



# Norwich Green Party

## A Manifesto for the City

# 2010

Norwich City Council election on Thursday 9th September



# Foreword

**The Green Party in Norwich is ready to form Britain's first Green council, by taking over from Labour, to run Norwich City Council in a new way. Our aim will be to create a fairer and healthier low carbon city where every voice counts.**

Addressing social and environmental injustice lies at the heart of our agenda and, if residents in Norwich elect more Green councillors than councillors from any other political party on 9th September, we can begin to work towards a more just and secure future for the city. The changes we want to make will not happen overnight, and our immediate focus will be on minimising the impact of the cuts being demanded by the Conservative / Liberal Democrat Government. We will prioritise saving services that will affect residents' everyday lives in Norwich while creating a more open and efficient council which enables local residents to enjoy a high quality of life.

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## An Open Council

**Decisions should not be made behind closed doors and imposed from above, as is often the case at City Hall. A Green council will make its activities as transparent, accountable and inclusive as possible. We will involve the community in helping the council to make better and more informed decisions and our style of politics will be less confrontational.**

### We will:

- Give residents the opportunity to say how the council spends some of its money in their local area
- Devolve power so some decisions can be made within neighbourhoods
- Consult the public well before major decisions are made and take account of all evidence provided
- Make more information available to all councillors, so the person you have elected is better able to represent you
- Make some council-funded partnerships less secretive, such as the Greater Norwich Development Partnership and Shaping Norfolk's Future

- Publicise council meetings widely and clearly and find new ways for public concerns to influence council debates and actions
- Recognise people undertaking local community work through the position of Sheriff and the Honorary Freedom of the City
- Make better use of City Hall and the Guildhall by making them available for more people to use
- Continue to visit residents all year round, hold regular surgeries and take up local issues
- Make timetables of work that the council is planning to carry out, for example, housing repairs, publicly available
- Create a Disclosure Log published online which lists Freedom Of Information requests received by the city council and the responses given to them
- Produce an Annual Report, giving a breakdown of the council's budget and financial situation, information on targets which have been met, areas for improvement and plans for the coming year. We will make this information accessible to all.



# The Local Economy

**National Government policy has recently taken millions of pounds away from Norwich and Norfolk. A Green council will fight recession and climate change by making the city a focus for Green investment. We will promote local businesses, encourage the creation of green jobs and establish a more secure and sustainable future.**

## We will:

- Lobby central government to allow councils to set business rates that encourage sustainability, re-use and repair
- Encourage further education institutions, including City College, to develop courses which offer the practical skills needed to support the growing demand for renewable energy and the installation of energy efficiency measures
- Establish an inclusive democratic Local Enterprise Partnership with the emphasis on sustainable development and on developing people's skills and training
- Extend support of existing and new local and independent businesses through initiatives such as 'Buy Local' and 'Norwich Lanes'
- Promote Norwich market and encourage sustainable ways of managing market stalls
- Support Street Fairs and Farmers' Markets across the city
- Ensure that the city council buys local goods and services wherever possible. These will also be of a high environmental standard
- Promote Norwich as a Fair Trade City
- Use the Planning system to encourage a successful light manufacturing sector in the city to ensure a healthy mix of employment
- Introduce a Living Wage for Norwich City Council staff and encourage other employers in the city to pay their staff a Living Wage. A Living Wage is higher than the minimum wage, and one that people can actually live on
- Begin to reduce the salary gap between senior managers and front-line staff in the public sector. We will pay workers fairly, with the aim that the highest paid earner within

the council will, in time, take home no more than ten times the full-time equivalent of the lowest paid

- Ensure that the city council continues to support credit unions and provides financial advice for Norwich residents. We will continue the work of the current administration which helps people on low incomes.

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## Energy & Climate Change

**Green councillors support local production of renewable energy as well as looking for ways to ensure that everyone in Norwich can have a warm home. We want to reduce household fuel bills, tackle climate change and create local jobs by providing and promoting insulation and local energy production. A Green council will work with all sections of the community to cut Norwich's carbon emissions by 40% by 2020.**

## We will:

- Provide opportunities for people who live in Norwich to fully insulate their homes and install photo voltaic solar panels. We will do this either by investing in partnership with energy companies or by setting up our own Energy Services Company. This renewable energy will cut the carbon emissions produced in Norwich and enable residents to heat their homes more cheaply
- Introduce carbon budgeting at the city council, so the environmental impact of every decision is recognised and recorded
- Work with the Energy Saving Trust to provide advice on saving money and energy to residents through community based energy saving programmes, targeting funding assistance towards people with low incomes
- Relax planning guidelines to enable residents of the city to add renewable energy systems to their homes more easily
- Oppose expansion of Norwich airport and encourage video conferencing as an alternative to business travel.

# Communities & Neighbourhoods

**We all want to live in safe communities where we feel comfortable. Green councillors will strengthen local communities by tackling inequality and exclusion. At the same time we will help residents to shape their own communities in the way that they want. Clean streets and clear pavements will allow residents to feel secure where they live. Green councillors will maximise access to sport, music and the arts, by promoting cultural and organised leisure activities across the city, including the city's many museums and places of historical interest.**

## We will:

- Hold meetings in the community, rather than behind closed doors at City Hall, where appropriate, particularly when a decision will affect a specific area
- Engage with residents in a variety of ways, using digital media as well as public meetings and consultations
- Develop neighbourhood management of council services so local areas can be shaped by the people who live there
- Enable residents to use the powers in the Sustainable Communities Act
- Make the city centre safer through targeted enforcement of licensing conditions and change licensing policy to consider the cumulative impact of licensed premises in a particular area
- Bring services provided to residents, such as waste collection, back under council control over time so the city council will then manage services more directly
- Provide support to community sports clubs and organisations with particular emphasis on youth inclusion, as part of a wider strategy to reduce anti-social behaviour
- Channel resources into outlying areas of the city to make cultural activity more accessible
- Encourage high quality busking in the city centre and local communities
- Seek funding for small-scale soundproofed venues and subsidised shared studio space

- Maximise financial and networking support for local charities and voluntary community organisations
- Establish action days to promote the responsible ownership of pets, including microchipping.

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# Quality, Secure & Affordable Housing

**A Green Council will work for affordable, secure and energy efficient accommodation for all. We are committed to increasing the influence held by tenants and residents over housing, and oppose the control held by central government over housing policy and finances. We will seek a broad range of types of housing to suit different needs, such as sheltered housing schemes.**

## We will:

- Oppose the privatisation of social housing and actively campaign for national government to increase funding to build new council housing, and lobby the Homes and Communities Agency to prioritise putting more of its budget into council housing.
- Carry out a thorough consultation with tenants on funding more Premises Managers to act as informal caretakers for more council properties
- Support community proposals for cooperative housing models such as Community Land Trusts and Mutual Home Ownership, positively engaging with them on any sale of council-owned land and support self-help housing co-operatives in bringing empty homes back into use
- Support 'co-housing' initiatives and developments where families and individual residents have the chance to share facilities and living space
- Work with other organisations on early intervention to prevent homelessness
- Work with tenants and Tenants and Residents Associations to establish effective ways for tenants to be involved in setting housing policies and priorities

- Actively encourage the setting up of Tenant Management Organisations, which allow tenants and leaseholders in a particular area to take over management of their homes and public areas
- Support the establishment of a private tenants' association to represent the interests and rights of private sector tenants and improve links with private landlords by increasing the profile of the existing Landlord Forum
- Transform the Housing Improvement Board to involve members of political parties in opposition and groups such as homeless charities and the Citizens' Advice Bureau
- Tackle the problem of empty houses, for example, by supporting property owners who want to bring their houses back into use, making full use of Empty Property Management Orders and allowing empty houses to be reported online more easily
- Investigate fast-tracking serious complaints regarding anti-social behaviour from council tenants
- Use the planning system to ensure an appropriate proportion of new housing is accessible to residents with disabilities.

## We will:

- Demand that future growth follows genuinely sustainable principles, served by high quality bus, local rail, walking and cycling networks
- Insist upon a requirement of 30% on-site renewable energy generation in major new developments
- Encourage the re-use of materials when buildings are demolished and promote retention and conversion of existing buildings
- Request carbon audits of major development proposals and require all new developments to be zero carbon sooner than the current date of 2015
- Promote energy efficient build techniques in the extension and regeneration of existing buildings
- Require energy efficiency and resource conservation statements for a wider range of planning applications
- Act on the concerns and priorities of disabled residents at an earlier stage in the planning process
- Encourage water saving measures on existing and new properties and insist on appropriate investment in sewerage and other facilities so that, overall, new development does not result in either increased water usage or a decline in water quality
- Strengthen protection for pubs and other community assets
- Encourage car-free developments but ensure they are well served by public transport and pedestrian and cycle links.

## Planning

**Land is a finite resource so it needs to be used wisely. Green councillors want to see decent housing built within sustainable communities. Residents have a higher quality of life in a community with a mix of housing, shops, appropriate light industry and green spaces, such as allotments, within easy reach of the countryside.**

**While Green councillors recognise the need for more good quality affordable housing, we believe the level of growth envisaged under the previous government was unnecessarily high and would have drastically altered, forever, the area around Norwich. Large scale road building was at the heart of these plans and Green councillors have consistently opposed this carbon intensive, car-based development.**

**In a city, it is important that buildings in a particular area have a variety of uses, so there are not times when an area is empty, and therefore, unsafe. We will encourage developers to build different types of building in an area in order to strengthen the community.**

# Working Towards Zero Waste

Disposing of the waste produced through daily living is dirty and expensive. Landfill sites cannot take our rubbish forever, so alternatives must be found. A Green council will implement a 'zero waste' strategy, reducing the amount of waste produced in the city and re-using, repairing and recycling materials. Central to this strategy would be a resource recovery park where materials could be re-used by traders working onsite. Greens would also treat residual waste in an environmentally-friendly way.

## We will:

- Expand doorstep collections to include a weekly food waste collection from houses and flats
- Improve information for residents, to reduce contamination of recyclable materials
- Establish a local resource recovery park which would re-use and repair waste material and also create green jobs
- Develop and introduce a litter and fly-tipping reduction strategy
- Support the introduction of city centre facilities for the recycling of batteries, ink cartridges, CDs, DVDs and mobile phones
- Continue to lobby central government for a tax on packaging and mandatory charges for bags given out by shops
- Encourage acceptance by retail outlets of returned non-recyclable materials.

# Green Spaces

A healthy local environment is essential if residents of Norwich are to have a high quality of life. Formal and informal green spaces in the city must be protected and properly managed to enhance their value to wildlife and to people.

## We will:

- Support the use of parks and green space by the local community and encourage input from local residents by promoting 'Friends of ...' schemes
- Install drinking water fountains in parks in the city
- Increase the number of allotment plots in areas where there is a long waiting list, to meet the increasing demand and diversity of allotment holders
- Identify areas of council land where community gardens and food-growing areas can be established where there is local demand
- Develop a Garden Share scheme so people who have larger gardens than they need can share them with people who don't have a garden
- Safeguard and enhance existing 'green corridors' through Norwich and ensure that green spaces are integral to all new housing and commercial developments
- Work with residents to increase the number of trees in public spaces across the city, including fruit trees. This will improve the local environment, provide free food and contribute to combating climate change
- Promote biodiversity at every opportunity
- Make the countryside more easily and safely accessible to pedestrians and cyclists from the city.

# Transport

**Many transport issues are currently decided by Norfolk County Council, so the city council's opportunity to improve the local transport system is limited. Nevertheless, Green councillors believe that everyone who lives in a city needs to be able to travel around it, as well as in and out of it, and will lobby the county council and the Government to make the changes we need. Green councillors make decisions about transport by thinking first about how the most vulnerable road users will be affected.**

**Pedestrians and people who do not own a car should be able to travel around the city safely and cheaply. Green councillors will also aim to cut carbon emissions within the city by encouraging more sustainable forms of transport. If we are not prevented by the Government, we will ask Norfolk County Council to work with us to establish a Quality Bus Contract to improve bus services in Norwich.**

## We will:

- Install street signs with information about walking distances and destinations
- Publish a map to show areas which are difficult to access for residents with disabilities
- Produce a plan for substantially improving the Norwich cycle network to ensure it is adequately 'joined up' and covers all areas of the city.
- Lobby the County Council to incorporate this plan into its local transport strategy
- Designate advanced stop lines for cyclists at junctions and restrict bus and bike lanes to bus and bicycle use only
- Promote cycle training for adults and children so that they are confident to cycle safely on the city's roads
- Double the annual investment in cycle parking, particularly in the city centre
- Promote travel into and around Norwich by rail, bus and boat
- Require long term service contractors for Norwich City Council to use low emission vehicles and to provide eco-driving training for staff

- Establish a network of electric vehicle charging points through Section 106 planning agreements
- Work with the county council to implement a 20mph speed limit for residential roads in the city.

**If you have any questions for Norwich Green Party please e-mail  
[enquiries@norwichgreenparty.org](mailto:enquiries@norwichgreenparty.org) or phone (01603) 611909**



**[www.norwichgreenparty.org](http://www.norwichgreenparty.org)**