

If successful at Westminster Ross will step down from Holyrood

Douglas Ross MSP, the Scottish Conservative Leader, has confirmed that if he is elected as an MP at the General Election in July he will step down as an MSP and as the party leader.

Mr Ross has been criticised for putting himself in place as a candidate for the seat which would have been contested by former Scotland Office minister, David Duguid who is currently in hospital. Mr Ross said at a press conference on Thursday that Mr Duguid was “seriously ill” which has since been disputed by Mr Duguid himself on social media.

When questioned on Thursday Mr Ross said he would retain all three positions, but it appears he has changed his mind. He said: “I think I’ve been able to prove that I can both represent an area in the UK Parliament and The Scottish Parliament. I think it’s been helpful and useful at times to be able to do that. And I will continue to lead the Conservative Party in Scotland. I think we can have a very good election. I think we are seeing voters uniting behind the Scottish Conservatives in key seats up and down the country. And they know that if they can unite behind the Scottish Conservatives who can beat the SNP, get the focus away from the obsession of independence and back onto the issues that really matter.”

But this morning in a statement released to the press he said: "I have served as MP, MSP and Leader for over three years now and believed I could continue to do so if re-elected to Westminster, but on reflection, that is not feasible.

"I am committed to fighting and winning the Aberdeenshire North and Moray East constituency. Should I be given the honour to represent the people and communities of this new seat, they should know being their MP would receive my complete focus and attention.

"I will therefore stand down as Leader following the election on July 4th, once a successor is elected. Should I win the seat, I will also stand down as an MSP to make way for another Scottish Conservative representative in Holyrood.

"My party has a chance to beat the SNP in key seats up and down Scotland, including in Aberdeenshire North and Moray East. We must now come together and fully focus on doing exactly that."

Scottish Labour Deputy Leader Jackie Baillie said: "I wish Douglas Ross the best of luck in the future.

"It's clear that this divided and chaotic Tory party is out of time and out of ideas.

"Voters know that this rotten Tory government has nothing to offer Scotland – it's no wonder Douglas Ross has given up on trying to resuscitate the Scottish Tories' flailing campaign.

"After 14 years of Tory chaos and 17 years of SNP incompetence and scandal, Scotland is crying out for change.

"There is clearly only one party that can take on two failing governments and only one party that now represents change and it is Scottish Labour.

"On July 4, the way to make sure we boot the Tories out of government at last and deliver the change our country needs is

by voting Scottish Labour.”

Earlier – and before this statement by Mr Ross – the SNP called for the minutes of the Conservative board meeting with David Duguid to be published.

Despite leading the Scottish Tories, sitting on the Board, and having chosen its chair Craig Hoy MSP, Mr Ross claims he had no role at all in deselecting Mr Duguid so he could get the seat.

SNP candidate for Aberdeenshire North and Moray East, Seamus Logan said: “Whatever our political differences, David Duguid was a respected local MP who didn’t deserve to be treated so badly by Douglas Ross so that he could grab the seat for himself.

“It’s no wonder Scottish Tory members are calling for Mr Ross to resign over this grubby backroom deal.

“Mr Ross already has two jobs and can’t possibly dedicate the time needed to our local area. The minutes of the Tory board meeting must be published and there must be full transparency – it’s simply not credible that Mr Ross played no part in deselecting Mr Duguid.

“Voters in Aberdeenshire North and Moray East, and across Scotland, can vote SNP on 4th July to put Scotland first and show Douglas Ross, and this dreadful Tory government, the door.

“If elected, I’ll be a champion for our local area – working hard to secure investment, protecting our NHS, and demanding help with the cost of living for local families.”

Scottish Greens co-leader Patrick Harvie said: “At times like these it is customary to say something conciliatory about a departing MSP, but Douglas Ross has been perhaps the worst leader in the Scottish Tories’ history and the Scottish

Parliament and indeed, Scottish politics, will be well rid of him.

“He embodies everything that is wrong with the Tory party in his anti-environment, anti-equality, anti-democratic pursuit of self interest, epitomised by his ill-judged sloop for David Duguid’s Westminster seat even while he recovers from serious illness.

“The fact he only now accepts that he must resign his seat as an MSP if he is returned to the House of Commons shows the utter contempt with which he holds his constituents and the Scottish Parliament.

“It’s not just Douglas Ross that we need to be rid of, it is the divisive, reactionary and prejudiced politics that he represents.

“It is clear that Douglas Ross has lost the dressing room, but it’s important that the voters take the chance to show the whole Tory Party the red card.”



Douglas Ross announcing he will stand as an MP in the General Election. PHOTO ©2024 The Edinburgh Reporter