Press Statement regarding Welsh Audit Report: 18 October 2019

Penmaenmawr Town Council – Press Statement regarding Welsh Audit Report

The Penmaenmawr Town Council welcomes the publication of the Welsh Audit Office (WAO) Report into the Use of Financial Reserves, up to and including the last financial year. The Council accepts the findings of this Report and acknowledges that during the period in question, its standards fell below those expected of a public body. Almost twelve months on from first publicising its difficulties the Penmaenmawr Town Council is now in a financially stable position, with reserves that exceed those recommended by oversight organisations. This resulted in the Auditor General concluding yesterday (17th October 2019) "I am encouraged that the Council has since put in changes to address the weaknesses identified in my reports".

The Council would like to reinforce that the financial problems discussed in the Report were initially discovered through Council's own internal procedures, and it was the Council who brought these matters into the public domain and, indeed, reported them to the Welsh Audit Office. The Council immediately took steps to rectify the issues, publishing a full report on its website in December 2018. By the spring of 2019, when the WAO investigation began most of the recommendations contained in the Auditor General's Report had already been implemented. This is recognised in the report, which emphasises ''it is evident that the Council had recognised the seriousness of its financial position by the autumn of 2018 and had started taking action to improve its budgetary control and monitoring arrangements.' This exercise was completed earlier this year.

The Mayor stated that "While the Council, and individual Councillors, have accepted that during this period they fell short in their responsibilities, the majority have since worked hard to rectify the issues and are now fully focussed on the challenges and possibilities for Penmaenmawr in the coming years." This positive outlook is echoed by the Auditor General 'the Council continues to strengthen its financial management and governance and is determined not to allow a similar situation to arise again in the future.'

18th October 2019