

# Studenten voor Leiden

Our plan for 2026 – 2030

*“for a Leiden full of life”*



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## Preface by our party-leader

Hi there,

Are you an international student studying in Leiden? Then you can vote here too. You study here, live here, and build your future here so you deserve a say in this city. This is our programme for a Lively Leiden (*Levendig Leiden*): a city in which all students have a voice, because our voice matters.

On 18 March 2026, Leiden will elect a new city council. This is the moment to choose a lively, inclusive and student-friendly city. A vote for Studenten voor Leiden (SVL) is a vote for genuine youth participation, better and affordable housing opportunities, more space for nightlife and culture, a greener city, stronger support for mental wellbeing, sufficient sports opportunities, and greater social safety.

We believe in a city where young people can actively shape local decision-making. Still, too often policies are made without the voices of students. While it is precisely young people who dare to choose for the future. SVL stands for a Lively Leiden. We bring a young, independent and future-oriented voice to the city council. We are a party made up of young people who study here, go to high school here, and are starting their working lives here. We're firmly rooted in the heart of Leiden's society. Our candidates are socially engaged in many different ways and now bring that experience into local politics.

At this moment, SVL holds two seats in the city council. From there, we have already made a real impact. Thanks to SVL, Leiden now has a housing brigade that proactively inspects rental properties to tackle housing abuses and protect tenants, mental health is firmly on the agenda of the Leiden city council, and terraces are allowed to stay open longer during the summer. With this programme, we proudly enter the elections. It reflects our vision: one that matches the ambition of the new generation.

**Vote Student for Leiden on 18 March!**

Kind regards, Claire van Megen  
*Lead Candidate Studenten voor Leiden*



# Preface electionplanningcommission

Dear reader,

We present the Election plan of Studenten voor Leiden with pride. SVL has promoted policy in the interest of young people, students and starters in Leiden for the last four years. SVL will be undiminished in their commitment to these causes, especially now young people need powerful representation. It is therefore very important to us to stay in contact with inhabitants and organisations of our city, to build a better city with whomever feels at home in Leiden. We therefore want to thank everyone who helped us create this election plan.

On March 18th 2026 a new municipal council will be chosen. You will have the chance to choose a lively Leiden. Voting SVL is voting in favor of youngster participation, a better housing market, more space for nightlife and culture, a greener city, attention for psychological wellbeing and greater social security. We are working towards a city where young people can live, celebrate, create and co-decide.

Let's work towards a lively Leiden together!

In the name of the electionplanningscommission,  
Lisa Wetting & Stijn van der Horn.

*Chairpersons of the electionplanningscommission*

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## **Electionplanningcommission** (*Dutch version*)

- Lisa Wetting
- Stijn van der Horn
- Marnix Argelo
- Valerie Bernasco
- Joris van Eijck
- Roos Heutinck
- Mels Pluis
- Quint Schenk
- Loman Wassenaar

## Our goals:

1. Studenten voor Leiden wants young people to be included in decision-making and the daily governance and the future of our city.
2. Studenten voor Leiden wants a future proof residential environment made with young people, students and first time home-buyers in mind. .
3. Studenten voor Leiden wants an expansion of night- and day culture. where events, creators of this culture and nightlife are given breathing room.
4. Studenten voor Leiden wants a green city with an ambitious and futuristic climate plan.
5. Studenten voor Leiden wants a Leiden that is both mentally and physically healthy, where care is given as- needed and support is given to anyone.
6. Studenten voor Leiden wants that everyone feels safe outside in Leiden..

# 1. Housing

**The housing shortage in Leiden is severe. There is a lot of pressure on the current housing market; Traditional communal student housing is disappearing, Housingprices keep rising and the construction of new homes does not keep up. Being able to live in the city you study in should be possible for all students. The student-culture of Leiden is at risk of disappearing. To resolve these issues, we want to create an easier process to receive permits, the removal of student-housing quotas and finally the creation of more student-accommodations. Renters need to be protected from their landlords. First time home-buyers are currently unable to find a home within the city. SVL wants to stimulate the construction of new homes and stimulate the throughput of mismatched living-arrangements. This should make a home available for all people in Leiden. The municipal council should at once take action to resolve the housing-shortage and implement long-term solutions.**

## 1.1 Living

### *Student rooms*

Students bring livelihood, culture and engagement to our neighbourhoods. They live in split up housing. These houses are purposefully limited by the current municipal government. "Roomification", the division of houses into separate rooms for rent to students, has been severely limited through national and regional regulations. The result of this in Leiden is a limited amount of student allocated housing per neighbourhood. These rules were erected with the conception in mind that students create noise-pollution and other nuisances which would then lower the liveability of the neighbourhood. SVL has not seen any proof of this claim. It is incorrect and discriminating to see students as a nuisance in advance. Removing the brake on this roomification creates more rooms, lowers the pressure on the housing market and creates clarity for renters.

### *Permits for multi-resident living*

SVL is of the opinion that renting with friends should be possible. Unfortunately this is not possible in some neighbourhoods. Many of these neighbourhoods require a renters-license when living with more than two renters. These rules make

renting-out these apartments practically impossible. Renting on your own is financially impossible, but renting with multiple people is not allowed. SVL therefore wants to terminate these renters-licenses in all neighbourhoods. Should these licenses remain, we need to re-distribute the costs in a fairer way. At this moment single-unit landlords pay the same amount for these licenses as landlords with many properties. This is unfair, who owns less, should pay less. A fair price should stimulate smaller landlords to keep renting out their property. This will benefit all renters by upholding the housing for rent stockpile.

#### *Protection of residential housing-stock buy-outs*

SVL realises the importance in creating a fair opportunity on the housing market in Leiden for first-time buyers and those with a medium-income. Buy-out protections help to create this fairness. It dissuades investors from buying cheap houses, to then turn around and rent for high sums. This protection is applicable until the NHG-threshold (National Mortgage Guarantee) of 450.000 euros. This is the same amount that determines whether people have access to a mortgage with extra protections. The housing market is ever-changing. SVL therefore wants this threshold for buy-out protections to be joined to the new yearly determined NHG-threshold. Only this way the protection keeps up with reality and protects the stockpile available to first-time buyers and medium-incomes.

#### *Renters protection team*

SVL wants the municipality to take charge in protecting our citizens from bad landlords. The pressure on the renters-market has created a position of power for landlords. The current "renters-team" that was created to help renters in situations where landlords abuse this power, is currently unable to help all renters with issues in a timely fashion. The team is currently operating for multiple cities at the same time, which negatively influences their capacity to help. The renters-team therefore needs to be expanded and get an office in Leiden. This additional capacity gives space for them to also help with excessive prices for rent and overdue maintenance. When this renters-team arrives, the municipality should work together with educational institutions to inform students of the availability of help. This way everyone is able to find the help they need.

### *Protections for the traditional student housing*

The “classic” form of student housing, with shared kitchens, old bikes outside the front door and all kinds of students living together under the same roof. This form of housing provides students with friendships, shared ownership and a social safety net. Unfortunately this form of student-housing is disappearing from the city of Leiden due to the current anti-“roomification” measures. SVL therefore wants to introduce a label, a label to protect traditional student housing. This will be called; “The student monument label”. The label will provide traditional student housing an official cultural status to protect them.

### *Communal rooms*

“De fusie” is the place where roommates can drink a beer together, talk over dinner, or recover from a hangover with a movie. Shared amenities as such are of utmost importance to our mental health and our social development. In research by Kences it is determined that students living in shared-living are consistently happier than those who live in studios. Good relationships with roommates helps the welfare of students, whereas students in studios live social isolationism. Especially now when the welfare of students is under threat, we see the building of new- and the protection of existing communal-living arrangements for students as of great importance. SVL is therefore happy with DUWO’s extra effort in realising these spaces. This policy should be maintained and expanded.

### *Freedom to choose your own roommates*

SVL is a great proponent of the right of students to determine who moves into their house with them. Being able to choose your own roommates is essential to maintain social cohesion, safety and the mental well-being within student-housing. The proposal by DUWO to limit this right undermines the cohesion and threatens the unique culture of traditional student-housing. SVL therefore fights for the preservation of free introduction-nights wherein housemates can jointly choose whomever would fit the best in the house. .

### *Asylum seekers and refugees*

The demand for asylum has risen in the Netherlands, partly due to the rise of conflict on our European continent. Leiden takes care of more than 1300 asylum-seekers and accepted-refugees in an asylum-seeker center, an emergency facility and other locations. Leiden is currently meeting the requirements as set forth by the law on the spreading of asylum-seekers. SVL is of the opinion that Leiden needs to do its part by being available for asylum-seekers and accepted-refugees.

## **1.2 Building**

The housing market of Leiden is stuck. Due to the absence of first-timer housing, graduated students are forced to remain in their student-housing. Families with an average income stay in social housing, because they are unable to get an affordable owner-occupied home. Retirees want to live smaller, yet are unable to find an apartment in their neighbourhood. At the same time traditional student-housing is disappearing to be replaced with luxury apartments. This all leads to mismatched housing, Single occupants live in large houses and families in small flats. This creates a housing-market in which flow from different living arrangements to appropriate ones almost stalls. Leiden has in the past been miraculously good at producing new housing. SVL wants Leiden to remain an example to others in this regard, yet we need to focus our efforts where we need it most. SVL wants to solve the structural shortage of 3000 rooms for students and build 10.000 new houses before 2030. Only this way the housing market will restart and only this way everyone in Leiden can live in a house fitting to their needs.

### *Building to accommodate movement between mismatched housing*

SVL is of the opinion that every new construction site grants plenty of affordable living spaces and first time home owner housing units, giving them the priority over the new homes. Additionally senior apartments and at least 35% social housing should be realised. To make moving affordable, a moving compensation of up to 3.000 euros would be realised by the municipality to help movement into fitting housing. Leiden will get a permanent flow-broker, an advisor who helps residents in finding fitting housing and enables the start up of movement. This flow-broker can offer advice to split a home, to use the existing housing supply to expand the number of homes.

### *Building height*

Leiden is growing, yet the city is not expanding. A good way to realise enough housing is building highrises. This grants opportunities. In areas outside of the city-centre, like the area around central station, “Het Wernikterrein” and Lammenschans are possibilities to realise modern, sustainable housing on a relatively small supply of land. The current maximum norm of 70 meters for living complexes is outdated. SVL wants to remove this norm to clear the path for more housing in our limited space. The project LEAD shows the power of such initiatives. With only one decision to build higher, 600 new homes arrived. Building high is no luxury. It is simply a necessity.

### *Building for the future*

Building green and building efficiently are sides of the same coin. Temporary solutions do not solve our housing crisis. The building of temporary emergency homes seems like a wise choice in the short term, but these are often used for longer periods of time. A good example of these are the student housing units on the Klikspaanweg. SVL is of the opinion that we need to invest in lasting solutions now. Solutions that help our city. Yet we also acknowledge the need for speed to realise our goal for 2030. When innovative building solutions lead to delays, it is our duty to critically examine what measures contribute to lasting solutions.

### *Stimulating new projects*

SVL wants to stimulate the construction of new housing units by reducing the regulatory burden. The “Welstandnota”, the rules that determine the way buildings look, need to be revised. The historical character of Leiden is of great value to us especially in the city center, however these need not to halt great new projects. The current rules have a number of unnecessary determinations. One of these states that new facades need to be of the same style as the existing ones in a street, even if these are not of aesthetic value. In addition to this, years of adding singular rules to our rulebook by several parties now have created an incoherent mess stifling progress. SVL wants a clear and coherent rulebook which creates space for the right plans which are proven to add value to our streets and to our city. The reduction of rules is not a goal upon itself. It is merely a necessity wherever stoppage occurs. Only this way, we can speed up the process of building whilst retaining our focus on quality.

### *Participation*

SVL sees a city in which inhabitants are heard. Therefore we look further than the direct surroundings of a project. We listen to the neighbours, but also to those looking for a house and future inhabitants. They get a voice from the beginning through selection in waiting lists and groups with interest. This way we can determine that the plans fit with the needs of the people, and we make sure there is plenty of support for the completion of the projects.

## **1.3 Alternative living**

To lift the existing deadlock in the housing market, we as SVL want to introduce new and effective measures to shorten waiting lists for social housing, to create a diverse housing stock, and to make housing available to young people once more. A healthy living environment needs to be large and diverse in her supply.

### *Friendscontracts*

Living together with friends makes your time in Leiden more fun. For some people this seems impossible, yet this would be possible with friendscontracts. These are a form of living contract that is disclosed with two or more renters to one landlord. This concept has been introduced to Leiden by SVL in the last term in office. The possibility of friends contracts needs to be made available to young people, (former-) students, first-time buyers or emergency housing searchers. This will offer more housing possibilities, without touching the current conversion permit. SVL wants to develop this further and stimulate its news.

### *Housing cooperations*

Buying a house together is possible. A housing cooperation, not to be confused with housing corporations, is a form of collective housing where multiple owners own one house. An example could be an empty schoolbuilding that is bought up by a cooperation of twenty people to live in together. This can make a relatively large and expansive property accessible to private citizens. Because of the cooperative ownership of the inhabitants, they will not be dependent on a landlord. This will leave the power of decision for communal space and the cost of living with the renters. SVL wants our municipality to actively support these

initiatives. This will make it possible for inhabitants to buy and create their own affordable housing.

#### *Stimulating renting out rooms of private property*

For people living with unused housing space, there is the possibility to rent out. This provides possibilities for young people, students and emergency housing-searchers. The current inhabitant can earn an extra income. By living in larger houses than needed, the limited space in Leiden is optimally used. Because of this SVL wants to make these renting out possibilities more vast. Currently a home-owner is capped to one renter per home in Leiden. SVL wants to eliminate this cap.

#### *Crossgenerational living*

Lonelier forms of housing are becoming more common, this combined with societal aging can hurt the liveability of neighbourhoods. SVL wants to create student housing in these societally aged neighbourhoods to re-invigorate the neighbourhood and create space for the students. Student housing will be realised right next to elderly homes. This will cut down the deficit in student housing and help the social cohesion in the area. We will stimulate contact between the students and the elderly with this new initiative. This way we create more space for student housing, we support both students and elderly, and keep our neighbourhoods vibrant.

#### *Dual living and working spaces*

Leiden is trying to deal with a double challenge; building more residential buildings, yet using our industrial areas smart and effectively. Industrial areas such as Rooseveltstraat (-west), Trekvliet, Weninkterrein, Veilingterrein and Lammenschans are close to the city and ideally located for dual use. Companies and organisations on the lower floors, with residential housing on top of it. In cities like Amsterdam these kinds of solutions are already being experimented with. This dual use ultimately uses available space, creates a vibrant neighbourhood and makes our target for 2030 more achievable. SVL wants to make this possible so Leiden can grow without using space.

### *Living for the homeless*

Everyone deserves a place to live, especially those looking for housing who are currently under threat of going homeless or because they cannot use a normal social housing unit. An apartment in social housing is not a possibility for everyone. Some people might not fit in social housing, yet not earn enough for renting on the free market. This group needs to find a house with support in a quiet area. SVL wants to create a “Skaeve Huse”. These housing containers are easily set up and offer a cheap living space with a garden and require a relatively small space. These are therefore ideally suited for people who do not fit in regular housing units. Leiden currently has two of these units. SVL wants to increase this to a level fitting Leiden. These “Skeve Huse” need to be well-maintained. It is more important that for those who are unable to use regular housing a safe and secure way of living will be made available.

### *Homelessness of young people*

A better solution needs to be found for homelessness among young people. According to ETHOS; at least 40% of homeless under 27, those who just became homeless, end up in regular homeless shelters. This is a situation of stress, a lack of safety and -privacy. Without rest and stability they are unable to solve their problems, which leads to long-term homelessness. SVL argues that we need young shelters to the model of Project010 in Rotterdam. The idea is to create a safe living space, support from involved professionals and a small budget to rebuild their lives. This way young people who would otherwise be lost in the system, will be given a way to rebuild the basics and work towards independence.

## 2. Nightlife and culture

**Leiden is a city of knowledge and a place where culture thrives. Creators support the identity of the city and give it a familiar face; Leiden is after all. the city of Rembrandt, Jochem Meyer and Armin van Buuren. The cultural sector and our nightlife deserve the attention, the locations and the investments necessary to fulfill this important role. In reality clubs currently do not receive the permits to let us dance, the cultural sector is in constant financial insecurity and event locations are closed for months. SVL says this needs to change. Because of SVL a nightplan will be made and nightlife will be higher on the agenda. Our day and night culture both give our society something unique. It has a positive influence on our city, our mental health and the liveliness of Leiden. SVL will work in the coming years towards this lively Leiden where young people can dance, the cultural sector knows financial stability and events are stimulated.**

### 2.1 Nightlife

#### *The nightplan*

The nightlife is a true asset to Leiden, but has become less appealing through strict regulation. Young people in Leiden have little choice to go out in their hometown and often choose to go to surrounding cities instead. Because of SVL a nightplan will be created to make Leiden's nightlife appealing and buzzing. In this plan SVL wants to include a large expansion of nightlife. To arrange this, we want to create a central party area, introduce easier door-policies and allow longer opening hours. The permit structure for the hospitality industry needs to be eased. This will lead to a more lively city, as only SVL can deliver.

#### *Central partyzone*

It's time to go into a newer, fresher direction with Leiden's nightlife. A central location where most of the nightlife occurs, together with space to develop yourself as a creator on the edge of the central city. In this central partyzone the nightlife of Leiden will truly come to fruition. The location of this central partyzone would be between de beestenmarkt and de Lammermarkt. The municipality issues the permits, the entrepreneurs will provide the supply. This initiative will entice people back to the nightlife in Leiden, will stimulate the local economy and

create a meet-up location for young people. It also provides space for young creators to grow from the smaller podiums of the city to the larger podiums in the country. Places like the Wibar offer an experimental podium that provides a first step to bigger stages in the city. This way we make the nightlife of Leiden appealing to both creators and young people.

#### *Opening hours*

A night of barhopping and ending at the club creates an impulse to the city. According to the current door-policy, cafés, clubs and other nightly providers can accept new customers until 01:00 on Sunday through Wednesday, and 02:00 Thursday through Saturday. SVL wants to get rid of this time limit and puts this responsibility in the hands of owners when new customers will not be allowed in. This way we create a more lively nightlife.

#### *Permits to the hospitality industry*

A night of dancing is part of a lively Leiden. The release of hospitality permits and the rules applicable to them are too strict in Leiden. Hospitality entrepreneurs do not get the opportunity to organise nightly events or organise party nights. SVL wants to loosen the rules to secure these permits by working case-adaptively and by redesigning the permit system. This would allow for an additional form of permit where cafés can organise events and parties more easily, without formally being seen as a nightclub. This way we deliver a diverse and ever-changing supply throughout the city and raise the quality of the night life in Leiden.

#### *Safety during the nightly fun*

A thriving nightlife sector requires safety for everyone involved. SVL wants to actively hinder intimidations on the street. The creation of the central party zone allows us to pool safety resources to this location. Measures such as the safe-bus in the zone, trained hospitality personnel and well trained BOA-officers and onlookers, will work towards a culture of safety. SVL wants to invest in safe streets, good lighting and carefully considered camera surveillance. This allows us to responsibly work towards a safe and lively city. Read more about this in our chapter on public safety.

## 2.2 Eventpolicy

### *Stimulating events in the city*

SVL chooses a thriving inner city and our encouragement of more events within the city fits this goal. SVL wants to allow more event permits every year in the city center at locations such as het Stadhuisplein. De Garenmarkt and de Lammermarkt. This creates more space for Lustrum celebrations, musical performances, sporting events and further initiatives that add to a lively Leiden.

### *Event locations outside of the inner city*

A standard location for a stage gives security to the events industry. SVL therefore wants to create this standard location for the region where there are festivals, concerts and other great events. Especially Lustrum celebrations could be held here. This way we support not only cultural and musical initiatives in our city, but we also create certainty to the student associations.

### *Lustrum celebrations*

To students, the lustrum of their associations represent something bigger than just a party. It celebrates five years of building friendship and traditions. Student associations in Leiden are currently left in a state of insecurity concerning the organisation of their lustrum celebrations. The standard location outside of town offers the association the guarantees of an appropriate space for these events. SVL argues the importance of these lustrum celebrations and wants the municipality to create a lasting lustrum plan. In the plan it is of utmost importance that the plan will be made taking into consideration how the lustrum can be made inclusive towards the larger city and how the municipality can help in the organisation of these large scale events.

### *De Nieuwe Rijn on october 3rd*

October 3rd is the event of the year in Leiden and SVL wholeheartedly treasures this tradition. The celebration should be made more extensive. SVL wants the centre of all the celebrations, de Nieuwe Rijn, to be temporarily covered by floats so more artists get the opportunity to perform, just as this was before 2020. The municipality should help to cover the costs of this. Getting a cheap beer in the supermarket should be made possible once more to keep October 3rd affordable

for all inhabitants. SVL wants to grant these permits so that the financial pressure of the celebration will be made bearable for both locals and organisers.

## **2.3 Cultural sector**

Culture is what makes Leiden appealing to people of all ages. It stimulates the economy and helps the mental health of all people from Leiden. Leiden presents itself as the city of knowledge and culture for a reason. Unfortunately the city structurally under-invests in this crucial sector. Young creators have little space to develop their talents; Money that is available is spent on buildings, while more money is cut from cultural education.

### *Investing in culture*

Culture brings people together, it stimulates talent and makes Leiden lively. At the same time our local government structurally leaves little space, money or attention to the cultural sector. This underinvestment in our culture makes both creators, but also the existing cultural institutions experience financial insecurity. SVL wants to strongly increase the cultural budget, in concordance with the creators and institutions that know what is needed. To accomplish this we will revise the existing subsidy system, so larger and smaller cultural organisations both have access to appropriate support. The application process for subsidies should be made easier. SVL also argues that the subsidies for cultural space and cultural activities should be separated. This ensures that investments do not solely end up in buildings and construction but with creators and programming where it belongs.

### *Space for creators*

Cultural talent needs to be developed. Nieuwplaat and de makerscentrale give young people the chance to develop their cultural and creative talents. These breeding grounds of talent form the foundations that launch a new generation of cultural talent in Leiden. SVL places priority on permanent places like these, yet highlights the possibilities of municipal building that are not currently used as a solution for the short term. SVL argues that current breeding grounds like these need to be structurally funded so they can continuously help the developing talents of Leiden. Only this way Leiden will be able to allow the creators to develop their creative talents within the city.

### *Cultuurkwartier*

The cultural sector of Leiden is for everybody, this is perfectly embodied in the northside of the center of Leiden. SVL supports the initiatives of the Cultuurkwartier: The place with the highest density of culture of the Netherlands. Making this part of the city greener and more traffic-free as well as diversifying the cultural supply will allow us to maintain Leiden as a cultural center. SVL is of the opinion that we need to add a partyzone so we have a diversified supply of entertainment in the cultural heart of the city.

### *Cultural education*

Cultural education makes sure that young people can develop their talents, it also diversifies the people that take part in cultural activities. SVL is of the opinion that everybody needs to be introduced to cultural activities. The municipality must facilitate cultural education to our inhabitants. SVL therefore argues to structurally finance the cultural education of kids and teens once more.

### *A visible library*

Libraries hold a central role in society: They improve interest in reading, help civic education and stimulate the cultural and creative development in Leiden. If it was up to SVL, we would have transformed the old V&D into a central, cultural meet-up spot where a library could fulfill their role in society. Now that the library is in an inconspicuous location SVL argues in favor of creating an eye-catching entrance at the upcoming renovation. This way all of us can easily find this important place.

### *Cultural trust*

The cultural trust used to be a cheap and effective way to distribute investments in the cultural sector. It was a structural foundation for up- and coming projects, stimulating entrepreneurship and improving cooperation between the city and cultural projects. This trust fund has now been cut. SVL wants to reintroduce the fund, to reinvest in the cultural sector and give them the space they need to develop.

### *Communal real-estate*

Some buildings managed by the municipality have a special public or social purpose, such as de nobel, de Stadsgehoorsaal and the community centres. They create space for day- and nightculture as well as a place to meet one another. The current system makes most of the funds disappear into the rent paid to the municipality. SVL wants to make the municipality behave proactively in granting these societal initiatives the space with non-market rent prices fitting their societal purpose. The largest part of subsidies should not disappear in the rent that is paid back to the municipality. The municipality needs to be transparent in the buildings it owns and which societal purpose the usage serves or could serve. Sale to a private buyer could only happen if no societal purpose is found or could be created. This decision needs to be made transparently and accurately communicated. This way SVL creates a city in which space and influence is not allocated to those who pay most, but to whomever contributes most to society.

## **3. Mental and physical wellbeing**

**Leiden is on the forefront of mental and physical wellbeing of her inhabitants, partly due to the efforts of SVL. In the last few years a lot of initiatives have been introduced by students. Yet there is still a lot to be done; more than half of those between the ages of 16- 25 experience psychological heartship. 12% of these describe them as severe. To help this group of young people, SVL pays attention to the prevention and qualitative, efficient cooperation between the municipality, educational institutions and aid organizations. The care for minors needs to be better; SVL argues for both a change of the system as the way in which help is provided. SVL also makes an effort of physical wellbeing in Leiden: Being able to play sports needs to be affordable and accessible especially to young people, first-time home buyers and students. SVL wants a healthy Leiden in which wellbeing for young people, first-time home buyers and students are put in the spotlight.**

### **3.1 Mental wellbeing**

SVL wants mental wellbeing to be a priority within the municipality of Leiden. Our city knows, partly due to SVL, a lot of initiatives, such as Stichting Praat Erover!, @ease and de CokeShow, that our municipalities need to keep supporting. These organisations help a lot of young people, students and first-time home buyers in mental wellbeing. SVL therefore argues in favor of measures that close the gap between healthcare and young people. Measures such as the young people's center (Jongerencentrum) and the integral week of wellbeing. Still the current state of affairs are concerning: In 2024 54% of young people experienced mental heartship. SVL will therefore keep fighting for the mental wellbeing of young people.

### *The young people's center*

Leiden knows almost 30.000 young people, yet it doesn't know a place where they can find everything one needs as a young person. This is why SVL wants to create a young people's center in Leiden: An accessible and visible place where young people can socialise, eat an affordable meal or drink a cheap drink. They also need to have easy access to mental healthcare. Leiden knows a lot of organisations that offer this kind of easy-access help and support. Yet a centralized and visible location for this does not exist. A young people's center in Leiden allows all these help to be centralized in a place young people feel welcome, heard and supported. In 2025 SVL arranged for 95.000 euros to be made available to a social café, this is a nice start for a young people's center.

### *Integral week of wellbeing*

Working together makes us stronger, Leiden needs to make use of this. SVL wants Leiden to organise an integral week of wellbeing together with large educational institutions, student associations and other interested parties. Currently a lot of institutions and associations organise their own safety- and wellbeing week, small organisations often struggle with this. SVL wants to organise one general wellbeing week involving all willing and relevant actors. By unifying ourselves we enlarge the impact of the week and take psychological wellbeing out of the taboo.

### *Social wellbeing of children*

Everyone needs to feel safe and good, especially children. Bullying and physical violence under children is a growing issue. In the region Hollands-Midden the amount of kids that are being bullied has more than doubled since 2019. The severity of bullying has also increased. This has large consequences, bullying can lead to tough social and emotional issues. Multiple scientifically rooted solutions for bullying have been developed. SVL wants the municipality to work with schools and schoolkids to create an integral preventative policy wherein scientific solutions are applied.

### *An inclusive city*

Leiden needs to be a city wherein anyone is welcome and there is no space for exclusion, hate and discrimination. Online hate and radicalisation grow among young people in Leiden. SVL wants the municipality to uphold the current plan of

inclusivity. The municipality needs to act as a good example by working together with the University of Leiden in investigating ways to prevent radicalisation under young people. The municipality must also provide the resources needed for both primary education and high schools to teach kids and to allow initiatives such as creating a gender or sexuality alliance within a school.

### *Suicide prevention*

To create effective suicide prevention, victims need to be granted the possibility to reach all kinds of healthcare institutions that can provide professional help. Only 40% of all suicide-attempts were previously known by professional institutions. Therefore SVL wants to increase the visibility of professional help such as 113 suicideprevention. The municipality needs to pro-actively look into groups with increased risk, train those who might come in contact with a suicidal person and initiate preventive campaigns.

### *Drug use*

Part of the student life are festivals, parties and good food at a restaurant in the sun. This is often done in combination with a beer or a glass of wine as it should. Sometimes young people get overdependent and even addicted to alcohol and other drugs. This form of escapism won't help resolve the issues they are currently experiencing. SVL therefore encourages bottom-up initiatives that are in close proximity to the target audience. Initiatives such as Lieve mark, de Cokeshow and Waar trek jij de lijn? need to be structurally supported by the municipality. These entice professionals and young people into conversations. This in turn will create a better insight in how we can intercept young people starting to slide down into addiction. This way usage of alcohol and other drugs can stay safe, responsible and fun.

## **3.2 Physical wellbeing**

To play sports is also to work on psychological wellbeing: It lowers stress hormones, it diminishes the chance of depression and it creates more self-confidence. It stimulates your brain and it is fun! Sports are essential for both physical and psychological wellbeing. Lifestyle and sexual health are also of influence on both physical and psychological wellbeing. SVL therefore argues in

favor of affordable contributions, stimulating healthy lifestyles and easy access to sexual healthcare for all young people in Leiden.

#### *The interests of young people in sports-policy*

Young people need to be involved in the conversations and decisions about the policy that is made about them. De Leidse Sport Federatie (LSF) is an official advisory-organisation to the mayor and councillor's office concerning sports in Leiden. SVL, helped by Studentensport Leiden, has been a constant member of student-sport affairs. This ensures that the interests of young people and students are included in sports-policy. SVL wants to keep including this constant member in the making of sporting policy.

#### *Professional sports*

Professional athletes hold a position of esteem. They inspire young people to start participating in sports. Thanks to SVL's efforts more money is available for professional athletes through "stichting topsport Leiden". Among others this money has been used to decrease social inequality within professional sports. This has led to the women's teams of both DIOK and ZZ Leiden entering the first league of their respective sports. SVL wants to keep professional sports accessible to all through structural subsidies.

#### *Accessible sports for everyone*

Everyone needs to be able to participate in sports. Through the SBG (Sportief Besteed Groep)-app, the people of Leiden are able to find sporting activities in their direct environment. This makes sure that sports are accessible and that everyone is able to find the sports they would like to participate in. SVL finds the availability of activities for students- and starters lacking and wants it to be expanded. We also want the rent of sporting halls to remain low to make sure that organisations such as "het sportakkoord" can keep organising events in these halls.

#### *Outside sports on public property*

Outside sports keep our city lively and healthy. Sports such as cycling, running, volleyball or football can all take place outside. It would be nice if these activities can be done close to home. For this reason SVL supports outside sports on public

property. We would therefore like to maintain and expand events such as de Singelloop and de Rapenburg Race.

### *(Student-) Sportassociations*

Sport associations help to make Leiden a healthy and social city: In the associations people not only play sports but they also meet new people. SVL therefore finds it of utmost importance to keep contributions to these associations affordable for people with a smaller income. The municipality needs to create a subsidy for everyone who is unable to afford contribution. This ensures that everyone, regardless of their wallet, can participate in sports. Student-sports associations are of great importance to students that want to remain active in a great environment with their peers for an affordable price. The municipality must actively support and encourage these associations. Associations such as Njord and Asopos need to be able to keep using the waters of Leiden to organise events, especially since these help the lively character of the city.

### *Healthy lifestyle*

A healthy life does not just consist of movement and sports; food and lifestyle also play an important role. SVL therefore wants the municipality to play an active role in the promotion of healthy lifestyles through healthy school- and sportcafeterias. Municipal help is needed in making healthy food available and affordable because the unhealthy options are relatively cheap compared to their healthy counterparts. The cafeterias must also promote healthy food over unhealthy food. SVL agrees with the national policy on smoking and vaping, meaning that every entrepreneur can decide whether they want to make their terrace smoke and vape-free.

### *Sexual health*

Leiden is a young and vibrant city, wherein social activities span wide. This means most people will have multiple sexual partners, which increases the chance of STDs. It is important to keep talking about this and to make sure that sex is safe and good for everyone. We need to work with positive prevention; the usage of protection and other prevention methods needs to be encouraged in a positive manner. We also need to launch an open conversation into why the usage of anti-conception is decreasing. SexEd needs to be progressive and open minded

with special attention given to inclusivity, consent, limits and pleasure. They do not need to and at STD's and pregnancies.

#### *STD-tests*

In a city full of young people such as Leiden it is important that everyone can freely and easily test for STD's. It is difficult to test for STD's right now. Waiting lists are long, which makes many locals go to different cities. It shouldn't be necessary to travel to another city for a test. SVL therefore argues in favor of making free STD-kits more available, to make sure everyone is helped quickly and Leiden remains healthy.

### **3.3 Care for young people**

#### *Reinvention of Youthcare*

SVL is in favor of a structural solution to youthcare, instead of endless small corrections that do not resolve the issues of the system., Our educational system has unrealistic expectations of students which pushes more people into youthcare than necessary. SVL wants to change this trend and make education more flexible, lower pressure on performance and support kids in their trusted environment. This requires a service oriented governance by the municipality which puts the emphasis on reducing unnecessary income of new patients, instead of expansion of youthcare. SVL wants to introduce "sleutel scholen". At these schools parent-, kid-, and neighbourhood teams work together to make sure care is provided quickly and where needed. Parents/guardian teams are involved as well as other teams to help the development of both parent and kid. Right now at this moment there are comparable initiatives such as "het Gebouw" and "de bredeschool Merenwijk". These beautiful initiatives are not definitive and not all neighbourhoods have a school as such. These initiatives therefore need to be centralized in the "sleutelschool". This is to make sure kids can remain in school while they get the support they need. Schools and other aid organisations will have the lead in how these schools will operate. SVL wants the municipality to assume a supportive role.

SVL wants a system wherein the healthcare goes to the kid instead of the kid to the healthcare. This would mean more specialized healthcare within the educational track of children, using flexible teaching methods, which adjust the

necessary performance of kids to what is responsible. It also requires a critical look at which youth we send to youthcare.

At the same time enough efficient and effective youth care needs to be available for those who really need it. Families and youth who are dependent on specialized help, should not be lost to waiting lists and bureaucratic processes. SVL therefore argues for organizing youthcare in a better way, which is less wasteful, so that those who need it most receive the resources meant for them. SVL chooses wherein not systems but the youth are put in the center of attention. Less labels, less bureaucracy, more space for prevention and development. An effective and efficient youth care for the kids and families that need it.

#### *Moving from youthcare to adultcare*

Moving from youth care to adult care is difficult, but can be made easier and clearer. Youth lose the help they trust when they turn 18 and need to look for new practitioners. This is a long and difficult process due to the lacking or confusing availability of adult care. SVL wants the municipality to support this transition better. One clear and accessible website needs to provide clarity to youth and youth organisations about what institutions they can turn to for help and how. This way we make the transition to adult care easier and clearer. This way young people get the care they need before and after they turn 18.

## 4. Climate, mobility and atmosphere

**Due to an initiative of SVL a climate emergency has been declared by the municipality of Leiden. SVL wants Leiden to be climate neutral in 2040. This requires great investments in durable energy, greening and mobility, and a fundamentally different organisational vision for the city. In the futuristic and green version of Leiden, cars do not fit in the inner city. Parking spaces are used as lively terraces, clean communal restrooms and green zoning to escape daily life. Without car traffic, unsafe road crossings into safe and clear biking lanes. This way we make Leiden not only sustainable and green, but also safer and more lively. Young people are ready to make this green step forward, yet municipal politics seem to be lagging behind. Leiden will be a green and vibrant city where young people take charge in the sustainable transition partnered by a municipality that dares to invest into the future.**

### 4.1 A green city

A green city is not a luxury, but a necessity. The challenges of heatstress, petrification and pollution require clear choices. Traffic and parking space need to make space for green and shadow. The municipality needs to work in consideration of the severity of the climate crisis: It needs to actively support sustainability initiatives by inhabitants and reduce the growth of polluters. SVL chooses a green Leiden, for now and for the future.

#### *A green city center*

A large part of the city center of Leiden is petrified and dedicated to traffic, whereas green, community and cool spaces are lacking. SVL wants a plan Bree: Busses have no place in the Breestraat. Only purposeful traffic by entrepreneurs and inhabitants are still allowed. If it is up to SVL, we repurpose the space into a green walking boulevard with terraces, plants and seating. The Haarlemmerstraat and Beestenmarkt would also be greened. The haarlemmerstraat would be filled with hanging plants and the Beestenmarkt would be filled with trees to create shadow during the summer heat. The inner city will be a place to live and to enjoy once more.

### *A helping hand*

A large part of the land in Leiden resides in private gardens and courtyards. The greenification of Leiden can be helped by the owners of these private locations. SVL wants to encourage these owners to greenify their courtyards or gardens. Initiatives such as the green coach help inhabitants to get started with initiatives such as handing out free plants in exchange for removed tiles. We therefore do not force from the top, we help from the bottom up. These initiatives can make greenification attainable and attractive.

### *Testing plans for the future*

The municipality must be a leader in change. Due to SVL's activism, the municipality now explicitly deliberates in the interest of future generations and long-term plans. SVL wants the long term vision to be institutionalised in policy by implementing a generational test. This is a test that specifically measures the impact of policy on future generations. This test must not be without obligation, it needs to steer policy. SVL calls on the municipality to create clear, measurable objectives on greening, biodiversity and climate-adaptation with measurement taking place every ten years. This way we make sure the bills of today are not paid for by future generations.

### *Circular choices*

A lot of people want to live sustainably, but they don't know how or are blocked by practical issues. SVL wants the municipality to make it easier to make circular and sustainable choices. As part of this effort the sustainability counter that provides extra support to companies and residents needs to be expanded. We also need to resist fossil fuel-based advertisements and stimulate reuse and the separation of trash. Inhabitants need to be nudged to green solutions, using behavioural motivation techniques to make choosing sustainable practices easier. The bar for companies is higher: They are the largest polluters and therefore should be financially incentivised to make more sustainable choices.

## **4.2 Sustainable and affordable energy and heating**

Since the start of the Russo-Ukrainian war heating and power have proven not as ordinary as once thought with prices rising sharply. Students have been confronted with this harshly since they are being excluded from power subsidies.

SVL is of the opinion that power poverty among students needs to be taken seriously. The way we organise our power is of great financial and climate consequences. SVL wants affordable power for all people from Leiden.

#### *Isolation offensive*

SVL wants to make all residences in Leiden more sustainable, even the monumental properties. Leiden is known for her beautiful and historic properties, these often function as student housing. Monumental properties are heavily protected by policy causing them to lack behind in the process of sustainability. Generally these properties are isolated badly and are single glazing. As a consequence of these, the houses will be unbearable with heat in the summer and draught through the house in the winter. Partly due to the efforts of SVL, has the municipality undertaken action by initiating the organisation “Energiefixers071”. This organisation helps isolation and helps rental apartments become more sustainable. SVL wants to embed structural funding for Energiefixers071. SVL also argues in favor of winding down regulation inhibiting the isolation of these residences.

#### *Modernising fund for student associations*

Student associations are of great importance to the community of Leiden; They bring together young people, are involved within society and make Leiden an attractive city to study in. These associations are often based in monumental buildings that are in grave need of being made more sustainable and being modernised. SVL argues in favor of a modernizing fund so the municipality can help make these properties modern and sustainable to keep the use of these important associations.

#### *The power grid*

The rising demand for power in the Netherlands, caused by the moving away from fossil fuels, has increased the overloading of the power grid. In Leiden this has sometimes caused the power grid to be completely full, this is called net-congestion. Construction projects are delayed and new companies cannot locate in Leiden because we do not have enough power available for them. The net-congestion is partly caused by the structural underinvestment by the national government. We can however try to mitigate some consequences on a municipal level. Building batteries on a neighbourhood level to save locally

sourced energy and redistribute them later is one of these solutions. Industrial areas can start to function as energy hubs where companies make deals based to divide the energy-usage differently. SVL is a great proponent of these local initiatives to solve our netcongestion issues.

#### *The warmthnet*

Warmteling is an underground warmth redistribution network that uses restwarmth from the harbors of Rotterdam and transports it to cities all around the province of South-Holland, the purpose being to create sustainable heating for companies and residences. Leiden will be linked to this system that helps to replace natural gas. The connection from Rijswijk to Leiden that should've been completed by 2025 and operational by 2027 has faced delays and rising costs. SVL sees this as an opportunity to stop this project. We are of course in favor of alternatives to natural gas, but a project that costs 1,1 billion euros and uses restwarmth from natural gasses is not the solution we are looking for. SVL wants to invest in smart, local warmth networks. They can offer the same results for a small fraction of the costs.

### **4.3 Atmosphere and mobility**

#### *Zero-emission zone*

SVL has declared a climate state of emergency and is of the opinion that this needs to be visible in the way that people move. One of the consequences is a worsening of air quality. SVL supports the implementation of a zero-emission zone in the city center of Leiden to improve the air quality. This transition needs to be done carefully, with clear steps and exceptions for people with disabilities, first-response vehicles and inhabitants dependent on motorized transportation. This measure will improve the health of our city and bring us closer to our climate ambitions.

#### *Car-free area within the ring of Leiden*

A carfree canal district makes Leiden more lively. SVL wants to limit car use between Rapenburg and de Oude Vest, de Herengracht and de Oude Rijn to purpose-bound vehicles. This will grant space to pedestrians and cyclists. We can repurpose the parking spots for green, terraces or bicycle parking places. SVL

wants to retain the accessibility of those with reduced mobility to the city by allowing the shuttle bus to continue to drive here.

### *Reserving parking-space*

The application to parking permits and the recognition of purposebound vehicles could be made more efficient and effective. SVL argues in favor of using algorithms to the granting of permits which will make the application of purpose-bound vehicles to these permits more affordable. We realise that due to the reduced number of parking spaces in the city, it will be made more difficult to find a parking spot in the city for the purpose-bound vehicles. SVL wants to solve this by creating a number of parking places in each neighbourhood that can exclusively be used by the purpose-bound vehicles.

### *Selfsufficient parking garages*

SVL wants to remove as many parking spots on the canals as possible. This fits in the vision of a carfree canal district wherein cars make space for other utilities. It is therefore important for residents within the inner city to be able to apply for a parking permit in a garage outside of the city center. SVL wants to increase the capacity of the parking garages on the edges of the city to allow space for everyone. This expansion shall be used to make them more sustainable. SVL argues in favor of adding solar panels to the roof of garages. The power created by them can immediately be used to charge electric vehicles through a battery. Permitholders will be allowed to charge their electric cars for free to stimulate the transition to emission-free vehicles. This will allow us to both use parking garages more efficiently, but also has them help in the power transition and the sustainable mobility policy in Leiden.

### *Parkingtax*

SCL wants to stimulate people to use sustainable transport. Cars are too intensive for the climate, this is why SVL has previously proposed to raise taxes on parking inside the city center and on the edges of the citycenter. We want to continue this. SVL wants to make short-parking more expansive in the citycenter, but ensure that parking permits outside of the center stay affordable. People who want to spend a day in our beautiful city center are then stimulated to use public transport or to park outside of the city center. The money made with this tax will be reinvested in parking and infrastructure for bicycles and pedestrians. This will

also allow us to repurpose de Breestraat and create more parking spaces for bicycles.

### *Bicycle parking*

The inner city has a large deficit in parking places for bikes. Within the city center there are 8.000 parking places for bicycles, yet there are 16.000 bikes. This makes the current policy of “When you park wrong, your bike is gone” indefensible. SVL wants to stop the fining and towing of wrongly placed bikes. Only when enough parking places for the bikes of Leiden exists, the policy can be enforced. We as SVL therefore want to double the amount of parking places for bicycles in Leiden. Only when this is implemented will the municipality start taking wrongly placed bikes again. It needs to be made more clear when a bike is deemed to be an orphaned bike. It happens too often that a good bike of a student is towed when they are visiting their parents.

### *Plan Bree*

The Breestraat should be repurposed. SVL wants the Bree to become a part of the carefree canals, the roads will be narrowed and buses will not be allowed to drive there. This will give the stores more accessibility and we can add terraces and expand the green city center. The street does not have a proper business environment at this moment, there are relatively low amounts of pedestrians and the street is too hot. This is why we want a plan of action for the repurposing of the Breestraat. This helps Leiden become a pedestrian city as it should be.

### *Waste*

SVL wants to make it easier for families to take part in recycling and the separation of waste by increasing the amount of wastepasses that are allowed per residence. This way large households, including student housing have access to the right forms of waste disposal. The decrease of parking space in the city will allow us to dedicate some of the space to waste-solutions. Waste disposal at events needs to be facilitated.

### *Public restrooms*

SVL wants to have more inclusive public restrooms in the city. This is necessary to reduce the amount of public urinals. This will keep the streets clean and allow people to enjoy the city center. These toilets need to be inclusive by not

designating them on the basis of gender. They can therefore also not be urinals. These can be placed where parking spaces disappear. The city center will then truly be accessible to all.

### *Heatplan*

The city center is plagued by heat in the warm periods of the summer. Due to the close proximity of buildings and the amount of stone, the temperature in the city center. This is dangerous for the inhabitants of Leiden and makes the city center inaccessible. SVL wants to create a heatplan for the areas where the heat is highest and natural cooling is lacking. We need to look into solutions for roads made of something else than stone. The concrete jungle of our inner city creates immense heat to the city and inconvenience and danger to her citizens. We therefore need to look into using lighter colours pavement or even gravel to replace the often used red stones for our roads. This will reduce the heatstress and increase the enjoyment of these spaces by bikers and pedestrians.

### *The northern ring*

The northern ring, a project to increase road quality, is currently nullifying the positive effects of the emission free zone. SVL is of the opinion that the budget for this project can be better invested in a more sustainable, better and safer public transport system. SVL wants to invest more in public transport and against “de Leidse Ring Noord”

### *Sharemobility*

SVL is of the opinion that sharemobility is a good development for Leiden. Electrical cars and bikes that can be shared provide advantages to travelers, citizens and tourists. Electrical shared cars reduce the cars on the road and the pollution in the air. Electrical cargo bikes can provide solutions for people that do not possess a driving license such as young people that are trying to move. SVL is a proponent of such sustainable forms of sharevehicles. Different cities have shown that sharescooters or sharesteps lead to unsafe situations and nuisances. SVL would therefore like to exclude these forms of share-transport from the city.

### *City beach Leiden*

City beaches provide a unique location for relaxation, encounters with friends and culture in the center of the city. Studenten voor Leiden wants to invest in a permanent city beach near the edge of the city center at a location such as de Rijn or het Huigpark. This city beach will be an accessible location where friends can meet up with space for events, small hospitality entrepreneurs and sporting and cultural activities. Studenten voor Leiden argues in favor of a public safe swimming zone that is delimited from the boat traffic and is actively cleaned to make swimming in this public place safe and attractive. The city beach will increase social cohesion and offer inhabitants an easy way to enjoy the outside. The city beach should be sustainably produced, taking in mind bio-diversity, circular materials and good maintenance. This way we make Leiden a lively city, especially in the summer.

### *Right of shadow*

Climate change is ensuring the heating up of our summer and increasing the frequency and intensity of heatwaves. In fossilised cities, where asphalt and concrete hold on to the heat, the temperature often rises above that of greener areas. This effect is called the heat-island effect and it makes cities especially vulnerable. The consequences of this effect might include the health of its inhabitants. Studenten voor Leiden wants our city to be prepared for warm summers. We want to create more shadows, to make our city more climate adaptive and so everyone can find a place to cool down in the summer heat. Fossilised locations without shadow will need to be greened to cool down the city center through shadows. If greening is not possible, mobile shadow installations will be placed to lower the temperature in the city.

## 5. A safe and secure society

**Thanks to SVL, several initiatives have been launched to improve safety in our city. These include cargo bikes that travel to events with professional assistance, and structural training programs for municipal law enforcement officers (BOAs) have been implemented that improve public safety on the streets. Despite these positive initiatives, street harassment remains a significant problem. SVL advocates for preventive policies to combat street intimidation. Sufficient and appropriate support is essential for a sense of safety on the streets, online and in student life. Furthermore, SVL believes that Leiden must be prepared for a constantly changing world, driven by both the city council and the citizens themselves. The right to demonstrate shall not be infringed; people must be able to demonstrate without the unnecessary restrictions currently in place. A Leiden where everyone naturally feels safe: that is what constitutes safety.**

### 5.1 Being safe on the streets, even at night

In Leiden, 57% of women and 36% of men experience street harassment every year. This means 38,493 women and 22,528 men feel unsafe in our city. Therefore, SVL wants preventive measures in the form of a Safe Bus, well-trained residents, preventative use of CCTV, and a safe streetscape.

#### *The safety bus*

Having a central and accessible safe place for all your problems makes going out in Leiden safer and more enjoyable. SVL wants a Safe Bus in Leiden, following the example of the successful Rotterdam pilot: "Safe'r Spot." This bus is staffed by mental healthcare experts, security guards, and government officials. If you have been, are being, or witnessed intimidation or harassment on the street, you can go to the Safe Bus to report it. You can also go to the Safe Bus for simple problems, such as losing your friends or your phone. SVL plans to operate this bus on Thursday, Friday, and Saturday evenings, right in the heart of the city's nightlife district. These measures, combined with hospitality stewards, will reduce the workload of the security services. Hospitality stewards are stewards who can empathize with young people and thus prevent a fight or altercation in advance, but can also answer questions. This allows the security services to focus on

serious public disturbances, such as fights. The Safe Bus is an accessible reporting point and SVL wants to make reporting incidents more accessible.

#### *Well-trained hospitality staff*

49% of street harassment cases occur in and around hospitality or nightlife venues. SVL aims to address this by training hospitality staff so they can be an accessible point of contact for victims and bystanders. The municipality is responsible for facilitating these training sessions. Furthermore, hospitality businesses must work together to create a safe atmosphere in and around their establishments. A centralized nightlife area promotes this collaboration. A hospitality business that clearly states it has been trained to address intimidation creates a sense of security and facilitates faster action.

#### *Responsible use of CCTV*

Security cameras have a preventative effect, increase the sense of security, and provide evidence that can support victims of street harassment or inappropriate behaviour. However, SVL believes that cameras should not be deployed arbitrarily. To protect residents' privacy, cameras are used exclusively for security purposes. The footage can only be viewed after a complaint or police report has been filed, and their placement and use must be communicated clearly and transparently. By deploying cameras in carefully selected locations, such as Breestraat and Haarlemmerstraat, and by communicating their location clearly and visibly, a deterrent effect is created. Furthermore, cameras increase the sense of security and can provide useful evidence. The number of street harassment cases that end up in court and have sufficient evidence to win is very small. By installing security cameras, victims are empowered, people feel safer, and incidents are prevented.

#### *Municipal law enforcement officers (BOA's)*

BOAs play a vital role in preventing unsafe situations. Thanks to the SVL (Dutch Police Service), BOAs in Leiden are now receiving regular training in dealing with street intimidation and inappropriate behaviour. Furthermore, the SVL believes that BOAs should be given additional powers so they can intervene appropriately.

### *Well-trained citizens*

SVL strives to strengthen the active bystander culture and social control at the city level by promoting initiatives that contribute to a safe environment for everyone. Bystanders can be trained through social safety training, which is often based on the 5D-model. This model offers five concrete tools for responding effectively and responsibly to situations of social unsafety. It encourages people to be alert, support each other, and utilize social control positively. Social safety should not depend solely on the police or law enforcement. Pub staff, hospitality staff, and other bystanders must be able to offer support and intervene where necessary. This approach can help create a culture in which everyone feels responsible for a safe and respectful Leiden.

### *Safe streets*

SVL wants a street scene where everyone feels safe, especially after dark. A vibrant nightlife must go hand in hand with street safety. Well-lit streets and a visible police presence contribute to preventing crime and intimidation. Therefore, SVL advocates for more street lighting and camera surveillance in designated locations.

### *Campaigns against street harassment and sexual transgressive behaviour*

SVL wants Leiden to become a city where street harassment and sexually transgressive behaviour do not occur. One of the measures to achieve this is by being able to speak to Leiden residents about the problem of street harassment and sexually transgressive behaviour. Thanks to SVL, additional funding has been secured for the "Are you OK?" campaign. SVL has also arranged for a cargo bike to visit major events like EL CID where people can ask questions about transgressive behaviour. This initiative needs to be continued , and that's why SVL wants a multi-year campaign to highlight the root causes of the problem. SVL wants to conduct this campaign in collaboration with the city criminologist.

### *Wishes, limits and the city's criminologist*

The Wishes and Limits approach and the city criminologist are two important initiatives for the safety of our city that were established thanks to SVL. The Wishes and Limits approach aims to make Leiden safer and combat street intimidation. The city criminologist researches social safety in Leiden and aims to improve it.

These two initiatives deserve the support they deserve. The Wishes and Limits approach must be continued, and the city criminologist must receive structural support.

#### *A vision for the future*

For SVL, the above points are just the beginning, because the real solution lies in a cultural shift. This shift will not be easy, but it is desperately needed. SVL wants to take steps that will lead to a cultural shift in how we view the problem of social safety. SVL wants a Leiden where the problem is tackled at its core. The focus is not only on preventing incidents, but also on making the very idea of any form of transgressive behavior or street intimidation unacceptable. Only then will the problem be truly solved. This shift must occur at all levels of society, from young to old. For example, student associations can organize campaigns to involve members in this shift. Many student associations already inform their members about this cultural shift, and SVL would like to see all associations do this. They play a crucial role in social safety in the city and can contribute significantly. This issue also needs to be addressed across all levels of education. This cultural shift will take time, but it will be more than worth it.

## **5.2 Providing a perspective for young people**

Leiden must be a safe city where young people are helped before they are at risk of going astray. The City-wide Youthplan plays a major role here; it is an approach where young people receive help that suits them. Young people are visible on the streets, but because their lives are increasingly taking place online, we are losing control. We can regain this control by also having aid workers online. Therefore SVL advocates for providing a perspective for young people, both on the street and online.

#### *Online counsellor*

There is less control over the online world where young people increasingly spend their time. Because young people can quickly go astray through these platforms, it is essential that we can reach them online to offer an alternative perspective in time. This can, for example, be done by deploying an online counsellor who is present on platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, and Telegram. It is important to

connect with young people in this way and provide them with a perspective before they go down the wrong path.

#### *Student ambassadors in play*

Student ambassadors play an important role for young people in Leiden; They are an easy point of contact and improve the fire safety of student housing. Nevertheless, the budget for the student police officer and student firefighter have been partially cut back. With all its students, Leiden needs at least one full-time student police officer who focuses specifically on what is going on regarding students.

#### *Fire Safety*

You must be able to live safely in your student residence. Student houses are often not completely fireproof due to poor maintenance by the landlord and insufficient information about fire safety. Other vulnerable groups, such as single seniors, are helped with fire safety. Because student houses are also vulnerable in terms of fire safety, SVL argues for student-oriented support. The student ambassador at the fire brigade plays an important role in this by providing information and carrying out fire checks. Partly thanks to SVL, the student ambassador of the fire brigade has more hours available for student houses. If it is up to SVL, this will be expanded to a full-time student ambassador.

## **5.3 Peace in troubling times**

#### *A resilient local government*

If it is up to SVL, our local government must be well prepared for a possible disaster/ crisis. Plans must be ready about how the city council will work during, for example, a power outage or a conflict. Thought must be given to how the council meetings can be held without power in the city hall and how the civil service will continue to run. These are questions for which an answer and a plan must be ready. It is up to the municipality and city council to lead the way in Leiden when it comes to a resilient society. Campaigns must be set up to reach all groups in the Leiden municipality. These campaigns are about how the (vulnerable) Leiden residents can prepare themselves as well as possible. The municipality must also investigate where it wants to place its emergency support points. These are support points where residents can go within walking distance

during a crisis or other emergency. Here, residents can collect power via emergency generators (type of batteries), get drinking water and report missing persons. SVL wants the municipality to be ready for disasters and conflicts.

#### *A well-prepared Leiden*

SVL would like to see a Leiden in which its citizens are well prepared for a possible disaster or armed conflict. To achieve this, the municipality must set up campaigns that reach out to all groups of society and inform them about how they can prepare for an emergency. More attention should be given to certain vulnerable groups such as students and residents with a lower income. They often shop for groceries daily, so they do not have a stock of food and other groceries at home and have less money for an emergency kit. If student associations or other organizations come up with initiatives to make Leiden more resilient, the municipality should support these initiatives. The residents of Leiden themselves can also take initiative; they can, in cooperation with the municipality, organize a meeting where neighbourhood residents discuss what to do during a crisis or emergency. In addition, Leiden residents can look around their own neighbourhood to see who the vulnerable people are and who may need extra help. This way, Leiden is well prepared for all situations.

## **5.4 Right to demonstrate**

SVL believes that the right to demonstrate must be respected and shall not be infringed. Unnecessary conditions are imposed when it comes to demonstrating in Leiden. Organizers of demonstrations must provide certain information in advance, even though the law does not require this. As a result some demonstrators will not register for a demonstration, which creates a less safe situation for both the demonstrators and the emergency services. SVL therefore wants the municipality to actively take up its legally established facilitating role regarding the right to demonstrate. In this way, all residents of Leiden can demonstrate safely without unnecessary restrictions and are not hindered from demonstrating. In addition, it is important that there is the possibility of independent evaluation of demonstrations in Leiden.

## **5.5 Safe use of substances**

Excessive drug use is a major problem that SVL does not shy away from. However, legal drug use should still be safe. SVL therefore advocates for easily accessible and sufficient testing locations in Leiden. At present, Brijder, the organization that tests drugs, has only one testing location that is open for just three hours per week. This is far from enough, resulting in long waiting times for results and not everyone having the opportunity to have their drugs tested. SVL therefore advocates for more testing locations and longer opening hours so that legal drugs can be used in a safe and responsible way.

## 6. Education and equal opportunities

**The Leiden of today is unthinkable without education and knowledge. SVL is a party for all young people and therefore values good, accessible, and innovative education. Leiden can be proud to be the educational city of 2025. In our city of knowledge, learning is valuable for everyone: it opens doors, increases equality of opportunity, and encourages personal development. Equal opportunities are essential, because background should never determine someone's future.**

### 6.1 Education

#### *Teacher shortage*

A good education starts with enough teachers. That is why SVL advocates for a Leiden version of the Large Cities Bonus (Grote Steden Bonus): an annual financial allowance with extra rewards for those working at schools with greater challenges. At the same time, we address workload by investing in smaller classes, additional support staff, and suitable school buildings. This creates space for professional growth, especially for new teachers who are actively guided.

#### *Suitable and flexible school buildings*

School buildings must align with the school's educational vision. Renovations are not just about the bricks, but also about what education requires. Think of extra space for hybrid teaching methods, or, for example, a theatre hall in a school where arts and culture play an important role. In addition, school buildings must be flexible and future-proof. Gymnasiums can be used in the evening by sports clubs, and school buildings should have the possibility to be converted into housing and vice versa.

#### *Expanding the high school curriculum*

A secondary school should be more than just a place to earn a diploma. It should be a safe and inspiring environment where young people can develop and feel connected to each other and to the city. SVL wants education to broadly shape young people. Therefore, the municipality should provide resources for schools to offer guest lessons on LGBTQ+ acceptance, sexual health, debt, discrimination, internet safety, and artificial intelligence. Schools should be given space for this

but giving these lessons should not be mandatory. If schools do give the lessons, it should be supported with municipal resources.

### *Bridging officials*

Bridging officials connect schools, families, and social services and identify what students need to be able to develop. SVL supports the work that these people do. When this approach has been fully implemented in primary education, SVL wants to expand it in combination with the Leiden Approach for Equal Opportunities. The municipality should do this without affecting the autonomy of schools.

### *Participation*

Young people also have a voice outside the classroom. SVL wants the municipality to continue investing in the youth council. In addition, SVL wants all students to visit the city hall at least once to learn about how the municipality works. This helps build engagement and civic responsibility.

### *Libraries*

Libraries are long gone from being just places to borrow books. In Leiden, they play a broad societal role: they enhance literacy and digital skills, encourage reading, stimulate cultural and creative development, and contribute to civic education. BplusC, the organization behind the libraries in Leiden, carries out this important work largely with support from the municipality. They provide a "rijke schooldag," for example by offering music lessons to children. SVL recognizes the importance of these facilities and therefore supports structural funding for BplusC, so that these social functions are preserved, the library buildings can be well maintained and that they stay visible and accessible in the city.

## **6.2 Equal opportunities in education**

Education is key to breaking the cycle of unequal opportunities. SVL therefore advocates for a good education for every student, regardless of home situation or financial background. To achieve this, SVL wants extra support for students with physical or mental problems. The municipality must provide schools with the resources to make this possible.

### *Preventing school stay-outs through case-by-case solutions*

Every child has the right to education. That is why SVL wants to prevent dropouts with customized solutions for students/pupils who cannot find a place in regular or special education. Not by sending students directly to child welfare organisations, but by looking at what is needed to kickstart their development. Together with "Bureau Leerrecht", an investigation must be conducted into the exact causes of school dropout and staying at home and how these can be specifically prevented.

### *Fair homework support*

Homework support can help many students learn how to study and make up for any delays. At the moment, homework support is too expensive for many parents. As a result, children from wealthy families have a better chance of achieving good school results. As SVL, we find this unfair. Therefore, there must be free homework support for students whose parents earn less and whose children most need homework support. The municipality must therefore offer subsidies to non-profit organizations, such as SOL or Inluzio. Close cooperation with schools is necessary because teachers know best which students need homework support the most. SVL also wants the municipality to support schools in providing homework support through older students. This allows students of different ages to interact and learn from each other.

### *Sleutelscholen*

SVL wants to introduce Sleutelscholen (Key Schools) in Leiden: schools where Parent-Child Teams and neighbourhood teams work closely together. Through cooperation between school and family, problems can be identified and addressed early and students can receive appropriate support when needed. Schools are given the freedom to implement this approach themselves, supported by a specific subsidy. In this way, we are building a society in which every child has equal opportunities, and where parents and caregivers are actively involved.

### *Flexible education*

Many pupils and students work, play sports, or provide informal care alongside their studies. The municipality should encourage schools to increase flexibility in education, so that students can organize their week in a flexible way.

### *Early childhood education*

Educational and social differences start as early as preschool. The municipality can help ensure equal opportunities from an early age by contributing to early childhood education for all children. Therefore, SVL supports affordable early childhood education in which every child is prepared for the challenges in their community and can receive appropriate education.

### *Integration support*

Leiden is a frontrunner in integration. Newcomers are assisted in creating an integration plan. Leiden should remain a welcoming city. For people who are new to Leiden, integration can still be overwhelming. Therefore, it should be made easier for newcomers to integrate, for example through appropriate language education. There are already International Language Classes for students to learn the Dutch language. SVL wants to expand this. Better information should also be provided to families involved in integration processes, regarding everything that needs to be arranged. It should be possible to request an interpreter for meetings with the municipality so that children never have to translate for their parents. It should also be clear what is expected of new residents and what is possible.

## 7. Economy and city of knowledge

**The economy of Leiden is driven by young people and (young) entrepreneurs. Vocational education trains the next generation and at the same time, incubators such as PLNT give young entrepreneurs the opportunity to develop their ideas and skills. According to SVL, the municipality should take on a facilitating role to enhance the creativity and economic potential of Leiden. By engaging with entrepreneurs, SVL aims to make Leiden a place where information for this group is easily accessible. SVL advocates for a municipality that values the importance of vocational education and encourages cooperation with these institutions. In this way, the knowledge from vocational education supports the economy of Leiden.**

### 7.1 Leiden: the city of knowledge

Leiden is the city of knowledge and culture. This knowledge comes from the vocational education based here: the various vocational schools (MBOs), higher professional education (HBO), and the university strengthen the Leiden economy. SVL wants the campuses to become more attractive, makes finding internships easier, and strengthens the connection between vocational education and the municipality.

#### *Student and city*

Student associations play an important social role in the city. The strategic partnership is a collaboration between the municipality and student associations affiliated with the Local Chamber of Associations. This allows student associations to organize a social project to bring students and the city closer together, such as the Longest Leiden Table and the annual resuscitation day. SVL has ensured that this partnership has a larger budget: over the past four years, it has doubled from €30.000 to €60.000 per year. SVL considers the connection between students and the city important and wants to make this increase structural, so that student associations can continue to fulfill their social role.

### *A vibrant Leiden Bio Science park*

The Leiden Bio Science Park (LBSP) is a source of innovation, a campus for thousands of students, and it puts Leiden on the international map. It is an important part of the city that has the potential to become more attractive. SVL advocates for a lively LBSP with terraces and a nightclub. SVL also wants a supermarket to be established, so that residents and students do not have to travel far for groceries. This way, we make the LBSP an appealing place to live, study, and spend time.

### *Construction on campus*

Vocational schools are growing and are therefore bringing more students to Leiden. This development makes Leiden an even more vibrant student city. Only together with the municipality can this necessary physical growth also take place. SVL believes that the municipality should help by issuing permits for renovations and extensions. The city of knowledge and culture thus provides job-specific, higher professional, and university education with the physical space to welcome new students.

### *Collaboration between vocational schools and the municipality*

Young people who study bring a lot of knowledge with them. Initiatives like "Leren met de stad" bring students and the municipality closer together to further develop the city. SVL advocates for further collaboration on topics that concern young people, by expanding the "leren met de stad" program.

### *A broad Leiden student council*

Connecting students with the city brings fresh perspectives and new insights. Students from all educational institutions should be able to make use of the different kinds of knowledge they possess. SVL advocates for a Broad Leiden Student Council in which students of all levels engage in dialogue and provide advice to the municipality and educational institutions. The Broad Rotterdam Student Council can serve as inspiration for this. SVL emphasizes the importance of broad representation of all educational levels, because it is important that all students have a voice and that this can reduce the gap between different levels of education. In this way, SVL works on new insights for the city.

### *Senior vocational training students*

Senior vocational students (MBO) should be recognized and treated like any other student in Leiden. Therefore, SVL believes that the city administration should advocate for adequate internship compensation for vocational students doing internships in Leiden. There will need to be an investigation by the municipality into how employers, who trainees can be encouraged to provide an adequate internship allowance. SVL also wants the municipality, in consultation with the MBO institutions, to consult on how best to combat internship discrimination. The later developed "internship hunter" will also be able to play a role here. In addition, MBO students must be able to participate fully in activities such as the EL CID and be supported and encouraged to participate in the city.

### *International students*

Leiden is an international city, with currently around 7,000 international students at our educational institutions. They contribute to the high levels of our university and university of applied science, making the city more diverse. These students belong to Leiden but often encounter specific problems. Housing is a major bottleneck: due to language barriers and prejudices, landlords often prefer Dutch students. In addition, international students are extra vulnerable to exploitation, because they do not always know the Dutch laws. SVL wants the municipality to actively support international students. This means working with educational institutions to better respond to the demand for housing due to the growth of this group, and to clearly inform international students in advance and upon arrival about their rights and obligations in the Netherlands. In this way we ensure that they feel welcome and can fully participate in our city.

### *The bridge between intern and entrepreneur*

SVL proposes to bring the internship hunter back to life. An internship hunter guides students to find an internship and calls on companies to offer internships. This plan was already implemented during the corona pandemic, because students experienced many obstacles in finding an internship at the time. The internship hunter is still needed, because internship fees are too low and it is difficult for students to find a good internship that meets their needs, wishes and development opportunities. By compiling a register for the internships in Leiden, it offers the entrepreneurs the opportunity to compete for interns. This will

encourage entrepreneurs to offer higher internship allowances in order to attract more interns. The internship hunter is also a connecting factor between the economy and the city of knowledge by bringing educational institutions into contact with the entrepreneurs in Leiden. In this way, the practical knowledge can come to the schools and the young insights and innovations can reach the entrepreneurs again.

## **7.2 Economy**

Young people and (young) entrepreneurs are taking the Leiden economy to a higher level with their unique ideas. When you are young, it should be attractive to start doing business and to work in the city. SVL is working on a healthy business climate by making the provision of information about, for example, permits and subsidies easily accessible. In addition, SVL emphasizes reducing the rules that weigh on the creativity of (young) entrepreneurs. In this way, SVL stimulates the local economy.

### *Young people as the engine of the local economy*

It is nice to work in the city where you live and/or study when you are young. The young people in this city keep the many businesses running, such as the shops or the catering industry. Young people are also full of innovative ideas that they want to develop. SVL stimulates the hospitality industry by offering more space for terraces, which increases employment opportunities for young people who want to work in the hospitality industry. SVL is also working on sufficient physical space for young entrepreneurs to start their start-ups. In this way, young people are taking Leiden's economy to a higher level.

### *Urban planning*

The environment is important to stimulate the local economy. SVL is committed to greening the city, making the city centre car-free and adding terraces, such as on the Breestraat and at the Hooglandse Kerkplein. In this way, it becomes attractive to be in the city, for the (young) Leiden resident and the tourist. This will also increase the number of consumers and allow the Leiden economy to grow further.

### *The entrepreneurship counter*

Entrepreneurship starts with the municipality you operate in. Leiden has numerous rules, permits and subsidies. It is therefore not surprising that (starting) entrepreneurs can no longer see the wood for the trees. SVL therefore wants an "Entrepreneurs' Desk": one central point where entrepreneurs can go with their questions and where the municipality thinks constructively about which rules, permits and subsidies are relevant to the entrepreneur. This makes it easier for small and medium-sized businesses to operate in Leiden.

#### *Future-proof economy*

The world is changing rapidly and Leiden is changing with it. Fortunately, Leiden has already taken many big steps. SVL believes that the municipality should support initiatives to make the local economy circular. SVL is in favour of continuing the existing "sustainability desk", where entrepreneurs and residents can go with all their questions about sustainable themes. If it is up to SVL, the municipality will encourage entrepreneurs who want to go all out for the circular transition, but are not yet able to do so themselves. SVL believes that the municipality should continue to network between green entrepreneurs and support small and medium-sized enterprises and start-ups through the existing subsidies.

#### *A place for the young start-up*

Young people are brimming with great ideas. Leiden needs to be able to showcase these talented young entrepreneurs. This group is leaving the city, while it's crucial, they stay. SVL advocates for sufficient office space and creative places like PLNT. This way, entrepreneurs do not have to manage their business and ideas from their attic, and the municipality supports the city's young, creative energy.

#### *Growing hospitality industry*

The hospitality industry is an important part of a vibrant and economically healthy city. But in Leiden there is still room to stimulate the hospitality industry more, which contributes to the liveliness of the city. The pub 'De Kroeg', for example, was one of the few places in Leiden where people still danced. They were informed that this was not allowed because it was not included in their permit. SVL wants to change that and make it possible that people in Leiden can dance again. In addition, there is still a lot of unused space that can be filled with

terraces. Now, the quality of life in the city centre is still used for , but SVL stands for more liveliness in the city by offering space for the expansion of terraces. That is why SVL wants a different permit system in which dancing in Leiden will be possible again and the hospitality industry will be given the space to grow.

#### *The farmers market*

On a hungover Wednesday and Saturday, fresh fish must be available at the market. SVL therefore believes that the marketplace should continue to exist in its current form. If growth is needed, the municipality will enter discussions with stakeholders from the city, including the marketplace entrepreneurs.

## 8. Poverty

**Many families are struggling to make ends meet, students are experiencing increasing financial stress, and it is becoming difficult for the average resident of Leiden to continue living in the city. Many young people in Leiden also live in poverty. Money stress can take a heavy toll on young people's physical and mental health. SVL sees this and wants to tackle poverty among young people, students and starters. No one should have to live in poverty, especially not in a rich city like Leiden.**

### *Poverty no longer a taboo*

SVL believes that the municipality should support campaigns that create awareness about the poverty that is present. 14% of households in Leiden live below the poverty line. Discussing this should not be taboo, because seeing it as a taboo prevents people from seeking help. This only increases the problem. The municipality must work through schools to identify and discuss financial problems among families. In this way, targeted help can be offered to families in financial need.

### *Poverty among students*

The municipality of Leiden does not have any statistics on poverty among students and there is no plan to investigate this. The national line is now that borrowing from DUO also counts as income. This is unjust and blatantly unfair, because loans with interest are not income. Unfortunately, there are students who live in poverty and so policy must be made on this. SVL therefore wants research to be done into poverty among students and to look at how students living in poverty can be supported.

### *Focussing on prevention*

Many young people are struggling with financial problems. Delayed payment companies, such as Klarna and Afterpay, and online gambling are partly to blame for this. This makes it easy for young people to build up considerable debts. Moreover, not all problems are immediately recognizable. SVL therefore believes that the municipality should focus on the early identification of financial problems. To achieve this, clear information and workshops must be available. For

example, more attention should be paid in education to arranging finances, for example through information and training. The municipality can develop an online teaching method for this, so that young people end up directly at the relevant channels. In addition, there must be more visibility for low-threshold points such as SHout! for questions about finances, tenancy law, loans and debts.

### *Subsidies for students*

SVL wants all students to receive the subsidies to which they are entitled. When poverty among students is mapped, it can also be oriented where Leiden students can still use support. In addition, there are students in Leiden who, due to various mental and/or physical limitations, are unable to have a part-time job in addition to their studies. These students are struggling to make ends meet and deserve a helping hand, but the subsidies they are currently receiving are too low. With the current plans, this will be paid nationally through DUO, but that subsidy will be based on the idea that the student would work less than seven hours a week and earn a minimum wage. Figures from Statistics Netherlands show that a higher education student works an average of 18.7 hours, which does not correspond to the aforementioned seven hours. SVL therefore wants the subsidies for students with all disabilities to be increased. SVL has also submitted a motion, which has already been adopted, that the alderman should lobby for an increase in this allowance in case the plans are implemented to pay it nationally through DUO. Furthermore, SVL remains committed to all students with a physical and mental disability, also financially.

### *The participation act*

The "Participation Act in balance" has been drawn up by the national government and must be implemented by the municipality. Unfortunately, the Participation Act, which is intended to support and guide as many people as possible towards work and income security, does not appear to be a good fit for the individual unemployed. SVL would like more investment and attention to be paid to making this more applicable to all residents of Leiden.

### *The "Bouwdepot"*

The "Bouwdepot" supports young people who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless. These young people often struggle with debts, lack a financial safety net and experience financial stress. The "Bouwdepot" offers them unconditional,

monthly financial support for a year. This support gives young people the peace and space they need to build their future. The “Bouwdepot” is therefore the right approach to homelessness among young people. The “Bouwdepot” of Leiden has started as a trial, but SVL argues for long-term support for this valuable initiative.

### *Migrant workers*

About 3500 EU migrant workers live and work in Leiden, often in poor conditions. These labour migrants are usually recruited by employment agencies that often also offer them a home. But due to poor working conditions, they are often underpaid and if there is an accident at work, the victims are often not compensated enough and are then at risk of losing their housing. SVL proposes that better support should be offered to these migrant workers in Leiden. This means that migrants are better supported and educated in, for example, their rights and obligations, that labour migrants are properly registered, and that their employers are encouraged to offer permanent contracts with better working conditions. The Hague initiative "Labour migration in good jobs" can be looked at.

### *Food poverty*

Some Leiden residents experience food poverty because they do not have a well-equipped kitchen and have few alternatives to eating with others. As a result, many residents are dependent on either fast and unhealthy or expensive alternatives. This problem is mainly experienced by Leiden residents living below the poverty line and students. That is why SVL proposes to make room in Leiden for the "Participation Kitchen", a kitchen in, for example, a neighbourhood or community centre where people come together to organize meals together. This initiative has a lot of potential in Leiden to bring people together to eat healthy together. SVL proposes to encourage students who experience food poverty to participate in this and also to make room for a "Youth Participation Kitchen" in the youth centre.

## 9. Participation, governance and digitalisation

**In Leiden, 34% of the residents are under the age of 26. Yet this age group is not fairly represented in the city council and municipal politics. Young people are the future and must be represented in Leiden politics. SVL has therefore ensured that young people from the age of 16 can become "duo councillors" in the city council. SVL has also established the most influential youth council in the Netherlands in Leiden. The municipality's website and online participation platform must be accessible to everyone. So that everyone can participate and contribute ideas to the city council. SVL believes that Leiden must move with the times. For example, the municipality's social media channels must ensure that young people in the city know what the municipality is doing. SVL also believes that our municipality should focus on the use of algorithms and artificial intelligence, which are used in a controlled manner, benefiting the municipality.**

### 9.1 Participation and Governance

SVL was founded with the aim of representing young people in the city. Everyone should be able to participate in the discussion and have the opportunity to participate in the city. That is why the municipality must continue to actively work for youth participation and keeping local democracy accessible. SVL advocates a young, strong and accessible local democracy.

#### *Democratie071*

SVL wants an integrated approach to democracy education in Leiden, so that education and local democracy are well attuned to each other. Democratie071 is a separate part of the municipality that will focus entirely on trust, information and involvement in and with politics, following the Utrecht example of Democratie030. A good example of involving young people in local democracy is Model Leiden. In this programme, students from Leiden come together to think about important themes and come up with solutions for them. In this way, primary and secondary school students are involved in Leiden democracy at an early age. SVL believes that Democratie071, the youth council, the children's

elections and the student and pupil debate should be laid down in the Leiden participation ordinance.

#### *The most influential youth council in the Netherlands*

It is important that young people are represented in politics. That is why the city council has set up the youth Council thanks to SVL. This is the most influential youth council in the Netherlands and it should therefore be preserved. They meet every two weeks and give advice to the city council. The recommendations are then discussed in the council; So something is really done with their input. This is the opportunity, together with lowering the duo council membership to 16 years, for young people in Leiden under 18 to make their voices heard in Leiden. SVL therefore believes that the youth council should become a structural part of the Leiden city council.

#### *Visible participation online*

SVL believes that it should be easier for all Leiden residents to make their opinion heard about municipal policy. Participation opportunities should be given a prominent place on the municipality's website, such as the online participation platform, information about speaking to the city council and sending a letter to the city council. Thanks to SVL, the city council is now also visible on social media. These channels must be further professionalized and expanded so that more young people can be reached.

#### *The Leiden student and pupil debate*

With the student and pupil debate, SVL wants to give students and pupils in Leiden a chance to make themselves heard by local politicians. Thus, as far as SVL is concerned, this annual debate is the time to enter into a conversation with the Municipal Executive. This debate focuses on the most important issues in student and pupil life. In this way, the council immediately hears about the problems and can get to work immediately. With this event, SVL ensures that students and pupils have a direct voice towards our city council.

#### *Citizens' assembly in Leiden*

SVL considers participation very important, for and by the people of Leiden. That is why SVL argues for a citizens' assembly: a group of people from the city drawn by lottery who jointly investigate a social issue and give advice on it. This group must

be representative of the residents of Leiden. The draw of this group will not be binding. This advice goes to the city council, which has to work on it. In this way, SVL ensures policy that is more in line with what is needed in Leiden.

#### *Student affairs official*

The student affairs official represents the interests of students in the municipality. This civil servant works together with the young student civil servants; Together they form the connecting link between the municipality and students and play a crucial role in increasing student participation. At the moment, this team is only active within the subject of Welfare, but SVL believes that this should be expanded to more topics. There are many more areas where the interests of students must be represented.

#### *Youth and neighbourhood participation*

SVL argues for more and fair representation of young people in neighbourhood associations. Thanks to SVL's efforts, neighbourhood associations no longer speak officially on behalf of their neighbourhood, but are seen as an equal stakeholder. Young people in Leiden are poorly represented in this. SVL wants to further develop this system by allowing multiple neighbourhood associations per neighbourhood, so that everyone can be represented. This can create neighbourhood associations that offer more space for the perspective of young people. When speaking to the city council, a speaker on behalf of a neighbourhood association must provide transparency about where the input was taken from, so that it is clear on whose behalf the speaker is speaking according to SVL.

#### *Youth elections*

SVL would like to see children get a taste of local democracy at a young age. Children often go to the polling station with their parents, but they are not allowed to vote. If the children do go with their parents and/or guardians, SVL believes that they should be able to vote equally. With the children's elections, children are introduced to politics at an early age and learn the importance of voting. The results of their elections will be communicated to the city council and the college, so that they can take the results into account in their visions and the voice of young residents is also heard.

### *Strengthening the local media*

SVL sees a strong local media as essential for the city and local democracy. The Leiden Media Fund must therefore be extended. This media fund improves the quality of local journalism, so that residents, organisations and companies are better informed about what is going on in Leiden and the surrounding area. The provincial subsidy must be extended so that the subsidy granted by the municipality of Leiden to the Leiden Media Fund can be increased. SVL believes it is important to maintain and improve the quality of local journalism.

### *Residence requirement for Duo-council members*

For SVL, it is very important that young people in Leiden are allowed to have a say in the future of their city. Thanks to SVL, it is possible to become a duo council member from the age of 16. Now, every (duo) council member must live in the municipality of Leiden. However, due to the tight housing market, it is not possible for every duo council member to continue living in Leiden. That is why SVL believes that the legal requirement that (duo) council members must live in the municipality of Leiden should be adjusted. When (duo) council members are sworn in, they must live in the municipality of Leiden. As soon as they are sworn in, it should not be the case that they have to leave the city council due to circumstances beyond their control.

### *(Duo) city council and councilmembers must always be able to do their work safely*

SVL believes that (duo) council and executive board members should always be approachable for Leiden residents. Unfortunately, it sometimes happens that it is not always safe for these representatives to do their work. City councillors in Leiden can face aggression, intimidation and even threats, which can make them feel unsafe. Duo, council and college members must therefore receive training on the standard in Leiden. In addition, the city council must practice every council term what to do in the event of a disturbance, so that it can do its work safely and well-prepared.

## **9.2 Digitization**

A lot is changing in our modern society; the digitization of governance is also a very present-day topic and raises many issues. For example; look at the use of

algorithms and other forms of artificial intelligence. SVL believes it is important that the municipality invests in its future, in a responsible manner. SVL wants to prevent serious errors with algorithms, such as the "childcare benefits scandal" and other scandals. Things must change: the city council must be transparent and be responsible with the use of algorithms and artificial intelligence, and these must be used in the right way. That is why SVL wants the municipality to invest in digitization, a new program and a digitally literate council. All this must be done in a transparent and responsible manner.

#### *A new programme: "Leidse aanpak digitalisering" (LAD)*

SVL believes that digitalisation should become a new programme within the city council. The LAD means that there must be a vote held on the use of algorithms and artificial intelligence, that the municipal council must be able to account for every algorithm and every form of artificial intelligence used, and that (duo) council members with sufficient knowledge can check them. The educational institutions in Leiden can be involved in this, so that they can share their knowledge and expertise with the municipality. In addition, there must be a register with a clear explanation of all algorithms: what kind of algorithm is used, what its purpose is and how it works. With this, SVL wants to guarantee the privacy of residents and deal with algorithms and artificial intelligence in the right way.

#### *A digitally literate city council*

SVL wants the city council to receive training on algorithms, artificial intelligence and other developments in the field of digitization. The council currently knows too little about these technological feats, which is at the expense of innovation and the privacy of the residents of Leiden. In fact, the current knowledge of the city council does not extend much further than ChatGPT. When the council is trained in the field of algorithms, it can check for itself whether the algorithms comply with all the required laws and regulations. If the council members are well trained, they will be more able to deal with issues such as disinformation, deep-fake videos, and ensure that they can keep up with developments and act on them. In this way, Leiden can develop responsibly and move with the times.

## 10. Finance

**Young people know better than anyone how to budget. For many young people, the end of the month is tight, and every euro can only be spent once. The finances of the municipality of Leiden are the same, so sensible choices must be made. SVL therefore wants transparent policies where capital is spent efficiently. In addition, SVL wants to critically examine the existing taxes to make them fairer.**

### 10.1 Financially sound, responsible and transparent choices

#### *Financial soundness*

Leiden is financially healthy and has built up good reserves to be able to cope with setbacks. SVL believes it is important to continue this approach by managing the budget wisely. Municipal finances are closely monitored by strictly keeping income and expenditures separate. For a solid and responsible spending pattern in Leiden, the efficient use of public resources is a requirement. Alongside this, the high debts the municipality already has, which could potentially lead to problems in the future, must be taken into consideration. SVL also argues that the municipality must be vigilant to ensure that capital allocated for specific purposes is indeed used for those purposes. That is how the city's ambitions are ultimately realized.

#### *The social domain*

The social domain remains a closed financial system. The safeguard around the social domain remains in place so that these expenditures are secure. Nevertheless, the social domain struggles with a structural deficit. These deficits should have as little impact as possible on young people, vulnerable groups, and preventive measures within the social domain.

#### *A budget made for everyone*

Last year, the program budget of the municipality of Leiden comprised 248 pages and was written in complex language. The budget is therefore far from accessible

to the residents of Leiden. Yet it is important that residents know what choices the municipality makes with the resources at its disposal. SVL therefore advocates for a budget in simple language, with a clear summary and a special explanatory video for young people, so that it becomes clear what choices the city council is making.

## **10.2 A critical look at taxes**

### *Parking tax*

The city centre would be a nicer place to stay if there were fewer cars parked. SVL will work on this. Short-term parking in the city center will become more expensive, but parking permits outside the canals will remain affordable. The income from this increase in parking tax will be spent on improving the infrastructure. Read more about this in the chapter Climate, Mobility and Environment.

### *Housing costs*

The municipal taxes in Leiden are high. The waste collection levy, sewerage and water treatment levy and property tax ensure that Leiden residents pay a relatively large amount of money. SVL strives to reduce this tax burden on residents where possible. For students who have little or no income, it should be possible to reclaim levies. In addition, students must be aware of the possibility of doing so.

### *Tourist tax*

SVL sees the added value of City Marketing and wants Leiden&Partners to keep sufficient financial resources to continue to do their work. Seventy percent of the tourist tax collected now goes to this organization to put Leiden (inter-) nationally on the map. A unique collaboration that the municipality does not do with any other organization. As far as SVL is concerned, the construction with Leiden&Partners will be adjusted. Leiden&Partners receives a fixed subsidy instead of a percentage of the tax collected. The total amount that Leiden&Partners receives from the municipality will remain the same as it is now. In this way, Leiden can continue to be put on the map (inter-) nationally.