

LOCAL MANIFESTO

SOUTHAMPTON



THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

As well as being crucial for biodiversity and ecosystem services, green spaces are vital for local people's health and wellbeing. However, the extent and diversity of habitats in Southampton is declining and the city's rivers, estuaries and coastal areas are polluted and under increasing pressure from development, industry and human activities.

We support the existing Green City Charter but, where there have been failings in targets, we will work to rectify this. We will ensure that Southampton is a city that shares its space with wildlife, through well-managed, well-connected habitats and communities invested in looking after their local greenspaces. Residents will be happier and healthier thanks to improved provision for active travel and access to nature.

HEALTH AND WELLBEING

Health equating to the absence of disease is not a successful strategy. We must develop policies that will enable and empower people to experience good mental and physical health through programmes and guidance that are tailored to meet the needs of different communities and age groups.

One local example of this is the walking and cycling to school policy that My Journey Southampton is promoting; this is a policy we fully endorse and would seek to expand.

AIR QUALITY AND POLLUTION

Clean air needs to be seen as a human right and we will support people taking legal action to enforce that right, and ensure that the 'polluter pays principle' underpins all regulations and charters. We will also seek to establish at least one car-free Sunday a month in the city centre.

TRANSPORT

Our vision is for local transport links that meet residents' needs, whilst minimising danger and any environmental impacts. We will place pedestrians and people with disabilities at the top of the agenda, making public transport cheap and more accessible.

We will ensure that all provisions for pedestrians and bicycles are safe and user-friendly and that it is possible to make journeys across the city safely by bicycle. We will work to reduce the air pollution caused by buses by encouraging the bus operators to replace buses, as they reach the end of their working lives, with vehicles that utilise greener technologies.

HOUSING AND HOMELESSNESS

The Green Party believes that nobody should be left homeless and we will campaign to permanently ring fence funding for local authorities to provide shelter for every rough sleeper who wants it. We support an end to no fault evictions, an increase in housing benefit to equal average rent and emergency funding to provide housing to the most vulnerable.

THE LOCAL ECONOMY

Southampton has economic issues specific to the city, including the port and cruise industry, Southampton Airport, Brexit and trade with Europe, loss of manufacturing jobs over time and areas of high deprivation. However, it has a diverse range of businesses, including marine, technology, leisure and education and is also a hub for transport links, shopping and office-based work.

We will seek to encourage an increase in local production and shopping, transform the port to become non-polluting and to support sustainable transport, ensure existing housing stock is retrofitted with efficient insulation, plan for sea level rises, including flood defences, lobby nationally for national green measures to modify the cruise industry, campaign against airport expansion and support the introduction of a Universal Basic Income. We will also campaign for a 'new normal' post-Covid that includes less travel by plane, fewer car journeys, increased cycling and walking and safe, cheap and efficient public transport, ensuring fewer people need to use cars.

CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT

A diverse culture is essential to the vitality and social wellbeing of local communities. Over recent years, Southampton City Council has established an excellent programme of arts and events in the city, and we believe that support for innovative ideas and community arts projects should be continued and increased.

The restrictions on our freedom brought about by Covid-19 have demonstrated how important local high quality leisure, arts and sporting facilities are and we will seek to ensure all residents can access free and low cost activities. Southampton is also bidding to become the UK city of culture in 2025 and we support this campaign.

SOCIAL WELFARE

Good decisions can be made at a local level, helping to bring communities together and address some of the inequalities that can happen when decisions are made at national level by distant bureaucrats.

We will ensure carers in Southampton and any companies providing support to carers are sufficiently funded to do the role expected of them and challenge any further budget cuts to social welfare services. We will also ensure all providers follow sustainable working practices.

EDUCATION

We will meet with the Director of Education to explore the issues of educational attainment, exclusion policies, future strategy and other issues relating to the city. We will also work to reduce the carbon footprint of education and set targets for annual reductions, including pupils travelling to school on foot or bicycle. Nationally, we will campaign to return academies to the control of local authorities, address the chronic underfunding of state schools, remove some statutory testing and the rigid national curriculum and overhaul education to create an approach that enables people to live fulfilled, happy lives.

STUDENTS

The Green Party is committed to free higher education for all through the provision of funding for all students and the scrapping of undergraduate tuition fees. While the universities operate independently from the council, student life in Southampton has a considerable impact on the culture of the city and its local residents. We aim to help bridge the gap between students and other residents in order to work towards a more cohesive community for everyone, including introducing an improved recycling scheme in order to reduce the impact on local residents from rubbish left behind during periods of high turnover.