

BUILD YOUR FUTURE

/OTE Volt

FUTURE  MADE IN EUROPE

DEAR RESIDENTS OF WIJDEMEREN AND HILVERSUM

As a new party in Hilversum-Wijdmeren, Volt brings fresh energy and the courage to innovate. Volt constantly asks: why do we do things the way we do, and could we do them differently? Smarter, greener, fairer? At a time when society is becoming more polarised and social media is driving us further apart, it is important that we come together and understand one another. Mistrust lurks in the background, whilst we all long for a place where we feel at home. That is why Volt puts connection first. Together, we set our sights on the horizon, so that creative solutions become possible. Together, we are building our future.

Imagine this: our villages and our city becoming a welcoming, diverse environment. You'll be building your future there, living surrounded by nature. Initiatives and entrepreneurs will be given the space to flourish, free from unnecessary red tape, whilst respecting the environment. Everyone is welcome: you can live affordably, move about freely and feel safe – both day and night, in every neighbourhood. Our new municipality is both village-like and cosmopolitan. Volt has consciously chosen this optimistic future: a healthy living environment for the current and all future generations.

I joined Volt because I believe that the major challenges of our time, such as climate change and international tensions, are best tackled together at a European level. We can also learn from other European countries where Volt is active. Whatever works in Paris, Utrecht or Nijkerk, we'll apply to our municipality. And we'll make good use of European funding for our municipality.

Volt takes a broad European perspective and also solves problems at the level where they belong. As a resident of Loosdrecht, I want to ensure that the future of the Wijdemeer villages is not decided in the city of Hilversum. The villagers know what suits them best. And the residents themselves know best what is needed in a Hilversum neighbourhood. New forms of participation give people a say once again. Meeting one another creates connections and space for a range of perspectives. During a political evening organised by Young Hilversummers, I spoke to young people who clearly articulated what they need: if football pitches were fitted with floodlights, they could play sport more often and meet up with one another. A simple yet effective solution that only became apparent through the conversation. In short, young people must also have a seat at the table: the future belongs to the young.

Connections between residents are also important in a literal sense: good public transport links the villages, the neighbourhoods, the Randstad and the rest of Europe. There is room for improvement in many areas. For example, the on-demand bus service in Wijdmeren isn't working properly at the moment. We need to sort that out. And everyone must be able to get home safely in the evenings and at night too.

Nature connects us too. I enjoy the Loosdrecht Lakes and love walking on the Hoorneboegse Heide. People I speak to feel at home in our green and blue surroundings, right in the middle of the busy Randstad. Nature is essential for everyone, especially for future generations. Volt wants to combat climate change and strengthen biodiversity. At the same time, we must adapt to the effects of climate change so that we are well prepared for extreme drought, heat and rainfall. And, of course, everyone should be able to enjoy our natural surroundings. By making our municipality more attractive to cyclists, we can also reduce the number of cars, thereby ensuring cleaner air and less pressure on parking spaces.

But a beautiful environment alone is not enough. I also believe a fair environment is important. This means that your opportunities should not depend on where you were born. There are too many people who, when they ask for help, get bogged down in red tape and bureaucratic procedures. That is why we need to bring back the human touch: with less bureaucracy, clear support and genuine attention for those who are struggling. In this way, the system will work for them again, rather than against them.

A fair environment starts with being able to live in your own neighbourhood or village. That is not a luxury but a basic necessity. Because space is scarce, we must use it more wisely. For example, by making house-sharing easier and investing in innovative solutions, such as student accommodation at the Media Park. And we will need to look for space for housing development. For example, at Hilversum Airport: a place where housing and new nature can go hand in hand.

Nature, housing, transport, equal opportunities, safety and community involvement are not separate issues, but form a coherent whole. Volt always opts for forward-looking solutions and cross-border collaboration, in consultation with one another. In this way, we build our municipality and our home together.

WILL YOU JOIN US IN BUILDING THIS?



Leonie Kok
lead candidate for Volt Hilversum-Wijdmeren

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1



Everyone should be able to find suitable and affordable housing. Some people manage to find their dream home in Hilversum or Wijdmeren themselves, but for others it is not so easy. For young people, for example, because there are no

affordable options for first-time buyers. For people on a tighter budget, who have to wait years for social housing. For older people who need a home suitable for all stages of life and cannot find a suitable property. This has to change, and we believe it can: a home for everyone!

Building more homes

The root cause of the current housing crisis in the Netherlands lies primarily in national policy. Due to a combination of a tight housing market, a tax system that allows mortgage interest relief and years of low interest rates, house prices have continued to rise. People are able to borrow more and more and therefore bid higher, making homes increasingly expensive. This primarily boosts banks' profits, leaves first-time buyers financially vulnerable and excludes new buyers. At the same time, small private landlords are selling off their properties en masse, which puts even greater pressure on the rental market. In The Hague and Brussels, Volters are working on solutions to these problems. In our municipality, we are focusing on what we can do here ourselves.

- **Building new homes is essential.**

To meet the expected demand for housing, Volt aims to have 6,000 additional homes built in Hilversum and 800 in Wijdmeren by 2040. Homes that meet today's needs: with a healthy indoor climate, low energy costs and, as far as possible, suitable for all stages of life. In neighbourhoods and villages, we will organise a healthy and appropriate mix of social housing, mid-range rental, owner-occupied and high-end homes, so that there are homes to suit every budget.

- **Inward development rather than outward expansion.**

New homes will be built within the current town and village boundaries, as we do not wish to encroach on the natural environment that surrounds us. Preserving the natural environment, which makes living here so pleasant, whilst ensuring good quality of life for everyone, is the challenge we face.

- **High-rise buildings in locations where it makes sense.**

For example, close to existing public transport hubs with fast connections and in areas where schools, shops, hospitals, workplaces and other essential facilities are already located. We are increasing the maximum building height from twelve to fifteen metres. High-rise buildings will be designed and integrated in such a way that they make a positive contribution to our cityscape.

- **For new homes, we may deviate from the parking standard.**

If new residents know in advance that the property will be handed over without parking facilities, they can make an informed choice to accept this. A condition for this is good public transport links, combined with cycle parking facilities and access to shared transport. This means that residents of such properties cannot obtain a parking permit.

- **Bicycle storage in the front garden.**

In Hilversum, you are not allowed to build a bicycle shed in your front garden without a permit, even if there is nowhere else to store your bicycle. A bicycle shelter measuring one and a half metres is prohibited, but a two-metre-high delivery van may be parked on the street without restriction. We support residents of, for example, Kometenstraat who are opposing this and are making it possible to install bicycle shelters in front gardens.

- **Students are provided with a room, not an expensive studio flat.**

We're encouraging the construction of student halls of residence where you live together. That's more sociable and better for your social life, and it's also cheaper than a self-contained studio flat. We're keen to build youth accommodation on or in the immediate vicinity of the Media Park. Rooms for students who want to do a media work placement, are studying media or have an entry-level job at the Media Park. In this way, we'll bring a buzz to the town and attract young talent to Hilversum for the Media Park of tomorrow.

- **Make way for new and experimental forms of housing.**

We welcome initiatives such as shared accommodation for friends, multi-generational housing, communal living arrangements and retirement villages. We'll help these groups realise their dreams by cutting red tape, encouraging self-management and contributing ideas. We'll run pilot schemes with innovative building methods such as collective building.

- **More affordable owner-occupied homes for first-time buyers on middle incomes.**

We support schemes whereby the council offers first-time buyers a discount on the purchase price of a home, such as the Starterslening and similar schemes. You repay the discount later from the profit made on sale. If these schemes prove effective, we will make them permanent.

- **Using the airport site for new homes amidst new nature areas.**

We are investigating whether the existing 25-year agreement regarding Hilversum Airport can be amended to phase out the airport in the long term. Three-quarters of the land released (over 50 hectares) will be designated for nature conservation. The edge of this new nature reserve will be used for nature-inclusive housing development. This will result in at least 1,500 new homes surrounded by nature and the possibility of proceeding with the 'Ter Syde' housing scheme in Loosdrecht, comprising 500 homes.

Make the most of all available living space

Building new neighbourhoods is important, but it also takes a long time. That is why, at the same time, we are taking a creative and smart approach to the homes that already exist. By being more flexible and embracing new ideas, we can already ensure that more people find a lovely home.

- **Adding storeys to existing buildings.**

Following Rotterdam's example, we're going to make it possible to create new living

spaces on top of existing buildings. The planning permission process required for this will be simplified.

- **Subdividing, converting and extending homes will become easier.**

A smart way to add homes quickly without losing a single square metre of green space is to subdivide existing homes. We will allow this provided the subdivided homes remain large enough and fit in with the neighbourhood. This is also a way to create alternative living arrangements for elderly homeowners.

- **Sharing a house with friends or colleagues will also become easier.**

For many people, sharing the rent and the house is a godsend. We consider it perfectly natural for four adults to share a home. We do, however, keep an eye on the quality of life in the neighbourhood.

- **Moving from a large house to a smaller home.**

We help older people make the move by building attractive homes for the elderly. Many older people live in large family homes and would be happy to move, but there is no suitable alternative. We are fully committed to building comfortable, lifetime-proof homes, as close as possible to where older people currently live. Older people who are leaving a larger home behind are given priority. This means homes become available more quickly for the next generation.

- **People who keep the council running can also live here.**

A local authority cannot function without teachers, care workers, police officers and firefighters. To prevent them from being priced out of the area, we reserve homes for these essential professions.

- **Transforming existing buildings into homes.**

To this end, the local authority is drawing up a local Transformation Acceleration Programme, with clear objectives and additional funding. In this way, we are using the available space for what we need most: homes.

- **Vacant properties are discouraged.**

We advocate the Flemish approach, a method whereby vacant properties are tackled through a sharp increase in council tax. This encourages owners to take action more quickly if their property is vacant. The national government must make this possible for local authorities.

MUNICIPALITY MOVEMENT

VOT

Volt

FUTURE  MADE IN EUROPE

freedom. It is therefore more than just a matter of managing traffic: it is not about vehicles but about people. Accessible and inclusive transport strengthens our independence and our sense of connection with one another.

We are giving priority to pedestrians and cyclists, building a reliable and affordable public transport network, and ensuring that shared mobility complements the existing

services. We discourage polluting traffic and encourage clean transport. Cars remain welcome for those who need them, whilst we encourage hybrid, electric or car-sharing as much as possible. We are committed to good connections to neighbouring municipalities and a robust rail network.

Focus on cycling, public transport and smart solutions

We believe it goes without saying that a modern living environment is characterised by good public transport and smart mobility solutions. Expanding the options for travelling by public transport is central to our approach. We are designing a municipality where people, not traffic, are given the space. However, reducing the role of the car is not an end in itself for us. Our approach is pragmatic and fair: we invest first and foremost in good alternatives such as reliable public transport and sufficient car-sharing schemes. In this way, we make choosing a bicycle or public transport the natural choice and can gradually limit the space allocated to cars.

- **A widely supported and financially sound mobility vision.** We can only realise the major investments required through close collaboration with the Amsterdam Metropolitan Area, the province, central government, the region, the Dutch Railways (NS) and other transport operators. Residents and other stakeholders are involved in the plans, such as the initiators of the future-proof 'Tuinstad Hilversum' project. In this way, we ensure that the transport of the future meets people's needs.
- **More cycle streets and cycle highways.** Cycling and walking contribute to a healthy, sustainable and accessible living environment. We are building a network of fast, safe and logical cycle routes between villages, the town and our surrounding area. We will redesign streets that already have a high volume of cyclists as cycle streets. For example, we are investigating whether Jacob van Campenlaan and Eemnesserweg could become cycle streets. We do not consider the cycle street in Kortenhoef, where cars travel at 50 km/h, to be a cycle street. Cycle streets must be designed in such a way that cars are genuinely guests and travel at the same speed as cyclists.
- **Cyclists automatically get a green light sooner with a cycling app.** With the 'Da's zo gefietst' app, cyclists can cycle straight through smart traffic lights. This is because the app sends a signal to the smart traffic lights in advance to let them know you're on your way. We're installing smart traffic lights to ensure this works in our municipality too.
- **Fast e-bikes and fatbikes will be allocated a place on the carriageway.** To restore peace and safety on cycle paths, we're moving cyclists who consistently travel faster than 25 km/h onto the carriageway. This creates more space on the cycle path for ordinary cyclists, children and older people.
- **Improved road safety for cyclists.** The quality of cycle paths could be improved. After roadworks, cycle paths are not

always properly repaired. Cycle paths must be regularly inspected and maintained so that potholes, cracks or obstacles are dealt with promptly. The separation between cyclists and cars is often inadequate, leading to dangerous situations. Where possible, we will improve the separation between cyclists and cars. We enforce the rules strictly when cars or lorries park on a cycle path.

- **Parking bicycles in cycle hubs.**

Shared bikes will be allocated a fixed space in cycle hubs so that we can organise the space for parked bikes. Private bikes can also be parked in these spaces.

- **Free bike parking at Hilversum Central.**

In many towns, you can already park your bike safely and for free at the station. To further encourage the use of bikes and public transport, the bike park at Hilversum Central will be free for the first 24 hours.

- **Expanding options for travelling by public transport.**

We are increasing capacity on key train services, such as those to Schiphol. We're also organising public transport connections early in the morning and at night that link up with services in Amsterdam and Utrecht. We're expanding the timetable to the villages so that it connects better with city buses. Where this isn't possible, we're making reliable on-demand public transport available. You can book this using a smart app.

- **Making use of shared mobility.**

We are investigating the best ways to encourage residents to choose a shared car rather than owning their own. To make shared mobility a viable alternative, we are significantly increasing the number of (parking) permits where necessary. In doing so, we are giving priority to initiatives organised by and for the residents themselves.

- **Research into autonomous transport.**

Self-driving cars are already on the roads in America and China. This is particularly the case in built-up areas, as you cannot drive very fast there and the roads can be made clear and well-organised. We are encouraging autonomous taxi services and are launching a pilot scheme for this purpose.

The challenge of cars and parking

Cars and parking stir up a lot of emotions. If you ask people on the street whether there are too many cars in the municipality, many will answer 'yes'. But getting rid of their own car doesn't seem like an option, as they need to do the shopping or take their children to sports clubs. Although for many residents the car is an essential part of daily life, tough choices do need to be made. If everyone sees themselves as an exception to the rule, we will not succeed in finding collective solutions.

We are opting for a course of action in which the car is increasingly less often the first choice, but where it is fairly integrated into a liveable, healthy municipality. We are phasing out fossil-fuelled vehicles; however, the internal combustion engine may remain in use

during the phase-out. Owning a car is no longer a given, and the cars we do use must be clean and smart. Electric driving is essential for clean air. And the batteries in these cars are increasingly offering the potential to resolve congestion in our electricity grid, as they can act as a buffer.

- **The transition to electric transport will succeed if the charging infrastructure keeps pace.**

We are therefore ensuring that there are sufficient charging points available in all neighbourhoods for cars, scooters, bicycles and boats, with the council making sure that these run on green electricity as much as possible. This applies to residents, businesses and logistics transport, so that the whole council can benefit from an emission-free vehicle fleet.

- **Low-traffic residential areas.**

The speed limit in residential areas will be 30 km/h, with priority given to cyclists and pedestrians. Speeding will be discouraged by road narrowings, speed bumps and roadside greenery. We are supporting this measure with communication campaigns to increase public support and awareness. For example, we are fulfilling 's-Graveland's wish to set a 30 km/h speed limit along the entire road and Kortenhoef's wish to retain the traffic lights on Kerklaan.

- **A fair approach to the allocation of parking spaces.**

Residents and visitors who need their cars for healthcare, irregular working hours or due to a disability must always be able to find a parking space. The council manages this through exemptions and adapted permits.

- **Clean air for everyone.**

Hilversum town centre is to become a zero-emission zone. This means that, following a transition period, polluting delivery vans and lorries will no longer be permitted to enter the town centre. In the long term, all delivery vans and lorries must be powered by electricity or hydrogen. This will result in significantly lower levels of particulate matter and better air quality for everyone.

**GREEN
FORESTS
BLUE
WATER
PURPLE
HEIDE**



3. Green forests, blue water and purple heather

Our municipality is rich in blue natural areas, such as the Loosdrecht Lakes, the Ankeveen Lakes and the Eastern Vecht Lakes. We also have plenty of green natural areas, such as the 's-Gravelandse Buitenplaatsen, the Erfgooiersbos and the Cronebos. And purple natural areas such as the Hoorneboegse Heide, Westerheide and Zuiderheide. Our vision for the future is for everyone to be able to enjoy clean air, water and green spaces. Climate change is a challenge, but nature is our greatest ally. By making the right choices, we can make our municipality climate-resilient, healthy and economically strong.

Living in nature

Gardens are connected to the natural areas that surround us. We help residents to make these gardens greener. We live in the heart of nature, and in everything we do, we influence the ecosystems that keep us healthy. We will connect the various nature areas with one another. This helps to retain water, ensures cleaner air, provides cooling and enhances biodiversity.

- **Nature-friendly recreation at the Vechtplassen.**

We oppose large-scale construction and leisure development in the Vechtplassen, as this is not in line with nature conservation. We will work with businesses to develop sustainable and low-impact forms of leisure, so that enjoying nature and its restoration go hand in hand.

- **Making the Vechtplassen accessible by bike and public transport.**

We will make the lakes more accessible to cyclists and by public transport during the summer. We will encourage people to leave their cars at home so that the natural environment is not cluttered with parked cars. This will make the lakes more accessible to everyone.

- **Improved layout of the beaches around the lakes.**

The pressure on existing beaches can be managed by expanding existing facilities or by adding new ones. Nuisance can be minimised by enforcing speed limits for boats and controlling noise pollution. We will investigate whether there are also opportunities in Hilversum to add outdoor swimming areas.

- **Strengthening our natural environment.**

By promoting nature-inclusive agriculture, we are strengthening nature conservation, as is the case, for example, at the 's-Gravelandse Buitenplaatsen. Restoring our peat meadow areas is important so that they can once again retain water and store CO₂. Measures that reduce the inflow of phosphates and nutrients from surrounding polder areas will aid this restoration.

- **Moving forward with the Oostelijke Vechtplassen.**

In 2017, the Oostelijke Vechtplassen area agreement was concluded with the aim of creating 600 hectares of new nature. However, implementation is behind schedule. We aim to achieve the original objectives of the area agreement within three years. We are working closely with the provincial authorities on implementation to make up for the delay.

We are full of energy

Summer heat stress, flooding after a downpour, the overloading of our electricity grid: these are not isolated problems. They are the symptoms of a system that is out of balance, because we have ignored its limits for too long. This is a challenge that goes beyond our municipality and one that we, as a European movement, are also working on in Brussels.

Here in our municipality, this means drawing on the municipality's own resilience. By seeing nature as our most important ally and by taking control of our own clean energy supply, we are building villages and neighbourhoods that can withstand a knock or two. A municipality that is enterprising, healthy and in balance: ready for the generations that will follow us.

- **The cheapest energy is the energy you don't use.**

We are fully committed to sustainable insulation. Before we invest in complex new energy sources, we ensure that we waste as little energy as possible. We are launching a large-scale insulation drive, with a neighbourhood-focused approach in close collaboration with housing associations. This way, we'll make your home more comfortable and lower your energy bill. And we'll hold businesses to account for their legal obligation to implement all measures that pay for themselves within five years.

- **Every village and every neighbourhood will have its own smart energy plan.**

This will be driven by the residents themselves, supported by experts. Instead of a single overburdened central network, we are working towards interconnected smart energy systems. These will intelligently coordinate the local generation, storage and consumption of both electricity and heat. In line with European regulations, we help residents in villages and neighbourhoods to set this up themselves through a 'renewable energy community', with legal, technical and financial support. In this way, both the costs and the benefits remain within the neighbourhood itself. We provide professional guidance for all neighbourhoods to ensure that everyone can take part. In this way, we distribute the benefits and costs fairly. We ensure that tenants also benefit from smart energy systems.

- **A crisis response to grid congestion.**

Grid congestion is currently the biggest obstacle to the energy transition and the

construction of new homes. We are doing everything we can to help grid operators upgrade the electricity grid as quickly as possible. Homes and frontline services, such as hospitals, will be given priority. At the same time, smart neighbourhood energy systems make an important contribution by balancing supply and demand locally, thereby relieving pressure on the main grid.

- **Support for research into a small modular nuclear reactor.**

At present, only a small proportion of our energy is generated sustainably. We have no space for wind turbines, which detract from our natural beauty. That is why we want the council, in its research into a small modular reactor (SMR), to seek a solution within the region. Such a facility could generate all the energy we use in the council area, and probably even a little more.

- **More sustainable solar energy, tailored to the neighbourhood's needs.**

Of course, we remain committed to installing more solar panels. But we are doing this sensibly. We encourage the installation of new solar panels particularly where they fit into a local neighbourhood energy plan, in which the electricity generated can also be used or stored locally. In this way, we prevent further overloading of the electricity grid. Instead of installing solar panels in fields, we encourage the use of the roofs of our businesses for this purpose.

- **New homes and buildings are as self-sufficient as possible.**

New-build properties are fitted straight away with high-quality, sustainable insulation, solar panels and a heat pump. We are aiming for a green, shaded living environment that can withstand changing weather conditions. In principle, new-build properties replace existing buildings: we will not be replacing the green spaces in the municipality with buildings.



VILLAGES NEIGHBOURHOOD DECISIONS

4.



You should always have a genuine say in deciding what happens in your street, neighbourhood, district, village and town. All too often, a plan is already largely

finalised before residents are invited to a public consultation evening. This leads to frustration, mistrust and unnecessary delays. We're turning the process on its head. First, we explore the issues together, and then we work together on solutions. We're not in favour of top-down decisions; instead, we solve problems together at the level where they belong.

Working together on our future

Genuine involvement starts at the beginning, not at the end. When it comes to housing, transport, care, energy projects and migration, we ensure that engagement is incorporated right from the design phase. Not to react to a ready-made plan, but to think together about what we want and what problems and choices exist. In this way, we can work together, find the best solutions and break through the current divisions in society. Everyone can get involved, regardless of their background or circumstances. Whether you take part via a neighbourhood app, a village meeting or a citizens' forum: your opinion matters.

- **Together we are stronger.**

That's not just idealistic; it's also simply practical. Old and new challenges can only be tackled effectively if we join forces. With the local council providing support, you'll work with other residents to address questions such as:

- What suits our village or neighbourhood?
- What are residents' concerns?
- Which solutions are realistic and achievable?

Is your street being redesigned? Then, together with the other residents on your street, you'll have the opportunity to engage independent experts and work together – based on their advice and the legal framework – to arrive at the best design.

- **Making it clear how much influence residents have.**

For all municipal issues, we choose an appropriate form of participation, such as neighbourhood meetings, citizens' assemblies, an international council, or digital platforms and apps. We publish municipal information in a clear and accessible way: budgets, decisions and contracts. This way, you can always see what's happening in your municipality, neighbourhood or street. We support the Hilversum Youth Council, which is currently being set up by young people themselves, and ensure that young people in the villages are also represented. The result is a local authority that communicates clearly and comprehensibly, listens, gives people space and supports personal initiative.

- **Residents take the lead through a permanent citizens' assembly.**

Democracy originated in Athens through citizens' assemblies selected by lot. Cities such as Paris and Lisbon have given this a contemporary interpretation. Following their example, we will establish a citizens' assembly in which residents selected by lot will take their seats. The citizens' assembly represents the villages and neighbourhoods. Participants take turns and receive a reasonable allowance. The participants discuss the

decisions to be taken at length with one another, drawing on the expertise of specialists and the people they know in their own communities. The local authority may only reject a proposal from the citizens' assembly if it transpires that there are insurmountable objections, such as a breach of the law.

Wijdmeren & Hilversum strengthen one another

The villages of Wijdmeren and the town of Hilversum share a long history. Their location by the water and in nature reserves has fostered strong social, economic and ecological ties. Through all the changes, the villages have managed to retain their own identity. This will remain the case after the merger.

- **An urban approach is not suitable for a village.**
The merger of Hilversum and Wijdmeren brings together two distinct local authorities. Within Wijdmeren, there are six unique villages, each with its own identity and challenges. Each village has a friendly atmosphere where people greet one another, help one another and look out for one another. The villages offer a pleasant living environment with peace and quiet, space and plenty of greenery. This is a safe public space that invites people to meet and play. Because each village has its own challenges, we tackle them at the level where they belong: in the village itself.
- **What applies to the villages also applies to the neighbourhoods of Hilversum.**
Hilversum consists of eight neighbourhoods, each with its own identity and challenges. These neighbourhoods have a more urban character, but they too must offer a pleasant and green living environment that encourages people to meet and play. We also tackle the challenges in the neighbourhoods at the level where they belong: within the neighbourhood itself.
- **Each village and each neighbourhood will be allocated its own budget to manage.**
Having their own budget gives them the freedom to decide for themselves how it can be used. In this way, we can further enhance the vibrancy and appeal of our villages and neighbourhoods. We bring issues relating to care, maintenance, housing, local facilities, public transport and community organisations to the village and neighbourhood level. Community centres, neighbourhood centres, local meeting places, sports club canteens, cultural venues of all sizes, and the weekly and annual markets can all fulfil their important roles effectively.
- **At the same time, good facilities that extend beyond individual neighbourhoods and villages are also important.** The hospital, secondary schools, railway stations, large shopping centres, cultural venues and events are important for all residents. And the ability to easily apply for a driving licence or passport and to report changes to your living situation is also important. The Wijdmeren schemes for the villages, such as the

Apple Tree Project, the subsidy for a green roof and the option to subdivide your property, will also be made available to residents in the Hilversum neighbourhoods.

A digitally smart local authority

A digitally smart municipality uses technology to make life easier, fairer and more transparent for its residents. Not by digitising indiscriminately, but by combining digital innovation with personal contact and equal access for everyone. The library will play a key role in providing personalised support to residents in developing their digital skills.

- **Clear information is the foundation.**

For each project, the council provides a clear information page, organised by village, neighbourhood and street, with contact details. The existing information pages in local newspapers will also remain in place. This ensures we are transparent about what is happening and allows you to have your say on all issues.

- **Independent of American technology.**

In collaboration with PublicSpaces, we will switch to open-source and European services as soon as possible, following the example of the North German federal state of Schleswig-Holstein. We are phasing out American technology step by step by basing all procurement of services on European technology. We do not communicate via X or similar platforms that undermine democracy.

- **Digital access for everyone.**

We believe it is important that everyone has or acquires sufficient skills to be able to use digital government information, regardless of background or disability. That information must be accessible and understandable to everyone; that is why we follow the guidelines of the Accessibility Foundation. The library will bring together existing support projects so that workshops can be offered in community centres.

- **An open data portal and registration in the algorithm register will be introduced.**

Municipalities such as Amsterdam and Ghent demonstrate how an open data portal can inspire residents, businesses and civil society organisations to develop new applications. In the algorithm register, residents can see what data is being used, how it is processed and where human oversight takes place. Examples can be found in Amsterdam and Helsinki. Residents will be given the opportunity to report irregularities and have them corrected.

CONTACT ONE ANOTHER



5. Connecting with one another

The town of Hilversum is often affectionately referred to as a 'village'. That is a huge compliment. It means that we are succeeding in maintaining a sense of community. But that precious village spirit cannot be taken for granted. It is a choice. In a

municipality that is at risk of becoming more crowded and anonymous, we must consciously work every day to create the places and moments that bring us together.

We fill our villages and neighbourhoods with life by investing in what binds us together: sport, education, art, culture and events. For us, culture is the beating heart of the municipality; a unifying force that we make accessible to everyone, particularly in the neighbourhoods. And when it comes to events, we opt for village and neighbourhood festivals that truly bring people together. In this way, we are building – brick by brick and encounter by encounter – a municipality that remains connected. A municipality where contact is not a matter of chance, but the very foundation of the community.

Culture at the heart of villages and neighbourhoods

We see art and culture as a unifying force that contributes to wellbeing, inclusion and quality of life, both in the city and in the villages. By investing in cultural education and in rehearsal and exhibition spaces, we make culture accessible and foster an active community. Investments in art and culture pay for themselves many times over: in health, employment and a sense of community.

- **The Artist of the Gooi and Vechtstreek.**

Every year, in collaboration with the other local authorities in this region, we organise a competition to select the Artist of the Gooi and Vechtstreek region. This is combined with an exhibition featuring all the nominated artists. Candidates are nominated on the recommendation of local residents.

- **Sufficient and affordable space for cultural practitioners.**

A thriving cultural sector needs physical space. The council will ensure there are sufficient affordable studios, rehearsal spaces and exhibition venues, and will protect these from the pressures of the property market.

- **Investing in our community centres and libraries as social and cultural hubs.** All branches of community centres and libraries will remain open. We support initiatives to bring the library to local residents. With an additional budget, these indispensable venues can organise even more courses, workshops and activities that bring people together.

- **Reduced licence fees for events.**

To give everyone the opportunity to organise something, we are reducing the licence fees for non-commercial events. Celebrations such as Pride and Sinterklaas, as well as small village and neighbourhood initiatives, will no longer have to pay the full amount. For large commercial events, we will apply a fair and cost-covering rate, whilst not expecting this group to compensate for the lower income generated by small events.

- **A flying start for volunteering and neighbourhood initiatives.**

Finding board members and volunteers is becoming increasingly difficult. Following the example of ‘neighbourhood coaches’ in Utrecht, we are exploring how we can support start-up initiatives and community centres to build a solid base of active residents. And we support volunteers from organisations such as sports clubs to ensure that their clubs do not get bogged down by all sorts of regulations.

- **A safe environment for everyone.**

To help all voluntary organisations provide a safe environment, the council is making a central confidential adviser available to whom anyone can turn. This person assists board members in drawing up policies, helps organise interventions and supports volunteers who encounter inappropriate behaviour.

- **Helping new pensioners to put their knowledge and experience to good use.**

People who are retiring have a wealth of experience. We will provide them with information, with no obligation, about the many opportunities for voluntary work, so that their talents are not wasted and they can remain active in a meaningful way.

A sporting foundation for everyone

Leading a healthy life should be the easiest choice. That starts in our streets, parks, schools and sports clubs. We believe in an environment that invites you to be active, encourages you to eat healthily and where the basics – from clean air to accessible sports clubs – make the neighbourhood a better place for everyone.

- **Sport is accessible and affordable for everyone.**

Money should never be a barrier to taking part in sport. That is why we support sports clubs in keeping their fees low. There are special arrangements for children from low-income families.

- **A living environment where health is a given.**

This starts with the very basics: we are continuing our clean air initiative to meet the World Health Organisation’s standards. We are extending the smoking ban to more public spaces, particularly those frequented by children.

- **Investing in adequate and future-proof sports facilities.**

We are encouraging the installation of accessible exercise equipment in play areas in villages and neighbourhoods, complete with lighting so that it can also be used in the evening. In addition, we are preparing our sports pitches for the future, for example by installing thermal storage systems beneath artificial turf pitches to combat heat stress.

Helping children discover the world

School is a place where children grow, get to know themselves and discover the world. A good education is the best foundation for equal opportunities for everyone. Everyone must be able to develop, regardless of income, background, place of residence or disabilities. We are investing in childcare, schools and training programmes that are accessible to all. This gives every child the opportunity to grow into a happy adult.

- **Equal opportunities from the very start.**

We support pre-school and early years education (VVE). Here, young children receive extra support through play in language and numeracy skills, motor skills and social-emotional development, so that they can start Year 1 of primary school without falling behind. We ensure that every child has access to this pre-school education and we encourage initiatives such as the VoorleesExpress and the Speel-o-theek.

- **Supporting out-of-school initiatives.**

We offer all children the opportunity to receive learning support during the summer and to work together with others. We encourage initiatives that enable children to learn, play sport, socialise and relax after school.

- **School meals are part of the curriculum.**

We are pressing ahead with the national School Meals programme so that – following the Swedish and Portuguese examples – school meals are regarded as part of the curriculum. This promotes healthy eating, tackles inequality and ensures that no one goes to class hungry. It also teaches children about food waste and environmentally conscious (more plant-based) eating.

- **Learning takes place in a good, modern school building.**

We will ensure safe, sustainable and inspiring school buildings, in both primary and secondary education, that meet changing educational needs.

- **Enhancing the value of school playgrounds for the local community.**

We are committed to green school playgrounds, with involvement from the local community. Green school playgrounds contribute to better physical and mental health whilst simultaneously improving the quality of life for the whole neighbourhood. We ensure that school playgrounds are accessible to all children outside school hours too.

- **Offering prospects to children not attending school**

Ensuring compliance with compulsory education is a priority, and we focus on prevention and support for families with children at risk of dropping out. Prevention stops children from staying at home. If, against all expectations, a child is unable to attend school, a family support worker helps the family to draw up a plan.

- **Strong state education and a safe, inclusive culture in every school.**

The local authority has a duty to ensure there is sufficient state education; this is the place where children from different backgrounds naturally come together. In addition, we promote a culture in all schools where differences are seen as normal and every pupil feels safe and accepted. Schools are places for people to come together, for both children and parents.

- **Language, maths and digital literacy form the foundation.**

A solid start in these core skills is the best guarantee of a successful future. Digital tools provide support in this regard, but the personal bond between teacher and pupil is always our top priority.

- **Together with other schools across Europe.**

We encourage schools to make use of EU grants and to exchange best practices with schools in other EU countries. We promote citizenship education, focusing on democratic awareness, social safety and European values. We encourage schools to address the issue of disinformation.



EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR EVERYONE



6. Equal opportunities for everyone

Whether you live in a village or a neighbourhood, it is important that we continue to look out for one another. This is the foundation of our local authority: that we lend a

helping hand when times are tough and ensure that no one is left behind. A healthy and resilient society starts with a safe home, accessible care and support for everyone. Care workers must be able to do what they have chosen to do: help people and provide care.

Equal opportunities: simple and fair

Living on a low income is complicated enough. Yet the council makes life even more complicated for these people: searching for schemes, filling in forms, going from one counter to another and explaining your situation over and over again. Support is available, but it is hidden away in a maze of schemes and organisations. That takes time and energy and causes stress. There is a better way: support from the council will be radically simplified.

- **The foundation: a roof over your head.**

A safe home of one's own is the foundation for a dignified life and is a fundamental right. No one should have to sleep on the streets: we are tackling homelessness and providing a home. We embrace the proven 'Housing First' principle: having a place of one's own to live is the starting point for further support. The Cocon emergency shelter in Hilversum provides initial accommodation and then helps people move on to an independent life. We are committed to increasing the number of container homes at accommodation sites and stepping up local support services.

- **Consolidating municipal schemes and organising a single central service.** Our approach is as simple as it is powerful: is money the problem? Then give money without the hassle. We'll bring the existing jungle of schemes together into a single, clear and accessible scheme. You'll receive a personal budget that you're free to spend as you wish: more freedom of choice, less dependence on separate schemes and initiatives. This gives residents real financial freedom and autonomy.

- **Trust over mistrust.**

We believe that people are best placed to decide for themselves what is right for their lives. Instead of a system that forces people to prove their circumstances time and again – thereby emphasising their shame about their situation – we are committed to a system based on trust. By prioritising simplicity and autonomy, and by consolidating all schemes, we reduce administrative costs.

- **Centralised, intensive support for those facing difficulties.**

This goes deeper than just financial worries. For many people, poverty is a consequence of other problems, such as debt, physical or mental health issues, or a difficult home situation. We offer this group effective, targeted support to tackle the underlying problems. This paves the way for improving their financial situation afterwards.

- **Digital support: the Virtual Income Helpdesk.**

We are supporting the development of this digital tool, which will soon enable you to apply for all the support you are entitled to in one go: from the local council, as well as national schemes such as healthcare and housing benefit. We are adopting this app from Utrecht. In addition, residents can receive support with applying for these schemes at a location in their neighbourhood.

Youth support without a waiting list: a different approach

Many parents, children and young people need (short-term) support. One in nine young people uses youth support services. Providing help quickly and preventing problems is particularly important for young people. However, at present, young people often find themselves caught up in a maze of organisations and months-long waiting lists, which does not help them move forward.

- **A single central centre of expertise will be established to coordinate care.**

We are opting for a fundamental shift, inspired by the success of the Youth Expertise Centre (JEP) in Veendam. We will no longer refer people via separate websites and service providers. If you need help, you will receive initial expert support straight away. Just as in Veendam, we will place specialists in primary schools and at GP practices, who will, for example, lead group therapy sessions and self-help groups.

- **Support for mental health issues will be free for young people up to the age of 25.**

Each family will be assigned a single support worker who will coordinate all the support, rather than the family having to seek help from various organisations themselves. This support worker will accompany the process from start to finish. These changes will ensure that young people receive the right support more quickly. In doing so, we will prevent more serious problems from arising, and ultimately youth support will become both better and more cost-effective.

- **There is also a focus on prevention.**

This includes programmes focusing on nutrition, exercise and mental health, as well as free activities to keep young people occupied after school (based on the Icelandic model).

- **Preventing young people from being taken into care.**

We achieve this through comprehensive and timely family support: in addition to parenting support, this includes assistance with housing, income and debt. If living at home is truly no longer an option, we opt for small-scale, supportive accommodation where young people can continue to live until the age of 23. In this way, they receive proper guidance and support during the transition to independent living.

Good health is the foundation for a happy life

Health is the freedom to participate, to pursue your dreams and to be there for the people you love. The harsh reality is that this foundation is not the same for everyone. All too often,

your postcode, your income and your background still determine your life expectancy. That is an injustice we absolutely refuse to accept.

That is why we are opting for a fundamentally different approach to health. We are moving away from a system primarily focused on treating illness and are building a municipality that strongly promotes a healthy lifestyle. We are focusing on prevention and sport, making a healthy lifestyle the easiest choice. For those who do need support, we provide a strong and compassionate safety net of care within their own neighbourhood.

- **Informal carers, young and old alike, play the most important role in care.** Informal carers deserve recognition, attention and, above all, practical support to enable them to continue with their demanding task. We believe that informal carers themselves are best placed to decide what support they need and how the care budget can best be spent. At present, a large proportion of the informal care budget goes towards organisational and coordination costs rather than towards supporting the carers themselves.
- **Informal carer committees will decide on the informal care budget**
In every village and every neighbourhood, we organise an informal carers' committee to decide how the informal care budget is allocated, ensuring that it is spent on informal carers. An informal carers' committee consists of informal carers, volunteers, professionals and a coordinator from the local authority. Together, they look for practical help. For example, a buddy, help with shopping or someone to temporarily take over the care responsibilities. The coordinator helps by making better use of expertise and resources. In this way, an informal carers' committee ensures that the quality of care provision improves and that more of the budget is available for informal care itself.
- **Staying in control of your own life.**
We are living longer and staying in our own homes independently for longer. Every year, the number of residents receiving care and support from the local authority increases. There is a sharp rise in the number of people aged 75 and over, as the first baby boomers reach this age. We organise support in every neighbourhood, depending on the number of older people, so that everyone can participate.
- **Easy access to services such as transport and daytime activities.** Welfare organisations will be quicker to offer simple help and support. You can easily apply for domestic help online, and the neighbourhood team will assist you further. We encourage neighbourhood activities that bring volunteers into contact with people who are lonely, such as 'Cooking and eating together' activities. This fosters new connections and ensures that older people remain actively involved.
- **Reliable transport for everyone.**
For residents who cannot travel independently, we are focusing on electric shared minibuses. We prevent empty journeys and waste with a user-friendly app for planning journeys. Closer collaboration with care organisations, schools and local transport providers ensures more reliable, tailor-made transport and greater user satisfaction.

- **Time for care, not for paperwork.**

Doctor's assistants, practice support staff, GPs and all other care workers form the backbone of the healthcare system. By simplifying local authority regulations and forms, we reduce their workload. Where the law permits, individuals only need to provide information once. That information can then be reused. Thanks to this approach, healthcare staff can spend their time on people rather than on forms. The Mental Health GP Practice Support Worker collaborates with designated contact persons from the neighbourhood team and can, via 'Wellbeing on Prescription', refer people directly to activities and support in the local area.

- **Using successful European examples to combat loneliness.**

We support local initiatives to tackle loneliness. We are also investigating which proven, successful programmes from other countries we can adapt, such as the Finnish 'Circle of Friends' programme to combat loneliness amongst older people.

- **Support from the Gooi & Vechtstreek Municipal Health Service (GGD) for everyone.**

The Municipal Health Service (GGD) in our region currently refers people with sexual health issues to Almere, Utrecht and Amsterdam. Appointments far from home cost residents time and money and create a barrier to access. This support must be easily accessible to everyone in our region through our own GGD.

- **Menstrual products are just as essential as toilet paper and soap.**

That is why they are available free of charge in an increasing number of restaurants. We are also making period products available free of charge in toilets in public buildings, such as schools, hospitals, food banks, shelters and libraries.

- **Shaping digital literacy together.**

A generation is now growing up that always has a smartphone to hand. This is changing the consequences of negative behaviour: for example, bullying and the exploitation of children are also taking place online. Social media demand attention and can cause children to feel insecure, play outside less and meet up with friends less often. To support parents in raising their children in the digital age, we organise joint workshops in community centres, where we receive support from experts and can learn from one another.

CHOOSE A A LOVING SOCIETY



7. Vote for a caring community

In our local authority, we look out for one another. We believe that everyone should be able to participate from day one, whether you were born here or have only just moved here. Participating from the start means that we remove barriers and create opportunities, that you can move freely through a municipality that is physically accessible to everyone, and that you can proudly be yourself – on the street, at work and in your village or neighbourhood – knowing that you are accepted just as you are.

A municipality where you can be yourself

In our municipality, it shouldn't matter who you are, where you come from or who you love. We are building a municipality that fights against every form of exclusion: from street harassment and discrimination in the workplace to the subtle exclusion of people who cannot celebrate their religious holidays. For us, the spirit of Pride is not just an annual celebration, but a daily commitment: everyone must feel safe always and everywhere, regardless of who you walk hand in hand with down the street. In partnership with networks such as Gooi & Vecht Inclusief, we protect the most vulnerable and are building a society in which everyone feels at home.

- **Gender equality is policy in every workplace and within the council.**

We advocate fair, gender-inclusive policies, both in the workplace in general and in the council's policies. Everyone, regardless of their starting point, can participate in our society on an equal footing. As a council, we are developing modern and inclusive policies for our own staff, for example regarding surrogacy and bereavement leave following a pregnancy loss.

- **An action plan against discrimination and racism.**

An accessible municipal reporting centre ensures that reports are taken seriously within the 'safety triangle': the police, the Public Prosecution Service and the council. We require all organisations with which the council collaborates to provide a safe working environment and full transparency regarding their recruitment and selection policies.

- **Space for everyone's public holidays: celebrating what unites us.**

You are free to choose when to take time off for religious holidays, such as Christmas or Eid al-Fitr (Feast of Breaking the Fast). In addition, we advocate for Keti Koti and Europe Day to become national public holidays, as these are important days for our shared history and identity. The council is already doing this itself as much as possible, and is lobbying the central government and the Association of Netherlands Municipalities (VNG) for a nationwide change.

We embrace international residents

Hilversum and Wijdemeren have a rich international community that contributes to the economy and social life of our town and villages. That is why Volt advocates for a multilingual municipality, a wide range of courses in language and basic skills, clear rules and swift, fair integration, so that newcomers can participate and enrich our municipality. We also believe it is important to welcome people fleeing war, violence or persecution. When we take in asylum seekers or those granted refugee status, we prepare thoroughly for this.

- **A joint plan for the reception of asylum seekers.**

We are following the example of the municipality of Nijkerk and Utrecht's 'Einstein' plan. Through participatory meetings, we arrive at a solution that provides for accommodation, daytime activities, education and work. In doing so, we focus on effective integration programmes and on strengthening social cohesion by involving local organisations, businesses and residents. We take our responsibility seriously, even if the Distribution Act is repealed.

- **Everyone plays their part.**

Newcomers can use their skills, talents, experiences and ideas to build a life for themselves and contribute to our society. That is why we need a migration approach that recognises this and focuses on the potential of migration. We are tackling the bureaucracy that stands in the way of newcomers' participation, so that they can get straight to work on integration and participation, such as through accessible language lessons. We are also exploring opportunities for participation in the labour market, for example in the care sector, where we face significant shortages.

- **International education.**

We will continue to provide high-quality education to all residents. With a wide range of international courses, bilingual programmes and language classes, we can build bridges between residents.

- **Multilingual local authority.**

Through multilingual leaflets and the use of translation software on the council's website, we ensure that residents who do not (yet) have a good command of the Dutch language can still participate.

- **Support with language and basic skills.**

Many residents struggle with language, numeracy and digital skills. We are expanding the range of support available and actively reaching out to people through their neighbourhoods, schools and workplaces, so that they can improve their skills in an accessible way.

Safe at home, on the move and at school

For us, safety means an environment in which everyone feels free and secure, both on the streets and behind their front door. Anyone seeking safety deserves a safe place. Safety is more than just enforcement and punishment; it starts with prevention, care and connection. We aim for a sensible balance: setting clear boundaries where necessary, whilst at the same time offering prospects to those who need them. In this way, we are building a municipality that is safe and feels safe.

- **Preparing for potential crises.**

The neighbourhood is the foundation for self-reliance and mutual support. In a crisis, good preparation makes the difference between panic and considered action. Whether it's a large-scale power cut or a cyberattack: we must be prepared. We ensure concrete and up-to-date contingency plans and invest in resilience, so that the neighbourhood continues to function and you know what to do if the unthinkable happens.

- **Bystander intervention helps.**

In cities such as Utrecht, Amsterdam, Malmö and Glasgow, residents support one another directly when incidents occur. A zero-tolerance policy against sexism and street harassment is enforced by bystanders confronting perpetrators. The result: less violence, less harassment and greater community cohesion. We will learn from these local authorities and, based on that, draw up and implement an action plan. Small interventions make a big difference, and safety begins with bystanders seeing, recognising and taking action.

- **A particular focus on women and children.**

We ensure that the quality of the support provided by Veilig Thuis is improved. Transparency, expertise and oversight deserve attention, so that protection and specialist support are available for children and women who are affected by violence. We support teachers, youth workers and sports clubs in identifying problems and vulnerable situations arising from peer pressure. And through campaigns, including those targeting schools, care institutions and employers, we raise awareness amongst everyone that they can call Veilig Thuis if they suspect unsafe situations.

- **The safety and equality of our rainbow community are our top priority.**

Being able to be yourself is a fundamental right. By signing the Rainbow Agreement, we have become one of the Dutch Rainbow Cities. We are setting up a discrimination reporting centre and establishing specific shelters for homeless LGBTQIA+ people. We are also paying particular attention to the safety of the queer community of colour. Furthermore, we are making it easier for trans and non-binary people to change their gender registration, including the option to select 'X'.

- **Investing in prevention is investing in the future.**

Before law enforcement officers intervene, we do everything in our power to prevent nuisance. For us, investing in youth work, sports clubs and community centres is not an expense, but the most effective way to make our municipality safer in the long term. We therefore invest in collaboration with informal partners. Cutting back is out of the question for us. Everything we invest in this area pays for itself many times over.

- **Femicide requires a structural and integrated approach.**

We are committed to preventing violence by (former) partners and protecting (potential) victims. Better cooperation between the police, support services, local authorities and the justice system leads to early detection and intervention.

- **Staying safe on the move with good lighting.**

We are investigating where residents experience problems and how we can improve safety. For example, through better and smarter lighting on cycle paths and in tunnels. And we are organising safe transport options for women and children.

INNOVATIVE ECONOMY



8. Innovative economy

We stand for prosperity that is fairly earned and fairly distributed. We are proud that Hilversum and Wijdmeren are attractive to both international and national businesses, large and small alike. And we are proud that everyone has the freedom and opportunity to work and earn a living. We enjoy vibrant shopping areas with a diverse range of local shops and restaurants. We therefore help entrepreneurs to grow and assist them in making their business premises and processes more sustainable.

Vibrant shopping areas

Many shopping areas in the Netherlands are struggling with vacant premises, which creates an uninviting atmosphere. To prevent this in Hilversum and Wijdmeren, we will ensure that business owners in the shopping areas receive support. A diverse range of shops and restaurants creates a lively and enjoyable atmosphere, making our shopping and hospitality areas attractive to residents and visitors alike.

- **Tackling vacancy rates in shopping areas.**

A reduction in the number of shops is inevitable, which is why we would like to concentrate them in the high streets. We can then convert the remaining buildings into residential accommodation. We support shops relocating from a side street to a high street.

- **Temporary shops, pop-up stores, concept stores and local initiatives.**

We embrace initiatives that ensure the high street continues to attract the public. Where necessary, we provide grants to support the start-up phase. In this way, we can prevent premises from standing empty. We also support local business associations in this regard.

- **In villages, shops and hospitality venues play an important role.**

They are the places where local residents meet and have a chat. We will organise facilities, such as after-school care, close to these centres. In this way, we are committed to preserving shops and hospitality venues in the villages; our aim is to have all facilities close together.

A vibrant Media Park

Who hasn't grown up with Dutch radio and TV programmes produced at the Media Park? It's the hub of showbiz, celebrities and the (youth) news. Nowadays, there are many new forms of social media, which have permanently changed the world. The advent of AI is creating new opportunities, but also bringing about shifts. Whilst we currently have plenty of space at the Media Park for studios and sets, many physical locations and sets will be replaced by AI-generated imagery. Together with the media sector and the people at the Media Park, we are already considering what this means for the future.

- **Media as a source of reliable information.**

We are collaborating with the Hilversum-based initiative THETA, The European Trust Alliance, because we consider trust in the media and combating disinformation to be of the utmost importance. The council supports THETA and will commit to this initiative for the next four years.

- **Strengthening the Media Campus.**

We are supporting the Media Campus with long-term funding from the council. This will enable them to maintain the appeal of the Media Park, reach out to young entrepreneurs working on new AI applications, provide workspace for start-ups, and offer retraining and further training to people in the media sector.

- **Innovation in the media sector.**

Only by enabling the sector as a whole to benefit from new technology can we, as Media Park, remain the centre of news provision in the Netherlands. To stimulate innovation, we will continue to collaborate through the Media Innovation Hub and the Media Campus. In this way, we will strengthen the regional development agencies of Utrecht and North Holland.

Smart, innovative choices

It is the people who form the economy upon which our society is built: the shopkeeper who has known the neighbourhood for generations, the barista who turns a cup of coffee into an experience, and the programmer with a brilliant idea in a co-working space. The strength of our municipality lies in this unique blend of ambition and a human touch. We must nurture and strengthen that strength. Small and medium-sized enterprises, our hospitality sector and the creative start-ups in our neighbourhoods and villages are the backbone of our thriving economy.

We help entrepreneurs to grow, rather than burdening them with unnecessary regulations. We will connect local entrepreneurs with the opportunities of the future. Together, we are building an economy that not only competes but also cares. An economy that is smart, but never loses its heart.

- **Entrepreneurs working on the solutions of tomorrow.**
We ensure there are sufficient spaces in our municipality for start-ups and scale-ups. Through our partners, we continue to support innovative businesses that contribute to tackling the major challenges of our time.
- **A reliable and communicative partner for every entrepreneur.** Entrepreneurs should not be put in difficulty by ill-considered decisions on the part of the local authority. We take our responsibility seriously, which means we listen to entrepreneurs before we act and that we first assess the consequences of new policies.
- **European expertise and resources for our entrepreneurs.**
As a European party, we are committed to opening the doors to Europe for local SMEs. We therefore make use of EU programmes such as the Small Business Act and InvestEU to support local entrepreneurs and start-ups.
- **Investing in our business parks.**
Business parks provide a home for businesses, and it is important that these sites do not fall into disrepair but instead stimulate growth. We are committed to making business parks more sustainable, making better use of the space that is still available, and assessing whether a business really needs to be located on a business park or whether it could be based elsewhere. This is to make the best possible use of the scarce space available on business parks.
- **Helping businesses make the transition to zero-emission logistics.**
This can be achieved through grants, clear regulations and collaboration. With logistics hubs near the N201, A27 and A1 motorways, businesses can temporarily store their supplies and make consolidated local deliveries. This reduces costs, whilst smaller, cleaner vehicles in the municipality result in fewer traffic movements and cleaner air.
- **Using the council's purchasing power to support local businesses.**
In tendering processes, the lowest price is not the be-all and end-all. We give preference to companies that make a social or circular contribution. If, as a company, you contribute to the municipality's objectives, you are the logical partner for us.
- **Enforcing the 60-night limit on tourist accommodation rentals.**
From 2026, new EU rules will require rental platforms to share their data, enabling us to monitor this limit more effectively. We will seize this opportunity with both hands to protect the quality of life and ensure homes remain available for our own residents.
- **Modern hospitality regulations for greater creativity and clarity.**
Entrepreneurs with innovative ideas often get bogged down in an outdated and rigid licensing system. We are moving to a flexible model, similar to that in Rotterdam, where

an entrepreneur can put together a bespoke licence. This gives creative plans room to flourish whilst ensuring clear and fair rules on opening hours, noise and nuisance.

Fair and responsible use of public funds

Compared with other local authorities, we are in a sound financial position, and we will maintain this by spending tax revenue wisely. The merger between Wijdmeren and Hilversum means that we will harmonise taxes for all residents, such as the dog licence fee, which will be abolished in Wijdmeren. Following the merger, we will ensure a fair distribution of benefits and costs between the villages and the town.

The central government does not cover all the costs of the additional responsibilities we have been given, such as youth care and asylum accommodation. With further central government cuts on the horizon, this means we must make choices and handle every euro of taxpayers' money that we invest in our future with the utmost care. We ensure that income and expenditure remain in balance and that taxes do not rise faster than inflation.

- **A fair municipal grant from central government.**

We will continue to fight with the central government for a fair budget. Responsibility for delivering youth care, care for the elderly and community nursing has been transferred to the local authority. However, the funding required for this has not been fully allocated to the local authority. Together with other local authorities, we will continue to oppose these cuts and demand that we receive the funding necessary to carry out our statutory duties.

- **Spending the informal care budget on informal care.**

The central government is encouraging the informal care budget to be spent on other matters. We will ensure that the entire informal care budget – which forms part of the Social Support Act (Wmo) budget – is actually used for this purpose. This budget must not be used for any other purposes.

- **Government funding for prevention.**

Our approach to prevention ensures that people require intensive care less often, thereby reducing national healthcare costs. We use the money saved in this way to fund our local prevention programmes.

- **Savings through smart procurement.**

We pool our municipality's purchasing power with that of neighbouring municipalities. This enables us to strengthen the municipality's negotiating position and achieve savings.

HILVERSUM in EUROPE



9. Hilversum in Europe

For us, the connection between our own neighbourhood and Europe is essential. Hilversum is the media capital of the Netherlands, and Wijdmeren is the water sports hub of the central Netherlands. And we benefit from boundless cooperation.

Whether it's the air we breathe in the Goois Nature Reserve or on the Vuntus managed by Natuurmonumenten, the jobs at the Media Park or the trains that take us in all directions: our future is inextricably linked to Europe.

We are committed to a municipality that dares to look beyond its own borders. Volt is a movement of people who truly feel European. How we work, build, heat our homes, travel, care for one another and live our lives: it is all linked to European legislation, cooperation and innovation.

Growing through sharing

We believe in a municipality that gets involved and works together. We realise that we are part of a region, a province, a country and a continent. We bring European energy to the council chamber. In our municipality, we are directly helping to build the Europe of tomorrow: fresh, boundless and full of action. That is why we will ensure our municipality takes part in European city programmes, such as Eurocities, the Green City Accord and the Climate-Neutral and Smart Cities Mission. We apply ideas that work in other municipalities here ourselves.

- **European cooperation.**

For us, Europe stands for cooperation, because together we are strong and greater than the sum of our parts. Especially in these times of geopolitical tensions, we desperately need the strength of a united Europe. But we also seek cooperation closer to home: with our neighbouring municipalities, the Gooi and Vechtstreek Region, the Amsterdam and Utrecht Metropolitan Regions, the provinces and our national government. By working together, we can achieve things more cheaply, more efficiently and more quickly.

- **Sustainability without borders.**

Climate change does not stop at the municipality's borders. We are committed to European standards for sustainable agricultural nature management and the conservation of the peat meadow area, for home insulation and the circular economy, so that Hilversum and Wijdmeren can become frontrunners in the green transition.

- **The European digital media city.**

As the Netherlands' media hub, we champion an open, safe and democratic European internet. Hilversum remains the place where European values set the standard in media and technology. We ensure that our media organisations can find their way to European programmes and collaborations. This increases our influence and strengthens our position as an international media city.

- **An inclusive European community.**

For us, Europe means friendship and exchange. We encourage European partnerships and exchange programmes for our young people, so that everyone from Hilversum, Loosdrecht, Kortenhoek, Nederhorst, 's-Graveland, Breukeleveen and Ankeveen feels European.

- **Making the most of grants made available by Europe.**

We work together with Europe on sustainability, nature conservation, agricultural support, innovation, culture, heritage and education. We are organising a strong grants team within the council to apply for and utilise EU funding.

- **Promoting the fact that Hilversum is part of Europe.**

We will fly the European flag in the council chamber and make Europe Day an annual municipal event. We aim for Hilversum to forge relationships abroad, for example through twinning schemes.

