

Stephen Crowther – Arbory, Castletown and Malew

Political Questions (2016)

Why do you want to be a member of the House of Keys?

To use my international and design skills to encourage growth and well-being to the Islands residents. To promote our island letter on the international stage.

If you were elected, what would your priorities be on a national level?

To create a more focused vision through the long-term strategic plan for the island ensuring that growth benefits are shared for all.

If you were elected, what would your priorities be on a constituency level?

To ensure that the newly revised constituency boundary works collectively and creates a new more vibrant region. Using my international transport architectural experience to achieve more commercial growth from our prime airport asset.

How well do you think the present administration has handled the major challenges of the past five years?

They have managed their way through difficult financial circumstances and maintained core services however now is the time to capitalise on the diversity that is developing in the technology sector.

What are the main political and social issues facing the Isle of Man in the next five years?

Ensuring stability and financial growth. Facilitating business however making sure the benefits are transmitted to all

How would you deal with the challenges referred to in the previous answer?

sections of society. Expanding the island skills base through education and apprenticeships. Working smarter in government through technology.

Using my international skills to bring greater investment and focused regional strategies with good vision. Ensuring the island is far better at communicating to both the Islands public and on the international stage.

My knowledge of technology provides me with the opportunity to ensure a major input into developing the education and technology skills base required.

How would you deal with the issue of public sector pension reform and the public sector pension deficit?

The current government has legislated to provide a solution to the near-term. It is vital we now deal with the current fear of the system non-performing which can be balanced against the potential future economic growth. The long-term potential deficit may require adjustments however this can only be evaluated against prevailing market conditions particularly interest rates.

What has changed in the past five years for Isle of Man residents for the better? (Please give examples)

Diversification of the technology sector, e.g. The new development fund for technology. Expanding the technology

What has changed in the past five years for Isle of Man residents for the worse? (Please give examples)

skills base, e.g. IOM UC and AMTC apprenticeship schemes. The beginnings of investment into our town centres, e.g. Castletown, Ramsay and Douglas. Legislation to ensure commercial regulation, e.g. crowd funding and financial regulation.

Is the Isle of Man too reliant on any one sector of its economy?

Introduction of stealth taxes, e.g. road, water and sewage taxes. Loss of the support for the elderly generation, e.g. TV licence, Bus travel. Travel costs and standards, e.g. airlines and ferry reliability. Communications and promotion of the Isle of Man, e.g. TT promotions.

If you feel it is, how would you further diversify the Manx economy?

Yes, financial and e-gaming. It should be noted however that both of these are currently being diversified and better integrated, for example financial technology, 'fin-tech', which is currently a keyword in London particularly following Brexit.

As outlined this is my core priority. It is vital that we use our existing assets, for example the airport and Douglas promenade to provide employment land opportunities. Ensuring legislation is scrutinised to ensure we are attractive to

Are you in favour of increased independence from the United Kingdom?

business however also that the new skills base is widened to all sections of society.

This can only be answered in light of future prevailing conditions which is now difficult following Brexit, however it is vital to ensure that we project stability to international markets. It would seem foolish to sever ties with our closest partner in such unstable times unless there are very strong economic reasons for doing so.

If you are, in which areas?

Please see the above answer

Are you in favour of parliamentary reform in the Isle of Man?

I am generally in favour of parliamentary reform as outlined in Lord Lisvane's report however again it is vital that this is scrutinised to ensure it does not result in political instability at this time.

If you are, which aspects of the parliamentary system would you change?

Strategies to achieve a better gender balance, code of conduct and continuing professional development. Review of the nomination process.

Who should have the responsibility of electing the Chief Minister?

As the Lord Lisvane report.

Are you in favour of the nationalisation of air and/or sea services to and from the Isle of Man?

No I am not in favour of nationalisation, however it is vital to improve the services by exposing performance delivery data. Transparency is essential. It is no good improving the Isle of Man if the journey here is a miserable experience.

Are you in favour of renewable energy projects in Manx territorial waters?

As an architect I have been involved in numerous environmental projects and am familiar with many systems. I am keen to see systems deployed however there design and consideration is important, particularly considering the Isle of Man's new UNESCO accreditation and our reliance on tourism. New wave power generating systems currently being studied could provide a good solution and also reduce wave damage to strategic coastlines.

Are you in favour of an increase in means testing for financial support and/or services provided by Government?

In hard economic times it is important all government expenditure is carefully reviewed however it is also vital that this is phased and commensurate to higher earners.

If you are, in which areas?

Social housing.