

DAVID ASHFORD

INDEPENDENT ELECTION CANDIDATE FOR DOUGLAS NORTH

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ASHFORD TO SEEK ELECTION IN DOUGLAS NORTH

Dear elector,

It has been an honour and a privilege to serve the people of Victoria Ward on Douglas Borough Council for the last 7 years. However, with the challenges our whole island faces over the next decade and beyond I believe the time is right for me to offer myself for election as an independent candidate to the House of Keys.

I fear that for too long government has taken a short-term view of the problems that we face, never looking past the next election. That is something that urgently needs to change with a plan not just for what we want our island to look like in 5 years time, but one that looks 15 even 20 years into the future. The problems our island faces can only be truly resolved with a long-term strategy and a government that is strong enough to deliver it.

In my manifesto, which will be issued nearer to the election, you will find my views on the challenges we face and the direction I believe we need to take. It will look not just at short-term issues, but also what we have to do over the long-term to guarantee the future of our island, not only for our children but also our grandchildren.

I am currently out canvassing door to door and if I have not yet had a chance to speak to you in person I hope to be able to have done so by the end of the election campaign. I also hope that once you have spoken to me and had a chance to read my Manifesto, when it is issued, you will consider casting your vote for me.

David



ABOUT ME:

Age: 37
born in Douglas, lives in
Governors Hill.

Employment: A Project Manager by
trade, I have also worked within the
insurance and financial services
industries.

Douglas Borough Council:
Councillor for Victoria Ward
2008-present
Chairman of the Housing & Property
Committee 2013-present
Mayor of the Borough 2012-2013
Deputy Mayor 2011-2012
Chairman of the Public Works
Committee 2010-2012
Chairman of Commercial Lettings
2008-2010

MY PLEDGES TO YOU

- **I am not a member of a political party and if elected will remain as an independent candidate. Therefore, I would not be bound by any party's policy and would be free to represent your interests fully and freely when the need arises.**
- **I will always assess any decision or policy on its merits. If I believe a policy is right and in the long term interest of our island I will vote for it. Where I think it is wrong, I will actively campaign and vote against it.**
- **First and foremost, I will be a constituency member for the whole constituency. Should the constituencies needs conflict with any government appointment I may hold, I will resign that post. The same applies should any conflict arise between any position I may hold and what I believe is in the best interests of our island. I will not simply support something because the government policy of "collective responsibility" states I should.**
- **I would hold regular constituency surgeries on an open door policy so that as constituents you can easily raise any concerns with me.**
- **Also, I will issue at least one constituency newsletter every six months. This will allow me to update you on events and give you the necessary information so you can hold me to account for any decisions I may make. I would be an MHK that stays in touch with you throughout the term of office, not just at election times.**

SOME OF THE ISSUES WE FACE

My Manifesto, which will be issued nearer to polling day will expand on the issues we as an island face and what I believe can be done about them. Below is just a snapshot of the problems I believe need tackling sooner rather than later.

Government bureaucracy - Government is still far too bureaucratic. There continues to be a duplication of information across government with not enough cross sharing of data between government departments. Although some progress has been made over the last four years more needs to be done.

Bringing new investment into the island - More focus needs to be placed on bringing new industries and investment into the island. The main focus of governments balancing of the books over the last few years has involved spending cuts and increased charges. But that can only go so far. Only by bringing new income streams into the island can government truly overcome the VAT bombshell. The increased charges we have seen have started to bite deep into the pockets of all of us pushing up the cost of living. Government needs to remember that every pound they take out of our pockets is one less pound for us to spend in our wider economy.

Public Sector pensions - The current arrangement for public sector pensions is unsustainable and must in my view be one of the main focuses of this government in the time it has left in office. This year the cost of public sector pensions, after taking into account contributions, will be equal to £578 per head of population. That is more per head of population than the government spends on Police, Fire, Prisons, Waste Management, Public Transport, Heritage Railways and Sports combined. It simply is not sustainable in its current form.

Legislative Council - Legislative Council should be a publicly elected body. Although there have been many arguments over the years of how it should be publicly elected, I believe there is one change that can be passed fairly quickly. That is reducing the number of members of the Legislative Council from the 8 members currently selected by Keys down to 5 and making it a body that purely focuses on the scrutiny of legislation.