



## **ABOUT DOUGLAS:**

Douglas is the capital of the Isle of Man.

The town is the business, leisure and entertainment centre of the Island and the seat of the Manx parliament, Tynwald which, at more than 1000 years old, is the oldest continuous parliament in the world.

The Isle of Man Government, headed by the chief minister, is also headquartered in Douglas, in Government Office.

Douglas originated as an insignificant medieval settlement at the estuary of the rivers Dhoo and Glass and grew slowly at first but with increasing speed when the advantages of its sheltered location, harbour and defensive capabilities were recognised.

By the 18th century it was beginning to thrive as a market town and port and eventually, in the mid-19th century, superseded Castletown as the Island's capital and seat of government.

Today Douglas is acknowledged as the centre of the Island's diverse economy, notably finance, e-gaming, world-class aircraft and shipping registries and a flourishing space industry.

## **CONSTITUTION:**

The Constitution, and all its appendices, is the Constitution of the Douglas Borough Council ('the Council').

The Constitution ensures that the Council's decision making and governance arrangements help it to achieve its corporate aims, objectives and priorities effectively and efficiently. It also ensures that the Council meets its legal duties.

### **Purpose of the Constitution**

- Enable the Council to provide clear leadership to the community in partnership with the public, businesses and other organisations;
- Support the active involvement of the public in the process of local authority decision-making;
- Help Members represent their constituents effectively;

- Enable decisions to be taken efficiently, effectively and transparently, with due regard to probity and equity;
- Create an effective means of holding decision-makers to public account;
- Ensure that no one will review a decision in which he or she was directly involved;
- Ensure that those responsible for decision-making are clearly identifiable to local people and that they explain the reasons for decisions; and
- Provide for the effective and improving delivery of services to the community.

The Constitution is available for public viewing at the Henry Bloom Noble Library or the Douglas Town Hall and can be viewed / downloaded at [www.douglas.gov.im](http://www.douglas.gov.im)

### **The Council's Constitution – Summary and Explanation:**

The Council's decision-making processes seek to ensure:

- accountability;
- transparency;
- effective decision-making;
- community leadership; and
- continuous improvement to services.

The Constitution is divided into **14 Articles** which set out the basic rules governing the Council's business. More detailed procedures and codes of practice are provided in separate rules and protocols at the end of the document. For instance, the Council's Standing Orders are included in Part 4 – Rules of Procedure.

### **What is in the Constitution?**

Article 1 of the Constitution commits the Council to explain the rights of the public and how the key parts of the Council operate. These are:

- Members of the Council (Article 2)
- The Public and the Council (Article 3)
- The Full Council (Article 4)
- Chairing the Council (Article 5)
- The Executive (Article 6)
- Regulatory and other Committees (Article 7)
- The Standards Committee (Article 8)
- Joint arrangements (Article 9)
- Officers (Article 10)
- Decision making (Article 11)
- Finance, contracts and legal matters (Article 12)
- Review and revision of the Constitution (Article 13)
- Suspension, interpretation and publication of the Constitution (Article 14)

### **How the Council operates**

The Council is composed of **18 Councillors** (referred to as 'Members' in this Constitution) elected every four years. The overriding duty and accountability of Members is to the whole community in the Borough, but they have a special duty to the constituents in their Ward, including those who did not vote for them.

Members agree to follow a Code of Conduct to ensure high standards in the way they undertake their duties. The Standards Committee trains and advises them on the Code of Conduct. The

Standards Committee is responsible for assessing and determining complaints that Members have breached the Code of Conduct or local protocol.

All Members meet together as the Council. Meetings of the Council are open to the public, although the public may be excluded when exempt or confidential information is to be discussed. Here, Members decide the Council's overall policies and set the budget each year; agree the Council's main plans, like the Corporate Plan; and approve the Council's contribution as a partner to the Douglas Community Partnership.

Meetings of the full Council reflect the history and traditions of our Borough. The Mayor presides at meetings and acts as the interpreter of the rules of procedure. He/she has the power to control and to regulate the course of debate. In so doing the Mayor must act impartially. The Mayor has a vote and may have a second or casting vote where this is necessary.

The Council is responsible for electing the Leader. The Council is ultimately responsible for holding the Executive to account. The role of the Council is set out in Article 4.

### **How decisions are made**

Most day-to-day decisions are made by one or other of the three Policy Advisory Committees or senior officers of the Council under delegated authority acting within policy guidelines approved by Members.

Three Policy Committees undertake the development of those policy guidelines. These are the Housing and Property Committee, the Regeneration and Community Committee and the Environmental Services Committee. Their respective areas of responsibility are set out in Part 3 of the Constitution, "Delegation and Assignment of Responsibilities."

Meetings of the Council are, by law, publicised well in advance and open to the public, except where personal and confidential matters are being discussed.

### **The Council's Employees**

The Council has employees, by convention known as 'Officers', to give advice, implement decisions and manage the day-to-day delivery of the Council's Services. The Chief Officers Management Team, made up of the Council's Chief Officers and led by the Chief Executive, ensures that the Council thinks strategically and acts corporately.

To help communication within the Council and between Officers and Members, there are regular meetings between the Chief Officers Management Team, the Council Leader, Committee Chair and Portfolio Holders.

Some Officers have a specific duty to ensure that the Council acts within the law and uses its resources wisely.

1. The Members' Code of Conduct is set out in Part 5 of this Constitution.
2. These are defined in the Access to Information Procedure Rules set out in Part 4 of this Constitution.
3. These are the Head of Paid Service, and the Director of Finance as the Chief Finance Officer.

A protocol set out in Part 5 governs the relationships between Members and Officers. It is a relationship based upon mutual respect.

## **The Rights of the Public**

The public have a number of rights in connection with their dealings with the Council. These are set out in more detail in Article 3. Some of these are legal rights, whilst others depend on the Council's own processes.

Members of the public have the right (subject to the payment of the appropriate fee (where applicable) and or any statutory conditions being satisfied) to:

- vote at local elections, if they are registered;
- contact their local Member about any matters of concern to them;
- obtain a copy of the Constitution;
- attend meetings of the Council except where, for example, personal or confidential matters are being discussed;
- inspect agendas and reports except where, for example, a report has been written about a confidential matter;
- complain to the Council under its internal complaints process;
- complain to the Standards Committee if they have evidence which they think shows that a Member has not followed the Council's Code of Conduct; and
- inspect the Council's accounts and make their views known to the external auditor.

Rights of the public to inspect agendas and reports and attend meetings, is available at the Council's offices.

## **COMMITTEES:**

Council business is conducted through an executive and three policy committees, each with a portfolio of responsibility. The three policy committees are:

- Housing;
- Regeneration and Community;
- Environmental Services.

Current members are:

### **Executive Committee:**

- Mr Councillor David Christian, MBE, JP (Council Leader)
- Mr Councillor Richard McNicholl (Vice-Chair)
- Mr Councillor Ian Clague, MBE
- Mr Councillor Stephen Pitts
- Councillor Mrs Claire Wells
- The Worshipful The Mayor (ex officio)

### **Housing Committee:**

- Councillor Mrs Claire Wells(Chair)
- Councillor Ms Carol Malarkey(Vice-Chair)
- Mr Councillor Colin Cain
- Councillor Mrs Elizabeth Quirk
- Mr Councillor John Skinner, JP
- The Worshipful The Mayor (ex officio)
- Mrs J. Quaggan (*Independent Member*)

### **Regeneration and Community Committee:**

- Mr Councillor Stephen Pitts (Chair)
- Councillor Ms Janet Thommeny (Vice-Chair)
- Councillor Miss Natalie Byron
- Councillor Mrs Helen Callow
- Councillor Mrs Raina Chatel
- The Worshipful The Mayor (ex officio)

### **Environmental Services Committee:**

- Mr Councillor Richard McNicholl (Chair)
- Mr Councillor Jonathan Joughin (Vice-Chair)
- Councillor Ms Karen Angela
- Mr Councillor Falk Horning
- Mr Councillor Ferdinand Pabellan
- The Worshipful The Mayor (ex officio)

The structure is completed by a Pensions Committee, a Standards Committee and a Allotments Committee. Current members are:

**Pensions Committee:**

- Mr Councillor Colin Cain (Chair)
- Mr Councillor Jonathan Joughin (Vice-Chair)
- Councillor Ms Karen Angela
- Mr Councillor Falk Horning
- Councillor Ms Carol Malarkey
- The Worshipful The Mayor (ex officio)
- Mr A. Thomas (*Independent Member*)

**Standards Committee:**

- Councillor Ms Carol Malarkey (Chair)
- Councillor Mrs Raina Chatel
- Councillor Mrs Elizabeth Quirk
- Mr Councillor John Skinner, JP
- Mr D. Booth (*Independent Member*)

**Allotments Committee:**

- Mr Councillor Stephen Pitts (Chair)
- Councillor Ms Janet Thommeny (Vice-Chair)
- Councillor Miss Natalie Byron
- Councillor Mrs Helen Callow
- Councillor Mrs Raina Chatel
- The Worshipful The Mayor (ex officio)
- Mr L. Gerrard (*Independent Member*)
- Miss H. Cleverley (*Independent Member*)

**Councillor Miss Debra Anne Marie Pitts, JP**  
**The Worshipful the Mayor**  
Ward: Derby



**Mr Councillor David William Christian, MBE, JP**  
Leader of the Council  
Ward: Hills



**Councillor Miss Natalie Anne Byron**  
Ward: St. George's



**Councillor Mrs Helen Callow**  
Ward: St. George's



**Mr Councillor Stephen Robert Pitts**

Ward: St. George's



**Councillor Mrs Raina Chatel**

Ward: Victoria



**Mr Councillor Ian John Gelling Clague, MBE**

Ward: Victoria



**Mr Councillor Jonathan Joughin**

Ward: Victoria



**Councillor Mrs Carol Elizabeth Malarkey**

Ward: Hills



**Councillor Mrs Claire Louise Wells**

Ward: Hills



**Mr Councillor Colin Leendert Harold Cain**  
Ward: Derby



**Mr Councillor Ferdinand Pabellan**  
Ward: Derby



**Mr Councillor Falk Horning**  
Ward: Murrays



**Mr Councillor Richard Henry McNicholl**  
Ward: Murrays



**Mr Councillor John Edward Skinner, JP**  
Ward: Murrays



**Councillor Ms Karen Angela**  
Ward: Athol





**Councillor Mrs Elizabeth Caracher Quirk**

Ward: Athol



**Councillor Ms Janet Thommeny**

Ward: Athol



**COUNCIL MEETINGS:**

The Council meets monthly in public at the Town Hall in Ridgeway Street.

Copies of the agenda are made available and members of the public are welcome to attend and observe Council business being conducted.

Meetings of the Executive Committee, Housing and Property, Regeneration and Community, and Environmental Services Advisory Committees are held monthly. The Pensions Committee meets formally at least six times a year, the Standards Committee four times. These meetings are not open to the public.

Meetings of the full Council reflect the history and traditions of our Borough. The Mayor presides at meetings and acts as the interpreter of the rules of procedure. He/she controls the meeting and regulates the debate. In so doing the Mayor must act impartially. The Mayor has a vote and may have a casting (or second) vote when necessary.

**MAYORALTY:**

In 1891 some 35 per cent of the Manx population was living in Douglas, placing additional demands on the town. The Douglas Municipal Corporation Act of 1895 provided for the election of 18 councillors for the town's six wards with six aldermen elected by the councillors. This legislation enabled the formation of the Municipal Borough of Douglas in 1896.

The first Mayor of Douglas was Alderman Thomas Keig JP, a cabinet maker and amateur astronomer who helped pioneer photography in the Island. Since then 83 men and women have served the Borough as Mayor.

For the 2017-2018 Municipal year the holder of the office is Her Worship the Mayor of Douglas Councillor Miss Debra (*Debbie*) Anne Marie Pitts J.P., who is supported by Mrs Linda Curphey as Mayoress. Her Worship the Mayor of Douglas has served on the Council since 2012 representing the Derby ward.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION AND TO VIEW / DOWNLOAD A COPY OF THE COUNCIL'S CORPORATE PLAN PLEASE VISIT THE COUNCIL'S WEBSITE: [www.douglas.gov.im](http://www.douglas.gov.im)**