

FAIRER. GREENER.  
MORE PROGRESSIEVE.

ELECTION PROGRAMME  
2022-2026

**GROEN**  
**LINKS**

AMSTELVEEN

## ELECTION PROGRAMME 2022

### The Green Party / GroenLinks

Fairer. Greener. More Progressive.

Amstelveen is a great place to live and work. Residents are very satisfied with living in Amstelveen. There are many facilities, like shops, museums and theaters, schools and sports facilities. Amstelveen is a green city.

But Amstelveen also has problems:

- There are barriers for expats that want to participate in Dutch society, i.e. children that want to enroll at a Dutch school or join a sports club
- The property market is locked down; young people, starters, the elderly cannot find a suitable home.
- Air quality is under pressure from increasing (air) traffic.
- Health is unevenly distributed among the various socio-economic groups of the Amstelveen population.
- Car traffic and aircraft cause far too much noise pollution.
- Residents seem less and less involved in the administration of the municipality and in their own neighborhood.
- Diversity and inclusion are also big issues in Amstelveen: can everyone really participate?

GroenLinks Amstelveen wants to make Amstelveen fairer, greener and more progressive. In this election programme you can read how we want to achieve this. A vote for GroenLinks makes Amstelveen fairer, greener and more progressive.

1 Housing

2 Climate and sustainability

3 Green and living environment

4 Care and welfare

5 Servile governance

6 Inclusiveness and Society

## **1 HOUSING**

An affordable place to live for everyone

### **Vision**

People with modest incomes now have to wait an average of 17 years in Amstelveen before they are eligible for social housing. Are you a single person with an average income just above the income threshold? Then you have absolutely no chance of renting in Amstelveen, let alone buying. As a hard-working family with an average income, you also have hardly any chance of finding a suitable family home. If you want to buy something as a young adult, your parents have to help you. Housing in Amstelveen leads to an unprecedented form of inequality, with the less well-off having no chance of settling down in Amstelveen. There is a big shortage of homes, and the shortage of affordable homes is even bigger. People with crucial professions, such as care workers, teachers or police officers, cannot find homes in Amstelveen.

GroenLinks is the party that has been working for years to solve the structural housing problem in Amstelveen. GroenLinks put it on the agenda when the subject was not yet in everyone's mind, and continues to work hard on it now that the problem is growing and growing.

### **What GroenLinks is doing**

We submitted an alternative housing agenda. We have argued for more affordable and suitable housing in every single housing project. We have come up with all kinds of solutions to make building affordable housing financially feasible. We urge the municipality to take control.

GroenLinks keeps repeating: the Amstelveen municipality must take the lead, and not let project developers fill every single piece of land with mostly overpriced homes. A municipal housing company must be set up again. 30% of the houses should be social housing - without including Uilenstede (the student Campus) in that percentage. Renting must become accessible again for people with ordinary incomes. And homes must be built for senior citizens. In the past 10 years, 2,800 people aged 65+ have moved to Amstelveen - and almost no homes are suitable for them.

### **The solutions of GroenLinks**

The most important solution to this problem is simple: build. But then we have to build what is needed first. GroenLinks believes that the construction of the many villas and extremely expensive flats is a misuse of the scarce building land we still have in Amstelveen. We do not want to damage the polders and woods around Amstelveen, and we also want to preserve the greenery within our city. There is certainly more than enough room to 'densify'. But we have to build smartly and go up where we can. We can still add a lot of housing if we make sure that the facilities and traffic can cope with the increase in people.

In addition, the solution lies in the fact that the homes that are there must be used for what they are intended for: to live in. This must be done in an honest way. The municipality must sharply enforce the abuses of home owners and stand by the tenants when unreasonably large rent increases are once again implemented.

### **Our proposals:**

1 The municipality must regain control of the housing market and take the initiative in building homes.

2 The municipality will take measures to combat buy-to-let of existing homes. Buy-to-let is the purchase of houses in order to rent them out commercially. The municipality is investigating whether voluntary owners can impose a self-occupancy obligation on their homes. In addition, the 'buy-to-let protection' that will apply from 1 January 2022 must be applied to the maximum extent.

3 GroenLinks wants the municipality to strictly enforce regulations on the misuse of homes, i.e. the use of homes only as commodities.

4 The municipality must monitor rent increases and approach landlords who charge excessive rents.

5 The municipality must draw up zoning plans in such a way that undesirable effects on housing are combated. The municipality must keep a grip and act as a leader.

6 The municipality will conduct an active land policy. For example, GroenLinks wants the municipality to purchase land in order to keep a better grip on what is being developed. The municipality's own land will be put to maximum use.

7 GroenLinks wants Amstelveen to reinstate the municipal housing company. If the market is unable to provide affordable housing, we as a municipality will do it ourselves.

8 We encourage the conversion of vacant commercial and office buildings into homes. In this way, suitable living space for students and young people is created.

9 We make it more attractive for the elderly to move on to more suitable housing in their own neighborhood. These suitable homes must be built, because there are none at the moment.

10 There must be much more room for alternative forms of housing, such as cooperative plans, residential care clusters and residential groups. The municipality will facilitate this as much as possible.

## **2 CLIMATE AND SUSTAINABILITY**

No more talk about the climate, but take action. Do it now.

### **Vision**

Man is demanding a lot from the earth. Large parts of the earth's surface are used too intensively. Freshwater supplies are dwindling. Forests are being cut down. Biodiversity is decreasing. Everything that people do in a day causes them to emit too many greenhouse gases. This leads to a major climate problem. Not in the future, but now.

For example, the floods in Limburg this year have everything to do with climate change. Renowned scientists from all over the world, united in the IPCC (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change) are sounding the alarm: man is responsible for the climate crisis. Therefore, mankind must do everything possible to prevent global warming. Moreover, we must prepare ourselves for unavoidable changes in the climate. For GroenLinks, the climate crisis is the biggest challenge of our time. Waiting is no longer an option: we must act now.

Municipalities undeniably play a role in tackling the climate crisis. Sustainability and energy transition are local issues. As a prosperous municipality, Amstelveen is obliged to do its bit to ensure a sustainable future for our children. The municipality must do everything in its power to make itself sustainable. In addition, it must take the lead in encouraging businesses and residents to take measures themselves against the negative environmental effects they cause. Many choices in the field of sustainability can be made at municipal level.

The Municipality of Amstelveen wants all buildings to be off gas by 2040 and connected to an alternative heat source. We need to start doing this now. And the municipality plays a central role in waste flows: the municipality regulates the collection of waste from residents and can, through the granting of permits, regulate how companies deal with their waste.

### **The solutions of GroenLinks**

GroenLinks wants the municipality to invest as much as possible in energy savings, the generation of clean energy and a climate-positive built-up environment. In this way, the municipality will set a good example. In addition, the municipality must take on the role of director. It must decide which heat source will be available for which district. The municipality must provide clarity.

We approach climate and sustainability from an integral vision. We make sure that the energy transition does not exacerbate other problems, but rather helps to solve them. We seize the opportunities of the energy transition with both hands and do so together with the inhabitants. This means that everyone has a say in how energy transition takes shape. Energy transition can only succeed if we take residents' wishes and expectations seriously. We ask residents how we can improve the quality of life in their neighborhood and see how energy transition fits into this. And we strengthen local democracy by actively involving residents in the implementation of the transition.

### **3 GREEN AND LIVING ENVIRONMENT**

The relationship between man and environment: if we do nothing, the balance will be lost

#### **Vision**

A pleasant and healthy environment to live in: that is what municipal policy in the field of Green and Living Environment is all about.

Amstelveen has a unique location, with Amsterdam as its large neighbour to the north, Schiphol Airport as its economic image defining factor to the west and the Green Heart in the southeast.

Many people, many activities, and much peace and quiet: this balance requires careful consideration. People and nature are dependent on each other. GroenLinks wants to create, preserve and develop a healthy and pleasant living environment. It is necessary for man to have a good relationship with nature.

Biodiversity, the variety of species of living beings, is essential to this. The whole of nature is based on the coherence and balance between the species of plants and species of animals. Biodiversity ensures clean water, fertile soil and a stable climate. Biodiversity ensures our existence.

A healthy and pleasant living environment also includes good air and water quality. The main threats to the air quality in Amstelveen are air traffic from Schiphol and car traffic. Water quality involves good drinking water, water drainage and the quality of surface water for recreation.

#### **The solutions of GroenLinks**

The policy for mobility must focus more on reducing CO2 emissions and traffic noise, and on the efficient use of space. Space, the available surface of the earth, is increasingly a scarce commodity. This means that more and more effort has to be put into cycling, walking and public transport. Cars take up a lot of space that is not available for a healthy, pleasant living environment. The stimulation of car sharing is therefore an important point for GroenLinks.

Cycling is becoming increasingly popular as a means of transport for short distances. GroenLinks has always argued for putting the bicycle at the centre of plans for the environment. Now is the time to move on. GroenLinks continues to advocate putting cyclists first and cars second.

GroenLinks opposes further building on the polders and further house building along the Amstel. There is plenty of room for housing in Amstelveen itself! (See also chapter 1, Housing).

The Amsterdamse Bos is almost entirely in Amstelveen. The forest is very important for recreation. But recreation must remain in balance with nature. Because the forest is also very important as a nature reserve. GroenLinks wants to be in permanent dialogue with the manager of the woods, the municipality of Amsterdam, about this.

### **4 CARE AND WELFARE**

We can do better, so we do better!

#### **Vision**

We want care in Amstelveen to be about people, not numbers. It is not about structures or organizations, but about people who need care. We believe that citizens should have sufficient say in the development of treatment plans.

We have an eye for growing inequality. We reduce the health differences between people with a low and a high social status. That is why we focus on prevention and good information, also for people with low literacy and non-native speakers. We believe that prevention is better than cure. We work towards accessible, inclusive care, regardless of people's cultural background or disability.

Amstelveen is aging. That is why we pay a lot of attention to seniors. We ensure that they can participate digitally, but we also provide sufficient alternatives to the digital channel: everyone should be able to speak to the municipality.

We strengthen the link between care and welfare. We welcome initiatives for joint dining tables, cultural excursions and sporting activities. We want to prevent loneliness. We help with transport for those who cannot get to the community centres on their own.

### **The solutions of GroenLinks**

GroenLinks is working for the welfare of all Amstelveen citizens. For people on a tight budget, including freelancers, we are expanding the possibilities of the Amstelveenpas. (The Amstelveenpas is a discount card for social and cultural activities.) We will advertise the Amstelveenpas even more. The vet will be part of the pass' facilities. In the future, the food bank will also offer pet food.

GroenLinks wants to experiment with basic jobs. Because work is not just about earning money, but above all about participating.

In addition, GroenLinks wants to encourage asylum seekers to attain the highest possible language level.

Art makes Amstelveen exciting. So we want Amstelveen to be bursting with cultural activities. We invest in affordable studios and talent development for beginning artists. Last year we introduced an Amstelveen art prize for graduates of the Rietveld Academy. We continue to ensure that children from families with a tight budget can participate in cultural activities. We stimulate art education at schools, but also for adults. We ensure that the Cobra Museum retains and expands its place in the Dutch museum landscape. We cherish our museums.

Now that the municipality is responsible for youth care, GroenLinks wants the municipality to really take up its task. The available resources must be used in such a way that everyone under the age of 18 can be brought up and educated in a positive manner. If things are not going well at home or elsewhere, they and their carers will receive appropriate support in good time. Any specialist help is preferably deployed early, light and mobile. The need for psychological support is identified in good time. If necessary, especially in the period after Corona, additional resources are deployed.

## **5 HELPFUL GOVERNMENT**

Residents determine the course.

### **Vision**

The challenges of our time call for a powerful and serviceable local government. More than ever there is a need to work on trust between government and citizens. A good connection between residents and government is the basis. This increases the support base and enhances the quality of the policy.

Governance and participation are inextricably linked. Direct democracy is the starting point. This means that the local government, together with the citizens, is responsible for the policy. This requires a strong local government. And a government that does its work in full publicity. The municipality creates the conditions for citizens to participate in decision-making.

This strong local government has the basic facilities for living together in order. It is a government that dares to set limits (frameworks) and at the same time offers space to citizens to make plans and carry out ideas. It is also a government that works together with citizens in equality towards an inclusive, safe, caring and sustainable society.

### **What GroenLinks is doing**

GroenLinks wants to involve the entire population of Amstelveen in governance, taking into account the great diversity of the Amstelveen population. For this reason, GroenLinks regularly asks questions to keep the subject of racism on the agenda.

In 2019, young people in Amstelveen-Zuid asked for playing facilities. Together with a number of other groups, GroenLinks submitted a motion to indeed realise the gaming facilities. With success: preparations for the play facility in the form of a small skate park are in full swing.

GroenLinks co-sponsored two important motions: one on giving citizens a say in the future of Amstelveen and one to organise city talks to stimulate dialogue between different cultures and strengthen social cohesion in an international society. Both motions have been or will be carried out.

For many years, GroenLinks has also been an advocate of more influence from citizens on the level of policy implementation. If it were up to GroenLinks, citizens would be given a say in the budget that is spent on their neighborhood.

### **The solutions of GroenLinks**

GroenLinks wants the municipality to organise district meetings, participation evenings and citizen panels. Digital means should be used to increase contact with residents. Equally, any citizen who wants personal contact with a municipal employee must be able to make that contact immediately. There is also room for optimal control and influence by citizens within care and youth care. This is certainly true when it comes to situations in which government intervention is imminent or necessary.

GroenLinks wants to see strong neighborhood cooperatives in Amstelveen. This will enable local government, organizations and citizens within the local community to work together to provide customized solutions in various fields (care, welfare, energy, poverty, climate). Numerous initiatives such as energy cooperatives, urban villages and care cooperatives are already emerging.

In the municipal council, GroenLinks wants to work with a council agreement based on what unites us. We are building a strong position for the council in the municipal administration and create its own council agenda. The council will position itself as a process supervisor and director of processes together with citizens. We do politics on the basis of exchanging arguments and do not participate in polarizing debates.

Amstelveen is a safe municipality. And we want to keep it that way. We do this by having a positive and inclusive safety policy. We want to promote a good living environment for everyone, equal development opportunities, and welfare and health as important basic conditions. And when problems arise, we want to normalise relations. That is better than allowing conflicts to escalate.

## **6 INCLUSIVENESS AND SOCIETY**

Talking to and listening to people who experience it themselves

### **Vision**

GroenLinks stands for an inclusive society. That is a society in which every citizen of Amstelveen can participate. Amstelveen should be accessible for people with a hearing, visual, physical or mental disability, for the elderly, for young parents, for children, for the rainbow community, for people of all colors and backgrounds, and for ex-pats. In short, for everyone who calls themselves a citizen of Amstelveen.

Diversity is important in all policy areas. From the design of public spaces to municipal communication, online presence, the town hall itself, and of course the own municipal organization. As long as inclusiveness is not self-evident, the municipality has to work hard at it.

We are convinced that an inclusive city is a beautiful city. We do not want more of the same, but room for more diversity, for all people with their own individuality. We want Amstelveen to be a town where everyone can feel at home. That increases the quality of life for everyone. Nobody should be excluded for any reason.

This is especially important since Amstelveen's growth plans mean that in a few years time 120,000 people will live in Amstelveen (compared to 90,000 now). The social services must be supported by all the inhabitants of Amstelveen.

At the same time, the conditions for an inclusive city must remain in place.

## **What GroenLinks is doing**

With the motion 'Amstelveen for all', GroenLinks has asked for a list of requirements to make existing public buildings and public spaces accessible. The motion also wants the municipality to take the necessary improvement measures to make the public buildings and public spaces comply with the accessibility requirements.

Furthermore, GroenLinks has submitted a motion to gain insight into how diverse and inclusive the municipality's organization is. In the coming period, it is time to use this knowledge to take the step towards a truly inclusive municipal organization for everyone with a hearing, visual, physical or mental disability, for people of any age, ethnicity, skin colour, socio-economic background, sexual orientation or gender identity.

In June 2021, GroenLinks asked for a quick scan on inclusion and anti-discrimination in the city council. Also in 2020, written questions were asked about extra support for Amstelveen citizens who have become victims of the so-called 'toeslagen affaire'.

## **The solutions of GroenLinks**

The municipality must listen to all inhabitants. Even more important: we must continue the dialogue with each other. This could take the form of an accessibility council, for example, consisting of experience experts in Amstelveen. GroenLinks has requested this in a motion. For the municipality this means that it has an example function and must take this seriously.

The municipality can make online workshops or seminars on inclusiveness accessible to residents free of charge. And organise meetings that promote this conversation, for example in cooperation with cultural institutions, sports clubs and schools. By not only striving for inclusiveness, but becoming truly inclusive and listening to the voices from the city, GroenLinks wants to make Amstelveen a city for truly all Amstelveen citizens.

## **Our proposals**

1 Everyone should be able to participate. The municipality should stimulate and facilitate the dialogue on inclusiveness in different ways. It should involve the residents, and especially the experts.

2 Art, culture, diversity and politics must be stimulated within education. The municipality facilitates a program on diversity and inclusion that schools can use. The municipality actively offers this program to schools.

3 GroenLinks wants good quality and diverse education in all schools. In a diverse school system, there is appropriate education for every child. The municipality is responsible for this and does what it can.

4 The municipality pays attention to teachers and their workload. It can pay for classroom assistants to actually do something about the workload.

5 We want sports to be made more accessible. Everyone in Amstelveen should have access to sports facilities.

6 We want sports to be safe for everyone. Sports clubs need to become more aware of LGBTQ+, discrimination, bullying and racism. Only then can they take active and effective action against it.

7 There must be a rich sports offer that focuses on lifestyle. A healthy lifestyle has many aspects: quality of the environment, nutrition, exercise. In each of these areas the city must work more closely with relevant parties. In this way a healthy lifestyle as a whole is promoted.

8 GroenLinks wants the municipality to reintroduce school swimming. School swimming ensures that children get more exercise. It also involves pupils from less privileged backgrounds in sports and exercise. And it contributes to the safety of an entire generation.

9 GroenLinks wants the municipality to play a more active role in reaching minority groups. This can be achieved, for instance, by making working visits to neighborhood coaches.