

Aberdeen Manifesto

Scottish Green Party

Local Authority Elections 2017

Homes & Neighbourhoods

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Homes & Neighbourhoods

Councils help create the places where we live. Greens want those places to be affordable, safe and attractive.

Housing

Our vision for housing is for good-quality homes that are affordable to rent or buy, and affordable to heat. There should be more social housing, better control of rents and better management in the private sector. Developers must not be able to opt-out of their responsibilities for building affordable and energy efficient homes.

Green Councillors will:

- Push for rent controls through Rent Pressure Zones to cap rent increases.
- Appoint an Empty Properties Officer to bring empty homes back into use.
- Help to make information about letting agencies and landlords easily available – and support action against bad ones.
- Push to reduce fuel bills and tackle fuel poverty through energy efficiency.
- Use new Council powers to buy land for housing at low-cost 'existing use value,' especially for building social rented housing.
- Support proposals for a local 'vacant land levy' to help deliver housing and reduce land speculation.
- Prioritise new housing that is affordable, low-carbon, built on brownfield sites and connected to local services. We will also push to increase the percentage of affordable and social housing in new developments.
- Encourage all new builds to incorporate solar panels and high insulation.
- Support new housing cooperatives and initiatives to bring rented property into shared management.
- Explore ways of taking into social ownership facilities like care homes and student housing where their owners cannot continue to manage them.

Streets, Green Spaces & Land Management

Our streets and neighbourhoods should be places we can all enjoy and be proud to call home. Green spaces should add value to our lives and provide places for wildlife to flourish.

Green Councillors will:

- Improve street lighting, increase energy efficiency of lights and reduce light pollution. Explore options for lighting and improved visibility in parks.
- Fill potholes, repair broken pavements and improve accessibility.
- Extend 20mph speed limits in residential areas to improve road safety and give streets back to communities.
- Protect parks and green spaces for people to enjoy and wildlife to flourish.
- Support local food production through community & market gardens, allotments and school growing projects, encouraging organic methods.
- Place the Council's duties to conserve biodiversity and tackle climate change at the heart of how they manage land and carry out their work.

Reducing & Managing Waste

Reducing waste with less packaging and more recycling means we can avoid incineration, save the cost of landfill and safeguard natural resources for the future. Council investment in bin collections and street cleaning is vital to make our neighbourhoods more attractive.

Green Councillors will:

- Support a zero-waste policy by 2025, and oppose large scale incineration.
- Improve bin collection and recycling services, and promote composting.
- Help local businesses to reduce packaging and find recyclable and biodegradable alternatives, and encourage supermarkets to redistribute useable food and waste sustainably.
- Enhance community warden services and take firm action against fly-tipping and irresponsible dog-waste.

Local Economy

Scottish Greens believe a thriving local economy is based on what's good for people, not just profit. Our economy should be sustainable, connect people with decent jobs and help to bring people together.

Green Councillors will:

- Support local businesses and social enterprises that create decent jobs and care about more than profit.
- Improve access to flexible working for council employees.
- Encourage diversification away from oil and gas with a focus on green jobs, renewable energy, cultural industries and small businesses.
- Establish a local energy company to generate electricity sustainably and keep the profits in the local community.
- Appoint a Night-Time Economy Officer to support development of evening festivals, markets, entertainment and cultural activities.
- Push the Council to buy local goods and services wherever possible.
- Help businesses with ethical policies, like environmental responsibility and paying the living wage, by making these a condition of Council-funded support.
- Support cooperative, social enterprises and employee-owned businesses through public procurement and access to publicly-owned property.
- Encourage local shops and businesses to fill vacant properties, and support urban community buy-outs.
- Support credit unions as an ethical alternative to high street banks.
- Increase the availability of grants, loans and advice for equipment, training, and assistance with setting up small businesses or cooperatives.
- Support a community payback scheme: when large companies take over land, they should help support local services that have been disrupted.

Leisure & Culture

People and communities connect through council services like libraries, swimming pools and sport facilities. Events like festivals and gala days help us celebrate our local area and identity.

Green Councillors will:

- Work to protect community centres, libraries and local leisure facilities, and improve funding for community centres and other local resources.
- Oppose the selling off of common good assets.
- Promote the economic and social contribution of the creative economy, and work to improve access to the arts for people from all backgrounds.
- Improve access to sport facilities in regeneration areas and ensure provision of 'community-use' facilities for hire at affordable rates.
- Support festivals, community events, and a safe, thriving nightlife.

Transport

Scottish Greens want to improve public transport, make walking and cycling more attractive, and make our streets safe and healthy for everyone to use.

Green Councillors will:

- Protect and improve existing bus services, and explore creating a publicly owned bus company to improve services and reduce fares.
- Support low-carbon buses and a charging point network for electric cars.
- Improve air quality by creating Low-Emissions Zones, and by promoting car sharing, park-and-ride, and better use of public transport.
- Push for transport-related carbon reduction targets, and for the Council to allocate at least 10% of its transport budget to walking and cycling.
- Support and develop plans to re-open rail lines and stations.
- Encourage low-carbon vehicles in the public procurement process.

Protecting Services

Green councillors will fight to protect and improve local services like educating young people, providing care and support, and keeping our neighbourhoods safe.

Schools and Childcare

We believe in supporting the development of children & young people to explore opportunities and face challenges in a fast-changing world.

Green councillors will:

- Fight to attract and retain teachers and pupil support assistants to ensure appropriate staffing levels at all schools.
- Ensure that all schools can deliver the fundamentals like literacy and numeracy, while also supporting creativity, critical thinking, practical life skills, outdoor learning and global citizenship.
- Campaign to better support children with additional support needs and from marginalised groups. Inclusion only works with adequate staffing.
- Support the Time for Inclusive Education campaign, which promotes inclusion of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) issues.
- Support pupils at risk of falling behind and support alternative provision for those for whom mainstream provision isn't working.
- Work towards the very best early education for children by improving qualifications, wages and conditions for nursery staff.
- Make free childcare hours more flexible to support parents in shift work or irregular employment to be able to use them.
- Ensure planning for enough nurseries and schools in areas where populations will rise, and buildings are high quality flexible spaces, built by the public sector to last and with environmental sustainability in mind.
- Support the Aberdeen Guarantees scheme to give every young person leaving school the opportunity to work, train or study.

Health & Social Care

We believe that high quality care is essential to support people's health and independence, and to build more compassionate communities. Investing in social care helps prevent unnecessary time in hospital, relieving pressure on NHS services and keeping people connected to their homes, friends and families.

While local healthcare services are managed by the NHS, the new Aberdeen City Health and Social Care Partnership will give councillors more of a role in decision-making. Greens believe that more can be done to attract and retain staff across health and social care, to shorten waiting times, and improve access to mental health services, especially for children and young people.

Green Councillors will:

- Push for better services and support for staff, patients and clients.
- Consider incentives and other schemes to attract and retain staff across health and social care, and work to implement the best possible options.
- Review the role of agencies in NHS and social care work, with a view to improving services and value for money.
- Campaign to pay care workers a 'Living Wage Plus' of £9.20 per hour.
- Support fair working practices by protecting working conditions, tackling zero-hours contracts, and ensuring payment for shift handovers and travel.
- Value care staff and create more opportunities for staff to develop their skills, gain qualifications and plan their careers in the sector.
- Support locally-led social care partnerships and social enterprises to provide good quality care at home.
- Promote continuity of care, keeping carers and the people they support connected and tackling loneliness.
- Support the development of 'rapid response' teams, who can provide care quickly in urgent circumstances.

Support for Unpaid Carers

Green Councillors will:

- Provide better local support for unpaid carers. We will push for all carers to receive high quality support for their own physical and mental health needs, including access to respite care and counselling.
- Take steps to improve unpaid carers' financial situation, like providing income maximisation advice to all carers and concessionary travel for carers on income support.
- Ensure income assessments for care charges don't include Carer's Allowance.
- Support young carers by minimizing children's practical caring responsibilities whenever possible, providing access to peer support and developing local forms of financial support.

Tackling Poverty & Discrimination

Scottish Greens believe that councils can help tackle poverty, inequality and discrimination. We will prioritise progressing equalities, working closely with people whose opportunities are reduced due to social class, race, gender, disability, age, sexual orientation, religion or belief.

Green Councillors will:

- Help people claim the social security benefits they are entitled to by supporting 'income maximisation' projects.
- Explore the feasibility of developing a Citizens' Income scheme, including monitoring pilot schemes in progress across the UK.
- Welcome refugees and asylum seekers into our communities and push to ensure relevant support services are available to meet their needs.
- Highlight the contributions of immigrants, work to tackle discrimination and promote community integration and cohesion.

Crisis Support Services

We believe that councils have a key role in helping people avoid crisis.

Green Councillors will:

- Review crisis support system and update provision to reflect rising prices.
- Campaign to secure funding to support those who have experienced domestic abuse or sexual violence.
- Work to prevent homelessness with measures to empower tenants at risk of homelessness through better advice and access to legal aid, and improve the standard of temporary accommodation available.
- Support social workers to manage workloads and focus on prevention, and support the delivery of community sentences for offenders.

Green Councillors Making a Difference

Since 2012, Scottish Green Councillors have protected services by:

- Achieving agreement in Midlothian Council to explore developing a council-owned energy supply company to raise revenue.
- Introducing Glasgow's first ever governance, asset management and budgeting policy for the Common Good Fund's assets.
- Campaigning against the privatisation of environmental services in Edinburgh.
- Persuading Edinburgh Council not to sell a sports centre but allow a local community sports organisation, supported by a housing association, to take on the lease and run it for community benefit.

Revitalising Local Democracy

Aberdeen needs a local democracy where citizens are engaged and active in the important matters affecting them, where voters can make real choices about services and how to pay for them. Greens will make the Council more open and accountable, and we will find ways for more people to be involved in decisions.

Green Councillors will:

- Listen to community concerns, then work hard to create solutions.
- Fight to keep power and important decisions locally accountable.
- Oppose top-down and forced centralisation of education and other functions, but remain open to bottom-up collaboration between local authorities for mutual benefit and improved services.
- Improve funding for community councils, and support more powers for community bodies to make decisions about public spending.
- Make it easier to understand what's happening in the Council, by calling for live webcasting of all Council meetings and making all committee votes available for public scrutiny.
- Support community-led projects, development plans and buy-outs, financially and by sharing experience.
- Work to provide non-intimidating community discussion spaces that support a diverse array of voices and use technology to pilot new methods for citizen participation, for example using citizen assemblies or citizen juries for decisions on planning or local service provision.
- Work to restructure Council committees and processes to be more focused and efficient.
- Push the Council to publish budget proposals early for public scrutiny, and ensure that budgets are analysed for impact on protected groups.

Planning & Development

The planning system should listen to people. It should be transparent, accountable and allow people to shape their communities, resulting in development that is driven by public interest, not just private profit.

Green Councillors will:

- Invest in planning as a public service to empower local people to engage, providing meeting spaces, information and dedicated staff.
- Campaign to give communities the right to appeal planning decisions. At present, only developers have this right.
- Protect wildlife sites and local green spaces from development and seek sustainable solutions to managing flooding and public land.
- Make carbon assessments a requirement for development proposals.

Taxation & Funding for Public Services

We believe in progressive taxation, investment in public services, and involvement of the community in financial decision-making.

Green Councillors will:

- Fight to scrap the regressive Council Tax and replace it with a fairer system of property taxation. Under the present system, we believe rates should be set by local councils to suit local circumstances.
- Support returning the power to set rates for non-domestic property.
- Expand and improve participatory budgeting schemes.
- Support a fiscal framework with the Scottish Government that promotes local democracy, devolved decision-making and stable funds for public services.
- Campaign to give council employees a say on how their pensions should be invested – including options to divest from fossil fuels, tobacco and weapons, and to invest in local housing and renewable energy.



The Scottish Greens believe in social justice and environmental sustainability. We want to build a better world for everyone.

There's no doubt that oil and gas have brought prosperity to Aberdeen. But the past few years have shown that we need to build a more **secure and sustainable** foundation for our city's economy. With local talent and experience, Aberdeen could become a **world leader in renewables**, through large-scale projects and local energy schemes. Supporting small and medium businesses will **create jobs**, spurring demand for services hit by the downturn. Tourism, tech and creative industries will help **diversify our economy** and make Aberdeen a more attractive place to live. Meanwhile, **better transport** links and public services will ensure that everyone can share in the city's new prosperity.