

Norwich Green Party

Manifesto - City Council Elections 2014



A City for the Common Good

Norwich is a city with a fine tradition of protecting its most vulnerable residents, keeping its green spaces flourishing and maintaining strong communities.

Our ability to continue that tradition is under threat from government cuts. Green councillors have strenuously opposed these cuts at every opportunity. If elected, a Green Council would do all it could to protect Norwich from cuts locally.

Norwich Green Party wants to work for a city and a world in which people have a safe and healthy environment and community, and secure access to high-quality food and housing. To achieve this, we need Green councillors who work for the common good.

A Different Way to do Politics

We believe that politics needs to change if we want to build a better society. Good decision-making requires political debates in which people come together in a genuine attempt to solve problems, remaining true to their values while respecting the views of others. Unfortunately, most political debate seems to be about blame, competition and short-term self-interest. Changing this culture will be difficult for *all* parties but there are things we can do to help make it happen:

- Green councillors will seek to work constructively with councillors of other parties to achieve common aims, giving them credit where it is due.
- Our councillors are not whipped to vote on party lines. Green councillors try to reach a common position in line with our core aims and beliefs, but their first responsibility is to you.
- Green councillors are in regular contact with residents throughout the year, because we believe that communities should be directly involved in decisions that affect them. Participation should be made as easy as possible for everyone, whatever their age, social or ethnic background, gender, sexual orientation or disability.

Norwich Green Party will continue to work to make politics in Norwich and Norfolk more democratic, participatory and inclusive.

www.norwichgreenparty.org www.greenparty.org.uk

Green Party priorities for Norwich:

Decent Homes and Social Welfare

Nobody should have to live in poor conditions, nor live in fear of hunger or homelessness. But these are a reality for too many people in Norwich. We campaign against the Bedroom Tax, and all welfare changes that hit the vulnerable hardest. We promote fair rents so that everyone has a home they can afford.

Our priorities:

- 1 Housing is for life.** Investment in housing is crucial. Council homes should be warmer, safer, and well-maintained. New council house building needs to be faster and better supported by the government. Private tenants also need much more support and the council should ensure landlords keep homes to a better standard.
- 2 Everyone has a right to an income they can live on.** We will work towards a Norwich-wide living wage and a city free of zero-hour contracts.
- 3 Fair access to housing and benefits.** The council should promise not to evict anyone because they can't pay the Bedroom Tax. Nobody should be left without income due to delays in council benefit processing.

Jobs That Last

Green councillors want a city where everyone can contribute to the life of the city through meaningful work opportunities. Greens have used the planning process to improve value of local development to the community and successfully proposed not to allow payday loan companies to advertise on council property.

Our priorities:

- 1 A centre of excellence for sustainable technologies.** Green councillors encourage investment in local low carbon industries to create jobs and training opportunities for local people.
- 2 Support employers who provide quality work and improve the city.** These include those that are community based, treat their employees well, and prioritise social and environmental goals.
- 3 Fairer Money.** We will support credit unions and community banks, and lobby for access for all citizens to sound financial advice and protection from exploitation. We encourage the City Council to invest its own reserves for the common good, not just to get a financial return.

A Council Working for All People

Public services should be run for the common good rather than for profit or the interests of a few. People elect councillors to decide how services are run, but too much power has been transferred outside of the council. Most remaining decisions are in the hands of only a few cabinet councillors. The council should respond to the community.

Our priorities:

- 1 Public control of public-private partnerships:** We will make them more accountable and hold meetings in public, not behind closed doors.
- 2 Involve more councillors in decisions:** The cabinet should be replaced by a committee system, which gives every elected councillor more equal influence.
- 3 A council responsive to the local community:** We need a change in culture, where the council actively listens to and engages with people. It should be flexible and creative in finding solutions to problems.

Equal Access to a Healthy Environment

A good environment is essential for the health and well-being of people in Norwich. People want flourishing green spaces, lively local communities, safer and cleaner streets across the whole city.

Our priorities:

- 1 Protecting Norwich's living heritage for the common good.** All communities need the support to enjoy, look after, adopt and improve their green spaces. This boosts physical and mental health and strengthens community ties. Trees are a vital part of city life, but are being lost because of council cuts. We must also protect the Norwich area from overdevelopment and large-scale road-building.
- 2 20mph speed limits city-wide to save lives and cut carbon.** Children and families especially benefit from safer streets for walking and cycling, improving health and saving money.
- 3 Reduce, reuse and recycle more materials.** Waste is a community resource, but is being sent to landfill. A reuse network would avoid items being wasted or fly-tipped.