminium. They have employed 12 workers so far and plan to begin construction in 2017. Once operational it will employ between 500 and 600 employees.

Research on the speed of the tide to the west of Holyhead shows that location to be among the best in Britain to install electricity generating turbines. Two projects have been established to take advantage of this. A Swedish company Minesto plans to install turbines in the westernmost zone. It has started to employ workers and set up an office in Holyhead. If this initiative is successful it is intended to build the turbines on Anglesey. The project has attracted £ 9.5 million of support from the Welsh Government.

Morlais is the second project planning to set up 7 different zones to pilot turbines by multinationals. The project has been established by Menter Môn. Currently the project is working on raising capital investment to install the

electrical connection into the zone. There is huge potential for the two projects to establish Anglesey as a centre of excellence for producing electricity created by tidal turbines.

One of the goals under the heading of the corporate plan is community renewal. The VVP project in Holyhead is the main project under this heading and was successful in attracting a grant of £ 7.9 million from Welsh Government. For anyone who visits the town on a regular basis the investment is quite obvious, the work on the High Street has improved the amenity hugely. The output of the project is 18 capital projects; 62 small and medium-sized businesses have won contracts, 22 homes have been improved and 22 have been built from scratch, 6 community and recreation facilities have been created or improved and £ 13 million of match funding has been attracted.

Work has started on the University Science Park in Gaerwen. The purpose is to give space to the new companies for innovating in energy and technology. Creating infrastructure and factories on the island in the future will enable those companies that flourish to establish their businesses on the island.

The Economic Development department has a very small Tourism team but it has been able to attract a lot of exciting events to set up on the island in the summer months to attract and retain tourists. Always Aim High organises the Sandman Triathlon at Llanddwyn and the Tour De Môn cycle race around the Island. Last summer the Tour of Britain professional cycling race began in Beaumaris drawing a crowd of 5,000.

Other major events are the Menai Bridge and Beaumaris Food Festivals, which have grown over the past year to include 'food slams' around the Island. These activities promote the food industry that is developing here on the Island. Dylan's restaurant has recently leased two of the new units at Parc Cefni to manufacture products it will market in supermarkets and shops.

### **Improving Education, Skills and Modernising our Schools**

The school modernisation strategy is moving ahead successfully. In Holyhead the construction of the new primary school has begun. The frame for the new part of the school is up and the old building has been 'gutted ' and is being modernised. A new Head has been appointed and a shadow governing body has been established.

In Llanfaethlu the new Ysgol Rhyd Y Llan site has been cleared and construction will begin later this month. A Head has been appointed and a shadow governing body is in place.

The final business case for the area school in Bro Rhosyr is being completed and sites are being considered.

The work to raise and maintain standards is being strengthened and a

strategy to ensure schools move up in category has been developed and is being implemented. As Members we are involved in this process through the School Standards Panel.

### **Increasing our Housing Options and Reducing Poverty**

The Council as one of the Local Authorities that has retained its housing stock has bought out of the housing revenue system. This means we can now build and buy houses to add to our stock of social rented housing. Over the next year we plan to buy 15 houses to add to our stock and we will build 15 new houses. In order to maintain the number of houses available for affordable rent the Council has decided to bring the right to buy scheme to an end. In addition to these developments there is an annual capital plan for improvements to upgrade our stock.

The project to transform and modernise the housing maintenance unit is near completion. This project has brought the running costs down but also improved our support for tenants.

The department has also worked closely with the VVP project in Holyhead to improve and build houses.

### **Transforming our Leisure and Library Provision**

The modernisation of our leisure centres has seen significant progress. The aim is to bring the Council's subsidy of the centres down by 60%. The computer booking system and payment system has been updated. Membership and swim and gym deals are now available through direct debit and this has raised additional income. There has been investment in the Holyhead centre by the Council and the VVP project. This has improved the quality of the building. The Council is also upgrading the centres in Llangefni and Amlwch. The department is modernising and updating its image and will be launching the Mônactif brand soon.

The transformation of our libraries has begun. There has been consultation with users and well attended open sessions in four libraries. Detailed work on developing options is currently happening with the intention of going out to consultation on more detailed proposals in due course. The intention is to bring proposals to Scrutiny and then to the Executive by October.

### **Becoming Customer, Citizens and Community Focused and transforming our Information and Communication Technologies (ICT)**

The smarter working project is key role in these priorities. The work of remodeling the reception area and the main building to accommodate staff who will move from offices outside of the main headquarters is starting soon. Contracts have recently been let to local companies for this work. The tenders

received are less than the original estimates. Departments within the main offices have begun to move to their new locations.

The purpose is to create a new one stop shop reception space that will improve the quality of customer care with the intention of being able to deal with consumer service requests far more efficiently.

Part of the commitment to improve customer service is the adoption of the Customer Care Charter. This is a set of guiding principles our staff are expected to follow to promote good practice in customer service.

Another customer care initiative is the new AppMôn system for receiving service requests from smart phones. This is the first bilingual app of its kind.

Many developments are moving along well in our ICT improvement work. Powerful new servers that will utilise virtualisation technology have been installed, new upgraded data storage has been installed. Citrix, a system to enable our employees to work from anywhere, is being implemented. Microsoft Lync has been implemented. Cost savings in printing are being made through the installation of multi-function devices that are shared by staff. ICT modernisation on this scale can take a great deal of time. It's pleasing to note that this work has all happened in the last year.

## **OTHER DEVELOPMENTS**

Not all events can be planned for and the Council must deal with some things as they come forward. This year we are making arrangements to accept two families of refugees from Syria and we are also working to identify sites for gypsies and travellers.

In June we held a meeting to welcome the Eisteddfod to the island in 2017. Local appeal committees have been set up and £192,000 of contributions have been collected to date.

At the end of 2015 electricity generation came to an end at Wylfa after 40 years. As already mentioned, we are playing our part in developing the New Watch.

I take this opportunity to thank the Chief Executive, the Senior Leadership Team, Department Heads and all Council staff for their hard work and dedication over the past year. Thanks also to my fellow councillors for their support.