AM: Can I ask you about the constitutional vision you have, because in the old party of Plaid Cymru in the age of the two Daffds, as we used to call it, there was a very clear idea that Wales would be a sort of mostly independent country inside the EU. Now Wales has have voted, like England, to leave the EU, that rather scuppers you doesn't it, in terms of your vision for the future?

LW: The immediate issue facing us here in Wales in defending our very nationhood now. There are grave threats to people in this country from an extreme Tory Brexit. Threats to livelihoods from an economic downturn as a result of that hard Brexit. And there are also threats in terms of our constitution here in Wales. Because I believe that an increased mandate for the Tories will mean that they will power grab from Wales. Those powers that will be coming down from Brussels should be coming directly to Cardiff Bay. The risk is that the Tories will grab those powers to Westminster.

AM: So it’s a defensive campaign, in a sense, you’re fighting.
LW: Yes.
AM: Is Plaid in any sense now a nationalist party?
LW: Well, in the sense that everyone is a nationalist. If those parties that are not defending Wales are talking from a British nationalist perspective of course. And so, you know, I just don’t think these terms are necessarily helpful. But you’re right, we’re in a defensive mode here now. There are grave threats facing our country and our people, and Plaid Cymru is determined to stand up for those people. And remember, Labour are divided. There are many Labour MPs in Wales who are openly attacking or have been openly attacking their leader. They’re in no fit state to provide the opposition and the voice that Wales needs in this
situation. So it’s down to Plaid Cymru, and I hope that people in Wales will recognise the situation we’re in and vote for the maximum number of Plaid Cymru MPs to be the strong voice for Wales in Westminster as these vital decisions are going to be made over the next few years.

AM: That Labour leader you’ve been discussing will be here shortly, but he has produced one policy I suspect you’ll be pleased with. A national holiday on St David’s day. Would that be a policy Plaid would enthusiastically endorse?

LW: Yeah, we’ve been calling for that for many, many years. We don’t have the powers in the National Assembly to do that or I suspect we would have done it many years ago. And this highlights the problem that we’ve got in Wales. We have grave problems and we don’t have the tools to provide the solutions to those problems. So greater economic powers, powers over our natural resources, are vital in this coming period to defend Wales from what we can expect to be the worst from the Tories. I mean, it’s not just about Brexit, the Tories are hell-bent, in my view, on privatising the NHS, they want to introduce more selection on wealth-based – wealth-based selection in schools. They have to be stopped.

AM: Okay. Leanne Wood, if you’re going to take them on you might well stand as a candidate yourself. I asked Paul Nuttall and he rather dodged the question: it’s been said that you were going to stand as a candidate in the Rhondda, is that right?

LW: I’ve been seriously considering this. There’s a lot to weigh up. Our party rules dictate that if I were to win a Westminster seat, which is very doable, then I would have to give up the leadership of the party, which is something I don’t really want to do.

AN: So you’re not going to stand?

LW: I think we can win the Rhondda with a number of different candidates, and I’m encourage that we do have a choice. The
LEANNE WOOD

Labour MP for the Rhondda is pretty vulnerable at the moment, and so we are looking to make gains in this election.

AN: Alright, Leanne, sounds like you’re not going to stand there. Thank you very much indeed for talking to us this morning. (ends)