



Llywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru
Welsh Assembly Government

WRITTEN STATEMENT BY THE WELSH ASSEMBLY GOVERNMENT

Title: Isle of Anglesey County Council – Recovery Board

Date: 16 September 2009

By: Brian Gibbons, Minister for Social Justice and Local Government

This statement informs Members of appointments I have made to the Recovery Board which will advise me on the progress that the Isle of Anglesey County Council is making towards addressing the serious weaknesses in its corporate management.

On 15 July, the Auditor General for Wales published a highly critical report on the corporate governance of the Council, and recommended that the Welsh Assembly Government intervene to secure recovery. I indicated that I agreed in principle with that recommendation in an oral statement to Plenary the same day. Subsequently, I issued the Council with a formal direction, the terms of which I outlined in my written statement of 12 August.

As well as enabling me to designate the Mr David Bowles as Managing Director the direction also required the Council to co-operate with a Recovery Board. This Board will advise me on the progress the Council is making as well as advising the Council on possible courses of action it might take to increase its capability and capacity to respond to its current problems.

I said in my last statement that I would announce the membership of the Board as soon as possible. I am now in a position to do so.

The chair of the Board will be **Professor Elan Closs Stephens CBE**. Elan is a non-executive member of our strategic delivery and performance board

specialising in corporate governance, and former Chair of S4C and of Chwarae Teg. She also Chairs our Corporate Governance Committee.

The other members of the Board will be as follows.

Sue Essex will need no introduction: she is a very highly regarded former Assembly Member and Minister, with particular expertise in local government matters. Sue commanded respect across the political spectrum throughout her career and continues to do so.

Bill Horne recently retired as Assistant Chief Constable, Gwent Police, after thirty years' service as a police officer in the Gwent and Dyfed Powys forces. That management experience and expertise will bring a valuable different perspective to the Board's work.

Richard Parry Hughes is a farmer from the Llŷn peninsula with extensive public service experience in north-west Wales, as the former Leader of Gwynedd County Council and now as a member of the North Wales Police Authority.

Dr Zoë Radnor is Associate Professor at Warwick Business School and an acknowledged expert in performance management and improvement. Zoë has worked with Anglesey before, as well as with other local authorities in Wales and England.

Mel Usher is a leading figure in local government improvement and recovery, having held senior management positions in several local authorities. He inspired the creation of the Improvement and Development Agency for local government, of which he was the first chief executive.

Graham Williams is the former Chief Inspector of Social Services for Wales and Director of the NHS in Mid and West Wales. Graham recently retired as the Assembly Government's Director of Social Services.

I am very pleased that these individuals have agreed to serve on the Board. They bring a huge breadth of experience and knowledge from diverse sources. That expertise will greatly assist me and the Council in securing the rapid and sustainable recovery that we all want.

I am also pleased that three of the Board's members – Elan, Richard and Graham – are fluent Welsh-speakers. These appointments recognise the importance of the Welsh language within the Council and on the island, and ensure that anyone who wishes to discuss issues with a Board member through the medium of Welsh will be able to do so.

The Council will have a duty to work with the Recovery Board. The Board's role will be advisory – to monitor the Council's progress towards recovery and to advise me accordingly. It may also advise the Council on possible courses of action. But responsibility for recovery rests with the Council. The Board will not approve, veto or amend any decisions that the Council makes.

Following my oral statement in July, some Members enquired about the cost of recovery might affect front-line services on Anglesey. A quick and sustainable recovery is critical – without it services will suffer far more, with a serious risk of complete failure. Accordingly, the Welsh Assembly Government will meet the costs of the Recovery Board, using part of a discretionary grant payable to Anglesey for meeting its improvement priorities – and there is no greater improvement priority than this.

I hope to arrange the first meeting of the Board very shortly and will make an oral statement to the Assembly following that.