

East Lothian Greens Council Manifesto

East Lothian Greens Council Elections Manifesto 2022

Globally and locally, we must secure a just and fair transition to a zero-carbon economy.

Although East Lothian Council has declared a climate emergency, its Climate Strategy has few tangible targets and little sense of urgency. All Greens elected in 2022 will ensure the council offers clear leadership for East Lothian's communities, businesses, and individuals in pursuit of net zero.

East Lothian is committed to being carbon neutral by 2045 – we would revise this to 2035 and immediately begin work to meet this ambitious target. Green councillors will prioritise the responsible installation of renewable energy across the county, and proactively work to secure jobs and training in East Lothian as part of this significant growth industry.

We will support decent pay in decent jobs, and listen to residents, especially our young people, about what they want the future to look like.

Green councillors will put climate, sustainability, social justice and community front and centre of all decision-making.

Mark James, Scottish Greens candidate for Dunbar & East Linton, said:

Everyone in East Lothian can think global, act local and vote Scottish Greens 1.

The full list of Scottish Greens candidates in East Lothian are:

- Dunbar & East Linton: [Mark James](#)
- Musselburgh: [Shona McIntosh](#)
- North Berwick Coastal: [Jacq Cottrell](#)
- Preston, Seton & Gosford: [Tim Porteus](#)
- Haddington & Lammermuir: [Jackie Swailes](#)
- Tranent, Wallyford & Macmerry: [Marnie Stirling](#)

Climate Action

Green Councillors will:

- Work to establish East Lothian's 'climate forest' in a way that maximises biodiversity and ensures the resultant green space is open for people to enjoy and accessible to reach by public / active travel transport routes.
- Establish a 'local heroes' certification scheme for local food producers, with different ratings (e.g. gold / silver / bronze) to publicise and reward regenerative farming and other carbon-reducing business practices.
- Seek to establish 'blue carbon' sites along the coast for restoration of seagrass and shellfish and involve local communities in their delivery.
- Create a car traffic reduction strategy with meaningful targets and clear actions to reduce emissions from car transport around the county to ensure that East Lothian achieves a 20% reduction in car kilometres travelled by 2030.

Local Democracy

Green Councillors will:

- Develop an Open Government Action Plan, including commitments to publish consultation results, begin participative budgeting, and open access to data.
- Devolve powers to local levels wherever possible – including to Community Councils, Area Partnerships, and Citizens’ Assemblies, which would all be given real power and real budgets to allocate – and involve citizens in decisions in a meaningful way, e.g. in the East Lothian Health and Social Care Partnership.
- Use participative and deliberative consultation to resolve divisive local issues, e.g. reducing car traffic, controversial planning decisions, and/or the implementation of short-term let controls.

Jacq Cottrell, Scottish Greens candidate for North Berwick Coastal:

The recent situation which [saw the closure of the Edington Hospital](#) – and others like it – can be avoided if local communities are genuinely involved in local decision-making and empowered to influence outcomes.

Only the Scottish Green Party is committed to involving community councils in local decision-making wherever possible, including representation within the East Lothian Health and Social Care Partnership.

Education

Green Councillors will:

- Focus on mental health and wellbeing, making access to counselling a right for all school pupils and ensuring a trauma-informed workforce across all people-facing council teams.
- Ensure real power is given to the pupil voice, including by ensuring representation of pupils on committees and in decision-making processes.
- Place greater emphasis on the importance of early years and on working with all providers, and parents, to roll out enhanced hours of early learning in a flexible way.
- Maximise opportunities for outdoor learning and other extracurricular activities, including forest school, music, and sport.
- Protect rural schools from closure and library services everywhere from cuts.
- Tackle anti-social behaviour with community-based solutions, involving community policing, bringing together schools, council, charities as well as organisations and people in the area.

Opportunities for jobs & young people

Green Councillors will:

- Support plans that bring jobs and inward investment into the county – especially where it creates long-term secure jobs that encourage young people to stay in the county.
- [Fully back the proposed Cockenzie 360 Centre](#), which will provide young people with training, learning and jobs for the future. Local green candidates believe it's a vision that links our proud industrial past with the new industries of the future, and makes our area a site of national economic importance once again.

Tim Porteus, Scottish Greens candidate for Preston, Seton & Gosford, said:

East Lothian can be the heartland of Scotland's Green Industrial Revolution and we support

ideas that will create jobs and help achieve Net Zero. I know it sounds ambitious, and it is.

And why shouldn't it be? We deserve this, our children and grandchildren deserve it."

Health & Social Care

Green Councillors will:

- Seek to support health and social care provision in the not-for-profit sector rather than private, wherever possible.
- Ensure that the development of the new National Care Service has human rights at its heart and proactively consult with those who have lived experience of the service to inform its delivery.
- Fight for local services such as community hospitals and GP surgeries to be well resourced and appropriate to the needs and size of the community – including the re-opening of the Edington Community Hospital in North Berwick.
- Ensure appropriate healthcare is available locally and accessible by public/active transport.
- Support a living wage of at least £15 for all care workers and support fair working practices. This will include tackling zero-hours contracts, ensuring social care workers are paid for shift handovers, for time spent travelling between jobs / travelling expenses and have opportunities for continuing professional development.
- Recognise that care should promote respectful and compassionate relationships and facilitate groups / spaces where carers (both paid and unpaid) can build on and strengthen social networks.

Environment & biodiversity

Green Councillors will:

- Maximise biodiversity on ELC land, e.g., through wildflower sowing, reductions to mowing and by immediately ending herbicide and pesticide use.
- Impose strict planning conditions on developers to enhance nature networks and biodiversity in the areas under development, including a moratorium on cutting down mature trees and hedges.
- Work with SEPA and utilise the Scottish Government's Nature Recovery Fund to improve water quality in all East Lothian's rivers and coastal waters to bathing quality.
- Develop a food-growing strategy for East Lothian to identify more land (especially in and around towns) that could be used for community allotments and / or for community food-growing projects.
- [Pause current plans for the Musselburgh Flood Defence Scheme](#) until realistic flood models have been produced and the impact of the Scheme on other coastal communities in East Lothian and Edinburgh are understood. Any Scheme will only be supported by Green councillors if it includes a significant role for nature based solutions in the management of the whole Esk ecosystem.

Shona McIntosh, Scottish Greens Candidate for Musselburgh, said:

We must have a sensible conversation about the risk and benefits of the proposed Flood Defence Scheme and the team must make their modelling public, so it can be scrutinised.

Slow & eco-tourism

Green councillors will:

- Use upcoming Scottish Government legislation on overnight taxation of short-term lets to raise revenue with a fair and progressive “sustainable tourism levy” to fund conservation and upgrading at tourist hot spots (to be confirmed via public consultation).
- Upgrade beach car parks with composting toilets, spaces for car-club vehicles and blue badge holders, and sustainable overnight camping.
- Revisit car parking charges at the coastal car parks – season tickets should be banded based on emissions from vehicles, with high-emissions vehicles costing significantly more.
- Implement the Core and Aspirational Paths Strategy in full and develop core paths between transport hubs and tourist attractions e.g. around North Berwick, Tynninghame and Tantallon.

We will make [Visit East Lothian an eco-tourism leader](#) by:

- Making it easier to travel without cars: e.g. cycle paths and a frequent weekend and holiday bus service. between rail stations and beauty spots.
- Establishing well landscaped sustainable campsites at the larger beaches.
- Protecting the most vulnerable natural habitats, such as salt marshes.
- Boosting farmers markets and craft stalls at transport hubs to promote local products.

Planning & housing

Green councillors will:

- Maintain a detailed housing register to ensure that property taxes are utilized as much as possible to disincentivise second homes and identify vacant properties that could be brought back into use, instead of building new developments.
- Ensure that all new-build housing is fitted with renewable energy systems as standard, that new developments genuinely meet the needs of residents, and that new developments do not add to private car traffic.
- Prioritise the insulation and decarbonisation of all ELC-owned council housing, helping to tackle fuel poverty as well as the climate crisis. Establish an advice service for all residents to find out more about support for insulation and renewable energy.
- Support the Scottish Government’s introduction of rent controls and consult with residents in different areas about how and where these might be usefully enforced in East Lothian.

Transport & connectivity

Green Councillors will:

- Always prioritise active travel and public transport links, and fully support the three aims of the ‘Walk, Wheel, Cycle, Vote’ campaign around Accessibility, Infrastructure and Investment.
- Support the development and secure funding for long-distance active travel paths, such as the Drem-Gullane route.
- Seek to develop a ‘beach bus’ service to link the urban areas of the county (and key train stations) with coastal beauty spots, helping those without access to cars to experience the beach, and reducing traffic around these sites.
- Support an electric cargo bike hire scheme in key locations around the county, pilot cargo bike delivery schemes with local businesses.
- Improve public transport to further and higher education institutions.
- Foster a climate which rejuvenates our town high streets, supporting community projects and delivering more space for walking, wheelchairs, buggies / prams and cycling. Seeking pedestrianisation or, where this is not possible, redesign town centre and village space to prioritise the movement of people rather than cars.

Finance & procurement

Green Councillors will:

- Support community wealth building through procurement, land use, and plural ownership of the economy.
- Call for a review of the Council’s recycling contract to ensure it is delivering the best value for residents and the environment.
- Lobby for the divestment of Lothian Pension Fund from fossil fuel investments and replace these with investments that can generate sustainable financial and environmental returns for pensioners and society as a whole.
- While we await the results of a Citizens Assembly on replacement of the unfair Council Tax system (a policy secured by Scottish Green Ministers in government) we would alter the 3% blanket increase approved by East Lothian Council and instead freeze tax for lower tax bands while increasing tax on higher bands.

In an [open letter to the East Lothian Courier](#), Scottish Greens council candidates wrote:

The broadest shoulders should carry the biggest burden in these uncertain times.