

ELECTION PROGRAMME  
2018-2022

CHANGE STARTS IN  
MIDDELBURG

**GROENLINKS**

**MIDDELBURG**

# CONTENTS

**Contents** Fout! Bladwijzer niet gedefinieerd.

**Introduction** Fout! Bladwijzer niet gedefinieerd.

*The social municipality* 3

*The green municipality* **Fout! Bladwijzer niet gedefinieerd.**

*The open municipality* **Fout! Bladwijzer niet gedefinieerd.**

**Programme Points 2018-2022** 5

## **1. Fair sharing** 6

*Equal opportunities start with education* 6

*Everyone participates* 6

*Humane healthcare* **Fout! Bladwijzer niet gedefinieerd.**

*Affordable housing* **Fout! Bladwijzer niet gedefinieerd.**

*Everyone exercises* **Fout! Bladwijzer niet gedefinieerd.**

## **2. The sustainable municipality** 10

*Affordable housing* **Fout! Bladwijzer niet gedefinieerd.**

*Green neighbourhoods* **Fout! Bladwijzer niet gedefinieerd.**

*Clean air* **Fout! Bladwijzer niet gedefinieerd.**

*Healthy climate* **Fout! Bladwijzer niet gedefinieerd.**

*Climate resistant municipality* **Fout! Bladwijzer niet gedefinieerd.**

*Healthy and attractive living* **Fout! Bladwijzer niet gedefinieerd.**

*Sustainable economy* **Fout! Bladwijzer niet gedefinieerd.**

*Sustainable job market* **Fout! Bladwijzer niet gedefinieerd.**

## **3. The open municipality** 14

*A municipality that listens to its inhabitants* **Fout! Bladwijzer niet gedefinieerd.**

*Working together on safety* **Fout! Bladwijzer niet gedefinieerd.**

*A welcoming municipality* **Fout! Bladwijzer niet gedefinieerd.**

*An attractive cultural city* **Fout! Bladwijzer niet gedefinieerd.**

*Safety whilst maintaining freedom* **Fout! Bladwijzer niet gedefinieerd.**

*Honest and trustworthy management* **Fout! Bladwijzer niet gedefinieerd.**

*The municipal organisation* **Fout! Bladwijzer niet gedefinieerd.**

# INTRODUCTION

Change starts in Middelburg: that's why you should vote GroenLinks on 21 March. GroenLinks is working on an engaged society in which everyone benefits. Too many people are not receiving the appreciation they deserve. For this reason, we are tackling the uncertainty that people live in. It's possible to have a nice residence, affordable health care, proper income, and a clean living environment for everyone.

It's time for change.

GroenLinks stands for equally sharing, affordable health care for all ages. Being ill is bad enough in itself; it should not be the cause for financial trouble. Health care is not about profit but about taking care of people.

The choices we make now affect the future of our children. GroenLinks chooses to combat climate change. We commit to a clean and green municipality, ensuring fresh air in our streets and stimulating the use of green energy.

We should take care of our open space in and around the city and the villages. As such, we do not want construction work without coordination with the municipalities surrounding us.

## By people of the municipality of Middelburg, for people of the municipality of Middelburg

GroenLinks is proponent of a democracy in which people can pitch in as much as possible about the path we should be taking.

## Things can and should change in the municipality of Middelburg

GroenLinks stands for change. We stand for a new way of doing politics. One in which our common interest in the long term, not profit in the short term, is key. We stand for sharing rather than saving. We stand for connection, trust, and hope, instead of dissent.

## The social municipality

GroenLinks wants everyone in our municipality to have the chance to make a proper living. Everyone should be able to participate, whether that be via a paid job, volunteering work, or school. If people cannot find a job themselves, we want the municipality help out. If you lose your job or fall ill, there should be a safety net. GroenLinks believes that every child deserves a good start and a fair chance: to learn at school, but also to discover what their dreams are. Health care should not be about rules, but about people. There should be room to evaluate what people can do and what they want. Moreover, we want everyone to be able to live in an affordable and energy-saving residence.

## The green municipality

GroenLinks want our children to grow up in green and healthy neighbourhoods. We want children to play in a green environment, breathing in fresh air. That's why we choose for green public transport and for spacious parks in which to play and to exercise. If we choose for clean, green, and healthy solutions, we will provide our children with a healthy planet and a balanced climate.

## The open municipality

GroenLinks has faith in people. We believe that everyone wants to do something with their lives and wants to contribute to their own environment. That's why we offer opportunities for people who want to make their environment greener or cleaner. That's why we trust teachers, nurses, and other professionals who want to help people. And that's why we make room for people's own wishes, instead of following organisational rules and structures blindly.

# PROGRAMME POINTS 2018-2022

The most important points in this election programme are:

1. We encourage people and offer them space. We choose for a society in which everyone belongs and participates. GroenLinks does not leave anyone behind.
2. We ensure that the municipality actively prevents children from already having fallen behind before they start primary school.
3. We want older people and people with disabilities to live at home for as long as possible by choosing for tailored health care.
4. We want to have enough social housing and rental and owner-occupied homes for first-time home buyers and the middle class. We do not want to build in vulnerable landscapes such as the Cleene Hooge and the Trekdijk.
5. We plant extra trees and choose for extra green. Everyone should be able to enjoy a park or an open green space. Green isn't only beautiful but also provides extra fresh air.
6. We stand for a climate neutral municipality using sun and wind energy. We stimulate energy neutral building and establishing local energy cooperatives.
7. We prioritise clean transport: bicycles, pedestrians, and electric (public) transport.
8. We provide room for local initiatives that make the city more social, green, beautiful, and clean.
9. We want to have more space for art and creativity. Art enriches our lives.

# 1. FAIR SHARING

GroenLinks chooses for a city in which we share fairly. Everyone in our municipality gets an equal chance at a good job, decent income, and affordable housing. We ensure humane health care and excellent education.

## Equal opportunities start with education

Your background should not determine the extent of your career or the size of your dreams. Every child deserves a good start. That's why our education should be focused on eliminating setbacks and developing talents. Not a single child should drop out or be written off. Everyone falling under compulsory education should be following education. We provide children with sport and play facilities inside and outside of school.

- Good education is only possible in school buildings that suit the demands of our time. They should be clean, safe, comfortable, and green.
- Affordable after-school facilities should always accommodate new school buildings. This matches the development of child centres and stimulates parents, especially women, in participating in the labour market.
- An integral child centre in every neighbourhood in due time.
- School grounds will be green.
- The municipality pays extra attention to pre-primary education.
- Children with a delay in language development receive extra guidance.
- Unhealthy food doesn't belong in a healthy school.
- Every child is in school or follows education: no child falling under compulsory education sits at home.
- Absenteeism and early school leaving gets actively tackled.
- Disadvantaged children will receive suitable education at regular schools. In exception cases, special education is offered.
- The municipality encourages education in nature and climate as well as in arts and music.
- There will be more opportunities for highly talented pupils that fit their personal development.
- The municipality stimulates schools to pay extra attention to these pupils, who frequently underperform and leave school early.
- Adults get a (second) chance to catch up in case of a delay in (language) development.
- We fight function illiteracy among children as well as adults.
- Middelburg is and will remain to be attractive to study at. Students, i.e. from UCR and HZ, bring a new dynamic to the city and provide employment opportunities. We ensure that students feel welcome in Middelburg and are committed to develop a second "UCR" via Campus Zeeland.
- There will be more programmes for children to choose technical careers via VMBO.

## Everyone participates

It is important for everyone to participate in or contribute to our society. GroenLinks wants everyone to be able to do so, whether that be via work, school, informal care, or voluntary work. If that's not possible, it's the governments task to help people, for instance with extra support or guidance. Social welfare is an important safety net. Jobseekers will get offered work if it's available, but once they're on social welfare, we're generous. An individual approach and trust are key in our vision. Ultimately, we want less rules and more trust in people's own choices. We want to get rid of useless, 'annoying' rules for people in social welfare. We think people should be able to earn some more on the side and should experience less duress.

- The municipality Middelburg starts with a social welfare experiment. Less rules and more freedom to find a job and earn on the side. Middelburg will experiment locally with basic income.
- Minima-regulations should be accessible and generous.
- If necessary, people will be guided by requesting facilities, allowances, and regulations.
- We encourage the use of minima-regulations.
- There will be one responsible supervisor per family with multiple problems.
- Clients of Orionis deserve the best possible guidance. The best possible people should be available at the places where good service is essential. That's why we want to invest in the professionalism of employees.
- We are against unnecessary bureaucracy for beneficiaries and as such no monitoring burden for Orionis employees.
- We ensure that children of people with a minimum benefit or income can enjoy sports and cultural activities like any other.
- The municipality of Middelburg always helps people in debt, but we try to prevent writing off debts. GroenLinks opts for actively tackling debt problems with prevention, restructuring, and aftercare.
- The municipality already attempts in an early stadium to settle with creditors and does not wait until debts increase even more.
- People should not be the victim of accumulating budget cuts. The municipality compensates asymmetrical consequences of budget cuts if necessary.
- An increasing amount of people cannot afford their energy bills. That's why tackling energy poverty is a priority in the fight against poverty in the upcoming years.
- The municipality will aid people who (still) do not have a shot at paid jobs by searching for alternatives: education, participation jobs, work for senior citizens, apprenticeships, internships, or volunteer work. The aim is for everyone to have a job at a regular employer.
- We discuss a suitable apprenticeship with every job seeker.
- The municipality will actively help job seekers who want to start their own company. The municipality will point job seekers to the possibility of starting their own company. We will help them with shaping a business plan and if it is viable, they will get enough time to start their own company whilst receiving allowances.
- We will discuss a flexible influx of people with the ROC, instead of twice a year.
- In principle, people with physical disabilities should be able to work anywhere. They have the right to work independently and under their own volition. The municipality will pioneer in providing jobs for people with disabilities.
- Beneficiaries are allowed to volunteer. We encourage people with allowances to help others. Moreover, we encourage them to earn money. For this reason, they are allowed to keep part of this earnings.
- Sheltered social workplaces are the only option to safely work for some people and for that reason will continue to exist.

## Humane healthcare

Senior citizens and people with disabilities deserve humane healthcare. GroenLinks wants people to be able to live at home, in a familiar environment, for as long as possible. People needing requiring, with their own talents and needs, is central in healthcare. That's why it should be professionally determined, instead of behind a desk.

We believe that healthcare should entail more than just healing patients next to prevention. All problems that people encounter should be paid attention to, such as work, income, housing, well-being, and youth care. It's important that professional healthcare practitioners, home care nurses, other attendants, debt counsellors, household workers, informal caretakers, and volunteers can cooperate well in the neighbourhood networks. We expect people at service points to receive help in the short term.

- From the first contact with the municipality and professionals onwards, family and/or friends will be involved in the matter at hand and, if necessary, invited for a network meeting. The approach of the municipality is focused on problem-solving. It's about strengthening personal volition.
- We do not abandon people to their fate. Trained and educated caretakers will pay home visits and have the mandate to set simple grounds for low-threshold facilities.
- GroenLinks wants a fair personal financial contribution. A personal financial contribution makes people aware of the costs and the worth of the care they receive.
- We aim for a strong prevention policy with proper guidance to healthcare.
- Professional care practitioners, such as home care nurses, other attendants, debt counsellors, and household workers, can indicate and discuss problems. We strengthen support possibilities to general practitioners who work together with a neighbourhood team and district nurses.
- Senior citizens and people with disabilities will be able to live independently. For this reason, we need suitable housing available for them.
- New residences for senior citizens and people with disabilities will be built in close proximity to imperative facilities.
- We will detect obstacles for wheelchairs and walker-rollators together with inhabitants. Together we decide which problems we will tackle first to make the municipality completely wheelchair and walker-rollator proof.
- GroenLinks finds it important for healthcare organisations to work together instead of compete. The priority is providing good care.
- Inhabitants and patient and consumer organisations will be actively involved in developing and implementing policies concerning healthcare, well-being, and living. We involve citizens in pinpointing problems and request them to think with us about budgetary trade-offs. The government should support and facilitate initiatives from citizens in the social sector more rather than determine them.
- We ensure that advisory bodies are diverse.

## Affordable housing

Everyone should be able to have a proper and affordable roof above their head, in every neighbourhood. GroenLinks wants housing corporations to commit to building social housing, including housing for senior citizens and people with disabilities who need suitable residence. Housing corporations and healthcare providers will do so together. Together with project developers, we will agree to the construction of enough rental housing for the middle class and affordable owner-occupied property.



- The municipality stimulates the construction of social rental and owner-occupied housing. GroenLinks wants an undivided municipality and therefore encourages social housing, for instance by charging lower land prices for it.
- GroenLinks wants a municipality with diverse neighbourhoods. That's why we always build residences with prices ranging from cheap to expensive.
- Our vision shapes enough affordable residences for diverse audiences.
- We consider options for first-time home buyers, senior citizens, and people with disabilities in assigning rental housing and, if necessary, prioritise them.
- GroenLinks chooses to consider holders of residence permits with a sense of urgency. Next to that, we ensure that other citizens will not have to wait, if necessary by building more.
- We make appointments with housing corporations for special target groups, for instance people with social, financial, or psychological problems, to ensure that there are enough residences available for them.
- The municipality takes part in the realisation of innovative living concepts that tend to the demands of specific target groups such as senior citizens, people with mental disabilities or central living projects).
- We make agreements with housing corporations to make residences energy-neutral when they are being renovated. New residences will be built without gas connection and will be energy-neutral.
- There will be enough good quality, affordable rooms available for students and working youth in the municipality Middelburg.
- The municipality actively fights vacancy.

### Everyone exercises

It's important for everyone in the municipality Middelburg to play sports. The municipality will provide good quality and affordable sports fields, a swimming pool, and sports centres for amateur sport practice. Senior citizens will be offered a range of sports activities, adjusted to their demands. Together with senior citizens' organisations, welfare organizations, and sports clubs, we will look for a suitable and accessible offer. There will be more sports activities for people with physical or mental disabilities.

## 2. THE SUSTAINABLE MUNICIPALITY

### Sustainable living

GroenLinks chooses for a clean city in which our children can grow up healthy. We'll fight for this together with local energy cooperatives, green DIY's, and everyone who puts effort into a nice and clean municipality. You can see, feel, and smell the effect of the deterioration of our environment in the air, the water, and the landscape. This needs to change! GroenLinks wants to restructure our disposable society into a circular economy. Raw materials won't be waste but will be constantly reused. And we will no longer use polluting fossil fuels to generate energy, but sustainable alternatives.

### Green neighbourhoods

It's more pleasant to live in a green neighbourhood. One in which our children can play outside and we can go for a walk, a bike ride, or a run close to home. That's why GroenLinks wants to protect and expand the green in our neighbourhoods. We decorate our neighbourhoods with the leafy green of trees, with sports fields, and beautiful parks. This prevents heat stress as well. We keep our streets, squares, and parks clean! Who pollutes, cleans up themselves; that's our principle. For that reason, the polluter pays more.

- We plant extra trees. That's not only pretty but also contributes to fresh air.
- We stop with haphazardly chopping trees.
- You'll need a permit to chop trees.

### Clean air

It's essential to breathe in clean and healthy air when our children play outside or when we cycle through town. That's why GroenLinks chooses for green transport. We discourage the use of cars and want that the city is easily accessible for pedestrians. But we also prioritise cyclists with the construction of cycling paths, fast cycling routes to popular destinations, and handy instructions on where to park your bike. We improve the infrastructure for electric cars.

- Sometimes, the air gets badly polluted due to misuse of hearths and wood burners. GroenLinks wants to tackle this problem.

### Healthy climate

GroenLinks pursues a healthy and good life for now and in the future. A healthy environment encompasses more than our municipality. Ultimately, however, it's all about what we can do together. Of course, we will implement the worldwide agreements to put a stop to climate change. We no longer what to use natural gas for heating our houses or cooking our dinners. Houses in Middelburg should be better isolated. And we should generate our own energy. A big task, but an

important one. Because next providing to a healthier environment, these measures will ensure employment and lower energy bills.

- The municipality stimulates initiatives surrounding the generation of sustainable energy through cogeneration, the sun, wind, and biomass of rest streams, and the avoidance of CO2 emission.
- The municipality creates an ambitious and innovative sustainability plan for its own property and to make schools more sustainable.
- The municipality sets the right example by being circular and innovative.
- The municipality will stimulate and support making housing and commercial buildings more sustainable.
- Sustainability projects initiated by entrepreneurs and inhabitants will be supported. Businesses and inhabitants who want to start innovative, sustainable projects, will be supported with expertise and the search to alternative funding.
- Inhabitants who form an (energy) cooperative can use the facilities of the entrepreneurs' office.
- Project developers can only work in our municipality if their projects adhere to the quality requirements as agreed upon in the climate accords.

### Climate resistant municipality

The climate changes; periods of drought followed by heavy rainfall will occur more and more often. We will ensure that everyone will keep their feet dry and prepare for a climate resistant municipality.

- GroenLinks wants to collect, buffer, and filter water on the land of houses and businesses. We want to require construction projects to detach downspouts and save water in their own garden.
- The municipality explores the possibilities to fight the increasing presence of stone gardens with tax measures.

### Healthy and attractive environment

- We will keep the vast nature and the coast (Veerse Meer) pure: we will approach further construction with reluctance. There will be no construction on de Cleene Hooge.
- We actively want to tackle vacancy (in houses and businesses): that way, there is no need to build something new and we can maintain a green environment.
- GroenLinks doesn't want a new industrial area whilst there is still enough space in Walcheren. De Trekdijk will not become an industrial area.
- When grounds are vacant for a long time because planned development is stagnating, it's possible to use these grounds temporarily for urban agriculture.
- We will use inner-city locations and obsolete commercial buildings (industrial property) for creative activity.

### Sustainable economy

Small and medium-sized enterprises are an important factor of the economy and the liveability of Middelburg. That's why we pay attention to their interest. The economic crisis of the past years taught us that we cannot continue the path that we've been following so far. Our future is a sustainable one. Investing in energy saving and sustainable energy will provide a lot of new jobs.

Moreover, it provides lower living costs for inhabitants. A change to a sustainable economy is the challenge for all entrepreneurs and enterprises. GroenLinks wants to facilitate this change by offering green and innovative frontrunners all possible opportunities.

- We want good municipal services for entrepreneurs. There is one office that entrepreneurs and starting entrepreneurs can address their questions to. This includes information about permits, taxes, sustainability measures, and employee issues.
- The municipality Middelburg works together with entrepreneurs on pleasant and safe shopping areas and industrial areas.
- Regular contact between the municipality and businesses is important for coordination and support. For instance, concerning the safety of shopping areas, supplying, opening times, accessibility for disabled people, sufficient bike parking places, tackling criminality, making shopping streets more sustainable, and improving liveability and image.
- GroenLinks is a proponent of shops being open on Sunday but wants to leave the choice to shop owners themselves.
- GroenLinks tackles degradation and vacancy in shopping streets and centres and with that creates more chances for culture, sustainability, and (social) innovation. We ensure this by opening up vacant buildings to cultural pop-up shops, sustainable and innovative starts-ups, and social initiatives.
- There will be no expansion in the retail industry in the periphery (ZEP, Mortiere) to prevent the inner-city from being abandoned.
- Bustle in the city centre is partly dependent on tourism. We will continue to welcome tourists warmly and encourage their presence, i.e. by supporting events in the innercity.
- Orionis is generous in supporting self-employed people who temporarily lost income, unless if there is a better perspective for the future.
- Innovation is an important task of the (local) government. The municipality uses her buyer power to stimulate and support innovations on their road to the circular economy.
- When industrial areas are revitalised, they will be made sustainable.
- The municipality wants to have little freight traffic the city centre so businesses will have to find another way to handle supplies.
- GroenLinks wants to attract companies who work sustainability and at the same time strengthen the job market in Middelburg. Next to that, we want to determine what suits the needs of our region.
- When attracting companies, the focus is with sustainable growth areas that at the same time strengthen the job market. Issuing industrial areas is linked to a minimum job positions per hectare.
- GroenLinks wants to invest in development and space for businesses that play a role in energy transition and the circular economy.
- We encourage economic dynamic not only by physical surroundings but also by other qualities of the environment, such as a well-educated working population and social and cultural facilities.
- Stimulating the local economy and job market is a long term task that is dependent on many external factors. But the municipality is able to encourage specific developments based on potential, for instance by investing in specific regions in the municipality.
- Focal points for local development in employment are knowledge-based economy, attracting higher educational institutions (Campus Zeeland), and services in the creative and leisure sector.
- There is the opportunity to develop a campus for creative entrepreneurs at the former CZAV terrain on Arnestein 1.

- The municipality promotes local products and consistently uses sustainable products at activities and events.

### Sustainable job market

The municipal organisation becomes an exemplar in the field of diversity, for instance by implementing anonymous job applications. The goal is to be a fair representation of the society and to take the social responsibility of helping people who have difficulty getting a job to a suitable position within the municipality. We make appointments with businesses about employing youth, senior citizens, low-educated people, and people with disabilities. A priority is making agreements about people who receive allowances. This is not as much about aspects such as age and gender as much as a personal distance to the job market. The law enforces employers, including governmental institutions, to employ people with a labour disability.

- The municipality demands a social contribution in the form of internships, apprenticeships, or guidance of socially vulnerable groups for commissioning and contracting. The municipality looks for alternatives for inhabitants who do not get a job at the regular job market and develops the social economy.
- We work together with other municipalities to improve the job market, but this cooperation should offer enough room for the local environment and autonomous choices of our municipality.

# 3. THE OPEN MUNICIPALITY

GroenLinks stands for freedom. You can be who you are and say what you want in an open society. You feel at home and safe. We treat each other respectfully. Even if someone is different from you, we give each other a chance. Always. People with different backgrounds, beliefs, and preferences can live in our municipality. We should all have empathy for each other's problems, feelings, and beliefs if we want to grow as society.

## A municipality that listens to its inhabitants

The municipality of Middelburg has free, autonomous, and vocal citizens. GroenLinks wants them to have more input in the place they live, work, and relax. We want the municipality to listen to them. We will find new forms of discussion and solve problems of the city together. Everyone will be heard, from vocal citizens who easily have a say to those who aren't as quick to have input.

- Inhabitants of the municipality of Middelburg are able to contribute to important decisions early on and can influence these.
- The municipality develops new ideas together with citizens. The concept of neighbourhood discussions no longer suffices and we need to look for new ways of participation together with inhabitants. These ways can differ per neighbourhood.
- Inhabitants of Middelburg get the chance to add points to the agenda of the municipality council by means of the 'citizen initiative'.
- Citizens will have the right to suggest alternative approaches for public aims in their area ('right to challenge'). Sometimes, for instance, inhabitants can take better care of smaller municipality parks if they do so together. They'll get the right to suggest as such.
- The municipality supports her citizens in their own initiatives and will do so actively. That way we prevent a split between active and reactive neighbourhoods.
- We encourage youth to feel more involved in our city.
- The municipality will often sit together with important organisations, neighbourhood teams, and other stakeholders in the municipality of Middelburg to find out issues at hand.
- Civil servants will more often go out in public themselves to seek out problems and discuss solutions with inhabitants.
- Everyone has access to municipal information. This information will become question-oriented and easily accessible.
- The municipality will provide services digitally as much as possible. Of course, we will continue to help people in need of personal contact or people who cannot access digital services.
- New inhabitants will receive a welcome package with attention for sustainable living.

## Working together on safety

An unsafe and intolerant atmosphere leaves less room for the diversity of a society. The police must act confidently against public nuisance and criminality to safeguard our streets. It's unacceptable for our inhabitants to feel unsafe in their own surroundings or for them to be bullied away or abused. The municipality, together with the police, should work on safe neighbourhoods and intervene when things go wrong.

- GroenLinks finds it unacceptable that people are bullied out of their neighbourhoods. The perpetrator should move and the victim should stay, not the other way around.
- Every neighbourhood will have a safety plan. Together with inhabitants and the police, we will establish dangerous points and find solutions to these.
- Neighbourhood watch makes inhabitants the eyes and ears of the neighbourhood. This is successful in several municipalities and contributes to the safety, cohesion, and social control of a neighbourhood.
- All residences will have to adhere to the police certification 'Safe Living' in the light of preventing break-ins. It's standard for new residences to adhere to this certification and for existing residences, we will encourage this with targeted actions.
- The municipality will make agreements with bar and restaurant owners about going out safely, in which they will take into account the stakes of the local residents. Bars and the neighbourhood should not oppose each other. The owners should be able to run their business and the residents should be able to feel safe. That's the balance we seek.
- GroenLinks wants to improve on direct contact between the municipality and its inhabitants and among citizens themselves. We want more district police that knows their area and its inhabitants.
- There should be a local mediator available in case of small problems and conflicts among members of the same neighbourhood. GroenLinks wants special attention for the youth: if they are involved in a conflict, they will be involved in a solution.
- Fire safety saves lives. We encourage the use of fire detectors. All bars, restaurants, and other places where groups of people gather should regularly be checked for fire safety.
- CCTV surveillance, Mosquito alarm, preventive searching, area bans, and bans on gathering should only be applied as last measure resort, under strict terms.
- The municipality will stay on top of response times of emergency services. Seconds can make the difference between life and death. That's why we should take into account the response times of emergency services when designing our infrastructure.
- We will do everything in our power to fight and prevent domestic abuse, against women, men, children, and senior citizens. We ensure good collaboration between emergency services to make signalling, combatting, and helping with domestic abuse become as effective as possible.
- The municipality will create a plan to fight alcohol abuse among youth. Prevention abuse as well as enforcing the law is important. Alcohol is not just a problem among youth; the municipality sets a right example by no longer serving alcohol after council meetings.
- Dumping trash will be prohibited and penalised; we do not take littering lightly. Giving perpetrators (financial) penalties works well and has a preventative effect.

### A welcoming municipality

An open society means a welcoming one. The municipality of Middelburg is a safe haven to people feeling from war or oppression. Refugees are part of our municipality. This demands work from them as well as the local community. GroenLinks wants to involve citizens in helping refugees settle. We are strictly against racism and discrimination of refugees, women, minority groups, or people with disabilities. We should all be able to feel at home in an open and welcoming society.

- Middelburg is a welcoming municipality for everyone following article 1 of our constitution: 'All those who are in the Netherlands are treated alike in likewise situations. Discrimination on the grounds of religion, believe, political affiliation, race, sex, or any other ground is not permitted.'
- The major is held responsible for policy on diversity, emancipation, and discrimination.

- Employees from the municipality are trained to locate signs of discrimination and prevent them at work.
- The municipality works together with the regional Bureau of Anti-Discrimination in tackling discrimination.
- Employees of the municipality must reflect the local community.
- The municipality supports the emancipation of women and the LGBTQ+ community within cultural and religious groups. The municipality informs them where they can find safe havens within the municipality. Refugees are specifically targeted and should know where to go.
- We prefer to provide refugees refuge in small-scale facilities. The municipality contributes to inform citizens about providing refugees shelter and will continue to discuss with them.
- Refugees are to start language courses immediately after arriving in the municipality and, if possible, start (voluntary) work to speed up the process of integration.
- The municipality will help refugees who have received permission to stay in the Netherlands with finding a residence.
- The municipality provides temporary shelter to asylum seekers who have been refused asylum.

### An attractive cultural city

We are proud of our local cultural heritage and take good care of it. A vibrant cultural environment is part of an open city. Art makes us question what we thought we know. Art envisions worlds that do not exist. Art enriches our lives. That's why GroenLinks values access to culture for all children, with no heed to the income of their parents. A complete deprivation of culture should never be part of the priorities that should be put in our municipality, even when taking into account the high amount of debts.

- GroenLinks wants to tap into the potential of local and regional artists and creative inhabitants to make Middelburg even more vibrant and lively in a diverse, high quality manner that's accessible for everyone.
- The municipality promotes the local and regional offer of culture and shapes this in a way that more people can enjoy it.
- The municipality guarantees an attractive offer of regional culture by working together with other regional municipalities. We will safeguard culture in Middelburg and prioritise investing in programming rather than buildings.
- Cultural experiments deserve support, especially if they provide a new or broader audience or promote collaboration between cultural institutions. We will have budget for interesting new projects next to the standard support for the Schouwburg, Concertzaal, and Vleeshal. We can encourage unique projects for a large audience with one-time subsidies.
- Vacant buildings will be made accessible as art or rehearsal space. Artists can exhibit work in empty display windows. This will make the city centre more vibrant and attractive for citizens and tourists alike. A good working environment for artists contributes to the vitality of the municipality. We want artists to work freely and innovatively and to be able to exhibit this to an audience. Cultural breeding grounds such as workshops and rehearsal spaces are essential to this process, which demands a cultural accommodation policy.
- We don't want less but more art in the public area in Middelburg. Cultural projects can prevent this in places where construction is halted.
- We choose for more art in the public space and in public buildings together with inhabitants. The biannual event Façade is an important contribution to the cultural climate of the city.



The municipality has the means to purchase objects from Façade on the basis of inhabitant's preferences.

- The municipality encourages schools to make youth enthusiastic about art and culture.
- We foster active artistic practise by cooperating with artistic education.
- Culture is for everyone, including children from families with low income. Our municipality participates in the 'Jeugdcultuurfonds' (Youth Culture Fund).
- We enable amateur associations to provide higher quality. Good quality amateur art ensures that artists become interested in professionalising art and culture.
- The public library will keep developing itself as gathering place. It's essential to pay more attention to specific groups to make knowledge accessible for everyone. The library contributes to citizen's culture participation by hosting and organising activities in the field of promoting reading, information, and cultural education.
- The municipality of Middelburg will put effort into making the Internet accessible to every citizen. Fast Internet is increasingly becoming a basic need in our society.
- The municipality safeguards valuable buildings, interiors, and landscapes.

### Safety whilst maintaining freedom

The municipal websites are well protected against viruses and cyber-attacks to safeguard the privacy of our citizens. Personal records will remain safe and private within digital services between the municipality and our citizens as well.

GroenLinks is in favour of legalising soft drugs. Middelburg contributes to the movement for legalisation and is a frontrunner in its policies with (de)regulation. GroenLinks wants to prevent street trading of soft drugs and sees a coffee shop as a potential part of a solution. GroenLinks wants to explore the possibility of legal cannabis cultivation supervised by the government.

### Honest and trustworthy management

The municipal government informs its inhabitants on its progress and the costs thereof. The municipality will focus more on inhabitants when justifying itself. They have the right to know whether their money is spent well. The municipal court of auditors plays an active part and checks the efficiency and effectiveness of municipal investments.

- There will be a public subsidy register in which everyone can review who receives subsidy and for what. We want to make the spending of municipal money more transparent.
- Faith in democracy is essential for the municipality. The Council, the Board, and the management will evaluate its own integrity at least once a council term. The interests of the public are most important. Transparency and integrity go hand in hand. Every politician should be honest and we should keep each other in check.
- The municipality of Middelburg will make its collected data publically available in an anonymous manner. Citizens and businesses will have the chance to develop innovative applications with this data. Since people put more online, the municipality has more access to open data.

### The municipal organisation

The municipality of Middelburg has a good working relationship with other municipalities in Zeeland. There will be more agreement to properly implement shared regulations and impact shared actions and finances. We should shape the municipality in such a way that it's efficient and effective. The

municipality delivers quality, preferably with fulltime civil servants. It will avoid expensive external advisers as much as possible. We are against fluctuating contracts. We will not only put conditions on the costs but also the quality of human resources if the municipality extends its tasks.

The municipality ensures engaged civil servants to benefit inhabitants. There will be a yearly survey into the levels of satisfaction among the employees of the municipality. The feedback resulting from this will be converted into actions. As a result, services towards inhabitants will improve.

The municipality council will receive enough support to be able to perform its duty, when it comes to creating policies as well as checking upon the implementation thereof. The workload of the council has increased with the new functions that the national government has delegated to the municipality. It's important to have enough budget and support from the municipal management to perform well.

The municipality of Middelburg chooses to use open source software and works on a strategy to decrease the use of closed-off software within its own organisation. Middelburg works together with other municipalities to improve its knowledge of IT. Municipalities work together in the field of IT and professionalising via existing governmental platforms.

Middelburg will keep putting effort into obtaining (European) subsidies that fit its current programmes.

The financial position of the municipality remains worrisome. In the upcoming years, it's expected that there will be more room for spending due to an increase of the Municipal Fund. Unfortunately, Middelburg is dealing with a past in which too much land was bought. That's why GroenLinks has made it a priority to make its property healthy. Financial increases will mainly be used to strengthen the position of property.