

D66

D66 Zaanstad

Election Programme
Municipal Council Elections 2026

A healthy, green and vibrant Zaanstad – it is possible!

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Foreword by the Lead Candidate

Zaanstad is a municipality full of energy, creativity and commitment. A place where people work hard, look out for each other and are proud of their city and villages. At the same time, we know that the choices we make now are decisive for how Zaanstad will look tomorrow. For our children, for our neighbourhoods and for everyone who wants to live, work and be themselves here.

With this election programme, D66 Zaanstad shows that it is possible: a healthy, green and vibrant Zaanstad. A municipality where you can live affordably, where there is space for nature and development, where education and care are close by, and where freedom and equality are not empty words but daily practice. We choose progress that is fair and sustainability that brings people along.

The challenges are great. The housing shortage, the changing climate, pressure on care and education, and an increasingly scarce space demand clear choices and vision. D66 dares to make those choices. Not by promising that everything can happen at once, but by investing in what truly makes a difference: prevention instead of repair, opportunities for children, a strong social foundation and a living environment that is healthy and future-proof.

This programme is written from trust in the strength of our residents. In residents who want to improve their neighbourhood, entrepreneurs who want to innovate, young people who want to think along and older people who want to share their experience. Democracy is not a formality for us, but something you shape together. That is why we invite everyone to participate, to have their say and to build Zaanstad together.

I warmly invite you to read this programme. Not merely as a collection of plans, but as an invitation to together choose for a municipality that dares to look ahead and leaves no one behind. D66 is looking forward to it. Zaanstad can do it. Together we will make it happen.

Merel Kingma

Lead Candidate GR 2026–2030

Introduction

D66 stands for a municipality where everyone can participate. The municipal elections are not about politics far away, but about the environment in which we live daily. About the street where you live, your children's school, the park where you walk, and the care that must be close by when you need it.

Because we all want roughly the same things: a home in a safe neighbourhood, work that pays, the freedom to love whom you choose, and confidence that the future – including your children's – is something to look forward to. Whoever we are, however we look, whomever we love, or whatever we believe: everyone must be able to be themselves in Zaanstad and pursue their dreams.

In every choice, D66 opts for a path of freedom, progress and connection. Equality is a prerequisite for freedom. That is why D66 works for equality of opportunity.

We know that not everything can happen at once. Municipal resources are limited, space is scarce. That is why we make deliberate choices. We prefer to invest well in what really makes a difference rather than a little in everything. D66 chooses policies that increase broad prosperity – not just income, but also health, safety, social cohesion, education, sustainability, sport and culture. We invest in a healthy environment. We choose resilience and prevention.

D66 is looking forward to a new council period. We know it is possible. Together we will make Zaanstad a vibrant, healthy and sustainable society in which everyone can be free.

Chapter 1 – Living well in attractive neighbourhoods

An affordable home is the foundation of a good life, for freedom, development and seizing life's opportunities. Yet for many residents of Zaanstad, an affordable home is out of reach. D66 wants the municipality to take charge of the housing market and ensure neighbourhoods that are sustainable, affordable and inclusive.

More homes within the existing city boundaries

Zaanstad is growing. Much has been built in recent years and we will continue to do so. There are sufficient inner-city opportunities for new construction. It is important to find creative solutions, such as 'topping up' existing buildings, transformation and kangaroo homes. In Zaanstad, D66 does not want to build in green areas, because green space is urgently needed for health, climate adaptation and recreation. Our (new) residents must be able to count on good facilities in areas such as sport and culture, decent infrastructure, education and nearby care, and sufficient appropriate employment.

- We accelerate inner-city new construction – not in green areas.
- Business parks are needed for the business community. D66 is cautious about transforming business parks into housing locations.
- To enable mobility in the housing market, we will build more mid-market rental and mid-priced owner-occupied homes.
- In every neighbourhood, a minimum of 30% social housing is the norm.
- To better represent the voice of housing seekers, the municipality will establish a housing seekers' council that is obligatorily involved in area plans.
- We explore possibilities to build more on the water.
- We support home splitting where possible and the construction of kangaroo homes, for example in back gardens. This must not lead to exploitation of, for example, migrant workers or neighbourhood nuisance – the latter will be strictly enforced.
- Vacant office buildings and shops outside the central shopping area of villages or cities will be rapidly converted into homes.
- We explore possibilities for adding extra floors to existing flat buildings, business premises and shops – always in line with liveability.
- In social welfare, the municipality permits renting out a room without reduction of the benefit.
- New residents of Zaanstad will receive a welcome package so they quickly feel at home in our municipality.

Sustainable new construction

We are not only building more, but also differently. New homes are built sustainably with natural or circular materials. The Zaanstreek grew great with timber construction. We would like to see that tradition return. We therefore build as much as possible with wood. We also focus on more biobased materials and reuse of existing materials. This saves CO₂ and we increasingly build more cheaply.

- New construction is climate-adaptive and nature-inclusive: prepared for heat, drought and waterlogging.
- Modular (prefab) construction is, in our view, a good option.
- The municipality stimulates biobased and circular construction. Timber construction also has advantages given our weak subsoil.
- D66 wants the municipality to give priority in procurement to (local) circular and innovative construction companies.
- New construction plans are assessed on housing quality and proximity to facilities – such as care, schools, shops, public transport, sport and culture, and neighbourhood accessibility.
- We develop car-reduced areas with great attention to cycling and public transport.
- D66 supports differentiated parking policy. Each new construction project is assessed individually. D66 does not support new parking spaces in public spaces at ground level.

Housing for all life stages

We build for families, but even more for young people, singles and the elderly. When they move to suitable housing, we create space in the housing market. We are therefore creative in our offering. We want senior homes that are attractive for our 55+ residents with owner-occupied homes to exchange their large family home and garden. There are increasingly more single-person households; we must take this into account. Direction is needed for mobility. We must programme our housing construction well as a municipality. Therefore, the municipality organises good cooperation between the municipality, banks, homeowners, housing corporations and care organisations. We also learn from other municipalities how to promote mobility.

- We want a building quota for young people's, starter and senior homes.
- In new construction, D66 supports combining homes for starters and seniors.
- The current 55+ scheme encourages senior tenants to move to a smaller, future-proof home. This scheme is a success. We will look at whether it can be further expanded.
- D66 stimulates generational homes and other communal living forms for young and old. We also want to support private housing cooperatives.

Sustainable and healthy living

An attractive neighbourhood is a sustainable, healthy and green neighbourhood. In the neighbourhood you live, meet, play, sport and recreate. D66 wants neighbourhoods where people know and help each other. D66 wants to renew and green existing neighbourhoods. Our climate is changing. Green will prove crucial for a liveable climate in the city. Green in the environment demonstrably contributes to health and is important to safeguard our biodiversity. We make use of the energy present among residents by stimulating bottom-up initiatives.

- Where renovation is not possible or desirable, we aim for at minimum circular demolition.
- Existing neighbourhoods are greened according to the 3-30-300 rule: everyone has three large trees in view from their home; 30% of the neighbourhood shows greenery; every resident has access to a park or nature within 300 metres.
- Homeowners are supported with energy savings, solar panels and water saving (such as grey water systems).
- The municipality sets mandatory water-saving installations and green roofs as the norm for new construction. We focus on rainwater capture under new construction projects.
- D66 wants to support neighbourhood and street initiatives to green or climate-adaptively design a street or neighbourhood.
- Our sustainability ambitions must go hand in hand with protecting vulnerable animal species such as bats. To prevent delays in large-scale home sustainability projects, D66 wants to allow comprehensive ecological surveys – as in Utrecht.
- Every neighbourhood is designed for meeting each other: there are sufficient play areas for young and older children and sufficient green space.
- Participation under the Environment and Planning Act is strengthened – residents have the right to be involved in plans.
- To maintain ties with the neighbourhood, current residents will get priority in part of the new construction.

Housing for refugees, asylum seekers and status holders

D66 wants vulnerable newcomers to be helped. At the same time, we recognise that immigration creates tensions, for example on the housing market. We also unfortunately see too often that newcomers end up in poverty. The municipalities in Zaanstreek-Waterland have jointly made agreements on various housing tasks for asylum seekers and refugees. Zaanstad takes its share and that is good.

- Zaanstad takes a fair share of asylum seekers and status holders, in line with the dispersal act.
- We want status holders to be accelerated into employment, so they can provide their own income sooner and integrate more quickly into our society. The shortages in, for example, the care sector make rapid entry of extra hands into the labour market necessary for everyone.
- Regional cooperation in Zaanstreek-Waterland is continued.

D66 builds mixed and pleasant neighbourhoods: liveable, healthy and nature-inclusive.

Chapter 2 – Staying and travelling

Zaanstad is safe and well accessible, without dependence on the car. Most journeys are less than 7.5 kilometres – an ideal cycling or walking distance. Moreover, there are increasingly more fast cyclists on the road. That is good, because this means greater distances are covered by bike instead of by car or moped. That must however be safe. D66 chooses to invest in cycle paths and public transport and much less in new roads for cars. Peak traffic causes problems in several places in our municipality. We believe measures must be taken to improve the situation. Public transport should become a better alternative. Many residents of Zaanstad go out in Amsterdam. D66 supports a night train. We also think that the water can be better used for the transport of both goods and people. Our roads, streets, squares and parks are not only for transport, but also for playing, meeting and sport. Public space is for everyone. We want less space for cars in residential areas. The Figarotoren, the new construction around the former Bannehof, or the Oostzijderveld are good examples of this. This creates more space for green, movement and meeting.

- Cycling and public transport get priority. D66 invests in express cycling routes, bike storage at bus stops and shared transport.
- Instead of fines, D66 wants the municipality to offer help with small bicycle repairs before winter, to increase road safety – so-called Bike MOTs, possibly in cooperation with Werkom.
- D66 wants the cycling infrastructure in Zaanstad to be well equipped for fast cyclists.
- D66 wants to invest more in accessible public spaces and accessible public transport for residents with a physical disability.
- Parking must much more often be underground or outside the neighbourhood. Larger vans will be banned from residential areas.
- Around train and bus stations, public transport hubs will be set up where public, targeted and shared transport come together.
- There will be no A8-A9. By stopping waiting for this solution, we will actively work on improving liveability along the N203.
- D66 wants to focus on more frequent train services between Amsterdam and Alkmaar to make the train a more attractive alternative.
- The western side of Zaandam is growing, but accessibility lags behind. D66 wants to further investigate how the accessibility of Westerwatering and Westerkoog can be increased.
- As Zaanstad we are an active participant in the Amsterdam Transport Region. Together with the transport region, we want to ensure more shared (car) transport is available in Zaanstad. Our starting point: everyone within 200 metres of their home has access to a (electric?) shared car.
- We want multiple stops in Zaanstad on the night train connection between Amsterdam and Alkmaar.
- The high-quality public transport connection (HOV line) between Amsterdam and Zaanstad planned by the Amsterdam Transport Region can in the future be converted into an extension of the North-South line towards Zaanstad.
- Fortunately, more and more residents are going electric. D66 wants more space for (fast) charging of electric cars and bikes in public spaces.
- There will be a (fast) connection over water to Amsterdam, including a stop at the Hembrugterrein.
- We will have the Zaanvery ferry running again and ensure a connection to Amsterdam.
- The proximity of Schiphol has both positive and negative impacts on the regional economy and thus on Zaanstad. Residents of Zaanstad suffer significant noise nuisance from a number of flight paths. D66 opposes further growth in the number of flights and believes night flights must be abolished. In the long run, aviation cannot avoid becoming more sustainable.

The quality of the living environment comes first. The transport of the future is public and sustainable.

Chapter 3 – Making good use of scarce space

Zaanstad faces an enormous spatial challenge. Space is scarce and the interests are great: housing, employment, nature, mobility and energy compete with each other. D66 wants a city that grows with respect for people, climate and nature. That requires sharp choices and good direction.

Space with vision

D66 believes the municipality must give a clear and lasting direction to spatial development. We must invest more in biodiversity, nature, soil quality and clean water.

- The municipality works with one integrated area plan per zone, in which housing, employment/business, sport and culture, energy, green space and mobility are planned together. We look at least 20 years ahead.
- We see active land policy as an instrument to organise the scarce land in Zaanstad as efficiently as possible, resulting in more space for living, working and nature.
- Inner-city densification is the starting point.
- Vacancy is used for housing or social functions.
- Dual use of space is the starting point: roofs for solar panels, sports fields as water storage, business parks with green zones.
- Tourism and culture are economically anchored, taking account of residents.

We cherish our nature

Green gives the residents of Zaanstad the freedom to breathe, relax and move. Zaanstad is surrounded by beautiful peat meadow areas. We must cherish, protect and strengthen these. It is also important that sufficient green space is present in the city, village centre and neighbourhood. Green Zaanstad contributes to climate adaptation, biodiversity and the wellbeing of our residents. D66 wants everyone to be able to be in green space within 300 metres. In all policy: green and water are not a residual category, but guiding principles.

- The existing nature in Zaanstad is maintained and strengthened.
- Economic development in nature is only possible if it fits within natural values. Nature is leading. For peat meadow areas, this means 'level follows function', not the other way around.
- The municipality creates an ecology vision. There must be connecting green structures between neighbourhoods and nature areas.
- D66 wants the municipality to work together with the Water Board to the maximum extent for clean water for people and animals – for example so that our water, including the Zaan, is safe to swim in.
- The municipality prevents further paving and stimulates green (facade) gardens and rain barrels.
- Public space may become more informal if that is better for nature – nature-inclusive maintenance remains the norm.

Recreation in the green

Green is good for biodiversity but is also there to enjoy and recreate in. Nature and recreation are still too often seen as opposites. D66 supports better use of nature and recreation areas for recreation, provided the natural values are not affected. It is also important that we invest in recreation options in the neighbourhoods, for example through nature playgrounds and sporting facilities.

- D66 wants to further open up the Westzanerpolder and the Westzijderveld for recreation, comparable to the walking paths behind the Zaanse Schans and Wormerveer station.
- Festivals in the larger recreation areas (Twiske, Jagersveld) must be possible, provided they do not conflict with natural values. The Jagersveld can be better utilised.
- We want to investigate whether parts of the Zaan and (side)canals can be designated as swimming areas, preferably with a city beach, if necessary via a temporary exemption.
- Existing route networks for walkers and small vessels such as rowboats must be optimised.

- There must be one recreation board for Laag Holland in which Twiske-Waterland and RAUM are merged. The Jagersveld can also become part of this recreation board.

Deciding together about space

Dividing space means making choices. D66 wants residents, entrepreneurs and social organisations to actively think along, preferably via digital channels.

- The municipality makes participation mandatory prior to area development.
- Residents get timely insight into plans, effects and alternatives.
- Via digital platforms and neighbourhood panels, residents can make their own proposals for green space, traffic or facilities. Communication about what happens with the input is crucial.
- We want a 'lawyer for nature' to participate as a participant under the Environment and Planning Act in construction projects.

Zaanstad grows not at the expense of its living environment, but with its living environment.

Chapter 4 – Climate and Sustainability

For D66, climate is a top priority. Zaanstad has expressed the great ambition to be climate neutral by 2040. To achieve this ambition, acceleration is necessary. It is necessary to focus on all forms of sustainable energy. We cannot afford to exclude certain forms of sustainable energy.

Generating sustainable energy

Properly insulating homes saves money, is good for the environment and increases housing happiness. Therefore it must become financially more attractive and simpler. We invest in energy savings, with special attention for tenants and residents of social housing.

- D66 supports more wind turbines along the North Sea Canal. Careful participation of neighbouring residents and entrepreneurs is necessary for this.
- Neighbouring residents must be able to be (co-)owners of new wind turbines or at minimum share in the revenues.
- D66 wants 10,000 extra homes in our municipality to be insulated to energy label A by 2030, giving priority to households in energy poverty. That is fair.
- D66 continues to support collective purchasing actions for insulation measures and solar panels, plus home batteries with involvement of local installers.
- For residents who do not have a suitable roof, we want the municipality to support cooperatives in which residents can invest in solar panels on the roof of a business or social institution – such as community centres, sports associations and schools.
- By 2050, all of Zaanstad must be off gas. The municipality must accelerate the unlocking of heat networks. A collective heat network is more economical than every individual having a heat pump.
- Given the large amount of water in Zaanstad, we see opportunities for aquathermy.
- We want to accelerate the sustainability of business parks. We also consider whether neighbouring residents can benefit from this, for example charging points at the edge of a business park used by residents in the evenings and nights.
- To create more capacity on the network, smart solutions for grid congestion on business parks will be explored.
- Biomass is not a sustainable form of energy. D66 wants an alternative to be found as quickly as possible for the biomass plant on Pascalstraat.
- For new construction (residential and industrial), green roof covering – for example sedum roofs – or solar panels are the norm.

Climate adaptation

Our climate is changing. Because interventions in public space often take several years, we must already think carefully as a municipality about how to keep our city and village centres liveable and healthy, how to limit the nuisance of drought or sudden heavy rainfall, and which green facilities to create. We must take into account that a changing climate requires different vegetation.

- Climate adaptation demands a greening of our living environment. We stimulate 'tile removal' (greening gardens) on one hand and parking on private land on the other – enabling the municipality to green a parking space.
- We plant more trees for a green and cool environment. The municipality thinks ahead by planting heat-resistant trees.
- For all spatial choices, the principle 'soil and water as guiding' applies: building where the subsoil allows it and where water management is in order.
- Water storage and water quality are included in all spatial decisions.
- Almost every newly built parking space must be a green parking space (open tile with grass) to promote water capture and reduce pressure on the sewer. In the long term, existing parking spaces must also be replaced with green parking spaces.

Infrastructure and energy supply

A sustainable city requires robust infrastructure. Grid congestion is currently a problem. The electricity network must be strengthened and until then creative solutions must be sought.

- D66 advocates for strengthening the electricity network.
- Until the electricity network is reinforced, creative solutions must be sought, for example by allowing entrepreneurs on business parks to cooperate on the 'virtual grid'. Not everyone uses electricity at the same time.
- It must become easier to charge your electric car at home. Digging a slot for the charging cable yourself is simply allowed.
- We want the number of charging points for electric cars in Zaanstad to double in the next four years. It should be investigated whether street lights can function as charging points.
- There must be more charging points for bicycles in public spaces. D66 wants to investigate whether car charging points can be combined with bicycle charging points.
- Investment is also made in charging points for electric bicycles at bicycle storage facilities at public transport stops and other facilities.
- The municipality invests in smart technology to make traffic and energy consumption more efficient.
- For new projects, heat supply is sustainable. There is public control over large collective heat networks.
- Large energy or construction projects must demonstrably contribute to CO₂ reduction and biodiversity.

Zaanstad develops climate-proof!

Chapter 5 – A fair, sustainable and healthy economy

A healthy economy and a healthy living environment belong together. Zaanstad has a rich industrial history, but the future lies in clean innovation, circular production and local entrepreneurship. D66 wants Zaanstad to become an example city where sustainability and economic growth reinforce each other.

A green Zaan economy

The economy of the future is circular, digital and social. For social challenges such as the energy transition, many (technical) jobs are needed. The tightness of the labour market is an urgent theme. Cooperation between business and education is crucial. With a practically trained vocational education and good MBO (intermediate vocational education), there are many opportunities for Zaanstad.

- D66 wants the municipality to create a green industrial vision.
- We want Zaanstad to focus specifically on circular business (recycling, repair, reuse and biobased production), green energy and food innovation.
- By 2050 we must be fully circular. By 2040: 90%. And by 2030 already 80%.
- Circularity must become part of the permit process for companies in the region. D66 wants the municipality to lead by example: by 2040, 100% of all municipal procurements are circular.
- The municipality reserves space on business parks for circular and clean manufacturing and food industry.
- Fossil subsidies or support for polluting companies are phased out. Municipal investments are always tested for sustainability.
- Companies that are becoming more sustainable get priority with permits and procurements.

Innovation and employment

Zaanstad has a thriving MBO and thus the knowledge and people to be a frontrunner in the green economy. We stimulate innovation and social entrepreneurship.

- D66 establishes a green innovation scheme for local entrepreneurs who develop sustainable products or services.
- Companies are helped with energy savings and electrification via customised agreements and municipal counters.
- Work-learning pathways are created in cooperation with MBO for jobs in technology, energy and circular production.
- The Tech Campus is further stimulated.
- Zaanstad stimulates social entrepreneurship, for example via social BVs (BVM), in which profit and impact are both central.

Zaanstad as part of a strong region

Zaanstad benefits from its location in the Amsterdam Metropolitan Region and participates fully in the MRA.

- D66 wants Zaanstad to seek more cooperation with neighbouring municipalities in the areas of employment, mobility, housing and energy.
- The municipality positions itself as the green innovation city of the region, with space for knowledge-intensive companies.
- D66 stimulates regional investment funds for circular economy and sustainable (shared) mobility.

Better anchoring tourism

Increasingly more (foreign) visitors are discovering Zaanstad. We want to focus on longer stays in Zaanstad. With ZAMU, Zaanstad gets a new crowd-puller. Tourism is good for the economy, but can also cause nuisance in some places. D66 believes there must be a balance between tourism and liveability. D66 focuses on spreading tourism across various locations in Zaanstad and on longer stays. There is so much beautiful to see and experience in Zaanstad.

- We want to focus on spreading tourism across Zaanstad, so that nuisance at busy locations is prevented and other places in Zaanstad can benefit from tourism.
- The municipality must ensure a good connection between the Hembrugterrein and the rest of Zaanstad (including the green areas) and between the Hembrugterrein and Amsterdam.
- We want the (fast) boat connection with Amsterdam Central back, or a water taxi as in Rotterdam.
- More hotels may come to our (new) tourist areas. We focus on high-quality tourism based on longer stays as tourists are interested in our history, culture and nature.

Balance between business activity and liveability

D66 stands for healthy growth. Companies that want to flourish in Zaanstad must take the living environment into account. Although D66 cherishes the industrial past and wants to remain a live-work city, D66 puts the health of its residents first. This is about wellbeing and green space in the neighbourhood, but it also means we must look critically at the proximity of industry. Not all forms of business activity are suitable for a densely populated area. Most homes in Zaanstad are 'environmentally burdened'. We want to reduce that number.

- Where industry and housing are already mixed, we want to use the room the law gives us to set strict rules against emission of hazardous substances in our air, soil and water. Also strict rules to limit odour and noise nuisance.
- Zaanstad remains a city where in the various centres housing and work are mixed in destination. Only that is a different kind of work than polluting industry.
- D66 focuses on relocating heavy industry from residential centres to the edges of the municipality. The freed-up locations are transformed into residential/work zones with a lower environmental and noise contour.
- Where industry and housing are not yet mixed, we are very cautious about letting housing development advance towards business activity. After all, business parks are needed for our economy and employment. Housing on business parks is only possible for outdated parks with little polluting activity and much vacancy. In our view, housing is possible in the northern part of the Achtersluispolder.
- Area plans give entrepreneurs clarity about the future of business parks – which activities are particularly welcome in the longer term, or no longer desired.
- In D66's view, the focus for Zaan business activity is on food and circularity. We welcome innovative companies.
- Municipality, companies and residents work together in consultation structures around industrial areas.

A strong economy is clean, social and future-oriented.

Chapter 6 – Everyone free to learn and develop

Good education is the key to freedom and equality of opportunity. In Zaanstad, everyone must be able to develop – from toddler to professional, regardless of background or income. D66 wants to invest in people: in schools, teachers and lifelong learning.

Education as the basis for equal opportunities

D66 believes it is the task of the government to strive for everyone to have equal opportunities to develop into what they can and want to be. And equal opportunities begin in the classroom.

- D66 wants all children in Zaanstad to have access to good education, culture and sport.
- To be able to learn well, a child needs a good breakfast. We want to introduce free school breakfast at all schools.
- Routes to school, sport and culture must be safe. Children must – via school – gain even more insight into safe road behaviour.
- All schools should, with municipal support, be healthy schools. In canteens, healthy food should be offered more frequently and more cheaply than unhealthy food.
- We invest in broad schools and integrated children's centres (IKCs) where childcare, education and welfare come together.
- All children have the right to a rich school day. We want to investigate how to extend and qualitatively improve the range of after-school activities – an income-dependent contribution is an option for D66.
- Municipal resources for educational disadvantages are structurally restored.
- Reading and language skills get priority – every child automatically becomes a library member.
- Extra attention for homework guidance and tutoring programmes at the schools themselves.

Strong schools, strong teachers

Good education requires good buildings and motivated teachers. Zaanstad arranges the housing of schools and has an important role to fulfil. School buildings must be an inspiring place for all pupils and must also be sustainable and accessible for pupils with a disability. The teacher shortage is a current theme. D66 wants to attract teachers and enthuse people to become career changers or part-time teachers.

- D66 wants all school buildings in Zaanstad to be sustainable, healthy and well-ventilated – including secondary schools.
- Schools may determine the layout of their own school grounds. D66 wants the municipality to help with greening school grounds. The municipality must work together with schools to look at expanding school grounds and/or play options during breaks in nearby parks. School grounds must be accessible to neighbourhood children after school hours and must not be unusable.
- There is a safe living climate in and around our school buildings.
- We promote smaller classes where possible. In smaller classes there is naturally more space for tailored education. D66 wants a caretaker at every school.
- The municipality stimulates cooperation between schools, sports clubs and cultural organisations.
- The municipality gives teachers priority for social housing and mid-rental homes.
- D66 wants to focus on enthusing young people and career changers for a job as a teacher.

Intermediate Vocational Education (MBO)

MBO students are the skilled workers of the future. They are needed for, among other things, the energy transition, housing construction and care. Zaanstad is a real MBO city, of which we are proud. D66 wants MBO students to receive more recognition and appreciation.

- D66 wants cooperation between MBO and the business community to be further stimulated, particularly in the areas of food, timber construction and energy transition.

- MBO students get priority, where possible, for internships in municipal projects and receive a reasonable/market-rate internship allowance from the municipality. D66 also wants the municipality to stimulate internships for MBO in the business community.
- D66 wants housing to be created for MBO students in Zaanstad.

Lifelong learning

The world is changing rapidly – knowledge becomes outdated, jobs change. D66 wants learning to remain possible, even after school.

- Meedoen Zaanstad, the summer experiences and summer school are examples of good initiatives that we want to maintain, strengthen and expand.
- The Zaanse Pas deserves a fresh start.
- The municipality establishes a Zaanse Learning Circle: a collaboration of education, businesses and libraries for training and retraining.
- Adults with a distance to the labour market get access to free basic courses in language, numeracy and digital skills.
- We want Werkom to be better connected to the business community so there is less unfair competition, but above all so that employees who can do so learn how to function in the setting of a regular company.

Inclusion and diversity in education

- D66 wants all children to count, even if learning is more difficult.
- There will be more space for flexible education for home-sitters or pupils with a support need.
- The municipality supports parent-child centres and accessible parenting programmes to help parents with guidance.
- Zaanstad offers refugees and newcomers access to language education and integration via schools.

Education is the engine of freedom. D66 invests in learning as a lifelong opportunity.

Chapter 7 – Care as preventive as possible

A healthy city begins with healthy people. And health always starts outside the surgery – in a nice neighbourhood, with enough money to get by and neighbours who look out for each other. D66 wants Zaanstad to focus on prevention, close to residents.

Care nearby and coherent

Care must be accessible at low threshold. Health should not be something we only think about when things go wrong. D66 applies the principle of 'Health in all policies'. Health is part of policy. It belongs in everything the municipality does: spatial planning, education, sport and social services. The immediate environment often forms the basis for our health. A safe, nice, green and social neighbourhood creates a much better starting position.

- D66 invests in green, clean and safe neighbourhoods that encourage movement and meeting.
- In every neighbourhood, the municipality facilitates a neighbourhood health centre with GP, physiotherapist, pharmacy and midwife.
- Communal living forms are strengthened as places where people help each other. For the elderly, such small-scale living forms are near facilities.
- Neighbourhood support workers coordinate local networks of care providers, informal carers and volunteers. They help people find their way to existing facilities – think of a lifestyle coach, dietitian, mental health support, a physiotherapist, debt assistance, contact with the municipality or with the housing corporation.
- Cooperation with schools, sports associations and care organisations forms the basis.
- Healthy nutrition, physical activity and mental resilience are actively promoted.
- For every policy proposal, it is assessed how it contributes to the health of residents.

Youth care and families

The previous council period saw the council implement many good interventions in youth care. Consistency leads to better results than changing course every four years. To properly organise youth care, the council must cooperate well. This is not a domain in which parties should want to score political points, but in which we must together solve the actual problems. We must get away from treating symptoms in youth care. We must focus on the actual problems in families, as early as possible. Often a different issue is hidden behind a referral to youth care.

- D66 opts for stable policy.
- Municipality, schools, youth teams and neighbourhood teams work together on early signalling and nearby support. Children must not end up on a waiting list when actually the parents need help.
- Waiting lists must be shorter. That is more humane and cost-efficient.
- Family coaches get more space to provide long-term guidance to families. We invest in confident parents, as they form the foundation for their children.
- We invest in parenting support, parent groups and collective programmes. Currently, too much emphasis is placed on the child. There must be more space to guide the parents. The municipality supports the Icelandic model for youth prevention – focused on sport, culture and involved parents.
- The focus is on normalisation: not every problem is a disorder. Children may well be 'different'. Every child has its own path. D66 wants less performance pressure. The norm is currently set too strictly. Children do not all have to be the same.
- Heavier care remains available where needed, but lighter help comes earlier. Where possible in the form of a general provision.
- We want outflow from extended youth care to take place as much as possible to supervised living rather than protected living.

Investing at the front end

Targeted investment in proven effective prevention measures saves care costs and increases wellbeing. Quick intervention prevents the problem from worsening. Often then a light intervention is enough.

- D66 wants neighbourhoods and playgrounds to be designed so that children can go through a healthy development. Children must be able to romp, fall and get up, let off steam. Children must be allowed to be 'different'. Playgrounds must also be inclusive – children with disabilities must also be able to sport.
- Resources shift from secondary to primary care.
- There will be more practice support workers, district nurses and youth coaches.
- The municipality monitors results via broad prosperity indicators.
- D66 wants a future-proof and sustainable WMO – we value strengthening the social base and want to further expand the programmes the municipality already has for this – such as fall prevention and wellbeing on prescription.
- We want welfare work and WMO to be better connected to each other. It happens that people experience medical complaints because they are, for example, lonely. Contact with neighbourhood residents is then a more sustainable solution than medical support.

Tackling poverty

Unfortunately, too large a part of Zaanstad's residents lives in poverty. Poverty causes stress and thus health problems. People are less able to focus on their future, become less enterprising. And children do not have the same opportunities when they grow up in poverty. It is important that the municipality does what it can, also to counter the stigma.

- We want to simplify applications for benefits and make multi-year applications possible.
- When someone is on social welfare, the municipality must automatically waive municipal taxes. The municipality must convince the Water Board to do the same.
- Low-threshold financial drop-in sessions can help people at an early stage with information that prevents debts and fines. These information sessions must also be offered outside working hours.
- D66 supports an approach with creative solutions for debt assistance, including experiments with – under conditions – taking over debts so that people are not pursued by their debts for the rest of their lives.
- We look at other municipalities to see which interventions work best to increase the wellbeing of people in poverty in the long term.
- The idea of the Zaanse Pas was good. D66 wants a thorough evaluation, fresh start and investigation into whether the target group can be broadened.
- The food bank should be a sort of shop where people can always go, not only at a fixed time.
- Under the Participation Act, enforcement becomes more a form of guidance, to keep in touch with the client and help them out of benefits.
- We do not accept exploitation of migrant workers.

Prevention is better – and more humane – than cure.

Chapter 8 – A vibrant Zaanstad

A city only truly lives when there is space for sport, culture and meeting. D66 does not see sport and culture as a luxury, but as a prerequisite for a healthy and connected society. Zaanstad is the 17th city of the Netherlands, but ranks 112th in terms of culture budget. We are not doing our residents justice with that. The relative proximity of Amsterdam is not a factor for children and our less mobile residents. Here in Zaanstad too, they must have sufficient opportunity to develop themselves.

Sport and movement for everyone

Movement is essential for health and wellbeing. D66 strives for every child to become a member of a sports club. If parents cannot pay for it themselves, there will be support from the municipality. Adults are also stimulated to move, also in public spaces. Children's (sports) clubs are not always easy to combine with the busy lives of parents. D66 wants smart collaborations to be sought, for example with schools, so parents can work and children can sport. The sports club is also a place where everyone is free to be themselves. D66 supports inclusive sports clubs.

- Play areas are designed more challenging and natural, with space to discover – play areas such as those at the ZNMC and recently created in Assendelft.
- Every child a club is D66's starting point. If parents cannot pay the membership fee, they are supported.
- Sports equipment in public spaces stimulates adults to exercise.
- The municipality extends participation schemes to families above the minimum.
- In our view: every child a club. Also in the age 12 to 18.
- Sports associations may organise more events and receive help with volunteer policy.
- During the day, schools and care institutions can use sports facilities. More options for dual use are explored.
- We want to discuss inclusivity with sports associations – creating occasions where children and adults with a (non-visible) disability can sport. Think for example of low-stimulation training for children on the autism spectrum.

Zaans Heritage and Zaanse Schans

Our heritage connects us to our region. D66 wants to maintain and protect heritage, but also develop and make it sustainable, so that everyone can enjoy it for a long time. Heritage is more than wooden houses. We want good policy to also preserve other types of construction. The Zaanse Schans is dear to every Zaankanter. It is our most important tourist attraction. We are proud of that! At the same time, this has a number of practical consequences. The accessibility of the Schans for ordinary Zaankanters is already limited by the crowds. The traffic situation is not always safe. D66 is in principle in favour of withdrawing the Schans from public access. That is our position. However, we find the opinion of the Zaankanters themselves more important.

- The municipality must consider the outcome of a referendum on the Schans as binding with a good turnout.
- There must be no physical fence around the Zaanse Schans. We investigate whether access for residents can go via the Zaanse Pas – after the Zaanse Pas has made a fresh start.
- The municipality develops a mechanism whereby income from tourism and culture flows back to the sector. That applies for example to 'ticketing around the Schans'.
- Heritage gets a new (social) purpose as much as possible.

Culture as a driver of connection

Culture connects people and strengthens the identity of the city. D66 wants a strong cultural infrastructure, with attention for both 'top culture' and amateur art. We also invest in continuous learning pathways.

- In the subsidisation of art and culture, we want to take more account of creating a continuous line, so that children (and adults) can progress from entry level to professional art practice, with corresponding professional teachers.
- Libraries remain central meeting places and are better financed.
- Zaanstad gets a full pop music venue. The Zaantheater is important for our city. It must have a good home – renovation or new construction.
- The Zaans museum will organise larger exhibitions.

- Zaanstad creates a vision for nightlife. Explicit attention is given to young people aged 16–21, as well as to the safety of women and LGBTQI+ people.
- Cultural institutions must remain accessible and affordable, also for low incomes. Cultural subsidies are therefore primarily intended to keep lesson and course locations accessible.
- The municipality must help to better bring the cultural offering to the attention of residents.
- A large part of Zaans cultural institutions runs on volunteer efforts. Volunteer pools and boards are ageing. D66 wants to investigate how to better support these organisations.
- D66 sees added value in a small, efficient cultural network organisation, focused purely on connecting and facilitating cultural parties, festivals and educational institutions. Property management and (re)distribution of subsidies are not part of this.
- Cultural subsidies are tendered in accordance with the Council of State ruling.

Space for creativity and identity

- D66 supports small venues, studios and incubator spaces in neighbourhoods and villages.
- The municipality facilitates temporary use of vacant premises for art, music and entrepreneurship.
- Heritage and Zaans identity are cherished: old buildings preserved where possible, renewed where necessary.

A vibrant Zaanstad moves, meets and inspires.

Chapter 9 – Everyone a voice

D66 believes in the power of democracy. In a city like Zaanstad, with its diversity of people, neighbourhoods and interests, it is very important that everyone feels heard. Politics must not be something that happens over people, but something that happens with people.

A safe Zaanstad

Zaanstad must be safe for everyone. Hate and violence against people because of their faith, background, sexual orientation or gender identity are not tolerated in Zaanstad. Prevention is the best protection. Young people must see opportunities rather than the temptation of fast criminal money. The municipality plays a mediating role where needed. The human scale is more important than 'silos' between legislation.

- We invest in neighbourhood-oriented approaches together with police and welfare organisations, in which safety, care, work, education and housing come together.
- People with incomprehensible or unsafe behaviour usually do not need police, but care. Close cooperation between care and safety will help with this – therefore sharing of data is permitted. The municipality plays a mediating role where needed.

Open and accessible politics

An open municipality is a reliable municipality. Freedom means being able to co-decide on what happens in your environment. D66 supports participation of residents in every decision made. D66 wants residents to be able to easily think along and co-decide on policy that affects them.

- Good participation in all phases of decision-making is anchored in a participation ordinance.
- Attention is paid to representativeness in participation – we also listen to the quiet voice.
- It is communicated clearly in advance what is and is not possible in the participation process. This way, residents know what they can expect.
- The municipality communicates in understandable language and is well reachable by telephone.
- Every policy proposal states how residents, businesses and social organisations are involved.
- We work with neighbourhood panels and citizen forums that advise on local issues such as traffic, green space or safety.
- Our seven centres must be able to retain their local character. This is also expressed through place name signs with the name of the centre first and the municipality Zaanstad below.
- The municipality develops a digital participation platform on which residents can submit ideas and support each other's proposals.
- D66 wants to experiment with citizen budgets: residents decide on part of the neighbourhood budget.
- Young people are actively involved via a youth council, so that their voice also comes through in policy.

Accessible government

The government is there for the resident, not the other way around. Municipal services must be simple and accessible, for everyone. Support is provided for residents who cannot manage sufficiently (digitally).

- Everyone has the right to understandable services. D66 wants the municipality to guarantee a right to clear language.
- There will be one recognisable counter for residents with questions about care, income or work.
- The municipality ensures that digital systems remain usable for people with a disability or low digital skills.
- Personal support remains available – not everyone can manage digitally.
- The municipality keeps residents' data under its own management. The municipality does not use platforms or apps that do not handle our data safely.
- The municipality develops a data, information and AI strategy, in line with that of the national government.
- There will be a portfolio 'data, information & AI'.

Diversity, transparency and trust

Zaanstad is diverse – that must be visible in governance. Moreover, everyone must be able to understand how and why the municipality acts. That means clear language and more frequent feedback.

- D66 strives for more diversity in advisory councils.
- Candidate lists and appointments reflect the city in terms of background, age and experience.
- The municipality supports initiatives that increase citizen participation in underrepresented groups.
- Decisions are clearly explained, including the considerations that preceded them. The municipal budget is explained in understandable language.
- Residents always receive feedback on their input or report.
- The municipal council monitors the implementation of participation policy via annual progress reports.
- Integrity and openness remain core values: D66 stands for reliable governance without conflicts of interest.
- Leading by example, D66 believes that as a governance body we must always be curious about the other. Connection, openness and integrity of governance are guiding principles.

Administrative merger

Our neighbouring municipalities Wormerland and Oostzaan can no longer remain independent. They are investigating the possibility of a merger with Purmerend or Zaanstad. In D66's view, the residents of both municipalities have an important voice in this. Should one of these municipalities or both choose a merger with Zaanstad, we are unreservedly open to this. An important condition – towards the national government – is that this does not further unbalance our municipal finances.

A strong democracy requires participation, deliberation and co-decision.

Chapter 10 – On what is (and is not) money spent

Municipal money is community money. D66 Zaanstad wants every euro to contribute to the broad prosperity of our residents – to health, sustainability, equality of opportunity and liveability. D66 opts for drawing up a balanced budget. Not everything can happen at once, so we must choose. We invest where it strengthens the future, and save where possible without damaging the foundations.

Where we want to spend more money

D66 opts for targeted investments in the foundations of a healthy, sustainable and fair city.

a. Prevention and health

- Structurally more resources for neighbourhood-oriented prevention programmes, neighbourhood support and health promotion.
- Extra focus on mental health, youth care at the front end and sports facilities.
- Expansion of neighbourhood health centres and support for GP practices.

b. Education and equality of opportunity

- Investments in a rich school day, with space for sport, culture, combating educational disadvantages, tutoring programmes and language houses.
- We continue to invest in the renewal and sustainability of school buildings.
- We ensure better connection of education, childcare, welfare and support (youth care).

c. Sustainability and energy transition

- Acceleration of home insulation, greening and local energy projects.
- Stimulation of biobased and circular construction.
- Extra resources for grid reinforcement, charging points and sustainable mobility.
- Support for local energy cooperatives and climate-adaptive measures (water storage, heat mitigation).

d. Culture, sport and social cohesion

- Strengthening libraries as places of meeting and learning.
- Investing in sports facilities and participation schemes, including maintenance and multifunctional use.
- Support for small venues, studios and incubator spaces in the city.

e. Good governance and services

- Investing in accessible and digital services, understandable communication and digital security.

Where we want to spend less money

Cutting spending is never a goal in itself, but sometimes necessary to create space for what is more important. D66 wants to responsibly save on expenditures that contribute little to sustainability or broad prosperity.

a. Symptom treatment in care

- Less expenditure on secondary and tertiary care by investing in prevention and early detection.
- Limiting unnecessary and expensive indications in youth care and WMO where lighter forms of assistance are possible.
- Revision of inefficient subsidies that show little social return.

b. Fewer investments in fossil fuels, pollution and paving

- No municipal money for fossil energy projects or companies that demonstrably are not becoming more sustainable.

- Less money for car traffic and parking facilities that obstruct greening.
- Less investment in maintenance of excessive paving in favour of nature-friendly maintenance. Cautious about laying new asphalt.

How we want to generate or free up more income

D66 does not primarily want to cut, but to invest smartly. That requires a future-oriented budget that links revenues to social return.

a. Active land and real estate policy

- Using a planning gain levy: value increases through new destinations partly flow back to the community.
- Applying the municipality's right of first purchase more often to maintain control over development locations.
- Temporary repurposing of vacant buildings for social initiatives or paid rental.
- We have companies contribute to the development and renovation of industrial areas.

b. Financial incentives for sustainability

- Quality budgets for energy and construction projects: the polluter pays, the environment benefits.
- Linking greening levies to polluting activities; proceeds go to climate adaptation and biodiversity.
- Promotion of energy cooperatives with local ownership, so that proceeds stay in the neighbourhood.

c. More efficient use of resources

- Applying a broad prosperity budget: policy is assessed on social return rather than just financial costs.
- Joint purchasing with regional municipalities for care and energy to exploit economies of scale.
- Digitalisation of municipal processes delivers structural savings in management and implementation.

d. Regional cooperation, subsidies and national resources

- Active participation in regional funds (MRA, province) for climate, innovation and education.
- More use of European and national subsidy schemes for circular projects and energy transition.
- We count on sufficient financing for municipal tasks from the national government and will work hard for this together with the national D66 parliamentary group.
- Raising the WOZ (property value tax) is our last resort.

Financial compass: choosing with values

Our choices are not only financial, but also moral. D66 believes every euro must contribute to freedom, sustainability and equal opportunities. We invest in people, not in problems. We build a city that uses its money to create a future, not to stand still. We choose as little increase in charges for our residents as possible. That is financial realism on a social-liberal basis.

More money for what makes people stronger. Less money for what only creates costs. More return through smart and sustainable policy.

Closing word

Zaanstad has everything it needs to become an example of a sustainable, healthy and fair city. A city where children can grow up safely, where people meet each other, where entrepreneurship flourishes without exhausting nature, and where everyone feels heard. It is possible!

D66 chooses a future in which progress and connection go hand in hand. With these choices, we want to give direction to a Zaanstad that is ready for the future – a city that we pass on with pride to the next generation!