

TÓRSHAVN—HEART OF FAROE

The charming capital of the Faroe Islands manages to combine fast-paced town development with widely recognized environmental care, spurred on by a highly popular mayor who likes to work in consensus with his City Council.

MAYOR Heðin Mortensen knows how to move things forward with the full backing of the City Council of Tórshavn. Undeniably, this is something of a feat in the world of politics, even at local government level. Earlier this year (2013), after he was elected for a third term—receiving a record breaking popular vote—Mr. Mortensen decided to form an all-inclusive coalition in the Council rather than going down the old majority-against-minority road. It's a strategy that seems to be paying off. One impressive initiative after the other is carried out, making Tórshavn an increasingly attractive place, whether for business or pleasure—from environmentally friendly street lighting to an international sports arena, from modern music venues to bold investments in education.

Not to forget, a new international golf course that has been approved for



Cruise ships docked in Tórshavn's East Harbor; Mayor Heðin Mortensen (below); Free-of-charge public service buses operated by the City of Tórshavn (opposite).

completion by 2019 at Glyvursnes, just north of Tórshavn—close to where, in time, an international airport could be built.

“We're able to work much more smoothly and effectively in this Council,” the mayor said. “It's such a breeze compared to earlier when we would have all this bickering between political blocs. Compared to earlier, we're getting things done in no time now, because we avoid all that waste of energy, time and resources. Instead, all the elected members of the Council work together to achieve our common goals.”

Mr. Mortensen added: “We want to make sure that this town has enough of quality offerings to match any other reputable town in neighboring countries that people around here like to compare with. We may already have achieved

much but there are many more things in the pipeline, in particular when we look at it from the 25-year perspective.”

‘WELL PREPARED’: The Municipality of Tórshavn has a total population of just under 20,000, which corresponds to roughly 40 percent of the population of the Faroe Islands, or three times the population of Klaksvík, the second-largest town. About 17,500 people live in the town of Tórshavn when counting the most adjacent communities, which are often considered part of the town. Strictly speaking, though, the population of the town itself is just over 12,000.

This is probably one of the world's smallest capitals. Yet Tórshavn remains a fascinating place that has much more to offer than other towns of its size, not only for those who seek a semi-urban

The Port of Tórshavn is the country's busiest port, with large docks and a container facility in Tórshavn as well as berths and terminals elsewhere within the municipality, namely at Sund and Kollafjørður, respectively. Kollafjørður has been the scene of extensive harbor development in recent years and today has high ship traffic, representing a significant portion of the total volume of freight shipped from the Faroes.

When it comes to search and rescue and other emergency services, Tórshavn has a well-equipped team of trained workers.

“Safety is a priority and must remain so,” Mr. Mortensen said. “We are very strong at sea and on land and have recently invested in new marine equipment. When it comes to helicopter support we have well established procedures for working with national agencies.

“In our long-term strategy we envisage that the capital will remain the economic and cultural heart of this country. We take a proactive approach to change, including the possibility that there will be a commercial oil or gas discovery in Faroese territory—we intend to be well prepared on the day that happens.

“As for other ports already involved in the operational aspects of the exploration business, I think we have a mutual understanding of our different roles where Tórshavn will be focusing on services rather than operations.”

City of Tórshavn

Vaglið, PO Box 32, FO-110 Tórshavn

www.torshavn.fo

E-Mail: torshavn@torshavn.fo

Tel.: +298 302010

Fax: +298 302011

Mayor: Heðin Mortensen

Permanent secretary: Ingibjørg Berg

Tórshavn is the main economic, political and cultural center of the Faroe Islands.

Tórshavn has been the capital of the Faroe Islands since 850 A.D. and is the country's largest population center.

Today, the Municipality has a population of around 19,500, which is more than 40 percent of the total population of the Faroe Islands.

The Municipality of Tórshavn encompasses Tórshavn, Argir, Hoyvík, Hvítanes, Kaldbak, Kaldbakshotnur, Kirkjubøur, Velbastaður, Kollafjørður, Oyrareingir, Signabøur, Sund, Norðradalur, Syðradalur and the neighboring islands of Nólsoy, Hestur and Koltur.

Area covered by the Municipality of Tórshavn: 173 square kilometers.

Port of Tórshavn

Tórshavnar Havn, Eystara Bryggja,

PO Box 103, 110 Tórshavn

www.portoftorshavn.fo

port@torshavn.fo

Tel.: +298 311762

Fax: +298 319059

Port Director: Jónsvein Lamhauge

The Port of Tórshavn is the largest and busiest in the Faroe Islands, with harbors and terminals in Tórshavn, Sund and Kollafjørður.

