

# Alfred CANNAN

Election of the Chief Minister 2021



## One Government

Building a *secure, vibrant and sustainable* future.

# SHAPING AN ISLAND PLAN

This manifesto describes how a new, more open and transparent style of policy debate, formation and delivery can build a more secure, vibrant and sustainable Island nation for all. I seek to lead a proactive Government that engages across the community, respects opinions, challenges where necessary and that strives for success. A Government where core values of hard work, determination, fairness and integrity lie at the heart of our approach and that seeks to underpin its vision with thoughtful and impactful policies for a strong, caring and united society.

This document sets out high level principles and ideas that will provide a foundation for how a new Council of Ministers will shape a new Island Plan for the period 2021 – 2026. It sets out how policy can be more inclusively developed and scrutinised and suggests changes for effective cross Government working.

I have set out my personal policy agenda in my election manifesto for the General Election but the role of Chief Minister demands leadership on the collective determination of policy. Some abridged thoughts from my manifesto are included in the statements below to provide both Tynwald and the public a greater insight into my own views, without them predetermining my support for a collective Island Plan.

If this manifesto is supported by the House of Keys, I will immediately seek to work with colleagues in Tynwald to put together a draft five year Island Plan which I intend to place before Tynwald in November for open debate and input. I intend that a finalised version will be brought to Tynwald in January 2022 for approval.

The Island is facing significant challenges but there are also significant opportunities. The big policy issues all require in-depth thought and planning in both resolving immediate issues, but also ensuring that we have long terms plans and associated structures that deliver sustainable policies for the future.

Our Island security must now be a core theme of future policy. Responding and managing the COVID pandemic is critical, but alongside that we have key central questions to answer regarding food and energy security.

To add further complications to a challenging scenario, we are now facing a significant and burdensome rise in gas prices alongside growing inflationary pressures in other areas. This will add pressure to household costs, particularly for those on lower incomes and welfare support. Government will have to act in the short term to relieve some of this burden on vulnerable and low income households.

Tynwald must rise not only to meet these challenges, but to deliver on our opportunities. We now need a focused Island Plan, with simplicity at its heart and the requirement to deliver essential services to a high standard, that sets out a core policy and delivery framework that will allow for better outcomes from Government services to meet the needs of our people, deliver on the ground and to the front line, and to contribute to the future success of our Island. A legislative programme must underpin the strategic requirements of the Island Plan where appropriate.



# ENHANCED STRATEGY & POLICY DECISIONS

The relationship between COMIN, Tynwald and Government Departments needs to change. We need better forums not only for more open policy debate and agreement, but also for ensuring that better and more cohesive policy is being delivered across Government. The following actions will enhance policy and strategic delivery:

- A Tynwald Conference is proposed in September annually to allow for public interaction and debate on the key issues.
- The Island Plan will be debated annually and amended accordingly by Tynwald.
- Every Department and Board must produce an annual report for Tynwald debate, scrutiny and approval led by the Minister or Chairperson.

These will be tabled regularly throughout the parliamentary year. These reports should lay out clearly the actions undertaken by the department, the positive impact on the Island and determine and justify staffing levels.

- Collective Responsibility can be relaxed (by COMIN vote) to allow for more substantive policy debate.

These enhanced actions will ensure there is higher quality engagement on scrutiny and delivery. I firmly believe that a wider range of diverse inputs will help deliver better outcomes for the community we serve.



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I seek to lead a Government that engages across the community, respects opinions, challenges where necessary and that strives for success.

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## CROSS GOVERNMENT WORKING

COVID has taught us that Government can work across departments to deliver outcomes that matter for our Island. Key decision makers and departmental representatives working together can ensure that decision making and delivery can be enhanced. There is also room for external expertise, preferably drawn from within our community, to help guide and advise on both policy and delivery. The following actions could assist:

- A definitive Policy & Strategy Unit formed in the Cabinet Office to work with Ministers across Government to develop politically determined policy priorities in a coherent way and confirm delivery. This should stress test policy and priorities, especially for difficult decisions, and identify quickly the policy / delivery blockers.
- The Treasury should consult with the Policy & Strategy Unit on Budget priorities and bids.
- COVID response should be re-examined and a new or refreshed COVID Response Group should lead across Government.
- A new Economic Development Board (modelled on the Economic Recovery Group) should look at economic policy and response. This will also take responsibility for delivering on the agreed future economic strategy.
- A new Projects Board should be formed to oversee, advise and scrutinise Government infrastructure projects OR, if the DOI is reformed, this could sit as the infrastructure Board to advise and input on all relevant matters.
- Our Climate Change Board make up and response should be reassessed.

# DELIVERY

Delivery matters. Whether it is a bus service designed for an inclusive and connected Island or a new scheme to assist people into work, the end result must work for people. Government exists predominantly to serve the people as well as to act in the best long term interests of the Island. Our culture should be one of “people first”. We should seek not to express what we “can’t do” but rather find ways to find out what we “can do” to take the Island forward and help people progress.

We must strive to create an environment that we can be proud of and that gives people and businesses the platforms to succeed.

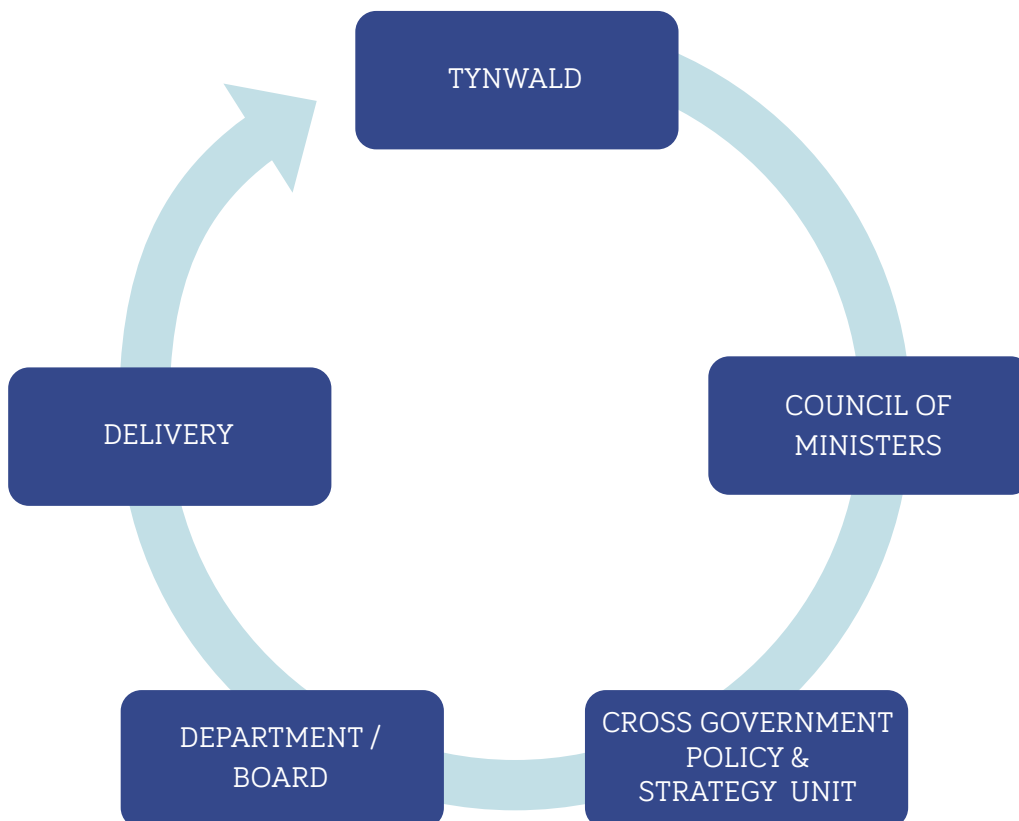
Actions described above will enhance delivery but we know that Departments can often run into difficulties.

We can do more:

- Ministers should (openly and transparently) be able to appoint relevant and experienced board level advisers from outside of Government to provide a greater depth of guidance and advice.

There are many individuals who live in our community with skills and experience who can bring a greater rigour to the performance of departments and provide politicians with independent advice. I would seek to work with colleagues to develop a framework within which these appointments could be made.

- The DOI should be broken up into smaller accountable operational delivery bodies.
- Separate regulatory functions from Government departments. Regulators should be free from political interference but should not be immune from Tynwald Scrutiny.
- A Cabinet Office led Business Resolution Group should act in conjunction with the relevant Department, Board or Agency to review implementation and overcome the problem or issue.



# ISLAND PRIORITIES

## ***The Economy, Business & Jobs***

It has been an immense effort by so many across the business community to navigate through COVID and it has been my job as Treasury Minister to deliver COVID taxpayer funded support to protect thousands of jobs and household incomes across the community. The Economic Recovery Group commissioned a new economic strategy for the Island which is currently being written. This vital document due later this year will provide a platform to focus our efforts over the next decade. We should be prepared to re-assess how to deliver targeted growth in a transparent manner. It is vitally important that we continue to build a diversified economy that offers our people the opportunities for well paid jobs in a number of business sectors. It is important that government policies applicable to young families are geared appropriately to enable them to have the best opportunities and future on the Island and there is a clear interlink with housing and social policies. Planning and associated policies must allow for regeneration to take place in our towns. A legacy project such as a Year of Sport in 2023 would provide a substantial boost for our tourism and domestic economy.

## ***Education***

The Island's education system has to meet the needs of our young people, those seeking to develop skills and support our business community. Education therefore remains of vital importance and we should empower schools, their teachers and Governors to create the environment for success with as little central bureaucracy as possible. There is significant room for education to improve and educational funding needs a full review as soon as possible. The Economic Recovery Group has created over a thousand new training opportunities in the last twelve months and these include new initiatives such as the learning company at UCM, increased graduate internships and the graduate employability training program. These types of initiatives should continue. UCM has a vital role in offering the skills and training needed for a fast developing world. We must ensure that apprenticeship training works for both student and employer and courses must be designed to match new building standards and changing technologies. We should also look carefully at the provision of childcare for working parents, the vocational opportunities in this area and consider what options may be available to relieve what can be a costly commitment.

## ***Healthcare Transformation and Delivery***

In recent years, healthcare delivery has been beset by overspending and performance issues. In response the Sir Jonathan Michael Review into Healthcare on the Isle of Man has led to the establishment of Manx Care which has the potential to revitalise healthcare provision on our Island. To move forward, urgent issues need addressing including how waiting times can be reduced. There is a recognition that a strong recruitment and retention plan is needed. There is an urgent need to deliver more accessible respite care in the community for those at home caring for loved ones. Welfare support for those caring at home needs review. Homecare offers many benefits and eases pressures on care services but carers currently need more support. Means testing elderly nursing home care fees remains controversial and this matter remains open for redress. Community nursing remains vital - we should explore how basic care and medical appointments can be delivered in the community. Finally early diagnosis / screening is vital in preventing long term illness - we should explore opportunities to do more in this respect.

## ***COVID Response and Recovery***

The Island has faced up to the pandemic with fortitude and flexibility but COVID is now endemic on the Island and with us for the long term. There remains the risk that we need to take immediate measures to protect public health and there is a need to consider what societal adaptations are potentially required as our understanding of the virus increases. We also need to carefully monitor the impacts of COVID on our economy and across society and take appropriate action which may be needed at short notice. We should consider the establishment of a new COVID Response Group to meet on an ongoing basis to assess the response, coordinate recovery and improve transparency around decision making.

## ***Infrastructure***

The maintenance and upkeep of the basic infrastructure around us is vital to our quality of life, the protection of our environment and indeed our safety. There is a strong argument to reform the Department of Infrastructure into smaller more accountable bodies in order to restore confidence, along with the need to review the method of managing key infrastructure projects. We should consider how a focused transport division will deliver a fully inclusive bus service and also plan for the future transport needs of the Island.

## ***Climate Change***

The Climate Change Bill commits the Government to achieving net zero emissions by 2050 and the Government has committed to deliver 75% of the Island's electricity from renewable sources by 2035. We should recognise the opportunities that this global crisis presents to improve our energy security, improve housing and improve our environment. This in turn presents better and more diverse economic opportunities. A Climate Change Plan will sit as an integral part of the Island Plan but it is most important that this plan is well thought through and costed. It is crucial that the financial impacts on the community and cost of living are factored in and these are disclosed in a transparent manner. A roadmap to achieving our goals and delivering our energy security should be clearly laid out by the summer of 2022.

## ***Housing***

Housing on the Island is fast approaching a crisis point. Young adults are struggling to buy first time properties due both to lack of availability and cost and the rising cost of property is causing problems for anybody who for whatever reason finds themselves in need of a home purchase or rental. To co-ordinate the response, we should consider appointing a Housing and Communities Minister to work across Government to ensure that our response is effective. A response is likely to be multi layered but the newly established Manx Development Corporation could play a key role in moving forward any opportunities for appropriate housing on Government owned brownfield sites.

## ***Agriculture & Environment***

Our agricultural community is facing continued challenges but they remain a key pillar of our economy and environment. The new agri-environment support scheme is designed to enhance biodiversity, sequester carbon, reduce flood risk and address land management matters related to Climate Change, but food security and the production of food remains vital. Clarity on the future of agriculture is needed.

## ***A budget for success***

As part of COVID management and recovery, there is the requirement for a new five year financial plan and a focus on recovering our economic performance and thus our revenue. This manifesto recognises that public finances remain strained following the COVID pandemic and that increased spending in areas will require sensible balancing in others. Current economic conditions including inflationary pressures and energy costs will provide a significant challenge for the next administration. Throughout my tenure as Treasury Minister I have endeavoured to deliver budgets that put people and families first. A return to the pre 2017 budget austerity policies that saw freezes in personal tax allowances and other vital supporting expenditure such as child benefit should be avoided and thus the emphasis increases on Government to carefully prioritise its policy and spending commitments. There is also a need to carefully review social security support to ensure that benefit levels are appropriate and targeted in line with agreed policies. The recommendations from the Report of the Select Committee of Tynwald on Poverty, as approved by Tynwald in July, must now be implemented, including the recommendation on the alignment of the Manx minimum wage with the living wage. In addition, next steps in terms of appropriate reforms of National Insurance will need to be considered, specifically considering the matter of fairness. The final Island Plan should carry with it high level costing assessment and recognise in advance policy direction that may carry increased financial commitments.



# A TIME TO DELIVER

Contrary to popular belief, the Chief Minister is not an autocratic position but one of a collective group of individuals brought together in the shape of both Tynwald and the Council of Ministers to deliver a better future for our Island home. Nevertheless, the role demands that the Chief Minister provides clear and collegiate leadership in bringing the best out of the Council of Ministers to deliver on Tynwald determined priorities.

But the Chief Minister is not just about the Council of Ministers. The appointment also carries a multitude of responsibilities which includes ensuring that political voices and opinions are heard and treated with respect, even when in disagreement. I firmly believe that by listening and working together, we can reinvigorate Government and improve the service that we provide to our society. We have a shared responsibility to formulate new policy alongside more constructive scrutiny and I pledge to work tirelessly for the greater good.

I do not set out with this manifesto to pre determine the eventual will of Tynwald in shaping an Island Plan, but to provide a platform for policy formation and progress. There are of course many challenges but there are also many opportunities for this Island. There is now a chance

for a new Council of Ministers to take a more open, focused and better informed approach with listening leadership and welcoming of outside input and scrutiny.

There will be the need to build overseas relationships and explore opportunities internationally. I take this responsibility seriously and commit to representing the Island to the best of my ability but without losing the focus needed to deliver success at home.

At the heart of it all are the communities and people of this Island. In turbulent times we must seize the opportunity to deliver a more secure, vibrant and sustainable Island home for all.



## ABOUT ME

Educated at King Williams College and following training at the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst I served as an Officer in the Royal Regiment of Wales in Northern Ireland and Hong Kong. I returned to the Isle of Man in 1994 and commenced employment in the finance sector with Nationwide International.

In 2011 I was elected MHK for Michael (now Ayre & Michael) and have been re-elected in 2016 and 2021. I have served as Chairman of the Civil Service Commission, Vice Chairman of the Public Sector Pensions Authority and on both the Departments of Health and Economic Development. I have acted as Chairman of the Manx Utilities Authority and the Public Accounts Committee and I have been Treasury Minister since October 2016.

Since being appointed Treasury Minister, I have sought to deliver a five year financial plan for the Island that supported hard working families, provided targeted support to welfare and benefits to support people back into work, created job opportunities through targeted business investment and sought to create greater fairness in society. I have had a central role in the purchase of the Steam Packet, the Sir Jonathan Michael

Healthcare Review, the introduction of Pension Freedoms, delivering the vital COVID financial response packages, creating the Economic Recovery Group in response to COVID and latterly successfully securing a £400m sustainable Bond issue.

I have previously attended CPA conferences in Cyprus and Cardiff and visited the national parliaments of Scotland and Ireland. I have attended multiple engagements in Westminster and at political conferences, meeting a wide range of senior politicians. I have engaged with the British Irish Council and met with counterparts in the Channel Islands.

I offer not only the experience and acumen to undertake the role as Chief Minister, but I can demonstrate a collegiate and listening approach to policy formation and problem solving, working with colleagues across Government to deliver results for our Island.

**We need to harness the collective political will to succeed and deliver the best results for the Island. We can all contribute. One Government building a secure, vibrant and sustainable future for our Island Nation.**