

# News Release

**IMPORTANT – STRICTLY EMBARGOED UNTIL 00.01 HRS BST 30<sup>th</sup> JUNE**

30th June 2005

## **Lord Ashcroft publishes results of private polling pre-election - warns Conservatives that Party must change**

Lord Ashcroft today published the results of an extensive programme of public opinion polling which he commissioned during the months leading up to May's General Election. In a 114-page pamphlet he explained the reasons for his decision to embark upon the exercise:

“As early as 2004, it became clear to me that the Parliamentary candidates I had supported in marginal constituencies were not making the headway that their labours warranted. At the same time, the Party's own opinion polls appeared to be at variance with all the other available evidence. I therefore decided to commission my own programme of research, with the aim of establishing the real state of public opinion.”

“I have known for some time that the Party was going to have to face up to some hard facts post-election, and I took the decision some months ago to publish my findings as a contribution to the overdue debate within the Party as to the right way forward.”

Lord Ashcroft commissioned a series of polls starting in the autumn of 2004 when he surveyed attitudes and voting intentions in the marginal constituencies. Later work commissioned by him included a major survey of 10,000 voters probing social and political attitudes in considerable depth. This was followed up with further work in target seats, a series of focus groups and a unique daily tracker conducted over the four months leading up to polling day.

Lord Ashcroft continued, “There are many lessons to be learned from the election, and I hope that this publication will in some small way contribute to that learning process. In my view, there are a number of key points:”

- “We must never assume that Labour's unpopularity will translate directly into support for the Conservatives.”
- “We need to rebuild a real core vote of our own – the election-winning coalition of professionals, women and aspirational voters without whom the party risks becoming a rump. Appealing to conservative or even reactionary instincts prevents us from connecting with these groups and means we will never attract the support of minority communities.”

- “We must target our resources more effectively and campaign hardest on the things that genuinely matter most to people, rather than things we hope can be made to matter.”

“More than anything else we must make sure we understand Britain as it is today, and how Britain sees us. Until we do, we will simply continue talking to ourselves.”

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Enclosure: Pre publication copy of pamphlet.

Copies of the printed version of the pamphlet will be available from July 1<sup>st</sup> from Politicos bookshop ([www.politicos.co.uk](http://www.politicos.co.uk)) price £10.00 plus p&p.

The underlying data from the study will be accessible from 00.01 hrs BST 30<sup>th</sup> June on [www.lordashcroft.com](http://www.lordashcroft.com) .