

CONSTITUENCY OF DOUGLAS CENTRAL
GENERAL ELECTION FOR THE HOUSE OF KEYS,
SEPTEMBER 23, 2021

DAMIAN CIAPPELLI MANIFESTO

AN ADVOCATE FOR CHANGE



MY MOTIVATION

I am seeking election to the House of Keys. My passion for the Island and the desire to represent the interests of the constituents of Douglas Central is my paramount driving force. In this, I will draw on my professional legal training and experience.

As I have canvassed on the doorsteps of the constituency, it is very clear to me that there is an overwhelming desire for change and a burning desire to do things better, especially in relation to spending taxpayers' money wisely, the stewardship of the economy and in the management of major capital projects. This is why I am seeking your vote to represent you; I am putting myself forward as your Advocate for Change.

I am Manx-born and was educated at St Ninian's High School and King William's College. After graduating from Cardiff University and Law School, I qualified as an Isle of Man Advocate in 2003 and went on to pursue a career as Legal Counsel across a range of industries both locally and internationally.

I have given public service as a member of the Isle of Man Law Society Council, an Employment Pension Trustee and as the Executive Chairman of a significant arts charity. I am currently working as a Consultant Advocate.

I wish to offer my skills and experience gained as an international lawyer, board member and work in the charitable sector, for the benefit of the constituents of Douglas Central and the wider Island community.

OUR AGENDA FOR CHANGE

Should I be elected, I will work tirelessly to:

- Curb Government waste.
- Secure a strong economy for the well-being of all our residents.
- Cut red tape and remove obstacles to progress.
- Increase funding for pre-school nursery care to promote equal opportunities for all.
- Improve infrastructure with proper controls and management.
- Create a sustainable future for our young people looking to start their careers and working families looking for affordable housing.

PRINCIPLES AND POLICIES

I believe that the constituents of Douglas Central are seeking someone who has the necessary qualities to represent both their interests, and the interests of the Island, with a passion and commitment to see things through to a conclusion – **action on issues is paramount, not simply talk.**

I am offering myself to fulfil that brief to the best of my ability.

THREE KEY PRINCIPLES TO REBALANCE THE ECONOMY AND PUBLIC SERVICES

- 1. Reduce the size and scope of Government** which will include cutting red tape and Government waste.
- 2. Increase the size and scope of the private sector** by investing in and incentivising existing and new businesses with some of the savings produced by principle 1.
- 3. Boost funding for key front-line public services** using the savings from principle 1 and the additional revenue resulting from principle 2, namely, boosting funding for schools (including substantially increasing support for pre-school nursery education), the health service, securing key airport links in the UK and Ireland, and a costed programme for an overdue infrastructure upgrade across the capital and the Island.

All policies should be **principled, proportionate, people-focused and prudent; government for the people and not the other way round.**

If elected, using the essential principles outlined above, I would pursue the following policies:

THE ECONOMY – By way of investment and incentives, I would promote both traditional industries together with new, sustainable green and tech jobs to replace the jobs lost in the banking, e-gaming and other sectors in recent years. The Island should, to the furthest extent possible, ensure that it remains a tax competitive jurisdiction. There are storms on the horizon and we must be ready to weather those storms when they arise. I am aware of a worrying trend that Island residents are experiencing serious difficulties using some online services – including financial services – because some companies and countries have become reluctant to deal with the Island. This is a trend which must be halted and reversed by ensuring that the Island is taken seriously in a competitive world.

REGULATION – I would pursue policies to reduce unnecessary red tape which deters investment in and doing business on the Island. This in turn hampers economic development and job creation. I believe that the Island has developed a dysfunctional banking system which hampers investors seeking to use the Isle of Man as a place to do business resulting in business going to our competitors instead. I pledge to work towards reversing this trend and have the difficult conversations required to start this process.

GOVERNMENT SPENDING – I would urgently address the Government's overspending and borrowing to ensure that confidence is maintained in the Island to sustain existing and encourage future investment. The Island needs to review the size and scope of the public sector with a view to making savings to ensure we can meet existing Government obligations, such as public sector pension commitments, and invest in growing the private sector. Adopting a single legal entity model of Government on the Island, coupled with investment in IT infrastructure, will improve overall efficiency and reduce expenditure.

CAPITAL PROJECTS – I would urgently address the gross mismanagement of major capital projects exemplified by the Douglas Promenade fiasco. I would like to better understand why the taxpayer seems always to bear the financial burden of errors made by contractors, rather than vice versa, which is the legal norm. Going forward, such one-sided arrangements must be reversed to protect the taxpayer.

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PRINCIPLES AND POLICIES

TRANSPORT – I believe the Government should seek to purchase and take ownership of significant UK and Ireland air routes, to ensure continuity of service in the long-term and avoid the Island's air links being hostage to the fortunes of any given carrier as we have seen in the past. This could be achieved by Government owning such airport slots through an appropriate legal structure. The current public transport timetables and service need an urgent review and overhaul to serve the public better. I favour low cost or no cost public transport to encourage its use in the interests of the environment.

STEAM PACKET – I believe it is vital that the Steam Packet operates with independent governance to deliver affordable travel for the Island's residents, freight services and a first-class visitor experience. Affordable and available travel to and from the Island is an essential component of the Island's attractiveness as a destination to live, visit and invest. Many of you have observed that the frequency and availability of links to ports, such as Ireland, need to be addressed.

INFRASTRUCTURE – It is clear that the Island has large swathes of deteriorating roads and pavements which reflect decades of neglect. Douglas is congested and needs investment in car parking infrastructure coupled with improved public transport to reduce congestion. The issue of reducing speed in our neighbourhoods must be given top priority to reduce risk to pedestrians and vehicle users alike. The 'twenty is plenty' slogan has wide appeal in residential areas and should be implemented as appropriate. **I will address these constituency and national infrastructure priorities with the utmost urgency, should I be elected.**

HEALTH – I believe we need to ensure that resources are directed at those who have had their appointments for urgent operations or consultations cancelled so they are put back on track. Going forward, we need to consider what services we can reasonably expect to be delivered on the Island, on the one hand, and what should be sought from centres of excellence in the UK in the interests of both costs and quality of care, on the other. An effective mental health strategy needs to be adopted to address mental health together with other important health issues such as the increasing incidence of alcohol, drug and gambling addiction in our society. Equally, strong public health measures focusing on preventative medicine, rather than cure, should lead to improved health outcomes for our Island.

EDUCATION – I believe the system must be better aligned to the Island's economy so that our young people are able to transition to sustainable jobs and a secure future. I believe that pre-school nursery education funding should be substantially increased, so it is either no cost or low cost, to assist families and ensure that education outcomes are improved in the long-term. It is important that the morale of our teachers and support staff is maintained as they carry out their important work. I am also mindful of the need to boost funding for special needs groups such as those diagnosed with dyslexia, autism and other learning challenges so their opportunities are optimised.

TOURISM AND LEISURE – I believe investment in tourism, leisure and conference infrastructure should be encouraged. Such investment would have a "halo" effect for many of the Island's local businesses. I also believe that we should review the strategy of Manx National Heritage, Culture Vannin and the Arts Council to ensure that there is adequate funding and a joined-up strategy to promote the Island's strong national identity, historic cultural links and develop the visitor economy.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING, PLANNING AND THE ENVIRONMENT – I believe brownfield sites across the Island should be developed to avoid the expansion of dormitory estates and towns which could lead to the decline in our towns and villages. This, combined with allowing the repurposing of increasing redundant office space to apartments, should go some way to addressing the shortage of affordable accommodation. I accept more must be done to address this acute issue. In my view, the Island's planners need to decide which areas of the Island are of outstanding natural beauty, cultural or ecological interest in order to define what must be preserved to protect the Island's character and not subject it to future thoughtless commercial development or exploitation. It is important that the Island demonstrates its commitment to reverse climate change as a responsible nation by adopting practical, planned and proportionate steps towards its environmental goals. It is important that Government grant support is made available to assist domestic upgrades towards energy efficient insulation, construction and associated technologies.

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ABSENT VOTING AND TRANSPORT ON ELECTION DAY

- Should you be unable to vote on election day you have the option of applying for either a postal vote or proxy vote subject to the regulations.
- Should you need assistance applying for a postal vote, proxy vote or if you require transport to the Polling Station on election day then please contact:

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