

Technical Preface

This election manifesto is the result of a broad and committed process. Many volunteers have contributed to it, putting forward ideas, discussing wording, writing, revising and consolidating sections. The manifesto was subsequently debated and adopted at a party conference.

We, the Free Democrats, stand for progress, openness to new technologies and the sensible use of modern tools. That is why artificial intelligence was also used as an aid during the final editorial stages of this manifesto. Proofreading, formal standardisation and typesetting were carried out with the support of AI. The political content, resolutions and statements in this programme naturally remain the result of our party's democratic consultation and decision-making process.

Despite the utmost care taken, it cannot be ruled out that individual spelling, grammatical or formatting errors may have gone undetected. We apologise for any such errors and would be grateful for any feedback should any be found.

For us, the use of artificial intelligence is not an end in itself, but an expression of a pragmatic understanding of technology: it should support people, make work easier and create freedom, without replacing responsibility. This is precisely how we understand progress.

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Education

Education is freedom. It is the key to a self-determined life, to participation and social mobility, regardless of one's background or family circumstances. Over the past few decades, Berlin has squandered too much of this promise. We want to give every child in Berlin genuine opportunities: a solid foundation in German and cultural skills, support AND high expectations, and clear prospects for vocational training or higher education. With quality rather than ideology, with a drive to excel rather than egalitarianism, with genuine equality of opportunity rather than empty promises. Every child in Berlin deserves a school that gives them confidence in the German language, that challenges and supports them, and prepares them for vocational training or university. And our universities must once again become beacons of excellence, capable of competing internationally for the best minds. That is our mission, and that is what we are fighting for.

Mission German

- We want to extend compulsory schooling to include a preparatory year (pre-school) taking place in childcare centres in the year before children start school. In doing so, we aim to ensure that children acquire a basic level of skills necessary for attending school. In addition to motor skills, such as holding a pen, using scissors and tying a bow, this includes strengthening non-academic skills (soft skills), frustration tolerance, language competence and social interaction. These must be guided by clearly defined learning objectives for pre-school work during the final year at nursery. For effective educational work with each individual child, it is essential that the respective support methods are adapted to the child's individual stage of development. We want to ensure that the indirect work (including assessments, observations and parent-teacher meetings) carried out by early years professionals is fully recognised and taken into account in staffing ratios.
- We are committed to ensuring that language support takes place in every nursery from day one. Funding for language support should be based on actual needs.
- We call for the school entry phase to be specifically strengthened by underpinning developmental assessments of language skills, numeracy and self-organisation. This requires mandatory language proficiency tests for all children aged between three and four. Participation in these assessments is

compulsory, as year after year hundreds of children fall through the net because participation in the tests is not properly monitored. To this end, the Senate Department for Education, Youth and Family must present a practical and resource-efficient implementation plan that ensures compulsory participation without unilaterally shifting the responsibility for enforcement onto nursery providers.

- Specialist qualifications held by educational staff in childcare centres, such as additional training in language teaching, should be remunerated separately.
- We will ensure that children who lack sufficient German language skills attend additional German lessons during the holidays.
- Children with special needs will be supported as effectively as possible within mainstream classes.

Nurseries and early childhood education

- We want to provide all children with the best possible environment for developing their cognitive, motor, social, linguistic, musical and mathematical skills. We therefore aim to remove the existing administrative and organisational barriers currently faced by all Berlin childcare providers as they expand their capacity. We want a cross-district, standardised administrative structure – a ‘fast-track system’ at state level – in which only a single application for approval needs to be submitted, with a guarantee of prompt processing. If you want diversity in childcare, you must also provide adequate funding for it. Independent providers account for just under 80 per cent of childcare places in Berlin and must therefore be treated on an equal footing with state-run nurseries in terms of funding.
- At the same time, we want to enable privately run nurseries to charge fees for additional educational services not covered by the nursery voucher. Excessive bureaucracy resulting from restrictive criteria for the use of funds and onerous documentation requirements must be avoided in this regard. Instead, the respective providers should be free to decide how to use the additional fees, provided they do not contravene the criteria for non-profit status. The nurseries themselves know best in which areas the fees should be invested for the children’s benefit – for example, in early musical education, sports programmes, language support or simply in additional staff. These services remain voluntary, and the additional contributions must not be made a condition of admission. Nurseries must not become places of social segregation.

- A nursery voucher should be issued automatically upon the issue of the birth certificate.
- We want to tackle the shortage of skilled workers in the childcare sector and significantly improve staff-to-child ratios in Berlin's childcare centres. Careers in childcare should also be attractive to men, so that we achieve a balanced distribution of male and female childcare workers.

School education

- We want Berlin's schools to be able to develop freely. To this end, they need greater autonomy in implementing framework and budget plans, as well as the ability to select their own staff. We want to further improve the staffing situation in schools through self-governance, in order to relieve teachers and the school's educational leadership of administrative tasks. As part of their autonomy over staffing, we also want to enable schools to form school-specific multi-professional teams comprising teaching staff, administrative staff, social workers and psychologists. However, greater freedom of decision-making always goes hand in hand with responsibility. In particular, this means that school management teams will have to be held to account for the development of their respective schools.
- We are launching a radical drive to cut red tape in the education sector. This includes the so-called 'reservation of consent' vis-à-vis parents or guardians, which we intend to transform into an option to object. Consequently, it will no longer be teachers who must seek parental consent, but parents who must actively express their objection.
- Furthermore, we aim to suspend all regulations and bureaucratic hurdles in the school sector for one year. Only what is strictly necessary should be reintroduced afterwards.
- District-level school supervision can be dispensed with in future if schools operate independently. The separation of responsibilities between the state and the district, as called for by the Free Democrats, will take place, as targets will be set by the Senate Administration, whilst implementation will take place within the schools themselves.
- We want representatives of independent schools to be granted full voting rights in district and state committees established under the Schools Act.

- Furthermore, the costs of excursions with a focus on remembrance and cultural heritage, including travel expenses, are to be covered in future by the relevant Senate administration.
- We want schools without any loss of teaching time and with the most appropriate cover possible. To achieve this, staffing levels for all posts must be raised to 110 per cent of the staffing guidelines for teaching staff, in order to meet schools' needs for the most appropriate cover possible.
- We want an 'Excellence Initiative' for schools. Our aim is for 10 per cent of schools to become 'flagship schools' that trial new models and best-practice concepts, serve as training schools for teacher training, and compete across Berlin for additional funding. There will thus be flagship schools in all Berlin boroughs; flagship primary schools are to be established in all neighbourhoods.
- We want to clear the backlog of renovation work and modernise and digitise the infrastructure.
- We want all pupils – regardless of the type of school they attend – to feel comfortable. This includes ensuring that everyone has access to well-equipped and properly functioning toilet facilities.
- We also want to ensure that, in future, every school has an IT specialist (either external or on staff) to support the digitalisation drive in Berlin's schools. Models in which a single IT specialist looks after a group of schools are also conceivable.
- Independent schools should receive the same funding rates per child as state special schools, and inclusion costs must be appropriately taken into account and allocated according to the specific areas of support required.
- The best teachers need the best working conditions. Modern, comfortable workspaces for the effective use of educational media and digitised administrative tasks, performance incentives, and, overall, more digitised processes and less bureaucracy are important steps towards making Berlin an attractive place for teachers. We will abolish the civil service status of teaching staff.
- Continuing professional development and training play a key role in ensuring the pedagogical quality required by our vision of quality-driven teaching. We are therefore committed to mandatory, needs-based training programmes for all

teachers, who must complete a set quota each year, and we will regularly monitor compliance.

- We see a particular challenge in the high proportion of career changers amongst teaching staff, especially at some schools in socially deprived areas. At 'schools in deprived areas', targeted incentives must therefore be offered – for example, in the form of career progression opportunities in exchange for service in these areas – in order to attract career candidates and thus enable a balanced distribution of career changers across Berlin's schools.
- It should be possible, as soon as practicable, to work as a teacher with a degree in just one subject. This provision should be implemented not only for career changers but also for those undertaking standard teacher training.
- We call for teacher training programmes to be more practice-oriented, with students spending one fixed day a week at a school from the very start. In the long term, we want to convert all teacher training programmes into dual study programmes.
- We are committed to providing more regular counselling services in schools, particularly career guidance tailored to individual needs. We also want to further expand teaching placements that run alongside the academic programme.
- We want to incorporate data literacy and economics into the framework curricula across all school levels.
- Entrepreneurship education should be provided in general education schools and, in particular, in upper-secondary vocational centres. Pilot projects such as pupil-run companies must become the norm in Berlin's schools in future.
- We are committed to pluralistic inclusion. By reintroducing special schools and strengthening inclusion classes tailored to pupils' needs, we can cater for the interests and needs of all pupils. In this regard, we advocate in particular for a genuine right of parental choice at any stage of a child's schooling. To achieve this, an appropriate staff-to-pupil ratio must always be provided for inclusion.
- Professional development programmes for teachers must be more specifically geared towards compliance with the Beutelsbach Consensus and the 2015 Frankfurt Declaration (particularly

with regard to the principle of addressing controversial issues) and should only be funded on that basis.

- We will give grammar schools the option to return to the G9 system (A-levels after 13 years). In this way, we will once again create more flexibility for grammar schools and for pupils. Furthermore, this will allow for better management of access to integrated secondary schools (ISS), some of which are oversubscribed solely because of the 13-year A-level programme.
- **Sufficient grammar school and ISS places locally!** To ensure that there are sufficient upper secondary school places available locally everywhere, the Senate must coordinate school development planning with the boroughs in a binding manner. Imbalances in the distribution of upper secondary school places must be corrected on the basis of data and in line with demand. New schools and expansions must be established quickly where there is high demand.
- Before any school conversions take place, existing capacity must be utilised consistently. Vacant or under-utilised premises, for example at upper secondary centres, should be systematically identified and made available to other schools.
- Furthermore, we want to fully digitise the enrolment process for secondary schools and make it more transparent. In future, decisions should initially be based on the first choice. If this cannot be met, a second round of selection will take place based on available places. This strengthens freedom of choice, reduces misallocations and improves school development planning.
- **Free choice of school and the introduction of education vouchers.** To ensure quality and genuine equality of opportunity, we call for the introduction of a system of education vouchers in the medium term. State funding for education should follow the pupil and enable parents to have a genuine freedom of choice between state and private alternative and supplementary schools. The existing compulsory catchment area system based on postcodes should be abolished for all types of school. Private schools that increasingly admit children from disadvantaged households should receive targeted state support to prevent social selection and ensure good educational opportunities regardless of family background.
- In view of the increasing number of crises, such as hybrid threats, disasters, acts of sabotage, terrorist attacks, supply shortages, cyber-attacks, extreme weather, military attacks, etc., we wish to introduce an annual civil defence awareness day in all schools. With the support of relevant organisations, children and young people should be familiarised, in an age-appropriate manner, with the practical behaviours, precautions and measures involved in civil defence.

Training

- We want children and young people to gain an insight into the various training pathways and the dual vocational training system from an early age. That is why, in addition to improving the teaching of core skills, we are committed to introducing comprehensive technical and practical lessons in primary schools and to improving career guidance overall in general education schools.
- We want to drive forward the digitalisation of upper secondary schools. This means both providing the long-overdue basic digital infrastructure and teaching digital skills specific to vocational training.
- We want to support more young people in reaching the level required to undertake an apprenticeship. That is why we are campaigning for a Berlin Alliance for Apprenticeships, so that as many young people as possible can meet the requirements to start and complete an apprenticeship and embark on their life journey on their own terms.
- Self-employment in the skilled trades should be an attractive career option. That is why we will have the State of Berlin fund the fees and charges for master craftsman examinations and preparatory courses.
- We will treat academic and non-academic qualifications as equally valuable.
- We want to strengthen the ERASMUS programme for apprentices to promote European exchange in vocational training and further education as well.
- Scholarship and support programmes must be expanded, for example by making talent development schemes available to apprentices.
- We would like to provide more training accommodation in Berlin so that apprentices can find affordable housing. In the long term, we want to merge the student services organisations with support for apprentices, or open up the student services organisations to apprentices.

Higher education and qualifications

- Higher education institutions must be enabled to respond flexibly and appropriately to international conditions and developments. They should be able to carry out appointments of professors with greater autonomy and decide independently on the level of performance-related bonuses.
- High-achieving academics at Berlin's higher education institutions need reliable structures. We want to make tenure-track positions the norm, expand alternatives to full professorship, and continually subject the Academic Fixed-Term Contracts Act to critical review.
- The pilot clause in the Berlin Higher Education Act and the tried-and-tested instrument of university contracts have afforded Berlin's universities the freedom they have used to improve. We want to continue this success story and enshrine it in a Berlin Higher Education Freedom Act.
- An individual's financial situation must not influence their decision to study or their academic success. At the federal level, we are campaigning for a BAföG grant that is independent of parental income, tailored to the needs of individual students, and which must be repaid after leaving higher education, taking social criteria into account.
- Academia is a pioneer of new ideas. That is why we want to make the start-up sabbatical available to all researchers.
- We are proud that Berlin is a hub for start-ups. That is why we want to expand start-up grants at Berlin's universities to support the best ideas.
- To attract more students and academics from all over the world to Berlin, English should be offered as an additional working language in university administration wherever the administration comes into direct contact with academics and students.
- We want a simpler and legally secure recognition process for academic achievements obtained abroad by reversing the burden of proof:

In principle, it should be the university be in abroad
achieved ; it must provide explicit reasons for any cases where
recognition is refused.

- We support the Charité in realising its Vision 2030 and in leading Germany's most important university hospital on the path to becoming a leader in Europe and worldwide. This includes the construction of a further ward block to enable the conversion of the historic hospital buildings for administrative and research purposes. The Mitte, Benjamin Franklin and Virchow sites will be further developed with different areas of focus. The Buch site will be expanded. The aim is to achieve full integration of the Berlin Institute for Health Economics and the German Heart Centre into the Charité, without neglecting cooperation with private partners.
- We are promoting a diverse ecosystem comprising life-science start-ups, clinical structures and a clear legal framework that is open to innovation. This helps to ensure that patients receive care of the highest standard.
- Berlin's consistent development into a world-leading centre for research and technology must be a strategic policy objective. We will continue to promote collaboration between Berlin's universities and non-university research institutions and businesses; in this way, the universities will contribute even more significantly to the growth of the research ecosystem and open up additional opportunities for their students.
- Freedom of opinion and research is a central component of academic education. Importance should be attached solely to the strength of the argument, not to the person or the context in which it is expressed.
- We are committed to safeguarding an open and democratic culture of debate at Berlin's higher education institutions.
- The right to award doctorates should, in principle, be reserved for universities; at the same time, however, it must be ensured that suitable doctoral places are available at universities or at selected universities of applied sciences for high-calibre researchers at universities of applied sciences.
- We want to expand the range of continuing professional development programmes at Berlin's higher education institutions and promote continuing professional development in the workplace.

- Through a Continuing Education Act, we aim to create a uniform framework for continuing education in Berlin. In particular, for the many women working in the low-wage sector, we want to offer a pathway to qualify for different and better-paid roles by providing more opportunities in the field of continuing education and skills development.
- We want to initiate a partnership between the Senate, the Employment Agency/Jobcentre and temporary employment agencies, so that temporary work becomes a bridge into the so-called primary labour market for people with low qualifications and long-term unemployment.
- We reject so-called ‘civil clauses’ that prohibit research with military applications. The decision on their abolition naturally rests with the universities themselves, within the framework of university autonomy.
- We call for a master plan to ensure that all structural defects at universities and higher education institutions are rectified and that the building infrastructure is brought up to the latest standards.

Providing opportunities for advancement

- We want to remove barriers for young people so that they can forge their own path, regardless of their family background.
- We wish to have the many different career guidance programmes in general education schools evaluated to assess their effectiveness, and to expand them where appropriate. Furthermore, we wish to engage in dialogue with businesses to determine to what extent and at what stage work placements are beneficial for young people. We therefore wish to strengthen career guidance in general education schools through ‘role models’ or mentors.
- We support networks such as ‘Arbeiterkind’ in visiting schools and encouraging pupils from non-academic families to forge their own path.
- With a ‘Start Opportunities Account’, we are creating a new tool that fosters personal responsibility, promotes wealth accumulation and enables genuine freedom in life choices. Up to 3,000 euros can be paid into the Start Opportunities Account annually with tax relief and invested in the capital market. In the long term, we aim to ensure that when the Start Opportunities Account is used

and used for the specified purposes, the State of Berlin will supplement it with a one-off contribution. To ensure cost-effectiveness, this amount should also be able to be drawn from existing but as yet unused support schemes (such as start-up grants, etc.).

- Alongside very specific measures, there is also a general need for greater appreciation of self-employment, employers and all those who wish to achieve something in life.

Strengthening media literacy

- We want to strengthen media literacy amongst young people right from the start, through teaching in schools. To this end, we aim to ensure the topic is better integrated into the training of teachers and school social workers, and to facilitate ongoing professional development.
- Particular emphasis should be placed on handling personal data and the risks associated with it (protecting one's own privacy, disinformation and cyberbullying, existing online dangers).
- We oppose blanket bans on the use of smartphones in schools at regional or district level. Within the framework of school autonomy, individual schools should retain the freedom to set their own rules regarding smartphone use.
- We also advocate for the greater integration of digital teaching materials and serious games into school lessons.
- We want to support parents in educating their children about media consumption and online risks.
- Furthermore, more information on children's and young people's media use must be made available to parents and key figures (paediatricians, child therapists, social workers, youth leaders). This serves, in particular, to protect young people and prevent addictive behaviour.

Economy and Reducing Red Tape

Berlin is good at business. In theory, at least. Our city has everything a vibrant metropolis needs: universities, a thriving start-up scene and the appeal of a cosmopolitan city. Yet, despite having been the capital for decades, we remain the largest net recipient under the federal financial equalisation scheme. The reason is clear. Whilst other cities welcome investors with open arms, we deter them with bureaucratic madness, endless approval procedures and a culture of activism that resists change. We, the Free Democrats, want to make Berlin one of the freest business locations in Europe. Our aim is an administration that confines itself to its core tasks, speeds up procedures, ensures legal certainty and does not hinder but rather facilitates entrepreneurial activity. Berlin must transform itself from a recipient to a contributor! This requires an economic policy that safeguards freedom, protects property, promotes initiative, enables competition and limits state intervention to the absolute minimum. Prosperity arises from it being worthwhile to be entrepreneurial, from reliable rules and open markets – not from detailed political control. Together with the hard-working and upright people of Berlin, we want to achieve precisely that.

Innovation policy

- We want to attract start-ups to Berlin by improving the framework conditions: straightforward procedures, low barriers to market entry, digital administration, legal certainty and a fair tax framework. We see collaboration with, or the establishment of, large companies as an opportunity and a benefit for the city.
- Experimentation clauses enable the exemplary testing of new technologies, e.g. self-driving cars or transport drones, and new business models in Berlin. To this end, we want to suspend existing regulations (laws, ordinances) on a temporary and area-specific basis and implement experimental clauses on a broad scale.
- It should be made easier for university staff to transform their scientific findings into marketable innovations and to set up companies for this purpose. To this end, they should be permitted to use the universities' infrastructure, including during the development phase of innovations, in return for a reasonable contribution towards costs.

- For founders from the scientific or higher education sectors, as well as from the civil service, we want to open up the possibility of sabbaticals (temporary leave of absence) for the purpose of setting up businesses.
- We support the networking of science and research with start-ups beyond cluster policy, so that scientific inventions can be turned into economic innovations more quickly.
- We will set up and support business incubators and maker spaces. In doing so, we aim to give start-ups access to workshops and laboratories so that they can try out and test their ideas without having to purchase expensive hardware or laboratory and medical equipment themselves. In this way, we will speed up the process of turning an idea into reality.
Where infrastructure for start-ups is lacking, the state should prioritise enabling private and university-affiliated initiatives by making existing premises available and streamlining the approval process.
- We will expand the Berlin Business Immigration Service to be more customer-focused and speed up service delivery.
- We want to encourage people from previously under-represented groups, such as women and people from migrant backgrounds, to set up start-ups. To this end, we are focusing on targeted support and networking programmes, role models, motivational examples for girls in nurseries, schools and vocational training, as well as media, learning materials and educational programmes free from stereotypes.
- We want to provide particular support for start-ups launched whilst looking for work, part-time start-ups and those set up by parents. To this end, we intend to utilise the start-up grant provided by the Federal Employment Agency.
- We will increase the IBB Venture Fund and extend it to further sectors so that we can also support start-ups in their growth phase.
- We will create a modern, user-friendly advisory service, provide greater support in accessing funding, and introduce a 'bureaucracy-free' first year, during which registration deadlines, approval requirements and documentation obligations are carefully eased. All tasks and services should be accessible online via a one-stop shop.

- We recognise start-ups not only in the high-tech and fintech sectors, but also champion new developments in the social sector and the skilled trades, and advocate for their services to be eligible for public tenders.

Reducing bureaucracy

- We want to clear the thicket of laws and regulations and rigorously reduce it within the next legislative term. To this end, we will empower the state administration, the district administrations, the House of Representatives and the judiciary to systematically modernise legislation and the body of law, in particular with the help of digital tools.
- We, the Free Democrats, are calling for a comprehensive Bureaucracy Reduction Act for Berlin. Never before in the history of the state has there been a major piece of legislation aimed at the systematic reduction of bureaucracy; until now, mostly only individual regulations have been amended or selectively repealed. We want to change that. We will cut red tape, simplify procedures and consistently remove superfluous requirements, so that citizens, businesses and the administration experience a tangible reduction in the burden.
- We want better law-making rather than ever more regulation. What matters is not the quantity of new regulations, but their quality, clarity and practicality. New laws and regulations should therefore be systematically assessed for necessity, enforceability, bureaucratic costs and digital feasibility. Our aim is a streamlined, clear and modern legal framework that reduces the burden on citizens, businesses and the public administration.
- We will abolish the Berlin Public Procurement Act and apply only federal (or EU) public procurement law.
- We intend to reduce and digitise reporting obligations for businesses. Where reporting and documentation requirements are necessary, we will optimise and digitise processes, and comprehensively exchange and consolidate data and information digitally at all levels.
- New laws and regulations should be given an expiry date set from the outset and should only be extended if they are still necessary and proportionate after this period has elapsed. Even in the case of amendments to laws and regulations that extend their scope, an expiry date should be set for the underlying legislation.

- In the case of new laws and regulations, or amendments, we will ensure that all associated administrative procedures can be implemented in a digitally compatible manner. The principles of 'digital only' and 'digital once' (submitting data to the Berlin administration only once) are to be applied in this regard.
- For every new bureaucratic burden, at least two existing burdens must be abolished, resulting in a tangible reduction in the administrative burden. The benchmark is not the formal increase in regulations, but the actual freedom enjoyed by citizens and businesses ('one in, two out').
- We want to establish a Regulatory Review Board to monitor each Senate's efforts to reduce bureaucracy.
- We want to establish a bureaucracy cost index, comparable to the federal bureaucracy cost index.
- We want to increasingly convert authorisation procedures into notification procedures.
- Where authorisations remain necessary, short decision-making deadlines shall apply, with a binding presumption of approval in the event of inaction on the part of the administration. This applies in particular to communication with authorities during ongoing administrative proceedings.
- Responsibilities within the administration must be clearly defined. Multiple areas of responsibility and parallel reviews must be ruled out within the respective administration. For each procedure, a lead agency with clear overall responsibility will be designated ('one face to the customer').
- To test innovative technologies, it should be possible to suspend existing regulations temporarily and in specific areas through experimental clauses, subject to safety considerations.
- At federal level, we are campaigning for Sunday trading to be permitted in full. As a first step, the districts should be allowed to approve additional Sundays per year on which shops may open and to set the dates independently. In addition, we will generally allow 'Spätis' to open on Sundays, regardless of the range of goods they stock.
- We want to exempt start-up founders from paying chamber membership fees for the first five years after setting up their business.

- We oppose the Berlin apprenticeship levy for employers. We want to repeal the Apprenticeship Promotion Fund Act in its entirety, even before the reporting obligations come into force in 2028. We share the objective of enabling more young people to undertake in-company apprenticeships, but additional red tape and costs stand in the way of this. We also oppose false comparisons between vacant apprenticeship places registered with the employment agency and the number of school leavers in a given year, as many vacant apprenticeship places are not registered in the first place.

“Frei-Kiez” Special Economic Zone

- For a defined period and with defined objectives, we are establishing, under the name “Frei-Kiez”, on previously undeveloped land such as part of Tempelhofer Feld. Berlin will consistently utilise all existing experimental clauses and regulatory sandboxes there, streamline approval procedures to a minimum and simplify building regulations as much as possible. At the same time, we are working at federal level to ensure that Berlin is authorised by federal law to deviate from the Working Hours Act, the Shop Closing Hours Act, the Supply Chain Act and the Minimum Wage Act within this zone. Following the successful example of the London Docklands, we are thus creating a hub for experimental economic models that enables genuine innovation ‘from scratch’.
- If the special economic zone is found to have been successful following a scientific evaluation, we intend to introduce regulatory relief, faster procedures and experimental clauses across the whole of Berlin as a matter of principle. Our aim is a liberal economic system for the whole of Berlin.
- At the same time, we are working at federal level to ensure that Berlin is authorised by federal law to deviate from the Working Hours Act, the Shop Closing Hours Act, the Supply Chain Act and the Minimum Wage Act within this zone. Following the successful example of the London Docklands, we are thus creating a hub for experimental economic models that enables genuine innovation ‘from scratch’.

Thinking of Berlin and Brandenburg together: binding structures as an intermediate step towards a shared future .

Berlin and Brandenburg have long formed a single region in terms of living, transport and the economy. Politically, however, separate structures remain in place – leading to inefficiencies, duplication of effort and untapped potential.

We, the Free Democrats, therefore want to reorganise this cooperation in a binding manner – initially as a clear, institutional intermediate step on the path towards a joint federal state of Berlin-Brandenburg.

A cross-state regional association as a binding intermediate step

We want to establish a Berlin-Brandenburg Regional Association by means of an inter-state treaty – with its own legal personality, its own budget and clearly defined responsibilities.

This regional association is not an additional level of coordination, but the first genuine joint governing body of the states with binding decision-making powers.

Democratic governance

The regional association will be governed by a Berlin-Brandenburg Regional Assembly, which

- is either directly elected or appointed by the state parliaments,
- adopts the budget,
- takes binding decisions and
- oversees the association's executive body.

Binding transfer of responsibilities

Central to this is the legally binding transfer of responsibilities through an intergovernmental agreement and state law. In particular, the Regional Association assumes responsibility for:

- Transport: planning, management and financing of cross-state public transport and commuter infrastructure
- Spatial planning: binding regional planning for housing, commerce and infrastructure
- Economy: joint location policy, business attraction strategy and international marketing
- Administration: joint institutions, selected specialist tasks and uniform digital standards

Principle: Anything that can be usefully managed jointly is bindingly transferred to the joint level.

Funding and binding nature

The Regional Association receives secure funding through allocations from both federal states. The following applies to delegated tasks: funding follows the task. Its decisions are binding on the participating federal states.

Merger as a prospect

Our aim remains a high-performing capital region with clear areas of responsibility – and, in the long term, a joint federal state of Berlin-Brandenburg.

The interim stage of the Regional Association creates, for the first time, joint structures, clear responsibilities and practical experience in joint governance.

Building on this, concrete preparations for a merger are being made through:

- an institutional vision,
- a robust cost-benefit analysis,

- a binding timetable,
- clear transitional arrangements and
- coordination with the Federal Government (Article 29 of the Basic Law).

A well-founded reassessment

A new referendum can be based on this foundation – underpinned by clear responsibilities, demonstrable benefits and cooperation that is already in practice.

Future clusters ‘made in Berlin’

- We aim to establish professional cluster management that connects existing businesses of all sizes, universities, research institutions, investors and the public administration, and identifies and organises joint cooperation projects. The clusters are to be marketed globally, with a focus on actively engaging international investors. In doing so, the partnership with the State of Brandenburg should be actively promoted, rather than viewing it as competition.
- We will establish Berlin as a leading hub for information and communication technology as well as deep tech (big data, Industry 4.0, telematics, the Internet of Things and services), and call for the inclusion of an ‘Artificial Intelligence’ action area in the regional innovation strategy InnoBB, in order to raise Berlin’s profile as an AI hub.
- We want to further expand Berlin as a data centre hub. To this end, we will support prospective investors in their search for suitable sites and ensure a reliable power supply and data connectivity.
- We aim to establish a permanently based gaming and e-sports hub that supports and connects developers as drivers of innovation.
- We will ensure conditions for Berlin’s healthcare sector that enable strong basic science and networking in biology (genetic engineering/biotechnology), digitalisation (including AI research and application), pharmacy and engineering, by expanding academic freedom in Berlin as far as possible, recruiting the relevant skilled workers and creating attractive

medical development centres. We want to develop Berlin into a leading centre for cross-sector healthcare. To this end, we will specifically promote innovative care models that integrate outpatient and inpatient services, and create a legally secure framework for new forms of cooperation between service providers.

- We want to strengthen research in Berlin, particularly in the field of women's health.
- We are promoting a diverse ecosystem comprising life sciences start-ups, hospital facilities and a clear legal framework that is open to innovation.
- Berlin has great potential to develop products and services for innovative, resource-efficient and environmentally friendly mobility that can serve as a model for cities worldwide. We will develop the Berlin 'Transport, Mobility and Logistics' cluster into an innovative and business-led 'Smart Mobility Cluster'.
- We are committed to further developing and expanding Berlin as a conference destination. To this end, additional capacity must first and foremost be created for new exhibition and conference venues. We will utilise trade fairs and conferences for location marketing and support the trade fair organisation in attracting new events to Berlin within the clusters, whilst offering a highly attractive and well-connected venue to which trade fairs from other locations will relocate. To compete with major global cities, more is needed than just a large conference centre. We therefore wish to see the construction of a further conference centre, whilst taking into account the existing capacity of current venues, such as the Estrel Congress Centre (ECC).
- For the ICC, we are focusing on its use for the international conference sector and will reconcile the necessary heritage protection requirements with the new needs of the ICC, prioritising new usage options over heritage protection.

The Liberal Professions and Self-Employment in Berlin

- For us Free Democrats, self-employment is not a 'special case', but a desirable and fulfilling way of earning a living. We want to support people who take on responsibility and are willing to take risks.
- The liberal professions stand for personal achievement, professional responsibility and the direct provision of services to people – they carry out their work

on their own initiative and in person; they cannot be delegated at will. They are characterised by professional codes of conduct, self-regulation and work focused on quality, trust and the common good. As Free Democrats, we protect this special form of independent service provision for our society and create the freedom they need to carry out their work.

- We are committed, at both state and federal level, to ensuring that, for voluntarily statutory health and long-term care insurance contributions for self-employed persons are based exclusively on the income derived from self-employment.
- We wish to put an end to the inclusion of other types of income (in particular income from capital assets, letting and leasing, private pensions and other income) in the calculation of contributions for self-employed people who are voluntarily insured under the statutory scheme.
- We intend to work towards ensuring that interim estimates and reporting requirements are reduced to the absolute minimum necessary.
- We are campaigning for the establishment of a pension scheme for tax advisers in Berlin.
- Pending the complete abolition of trade tax, we are campaigning at federal level for an increase in the tax-free allowance to 50,000 euros and the abolition of all elements of asset-based taxation. At the same time, at the state level, we are utilising all legal avenues to reduce the Berlin trade tax assessment rate for small businesses, insofar as this is constitutionally permissible.

Retail, skilled trades, hospitality

- The retail sector is a vital pillar of vibrant neighbourhoods and a city worth living in. We will therefore ensure that the retail sector in our city has a future. We are firmly opposed to urban planning that makes life difficult for local retailers.
- We want special-use areas for retail, licensed premises and cultural projects to be designated without bureaucratic hurdles, and for paved outdoor seating areas – such as beer gardens on the pavement sub-strata – to enable the operation of catering and retail businesses. Accessibility requirements must be met in this regard. Special-use permits must not depend on differing

. For outdoor catering, beer gardens, product displays and temporary uses, we are establishing uniform, digital and legally secure licensing standards across Berlin, with binding deadlines.

- We will work to ensure that neighbourhoods heavily characterised by retail undergo genuine urban regeneration to enhance the quality of the environment, as their appeal depends on a pleasant atmosphere, which is guaranteed by cleanliness and safety. To redevelop modern retail locations, it is also necessary to significantly raise the square metre limits for large-scale retail in the Land Use Ordinance at federal level.
- We will strengthen the skilled trades sector, treat it with recognition rather than micromanagement, and ultimately ensure that it remains a key factor within Berlin's economy. After all, the skilled trades sector has repeatedly demonstrated its innovative strength throughout Berlin's history. It has driven progress not only through the invention of new processes and techniques. The establishment of new technologies, too, was only possible thanks to the skilled trades. We will therefore support the skilled trades in fully realising their innovative potential and, with it, their opportunities once again.
- We want to make more space available for outdoor dining and, to this end, further develop the legal framework, taking into account the respective traffic situation and noise protection.
- The hotel and catering sectors should be recognised in our city more than ever before as a strong and systemically important economic sector and supported accordingly, for example by abolishing Berlin's overnight accommodation tax (City Tax).
We will campaign for safe public spaces, predictable licensing procedures, usable spaces and less bureaucratic red tape.

Tourism

- We will develop a new tourism strategy and focus it on marketing Berlin as a destination. In doing so, we will expand high-quality tourism. Furthermore, we aim to incorporate the increasingly sought-after experience-based elements into Berlin's tourism sector and place greater emphasis on marketing the city's outdoor areas.

- We want to supplement monuments and commemorative plaques that are only in German, as well as street names, with small plaques featuring QR codes or similar. This will enable anyone interested to access translations of the relevant texts in several foreign languages and in easy-to-read language using a smartphone. For people with visual impairments, these texts should also be available in audio format.
- We want to enable the police and public order authorities to maintain a stronger presence at tourist hotspots.
- We want to significantly step up efforts in market research and statistical data collection, for example through surveys on private accommodation (the sharing economy), visitor satisfaction, the origin of visitors, etc.
- We want to build on initiatives such as ‘Visitor Insight’ by visitBerlin and extend them to other areas. The issue of tourists’ subjective perception of safety must be taken into account here.
- We want to strengthen initiatives such as ‘Service in the City’, which rely on visitors to Berlin become ambassadors who promote Berlin. We wish to strengthen these initiatives both to enhance Berlin’s reputation as an attractive destination and to benefit from the experiences and feedback of visitors to Berlin
, measures that encourage greater participation must be made permanent.
- EXPO 2035 is a unique opportunity that will help Berlin to redefine itself for the coming decades. The bid to host the EXPO must be given priority over all other major events and, should the current government continue to fail to act, must be submitted immediately after the election.

Berlin as a gaming hub

- The games industry is a key driver of innovation for the entire software and digital economy. We want to strengthen and expand Berlin’s position as a hub for the international games industry. Berlin should be the most attractive location for the games industry not only within Germany but across Europe. The State of Berlin should therefore support the games industry on an equal footing with other sectors eligible for funding.
- We expressly support private initiatives in this field, such as the Computer Games Museum in Friedrichshain.

- We, the Free Democrats, expressly support the planned ‘House of Games’ at ‘LUX Berlin’ as a flagship project for Berlin’s games and digital economy and as a visible anchor for the games industry in Berlin.

Digital administration

- It should be possible to carry out all administrative procedures digitally from home, round the clock, via a unified ‘digital town hall’, which also brings together all available information. Our aim is for users to find a solution to their problem through a single interaction.
- Digital sovereignty requires the targeted expansion of our own capabilities and the consistent promotion of resilient, sovereign and European alternatives to existing dependencies and cost structures. A strategy modelled on those of Schleswig-Holstein and France should be employed here. For example, by utilising existing and new open-source solutions, we can both reduce dependence on individual providers and strengthen the regional economy through public sector contracts.
- Open-source solutions should also be specifically offered to strengthen the regional economy.
- We want to further develop the work of the District Councils (BVV) – as bodies comprising representatives from Berlin’s districts – to provide strong, transparent opportunities for public participation. The BVV should be able to hold digital meetings without there being any particular emergency.
- We intend to transfer the district administrations to the state level in order to eliminate overlapping responsibilities and enable consistent administrative action. We will abolish the role of district mayors. Until this is implemented, we call for a political district office.
- We want to develop the role of the State Secretary for Digitalisation and Administrative Modernisation (CDO) into a decisive steering body. This includes binding powers for cross-departmental IT and digital projects, the consolidation of central digitalisation budgets, and clear, state-wide IT and data standards. The CDO should not merely coordinate, but actively steer the implementation of clear objectives. To this end, a task force should be made available to them, with clear powers to stabilise, accelerate or relaunch projects. Progress will be measured against binding targets and timetables and

made transparent. The cross-cutting area of 'Organisation, Processes and Digitalisation' should therefore, in principle, be assigned to the CDO. We advocate a technocratic appointment to the CDO post to enable objective work free from party politics. To this end, suitable candidates should be able to apply as proactively as possible.

- Secure and intuitive identification methods – including those beyond the conventional eID function – are essential for effective digitalisation of public administration, to facilitate transactions between the administration and citizens and businesses. Berlin can lead the way here by seeking cross-border cooperation – including at European level – by enabling the widespread use of qualified electronic signatures, and by applying modern encryption technologies that are easy to understand and simple to use. The State of Berlin must therefore address the shortcomings in the implementation of the European eIDAS Regulation, which establishes such standards, as quickly as possible. Access to a secure online ID should be underpinned by a legal entitlement for citizens – similar to the right to a passport.
- Following the example of Hamburg, we want to establish a central human resources office for Berlin that coordinates and strategically manages the staffing needs of the state, the boroughs and the authorities. In this way, we will put an end to uncontrolled staff growth, target applicants more effectively and ensure uniform standards for comparable posts. Equal work should also be linked to comparable job profiles, requirements and career prospects. This will make the Berlin administration a more modern, transparent and competitive employer.
- We also wish to pay particular attention to the information security of the public sector's IT systems. In addition to the use of state-of-the-art, automated IT security technologies, the pool of highly qualified IT security specialists must be sustainably expanded. To this end, a separate pay scale for IT staff will be introduced, enabling salaries to remain competitive with those in the private sector. A modern security culture must be established and maintained within public authorities.
- All administrative services and official documents should be available in German and English. By using automated language recognition and translation, we are strengthening multilingualism within Berlin's administration.
- In addition to our commitment to open data, the Berlin administration itself must also benefit from intelligent data management. The

Transparency Act provides valuable support. Alongside the comprehensive digitisation of all services and administrative processes for Berlin's residents and businesses, it is essential to further develop political planning and governance in the State of Berlin – particularly within the Berlin administration – in a data-driven manner. The reporting, information and notification systems require a massive digital and technical upgrade. Digital situation reports must completely replace the traditional reporting and notification systems.

- Berlin is home to a large number of up-and-coming GovTech companies. We are committed to strengthening cooperation with these companies. This would enable the state to secure innovative technological solutions for its administration – and provide the companies with a showcase for their products.
- The state should endeavour to ensure a positive working atmosphere for its employees. Furthermore, the process for purchasing items of minor value (such as office chairs) must be significantly simplified.

Administrative modernisation

- We want to further develop the work of the district councils (BVV) – as representative bodies comprising representatives from Berlin's districts – to provide strong, transparent opportunities for public participation. We call for the direct election of district mayors. We want to transfer district administrations to the state level in order to eliminate overlapping responsibilities and enable consistent administrative action.
- Pending the standardisation of the administration, we want to create a digital 'Best District Law' portal: citizens and businesses can choose the most generous interpretation of Berlin-wide law for administrative matters, and the districts must apply it accordingly.
- We want to make greater use of performance-related pay, performance-related civil service salaries and performance-related promotions, regardless of length of service.
- Modern workplaces should make the administration an attractive employer and enable efficient working. Procurement of minor items (such as office chairs) should be significantly simplified.

- HR processes will be optimised and streamlined. Job advertisements should be published early, quickly and in a standardised manner. Once a department has selected a suitable candidate, the co-determination bodies should in future be involved in parallel and reach a decision within two weeks. If no response is received by the deadline, consent is deemed to have been granted. Procedures will be organised entirely digitally and without circulation processes. Participation is to be reduced to the minimum required by law.
- By the end of the legislative term, around 30 per cent of state employees will be leaving due to retirement compared with 2022. This cannot be fully offset by new recruitment. Instead, the workload in public authorities must be reduced by at least 30 per cent through process optimisation, cutting red tape, digitalisation and the use of AI.

In step with the times – strengthening club culture

Club culture is a central component of Berlin's cultural and economic diversity. It shapes not only our perception of the city but also Berlin's international image as a whole, creates jobs and contributes to the vibrancy of our neighbourhoods. We, the Free Democrats, are therefore committed to ensuring reliable and innovation-friendly framework conditions for clubs and event organisers. Rising commercial rents, uncertain lease terms and conflicts of use with new construction projects are threatening many established venues. We are committed to ensuring that club venues are taken into account at an early stage in urban development and secured for the long term. At the same time, we support the so-called 'agent of change' principle: anyone building new premises in the neighbourhood of existing clubs must ensure adequate soundproofing themselves. We want to consistently recognise clubs as cultural venues, thereby enabling them to have better access to cultural funding. At the same time, licensing procedures must become simpler, faster and more transparent. Events, refurbishments or temporary uses must not be thwarted by excessive bureaucracy. A central point of contact for the club scene within district offices and the Senate can consolidate and speed up procedures in this regard. Club culture is also an important economic factor for the city as a whole. We want to integrate it more closely into location and tourism strategies and provide clubs with unbureaucratic support, particularly in times of crisis. At the same time, creative cultural projects need new spaces. We want to facilitate the interim use of vacant buildings, temporary event spaces and open-air venues in order to create new spaces for culture, music and creative experimentation.

The role of Berlin's state-owned enterprises

- Berlin is experiencing a proliferation of countless state-owned enterprises; this must not be an end in itself. We will identify which enterprises can, in the medium term, provide their services to Berliners more efficiently under a different ownership structure.
- These enterprises should focus on their business purpose and raise external capital solely for this purpose. Indirect financing to prop up the Berlin state budget must be discontinued. Investment management must become more professional. In particular, this also means setting realistic economic and operational targets for the enterprises.
- There must be a clearer separation between the management and supervision of these companies and the political sphere, for example through transparent nomination processes when filling management and supervisory positions. Management should be carried out by a central investment agency, with independent reporting on the financial situation alongside the contribution to political objectives, and free from individual party interests.

Urban development and housing

Housing is a basic need. And in Berlin, it has become a privilege – which it must not be. The housing market in Berlin is at a standstill: rents for existing properties are moderate, asking rents have skyrocketed, and new-build construction has ground to a halt. Only 16 per cent of Berlin households live in their own owner-occupied homes. This is a damning indictment of a free society and an obstacle to social mobility. Instead of relying on market forces, senates of all political colours have, over the past decades, made building more complicated with a constant stream of new regulations. We, the Free Democrats, want to change this: we advocate urban development along the 'Siedlungsstern' (settlement star) model, which allows Berlin to grow systematically; small-scale ownership structures rather than a monoculture; and a diverse range of property developers rather than a state-controlled planned economy. Selling building land rather than hoarding it, cutting red tape rather than inflating it, and promoting home ownership rather than hindering it – that is our approach. We pursue policies for tenants, homeowners and all citizens looking for a home in Berlin. All Berliners deserve the chance to live in a beautiful city worth living in, where diversity is fostered by a wide range of stakeholders and which is clean and well-maintained. Berlin needs a new 'Gründerzeit' era, brought about by its citizens who build, not by the state.

Citizens. Building. Berlin - on more space for flats and new urban neighbourhoods

- We want a city shaped by many, not by a few. A diverse range of property owners is essential for diverse and flexible urban development. We will therefore strive for, and wherever possible establish, a fragmented ownership structure for sites due for new development or fundamental redevelopment, particularly in the city centre. Instead of promoting only large-scale projects by individual developers, we will encourage a diverse mix of building cooperatives, private developers, small and medium-sized developers, and housing associations. In this way, we will ensure that the city adapts steadily and dynamically to the changing needs of its residents. We will exploit every opportunity that allows for a diversity and mix of uses, thereby safeguarding and further developing Berlin's famous mix.
- The housing construction we are driving forward will make a significant contribution to easing the strain on Berlin's state budget and increasing tax revenue.
- We aim to develop new residential neighbourhoods that are liveable, welcoming, diverse, attractive and tailored to the housing needs of as many Berliners as possible. We reject monotonous, oversized and overly ideologically planned neighbourhoods with a predominance of social housing and/or exclusively rental flats. We achieve social objectives through mixed-use neighbourhoods, including subsidised housing (in the vicinity of non-subsidised housing), occupancy rights and housing benefit. Urban development should create neighbourhoods where everything is within easy reach.
- Furthermore, housing benefit, support for the homeless and targeted temporary solutions must be structured in such a way that low-income households can bridge the gap until the additional housing supply becomes available.
- We are committed to the systematic further development of the 'settlement star' as a model for Berlin's growth. For us, the rays of the 'Siedlungsstern' along the rail network are growth axes along which housing, commerce and industry should be prioritised for development. Between these axes, we will permanently protect green spaces and recreational areas, as well as agricultural land outside Berlin. In this way, we combine compact, urban growth with the preservation of natural areas. We are planning this development jointly with Brandenburg as a unified

metropolitan region. Along the growth axes, we are enabling taller and denser development so that building land is used efficiently.

- We aim to introduce digital vacant-plot registers across the state and in every district as soon as possible, to ensure the systematic recording of vacant plots in Berlin, which can then be incorporated into urban planning.
- Together with the district authorities, we will identify potential for the use of unused building land in inner-city areas and vigorously drive forward its development. We will respond to initiatives in this regard from the property development sector – within the limits of what is legally possible – with goodwill and commitment.
- The core responsibility of the State of Berlin is to make sufficient building plots available from its portfolio for its citizens and the property sector. To this end, we will, with immediate effect, resume the sale of state-owned building plots that are not required for public purposes; we will also encourage state-owned companies to sell any plots they do not require. The aim is to supply the market with a large number of building plots at market-driven prices, thereby preventing speculative profits arising from the scarcity of land.
- Sales will be conducted via a maximum-bid procedure in accordance with the rule of law. The contract will be awarded to the highest bidder – regardless of whether they are a building consortium, a private developer, a property developer or a co-operative. A prerequisite is binding compliance with the site-specific urban planning and social requirements (e.g. building height, occupancy rights), as well as the timely commencement and completion of construction works. In the event of non-compliance, the plot will be reverted to the state.
- Purchasers of land owned by the state may, once the contract has been awarded, choose whether to purchase the plot outright or to enter into a leasehold agreement with the State of Berlin in order to facilitate the loan financing of the property project. The appropriate percentage for the ground rent is published in the tender notice for the plot. It is calculated on the basis of the highest bid. This ensures equal conditions for all bidders, whilst maintaining transparency for both participants and outsiders.
- In addition, we aim to support building groups, building associations, co-operatives and private owner-occupier projects in the acquisition of state-owned building plots through a targeted financing instrument provided by Investitionsbank Berlin. The award of the contract in the highest-bid procedure remains unaffected by this; the support is provided

exclusively after the contract has been awarded and does not alter the principle of equal treatment in the tendering process. For building groups, building associations, co-operatives and private owner-occupier projects that acquire a state-owned building plot or take it over under a leasehold and use it predominantly for residential purposes, the Investitionsbank Berlin should be able to offer loans at reduced interest rates.

- To incentivise the boroughs to approve new-build projects more quickly, we will give the boroughs a share of the proceeds from the sale of state-owned building plots once construction has been completed.
- We will instruct the state-owned housing associations to focus on their existing housing stock and to carry out energy-efficiency refurbishments on these properties. These are often in very poor condition. The state-owned housing associations should also make housing available from their stock for people at risk of homelessness.
- In regeneration and neighbourhood preservation areas, the public right of pre-emption should no longer be exercised, except for public infrastructure.
- We reject the development of new neighbourhoods on the outskirts of the city consisting solely of rental properties, with a high proportion of subsidised flats, as these are likely to become future social hotspots with unforeseeable follow-on costs for the public purse. In new development areas, we aim for a mix of multi-storey rental and owner-occupied properties, built by private and public developers as well as co-operatives. Space for local businesses and the liberal professions must be taken into account.
- On the outskirts of the city, we wish to facilitate mixed-use development with a higher proportion of private green space, comprising small, open-plan apartment blocks combined with detached, semi-detached and terraced houses, for families and residents who prefer this type of housing.
- When planning and parcelling out building sites, we aim for standardised plot sizes for as many plots for sale as possible. The aim should also be to attract as many developers as possible in order to create aesthetic and architectural diversity.
- 'New urban neighbourhoods' owned by the state: We will de-ideologise the planning process (e.g. by permitting underground car parks, abolishing the requirement for timber construction, and, where appropriate in suitable micro-locations, reducing building densities). The State of Berlin will only be responsible for establishing building rights, carrying out development works and providing the necessary infrastructure. Marketing will take place via a highest-bidder auction process, both on a plot-by-plot basis and in blocks. Property buyers decide for themselves whether, beyond the tender specifications, they wish to build free-market or

subsidised rental housing or, alternatively, owner-occupied flats, and what materials they use to build their homes.

- TXL: The former Tegel Airport site must not be allowed to fall into disuse; instead, politicians must view it as a mandate to realise grand visions for the urban landscape. Whilst cities such as Toronto are creating housing for over 100,000 people on decommissioned airport sites, Berlin is planning a mere 5,000 flats at TXL. We will immediately step up or commence planning for the potential development areas TXL-North and TXL-West in order to significantly alleviate Berlin's housing shortage. In doing so, we will ensure the necessary transport links, including an underground connection. The immediately adjacent natural areas – Flughafensee, Jungfernheide Forest, Tegeler See and the River Havel – offer numerous opportunities for local recreation and must be preserved as compensation areas. We will remove the regulatory hurdles necessary to achieve this.
- 'New urban neighbourhoods' in private development: We will support large-scale private developments with the same commitment and fairness in securing planning permission as we do state-owned development projects. We will take the planning visions of the property owners into account. In this way, we will enable private property investors to build neighbourhoods where people genuinely enjoy living.
- In view of rising costs and the associated increase in planning applications, we advocate an alternative to the current cooperative building land development model. Where a social housing quota is stipulated under planning law, this must be publicly funded through social housing resources within the usual framework. We want to return town planning law to its core functions – namely, determining the nature and scale of building use – and relieve it of social obligations that cannot be financed.
- To enable housing construction and commercial use, unconventional approaches must also be pursued. We therefore wish to facilitate and promote, without bureaucratic hurdles, the addition of residential storeys to retail and other suitable premises – including in exchange for the expansion of, for example, built-up retail areas. Enclosing or covering over traffic areas – in particular, covering over the urban motorway around the Funkturm junction – can also make a contribution, subject to the costs of the necessary structural engineering. Furthermore, we wish to draw up a development plan for the use of riverbanks and water areas, without privatising riverbanks that have hitherto been open to the public.

- We also wish to tap into the potential in the areas surrounding Berlin – to this end, joint regional planning must be urgently further developed as part of a master plan for the metropolitan region.
- We support the organisation of an International Building Exhibition (IBA), as this can provide the vital answers to the various challenges facing the federal states of Berlin and Brandenburg within the shared metropolitan region and bring the two states closer together through cross-state approaches and concepts.
- We also want to increase density within the existing built environment. Berlin must continue to grow upwards, not only within the S-Bahn ring but also beyond it.
- We will simplify building regulations so that office blocks can be converted more quickly into blocks of flats or at least for temporary residential use (such as student accommodation), thereby creating inner-city housing.
- We call for an increase in living space of around 20 per cent, including by raising the eaves height by at least one further full storey. As a first step, there should be an immediate programme called '10,000 Roofs for Berlin', which facilitates straightforward loft conversions.
- We want to preserve allotment gardens outside the city centre and develop new ones in suitable locations. However, in many areas, the land occupied by inner-city allotment gardens is lacking for housing development and for providing the population with urgently needed public green spaces and open spaces. In Berlin, there are approximately 71,000 allotment gardens covering a total area of 2,900 hectares, which is equivalent to around 4,000 football pitches. Just under 80 per cent of allotment gardens are owned by the public sector. The use of allotment gardens was always intended as a sensible interim use pending planned high-value development. The fact that allotment gardens must then be cleared in return for compensation is reasonable; this was contractually agreed at the time and is laid down in law in the Federal Allotment Garden Act. In the interests of the common good, we will have to terminate some of the state-owned allotment garden sites located close to the city centre and well connected to public transport. Selling these as building land will generate revenue for the State of Berlin whilst minimising public expenditure on infrastructure and so on. The construction projects themselves will generate additional tax revenue.
- We intend to press ahead swiftly with a state-wide approach to making so-called 'ghost houses' usable. We are developing an efficient model to

encourage obstructive or inactive owners, through financial pressure, to hand over or renovate their properties.

- Berlin's historic preservation authority should evolve from an obstacle to many construction projects into a creative enabler. Modernisations such as automatic doors and internal lifts, which also contribute to accessibility, must no longer be prevented as a matter of principle. The same applies to alterations that are compatible with architectural history. Furthermore, under certain conditions, owners should be granted a right of objection when a property is listed as a listed building; for example, where buildings reflect certain architectural styles but were constructed out of necessity rather than with any particular stylistic ambition.

Fair contracts for tenants and tenants landlords and landladies

- We consider the current practice of basing rents on the rent index to be an appropriate means of striking a fair balance between the interests of landlords and tenants. To this end, the rent index must be compiled annually on the basis of real market data from the past three years, without any political influence.
- To prevent abuse, in the case of furnished flats let for more than temporary use, the net rent excluding furniture must be stated separately in the tenancy agreement. This enables every tenant to see whether the rent index is being adhered to and whether the furniture surcharge corresponds to the standard of furnishing provided.
- We will narrow the scope of those eligible for a housing entitlement certificate (WBS) so that those eligible for a 'WBS with special housing needs' once again have a better chance of securing a WBS flat at all.
- We intend to subject the Housing Promotion Act to a targeted review to ensure that support truly reaches those who need it. For this reason, we want to prevent the misuse of the WBS and allocate subsidised housing as effectively as possible.
- We oppose the setting of WBS quotas for new-build projects.
- We will take measures to ensure that misallocation does not permanently reduce the supply available to the actual target group of WBS holders

. This can be achieved through a misallocation levy based on market prices. This levy must be paid as financial compensation by tenants who live in subsidised flats on favourable terms, even though they now earn a good income. In the long term, we advocate support for individuals rather than for properties; in other words, those in need will receive housing benefit at a sufficient level to enable them to rent suitable, privately funded flats on the market.

- We support the application of the standard cap of 20 per cent (currently 15 per cent in Berlin) on existing rents, to be phased in over three years up to the level of the local comparative rent. We consider the rent cap on new tenancies to be unsuitable and will abolish it.
- We reject rent caps in any form.
- We reject the expropriation and nationalisation of private flats. This does not create a single new flat, wastes billions that Berlin could use for the development and preparation of building plots and new residential neighbourhoods, and deters private investors, whom we urgently need to alleviate the housing shortage. We will therefore also put an end to the costly and ineffective exercise of the district's right of first refusal.
- We will abolish neighbourhood protection zones and the associated restrictions; they have proved ineffective in the past. Until then, the public right of pre-emption should no longer be exercised in regeneration and neighbourhood protection zones, except for public infrastructure. Should immediate abolition not be achievable, uniform regulations should at least apply across all boroughs. In the remaining neighbourhood protection zones, we want to permit all investments and remove the so-called 'negative criteria' from the rent index in order to maintain the housing stock at an acceptable level for tenants.

Reducing ancillary rental costs

- Service charges in Berlin are too high and are often driven by government policy. We will compare the trend in costs – particularly in relation to local authority charges and taxes – with other major cities and take our cue from cities where costs are lower. In this way, we will help to reduce the cost of living for all Berliners.

Simply build more

- We want to streamline central urban planning to a few key guidelines and simple rules for structuring urban spaces. We will enable diverse, decentralised development by a wide range of stakeholders through maximum freedom rather than detailed government regulations.
- We will further streamline the State Building Regulations and, in the medium term, standardise them nationwide.
- The introduction of a standard building permit will simplify administrative procedures for structures that can be erected in the same design in multiple locations. This will speed up construction, as the developer will only need one permit for buildings of the same type.
- We want to significantly speed up the administrative processes required for construction and achieve the full digitalisation of all planning and approval processes.
- We want to abolish urban development contracts as ‘negotiated building regulations introduced through the back door’. Binding local development plans and building regulations provide the necessary certainty for investors.
- Within the S-Bahn ring, we want to make greater use of ‘urban areas’ (Section 6a of the Federal Building Code) to enable higher density and better metropolitan coexistence.
- The comprehensive development plan (Baunutzungsplan) adopted across the whole of the city of Berlin (West) in 1958 is an obstacle to development. We will repeal this outdated development plan and replace it with modern, small-scale plans. In the meantime, planning permission is to be granted in accordance with Section 34 of the BauGB, provided that no overarching urban planning provisions preclude this.
- All new and existing laws should be reviewed to determine whether they drive up the cost of construction and, consequently, rents (Rent Review).
- We call for the removal of excessive maintenance and inspection obligations, an open approach to technology rather than rigid requirements, and the abolition of the mandatory monthly consumption reporting, in order to effectively reduce unnecessary service charges.

- To identify ways of drastically reducing the regulatory jungle, we are establishing an ongoing dialogue with practitioners (including architects, surveyors, structural engineers, tenants' associations, owners' associations and staff of the relevant authorities). We want to recommend, but not mandate, sound building measures that are not strictly necessary.
- Due to the foreseeable and intractable staff shortages within the Berlin administration, we will implement AI-based administrative software which, as a first step, will develop proposals for resolving legal conflicts and, as a result, relieve administrative staff of routine tasks (e.g. checking the completeness and content of submitted documents, requesting additional information, issuing reminders, checking deadlines, etc.).
- Buildings and plans that comply with the building regulations of other federal states or other Central European countries must also be approved in Berlin. This will also facilitate mass production, with economies of scale reducing construction costs.
- We are further developing Berlin's Fast-Track Building Act, drawing on more cost-effective construction methods such as the 'Hamburg Standard'.
- Inner-city development: We will urge the boroughs to interpret the 'nature and extent of integration into the surrounding built environment' under Section 34(1) of the BauGB (German Building Code) generously. In the long term, we will relieve the boroughs of these responsibilities.
- We will develop a set of regulations to facilitate the approval of more high-rise buildings in the city centre. High-rise buildings provide significantly more living space whilst having a low environmental footprint, reduce costs for (new) infrastructure and minimise commuter traffic, etc.
- We intend to specifically develop the area around the Uber Arena and the Warschauer Bridge as a site for high-rise buildings. We view the project at Rudolfstraße 19 and the construction of a 167-metre-high residential tower positively. We are also open to further high-rise projects in this area, provided they are embedded within a coherent overall concept and make a genuine contribution to the creation of new housing.
- We will focus the planning departments' human and financial resources on areas and sites where the implementation of plans promises the construction of many new homes.

- We will facilitate the voluntary conversion of vacant commercial, office and retail premises into housing.
- As a general rule, we will not place infrastructure structures – particularly transport infrastructure – under heritage protection, and we will remove already protected structures from the heritage list. In exceptionally justified cases, heritage protection may remain in place – in such cases, the heritage protection authority will bear all additional costs from a limited overall budget in the financial plan, including the costs arising from delays. Heritage protection requirements that impair the function or improvement of infrastructure are, as a matter of principle, inadmissible.

Ownership

- In Berlin, only 16 per cent of households own their own home for their own use. This is an extremely low proportion and is detrimental to a functioning market, a stable social fabric and, ultimately, to the citizens of Berlin. In accordance with the Berlin Constitution, we want to enable as many Berliners as possible to become homeowners, or at least make it significantly easier for them to do so.
- We want to introduce a rent-to-buy scheme within the state-owned housing associations. The state-owned housing associations will build new flats on land owned by the state. Their fittings and floor plans will meet simple yet sustainable standards. Construction will be carried out using a modular approach to ensure affordable costs.
- State-owned housing associations are to submit a plan for the privatisation of tenancies within their portfolios. Provided that ten per cent of the tenants in a block of flats owned by a state-owned housing association express an interest, we will enable them to purchase their flats (following a declaration of division) or the entire block (as a co-operative) at market value. The flats are then to be sold at market value to interested tenants or, when they become vacant, to owner-occupiers. In this way, we aim, on the one hand, to achieve a better social mix in the neighbourhoods concerned, comprising both tenants and owners, and, on the other hand, to promote home ownership amongst broader sections of the population. The state-owned housing associations must advise their tenants accordingly.
- We are calling for the expansion of equity substitute loans so that more people have the opportunity to buy their own rented flat.

- We will reduce the land transfer tax for the purchase of owner-occupied property. The first 750,000 euros of the purchase price will be tax-free; the applicable tax rate will apply to the portion of the purchase price exceeding 750,000 euros. This will be financed through the sale of state-owned building plots.
- We will allow the conversion of rented flats into owner-occupied flats across the city. We will continue to guarantee the tenant protection measures already in place today.

Peripheral development of Tempelhofer Feld

- We want to begin development along the perimeter of Tempelhofer Feld immediately, without further consultation. This is not only legally possible; given the extremely tight housing market, it is also socially necessary.
- We envisage a 'Berlin mix' for the new neighbourhood, which will accommodate households with different income levels and a blend of residential and commercial use, as well as a mix of owner-occupied and rented properties.
- To ensure a wide range of housing options, we aim to attract a variety of developers: housing cooperatives, public housing providers and private developers. We do not want a monotonous development, but rather one that is varied, aesthetically pleasing and architecturally forward-looking.
- In addition, larger residential complexes for apprentices and students are to be built on part of the site. The aim is to create an urban yet liveable development with appropriate green spaces.

Budget and finances

Berlin must finally learn to manage its finances. After decades of mismanagement, Berlin is heavily in debt and the largest net recipient under the federal-state financial equalisation scheme – in other words, a capital city that has to be supported by others rather than acting as the driving force of our republic itself. The current government has pushed the State of Berlin's liabilities to a record high in just three years; if one includes the additional liabilities arising from, for example, the state's shareholdings, Berlin has accumulated liabilities totalling more than €100 billion in recent years. Despite all public claims to the contrary, the budget has not been consolidated; instead, it was deemed more convenient to pile up further burdens for the future. The favourable interest rate environment of the 2010s is now reversing due to Berlin's traditionally long-term loan portfolio; rising interest expenditure threatens to completely erode positive developments on the revenue side. Any political decisions in the new legislative term are therefore subject to strict financial constraints and a post-election review of the city's finances. Failure to do so risks a slide into a budgetary emergency worse than the budget crisis at the start of the century.

Whilst other major cities are prospering economically, Berlin is indulging in ideological pipe dreams, shadow budgets and a bloated administration that burns through taxpayers' money instead of creating value. We, the Free Democrats, want to change this radically: sound public finances are a prerequisite for freedom, intergenerational justice and the state's ability to act. That is why we adhere to the debt brake without resorting to alternative budgets, limit the public spending ratio and consistently prioritise private investment over state expansion. We focus on the state's core responsibilities – education, infrastructure, security – thereby creating scope to provide financial relief for the hard-working middle class. Our motto: Less state, more freedom. First things first: Berlin must finally prioritise its spending; conversely, this also means that certain tasks must be scrapped. A guiding principle here must also be to enable economic prosperity and well-being for as many Berliners as possible. In the medium to long term, it is clear to us that the city should transition from being a recipient to a contributor.

The Free Democrats want to change this radically: sound public finances are a prerequisite for freedom, intergenerational justice and the state's ability to act. That is why we adhere to the debt brake without resorting to 'workaround' budgets, limit the public spending ratio and consistently prioritise private investment over state expansion. We focus on the state's core responsibilities – education, infrastructure, security – and thereby create the scope to provide financial relief for the hard-working middle class. Our motto: Less state, more freedom. First things first: Berlin should transition from a recipient to a donor region.

Fair taxes and levies

- We reject tax increases. Where financial leeway arises, we want to ease the burden on citizens, the self-employed and businesses.
- We want to introduce a land transfer tax allowance of 750,000 euros on the purchase price of a residential property for owner-occupation.
- We want to abolish minor local taxes such as the dog licence fee. The dog licence fee involves a high administrative burden that is out of all proportion to the revenue it generates.
- We will utilise any financial leeway to reduce the trade tax assessment rate.
- The implementation of the property tax reform has shown that the promise of revenue neutrality was not kept. Many property owners, particularly those of detached houses, have faced a noticeable increase in their tax burden. Future tax policy decisions must meet the requirement of revenue neutrality and must not lead to hidden additional burdens.
- We intend to use artificial intelligence to curb VAT fraud. The use of intelligent software and big data at the tax administration level can help to make tax collection and assessment more efficient. The application of artificial intelligence in tax administration, using products and software solutions already available on the market – for example, to detect VAT fraud – should be promoted.
- In the long term, we want to abolish property tax and business tax and replace them with a local authority surcharge – with the authority to set its own assessment rate – on corporation tax and income tax, as well as, where appropriate, a higher share of VAT for local authorities.

Private over public

- Berlin-Brandenburg Airport is to be sold to private owners in the medium term, similar to other airports in Germany. To this end, we are entering into discussions with the other co-owners.

- We intend to abolish Berliner Stadtwerke GmbH, as it offers no added value compared with other private energy suppliers and poses significant financial risks to the state.
- We intend to wind up the 'Sicheres Wohnen – Beteiligung, Beratung, Prüfung – Anstalt öffentlichen Rechts' (Safe Housing – Participation, Advice, Audit – Public-Law Institution) and have the Senate administrations resume technical supervision.
- We reject plans for expropriation and nationalisation; they are fundamentally at odds with our Basic Law and our economic system. We actively oppose any attempts to interpret Article 15 of the Basic Law differently.
- We want to reverse the nationalisation of land carried out by Berliner Bodenfonds GmbH (BBF).
- We want to dissolve GB infraVelo GmbH, as it offers no added value to private planners. Its responsibilities should be reintegrated into the relevant Senate department.
- We want to abolish Digitalagentur Berlin GmbH (DAB). The tasks carried out by DAB can be performed far more effectively by private companies.
- Berlin Recycling GmbH must be separated from Berliner Stadtreinigung (BSR), privatised and opened up to competition.
- Tempelhof Projekt GmbH must be dissolved. The Tempelhof Airport building can be developed more quickly and effectively by private, experienced project developers.
- The establishment of companies by the state must not lead to a lack of transparency in Parliament, with trade and business secrets being used as a pretext to withhold information. Information must be made fully available to the democratic decision-making process. The State of Berlin shall not establish companies to provide services that can also be provided by private companies.

A sound budget

- Berlin's budget is characterised by an ever-increasing proportion of expenditure based on statutory obligations and other long-term commitments; the budget is thus becoming increasingly 'fossilised'. Efforts to put public finances in order in the medium term have been neglected in recent years. Berlin has been living 'from hand to mouth' for years.
- Particularly striking is the high and ever-increasing proportion of social expenditure and the number of posts in the civil service. Both are disproportionately high on a per capita basis and must be corrected.
- We want a balanced budget without taking on new liabilities: the statutory debt brake has proved its worth and allows for sufficient financial leeway even in times of crisis. We therefore intend to comply with it in full once again. We are also committed to ensuring that all supplementary budgets are included within the debt brake to prevent shadow budgets and circumvention of the debt brake. At federal level, we are committed to reinstating the fundamental ban on new structural borrowing by the federal states.
- Furthermore, we call for further debt reduction for the benefit of future generations. The aim should be to reduce per capita debt, initially to the average level of the other federal states.
- We want to further strengthen the Court of Auditors, both institutionally and in terms of staffing. The Court of Auditors is a trustworthy supervisory body that critically monitors and reviews budgetary policy, and we value its recommendations.
- We are committed to the goal of economic and employment growth, not least to increase revenue for the state and, in particular, to reduce expenditure.
- Despite our commitment to spending discipline, we want to increase the proportion of the state budget allocated to investment (particularly in critical infrastructure). We will achieve this, in part, through new forms of financing.
- We will end the use of taxpayers' money to fund so-called 'round tables' and discussion groups, and press for planning and consultation processes to be carried out more quickly and efficiently.

- We will review all ideologically driven small-scale projects in terms of their costs and benefits and, where necessary, discontinue them in order to further reduce the public spending ratio.
- We reject the chambers' financial stakes in state-owned enterprises such as Berlin Partner or Messe Berlin; these should be phased out swiftly.
- We want Berlin to push for a fundamental reorganisation of federal-state finances within the Bundesrat. Tasks, competences and financial responsibility must be clearly assigned to a federal level. This creates transparency, strengthens accountability and fosters a new spirit of reform in the cooperation between the Bundestag and the Bundesrat.

Transport

Mobility is freedom. Berlin must be a city where people can get around quickly.

Whether on foot, by bike, on public transport or by car: everyone must be able to travel quickly, safely and independently. Instead of ideological transport policy that fusses over motorists and neglects public transport, we advocate intelligent coexistence between all modes of transport. We want a public transport system where every Berliner has access within 300 metres and can reach Alexanderplatz or Bahnhof Zoo in 30 minutes. We want intelligent traffic management instead of constant gridlock, investment in roads and railways instead of ideology, and innovative mobility solutions ranging from autonomous driving to new logistics solutions powered by artificial intelligence. It is not political directives, but individual road users who decide which mode of transport to use. Berlin must become a central hub of the European transport networks – modern, climate-neutral and fast. Where bottlenecks exist, we favour fair pricing over bans. Vision Zero – zero road deaths – is our goal.

- We want a seamless, integrated door-to-door transport service for all Berliners. Rather than pitting individual modes of transport against one another, we view the entire mobility system as a single entity: public transport, private motorised transport, cycling and walking must be intelligently interconnected. Widely available sharing schemes and autonomous transport systems should facilitate intermodality. We will expand digital platforms through which citizens can, at any time, find the best door-to-door connection for their personal mobility needs – individually, flexibly and without barriers – and freely choose suitable modes of transport. Bus stops and railway stations will be designed to be accessible.
- We want to fundamentally overhaul the Mobility Act. The aim is to ensure fair coexistence among all road users and to provide transport infrastructure and mobility services tailored to people's needs. It should be up to each and every citizen to decide whether they wish to travel on foot, by bicycle, by public transport, on an electric scooter or by car. No matter where Berliners live and work – whether within the S-Bahn ring or in the outlying districts – everyone needs a transport network that meets their needs and works effectively. We are creating a coordinated transport plan and an attractive range of mobility options, which is essential for the development of our metropolitan region. In close cooperation with the State of Brandenburg, we are developing an efficient range of services across all modes of transport. Good connections between the outskirts and the surrounding areas can make a decisive

contribution to easing the situation on the housing market in the city centre. Existing cycle paths must be repaired, even if they do not meet the 'standard width', rather than waiting ten years for a 'transport plan' and its implementation. Known accident blackspots will be made safer.

- We want to make the best possible use of Berlin's limited space by increasingly building transport infrastructure underground, at ground level and at height. Smart, three-dimensional transport concepts significantly reduce land consumption and create space for green spaces, recreational areas and social interaction. We will drive forward the expansion of underground transport infrastructure, for example through new underground railway lines and underground car parks. At the same time, we are focusing on innovative transport systems at height: cable cars, elevated railways, maglev trains and, in the medium term, (autonomous) air transport systems will connect the city and the surrounding area from the third dimension. These systems are quiet, space-saving, climate-neutral and provide fast connections across obstacles such as bodies of water or densely built-up areas. These innovative transport systems are designed to effectively complement the existing public transport network at suitable locations, drawing on their specific characteristics and strengths. We will make footpaths safe and ensure they remain so even in winter.
- We, the Free Democrats, want to reduce the number of commuters travelling to and from Berlin who have to use their own cars by offering them an attractive Park & Ride (P&R) system. 'P&R Mobility Hubs', easily accessible by car, must be established at suitable locations along regional rail routes and on S-Bahn lines in the Berlin catchment area, where cyclists will also find parking spaces. A key feature of these hubs is a large number of bookable parking spaces to ensure a smooth transition from car to train. An attractive fare system combining a public transport ticket with a parking space booking must be developed for this purpose. Suitable locations could include, for example, former freight stations or freight transport centres.
- Where side streets still have cobblestones, we want to gradually remove or grind them down to make these side streets attractive and usable for cyclists too. As a side benefit, this will also reduce noise pollution for local residents.
- In its current form, BER is not competitive. In addition to the errors during the construction phase, the resulting high liabilities, the insolvency of AirBerlin and the errors in the subsequent EU state aid proceedings, it is under pressure from national quasi-monopoly operators who, in both the passenger and freight sectors, have no interest in a strong air transport hub in Berlin-Brandenburg. In future, regional policy must focus on our regional interests

: good connections to and from Berlin, for Berliners and businesses alike.

- We intend to work with the affected federal states to examine the extent to which Leipzig Airport can be developed into an international hub for a joint capital region. Part of this assessment will involve the possible construction of a Transrapid line between Berlin and Leipzig Airport, which would enable a journey from Berlin to the airport within 30 minutes, as well as appropriate traffic management systems for private transport and efficient baggage handling in Berlin itself. Should an assessment show that this project is not feasible within a reasonable cost and time frame, we intend to lift the night-time flight ban at BER entirely in order to enable further long-haul connections at BER as quickly as possible.
- We want to strengthen Berlin's position as a key European aviation hub and significantly expand its connections to the rest of the world. BER must realise its full potential as an international airport. To become competitive, its profitability must be increased, for example by tapping into further sources of revenue. We are also committed to granting foreign airlines more landing rights, particularly for long-haul routes, and to removing bureaucratic barriers to new routes. Greater competition means more routes, lower prices and better links between Berlin and global economic centres, which is a crucial location factor for businesses, academia and tourism. Berlin should endeavour to support the establishment of a regional airline operating out of BER.

Public transport

- We, the Free Democrats, want to put an end to the public transport crisis in Berlin affecting buses, trams, the underground and the S-Bahn. Our aim is a public transport system that people can rely on at all times: cancellations and delays must be a thing of the past, service frequencies must be increased and connections better coordinated. At the same time, we want to ensure safety, cleanliness, comfort and accessibility across the entire public transport network, so that all passengers can feel at ease on buses and trains, as well as at stations and stops.
- Our growing metropolitan region requires a well-developed and efficient public transport network to cope not only with the growing population but also with the increasing number of visitors and commuters. The planning of the various modes of transport must be better co-ordinated to provide more effective alternative services during construction work on existing routes.

- We are committed to ensuring that the pioneering i2030 rail transport project, with all its sub-projects for the S-Bahn and regional rail services, lives up to its name and is fully implemented and operational by the end of the 2030s at the latest.
- To relieve pressure on limited road space, we are particularly committed to expanding the underground network. The underground is accepted by passengers like no other mode of transport and provides a strong incentive to switch to public transport – because, unlike buses and trams, it is not held up in traffic and covers distances considerably more quickly. Only with a metro service running at frequent intervals can we cope with the rising passenger numbers in our city and encourage new passengers to switch to public transport. It is therefore essential not only to maintain the existing network, but also to build an additional one to two kilometres each year. However, the comparatively high investment costs represent a sensible investment in the future: the expansion of the underground network noticeably improves people's quality of life.
- These specific planning projects – subject to a positive cost-benefit analysis – are our priority:
 1. key extensions to close gaps in the underground network: the U8 to the Märkisches Viertel, the U1 to Ostkreuz and Halensee, and eventually to Schmargendorf, and the U7 to BER
 2. Key extensions to the underground network: the U2 to Pankow Kirche; the U5 from the Hauptbahnhof via Moabit and Jungfernheide station to the Urban Tech Republic in Tegel; the U9 southwards to Lankwitz and on to Marienfelde, and northwards via Pankow Kirche to Karower Kreuz.
 3. New underground line planning: construction of a new underground express line from Alexanderplatz to Marzahn-Mitte (as far as Glambecker Ring) via Weißensee and Hohenschönhausen.
 4. Reactivation of the Stammbahn (i2030 South-West Corridor project) and connection to the U3 via a line extension to Düppel-Kleinmachnow, the future regional station of the planned reactivated Stammbahn. The timetable is to be coordinated so that this U3 extension and the Stammbahn enter service as simultaneously as possible.

5. Double-track expansion of previously single-track sections of the S-Bahn (e.g. the connection to Teltow and along the former course of the Berlin Wall) to improve connections to outlying areas
- We want to realise an elevated, fully automated and zero-emission maglev line from Alexanderplatz via Lichtenberg to, in the long term, Falkenberg, as a fast and efficient connection. To this end, we are calling for the State of Berlin, together with the BVG, industry and academia, to present a feasibility study by 2029.
 - We support a state-owned fleet of rolling stock for the Berlin S-Bahn to enable greater competition amongst rolling stock suppliers. Competition ensures better service and lower costs. The S-Bahn tender, which was deliberately poorly designed for political reasons, has led to unacceptable delays and unnecessary additional costs of several hundred million euros, which could otherwise be put to better use in expanding the public transport network. We will utilise all remaining legal and political avenues to get new S-Bahn trains onto the tracks as quickly as possible, to limit the disruption to Berlin's passengers and to mitigate the considerable financial damage to the state budget.
 - Automatic driverless operation (GoA4) of underground trains is now standard practice worldwide. We therefore call for the swift introduction of driverless automatic operation on the underground. The widely demanded expansion and strengthening of public transport stands in contrast to the ever-increasing shortage of driving staff, partly due to demographic change. This applies equally to the S-Bahn, which faces the same demands and challenges.
 - We call for an increase in the frequency of high-traffic services, better coverage of outlying areas through flexible on-demand bus schemes, and the ability to track buses and trains in real time, as well as monitor the occupancy of individual carriages and vehicles. We are clearly prioritising higher quality in public transport (speed, punctuality, reliability, cleanliness, safety, comfort and accessibility) rather than just low prices, as this is the key prerequisite for an attractive public transport system.
 - We want to upgrade the Berlin Outer Ring Railway as quickly as possible and supplement it with a third railway ring in order to optimally connect the city's districts along the various growth axes. This will create a shared living, working, economic, cultural and recreational space that combines efficient infrastructure with a high quality of life and reliably ensures essential public services – from public transport and schools to medical care.

- We are committed to the swift implementation of the local transport tangent to relieve pressure on the inner-city network and improve connections between the outlying districts.
- We want to make the BVG and S-Bahn significantly more transparent. Passengers must be able to rely at all times on accurate, real-time information regarding cancellations, delays, connections and alternative routes. To this end, we are focusing on improved digital passenger information, clear communication at stations, stops and on board vehicles, as well as faster updates in the event of disruptions. Reliable information reduces everyday stress and is an essential component of a modern, customer-focused public transport system.
- Freedom of movement is a key value for us. We pay particular attention to accessibility and safety in all our transport services. This includes gradually making all S-Bahn and U-Bahn stations accessible. We ensure safety, for example, through well-lit trains and stations.
- We want every investment in rail infrastructure to take into account the technical and structural requirements for automation or driverless operation.
- We call for the BVG to continue to be able to co-finance its operations through private advertising on its vehicles and in stations.
- We are committed to ensuring that all public transport vehicles are fitted with air conditioning.
- Ostkreuz station is one of Berlin's most important transport hubs and has become even more significant following the expansion of regional transport services. It must therefore finally be better connected to the tram network. At present, some tram and bus routes run some distance away, making access from the surrounding neighbourhoods unnecessarily difficult. With the new Marktstraße–Ostkreuz–Wühlischplatz route and the rerouting of line 21, we aim to develop Ostkreuz into a genuine transport hub.
- We want to reform the right to strike for infrastructure and monopoly companies such as the BVG. In March 2025 and February 2026, the entire city of Berlin was virtually paralysed by a strike at the BVG. The economic damage is unacceptable. The BVG is a vital piece of infrastructure with no significant competition, as the S-Bahn offers a suitable alternative only in parts of the city. That is why we are calling for new regulations. Before any strike

there must be a binding arbitration process. The parties to collective bargaining may only resort to industrial action after serious efforts to find a solution have failed. The involvement of a neutral third party in collective bargaining disputes has generally proved effective. The threat of industrial action must be regarded as a means of industrial action in its own right and should only be permitted after unsuccessful but genuine attempts to find a solution have been made. Furthermore, the Free Democrats call for binding notice periods to protect the general public, as the impact on third parties is significantly reduced when sufficient advance notice is given. In this way, the economic and reputational damage caused by industrial action – including to Berlin as a business location – can also be minimised. In addition, we call for mandatory emergency service agreements to ensure legal certainty. These are already recognised by the highest courts today – for example, in the aviation sector – but can only be secured through summary proceedings at very short notice. A statutory obligation to conclude such agreements leads to greater legal certainty.

Footpaths

- Most journeys in Berlin are made on foot. We will improve conditions for pedestrians so that everyone can get about safely.
- Pavements must be sufficiently wide, level and free of obstacles. We will systematically remove bottlenecks, rectify trip hazards and prioritise maintenance. Pavements must not be blocked by parked cars, e-scooters or other obstacles. We are committed to consistently penalising violations.
- We want it to be possible to cross major road junctions in a single go, with accessible double crossings on all four sides. People with reduced mobility, parents with pushchairs, older people and wheelchair users must not be forced to stop several times or take detours. We will therefore systematically redesign major junctions to ensure that all crossings are fully accessible: with lowered kerbs, sufficiently long green phases and tactile guidance systems for visually impaired people.
- We will press ahead swiftly with the redevelopment of major junctions, working closely with relevant organisations to find practical solutions.
- Consistently good lighting on pavements is crucial to many people's sense of safety. We will systematically

and focus street lighting on pavements rather than on the carriageway.

- In neighbourhoods where pavements are missing in some areas, we will work with local residents to assess the feasibility of rapid construction and, if the assessment is positive, press ahead with the project.
- We will commission the definition of a priority network for pedestrian traffic, similar to the priority networks for cars, cycles and public transport. This network will encompass the city's most important pedestrian routes and will be given priority in planning, maintenance and expansion. As in London or New York, we will use information boards to show what can be reached within a 5- or 10-minute walk.

Road traffic

- The road network also needs to be further expanded. High-capacity, easily accessible expressways relieve neighbourhoods of unnecessary through-traffic, thereby improving the quality of life in the city. Eastern Berlin, in particular, is still not sufficiently connected to the main road network. The rapid continuation of the A100 through construction phase 17 to Storkower Straße and the completion of the Eastern Tangential Link (TVO), as well as new road links, particularly in the north-east and south of the city, therefore remain a priority for us. The FDP Berlin supports the cross-party alliance against bollards and neighbourhood barriers and is committed to its aim of ensuring genuine public participation as a fundamental prerequisite for all transport planning. Anyone who lives, works or provides care in a neighbourhood must be heard before bollards, modal filters and neighbourhood barriers restrict their daily lives.
- We want to extend the Tiergarten Tunnel as far as Sachsendamm in the southern section and further north.
- We oppose any further reduction in the capacity of existing through roads in the city centre where this is not justified.
- To reduce congestion on our roads and restrictions on footpaths and cycle paths, we call for centralised coordination of roadworks, which will harmonise and speed up the numerous roadworks projects. This should build on the existing 'Baustellenatlas' platform operated by Infrest, the use of which should be mandatory for all public authorities and state-owned enterprises. When

approval of roadworks, care must be taken to ensure that they are planned as swiftly as possible and with minimal disruption. Long-term roadworks should be regularly monitored to ensure that the conditions of the permits are being met and that they do not unnecessarily block public roads.

- With smart city infrastructure, we aim to enter a new era of intelligent, data-driven transport planning. Fixed traffic sensors distributed throughout the city will help to optimise traffic flows and transport routes, leading to effective, efficient and holistic planning of transport infrastructure and transport systems.
- We wish to maintain a 50 km/h speed limit on all major thoroughfares and reject disproportionate restrictions as counterproductive.
- The key point is this: a modern, growing metropolis needs modern traffic management systems. Through smart city technologies, we are enabling intelligent, smartphone-based parking guidance and booking systems with demand-based parking charges. We will tailor the supply of parking spaces to meet demand rather than artificially restricting it. We therefore support the construction of privately funded underground car parks and will streamline and simplify the necessary approval procedures.
- We oppose the introduction of a city toll.
- Bike and e-scooter sharing expand the range of available transport options. However, they must not inconvenience other road users, such as pedestrians. We are therefore creating incentives for providers and users to park their vehicles in an orderly manner on the streets.
- Fair competition between commercial passenger transport providers is in the interests of consumers. We are therefore committed to liberalising the taxi market and creating legal certainty for new business models. To this end, the Passenger Transport Act must be reformed and adapted to today's technical capabilities. All Berlin taxis should have the right to pick up passengers at BER.
- Autonomous driving has the potential to make driving safer and more environmentally friendly and – through fleets of autonomous minicabs – to create attractive alternatives to private cars. The operation of autonomous cars and buses on public roads should be promoted. We want Berlin to take a leading role in the introduction of this technology.

Car2x infrastructure (connectivity between infrastructure and road users) should be introduced comprehensively at an early stage. At the federal level, we intend to campaign for the swift removal of any remaining legal uncertainties in the context of autonomous driving.

- To ensure that autonomous driving can realise its full potential, we will consistently align road traffic and infrastructure planning with the necessary changes and prepare for the impending transformation in road transport.
- A well-functioning commercial transport sector is essential for our city's economic development and security of supply. We want to encourage and facilitate initiatives for the intelligent optimisation of commercial transport, which will help to make it more cost-effective and environmentally friendly whilst reducing the strain on transport systems. In doing so, we do not wish to impose logistics systems through political means, but rather to take into account logistics solutions provided by private companies and initiatives by logistics customers for their own logistics platforms. Sufficient loading bays must be provided and protected against misuse.
- At suitable locations throughout the city, we intend to expand charging infrastructure that is also suitable for lorries and, in particular, easily accessible to large lorries
- Provider-neutral parcel lockers at home and at work contribute to more economical, safer and more environmentally friendly delivery services.
- Tradespeople and other local service providers should be allowed to park free of charge throughout Berlin.
- We are campaigning for the introduction of electric water shuttles and taxis, for example on the Teltow Canal and to the main railway station.
- Electric mobility is a key component of modern and climate-friendly transport. We are therefore committed to the rapid and needs-based expansion of charging points throughout Berlin. Public charging infrastructure must be easier to obtain planning permission for, widely available and technically reliable – particularly in densely populated districts where many people do not own their own property or have private charging facilities. We want to remove bureaucratic hurdles, facilitate private investment and promote innovative concepts such as fast-charging hubs, charging points at supermarkets and smart charging in public spaces. Our aim is a modern infrastructure that

makes climate-friendly mobility suitable for everyday use, without patronising people through unnecessary bans or restrictions.

Cycling

- We want to significantly expand cycle lanes running parallel to main roads, following the example of Linienstraße, and substantially increase the network of cycle lanes. In return, the cycling infrastructure on the main roads running parallel to them can be kept to a minimum. The cycle lanes are to be marked by a clearly visible cycle guidance system to make it easier to find your way around.
- We will fundamentally expand and overhaul Berlin's cycle network. Cycle expressways for longer distances are essential in this regard. We will repair existing cycle lanes and paths.
- Where cycle paths cannot be routed along side streets, they should run directly alongside the motor vehicle lane at road level and be physically separated.
- In busy areas, particularly at railway stations, privately funded cycle parking facilities – including underground ones – equipped with security technology are to be built.
- Accident blackspots at dangerous junctions will be eliminated, and junctions will be better adapted to the needs of pedestrians and cyclists. This includes, in particular, traffic light phasing that gives pedestrians and cyclists priority over turning vehicles.
- We support unconventional cycle route concepts such as tunnels or flyovers.

Home Affairs, Justice and a Clean City

Safety is the foundation of freedom. Berlin must be a city where everyone feels safe at all times and in all places – whether in parks at night, on public transport, in public spaces or in their own homes. Instead, we are witnessing increasing neglect, rising crime and neighbourhoods that feel like no-go areas. We, the Free Democrats, want to change this: Berlin must be a safe and clean European metropolis. The police, the judiciary, the fire service and the emergency services need the best equipment and more staff, and they deserve respect rather than hostility. We prioritise prevention over repression, but where necessary we advocate the consistent enforcement of the law. There must be no homelessness, no illegal drug use in public spaces, no widespread littering and no vandalism. Courts must deliver swift judgements; proceedings must not drag on for years. Anti-Semitism, extremism and group-focused hostility have no place in our city. Berlin should be a cosmopolitan, well-maintained and safe city, where freedom and security go hand in hand.

Security

- We want a free and democratic society. The free democratic basic order and its pluralistic values must not be called into question. We resolutely combat political and ideological extremism of any kind. We call for crime prevention that tackles the root causes through increased awareness-raising, rehabilitation programmes and collaboration between government agencies and civic initiatives.
- Good staff also need good infrastructure. Police stations and fire stations must finally be refurbished and brought up to a good standard; to this end, we will draw up a refurbishment programme with a binding plan.
- Our aim is to increase the police presence. The police should maintain a permanent presence in public spaces. To this end, we want to relieve the police force of administrative tasks as far as possible. We support measures modelled on the 'Kottiwache' in areas with high crime rates. We must prevent parts of the city from becoming no-go areas for sections of the population.
- In order to enhance citizens' sense of security and improve low-threshold interaction between the police and the public,

we call for community liaison officers to be deployed more extensively and for them to be relieved of additional duties to this end.

- We wish to implement ‘Security by Design’ across Berlin. In high-risk areas of Berlin, such as railway stations or drug dealing hotspots, we aim – alongside temporary CCTV surveillance – to enhance safety, cleanliness and the quality of the public environment through structural measures, such as good lighting, unobstructed sightlines and the elimination of dark corners. It is crucial that the implementation of these safety-enhancing measures takes into account quality of life and the cityscape. Furthermore, the establishment of homeless encampments must be consistently prevented, and those affected must be actively offered alternative accommodation options.
- We, the Free Democrats, want to effectively combat crime in areas where offences with significant consequences are committed frequently or by organised gangs. To this end, the police in such high-crime areas will be granted special powers to carry out identity checks and searches of persons and property without reasonable suspicion. We, the Free Democrats, wish to clarify the criteria by which a location is classified as crime-ridden and make them publicly transparent. To this end, the General Security and Public Order Act (ASOG) must be amended to include a list of the offences that lead to such a classification. Furthermore, account must be taken of the extent to which the planning, preparation or commission of these offences is actually established at the location in question. The classification must be reviewed on a regular basis. If the conditions no longer apply, the classification must be revoked. In doing so, procedural safeguards must ensure that findings based exclusively on an existing assessment of an area as crime-ridden do not lead to such an assessment being made again. Furthermore, we call for a scientific evaluation of the effectiveness of classifying areas as crime-ridden from a criminal justice perspective.
- We wish to abolish the presumption rule in Section 7 of the State Anti-Discrimination Act, the reversal of the burden of proof under which makes police work more bureaucratically burdensome.
- We reject the indiscriminate, mass linking of personal data with the aim of creating individual risk profiles as a preventive measure, for example through the use of surveillance software that restricts fundamental rights.
- Extremist activities, whatever their origin, have no place in our public authorities and, in particular, within the security apparatus, and must be consistently prevented on the basis of scientific evidence.

- Preventative programmes, such as those offered by the police as part of the school curriculum, anti-violence training and information sessions offered by the police as part of school lessons must be stepped up. At the same time, better coordination between the police, schools and youth support services is required. Furthermore, greater deployment of youth and social workers, as well as street workers, is necessary to create a reliable point of contact. ‘Criminal careers’, particularly among children who are not yet of criminal age, must be identified at an early stage and prevented.
- The excessive, unwarranted collection and storage of data, for example in the context of mobile phone cell site queries or other forms of telecommunications surveillance at source (Quellen-TKÜs), as it places completely unsuspected citizens under general suspicion. Instead, we are establishing the ‘Quick Freeze’ procedure, which may only commence following a court order and subject to strict storage conditions and deletion deadlines. This prevents massive intrusions into the highly personal data of all citizens and removes the blanket suspicion. Instead, only information relating to actual suspects is stored.
- We call for a consistent approach to tackling vandalism. Damage to property, for example in the form of graffiti on public infrastructure, is not prosecuted sufficiently in Berlin.
- We want to strengthen player protection in the gambling sector. For these standards to take effect, a resolute approach is needed against the illegal market, which circumvents all regulation and leaves vulnerable gamblers defenceless. We therefore intend to take consistent action against illegal gambling sites whilst simultaneously creating a framework that enables regulated providers to offer a safe and reliable environment in which gamblers can make an informed choice in favour of legal options.
- We intend to merge the State Offices for the Protection of the Constitution in Berlin and Brandenburg to increase their effectiveness in the metropolitan region.
- We want to strengthen public awareness of the forms and consequences of psychological violence on the internet. Digital violence threatens freedom, security and social participation, and manifests itself in particular in the form of threats, coercion, stalking, doxing, sexualised assaults, identity theft, deepfakes and attacks on privacy.
- Domestic and sexual violence: We want to ensure rapid assistance. We want to strengthen and expand the emergency shelter for victims of violence. We want to increase the number of

safe havens. We want to establish efficient cooperation between the police, the domestic violence support centre, the youth welfare office, judicial authorities and the courts, so as to increase the trust that victims of violence have in these institutions. We are expanding our prevention work. Domestic violence causes suffering, but it also always results in economic loss.

- We will consistently prosecute acts of violence against emergency services and law enforcement officers, who stand up for our city and our common good every day, in accordance with existing criminal law.
- The Berlin Fire Brigade must be enabled to continue ensuring safety in Berlin. It has been operating at full capacity for years. We need more skilled staff in the fire service and will campaign for a significant increase in posts within the technical fire service. The response times of emergency vehicles must return to a level of well under ten minutes per call-out. This can only be achieved with more staff and more vehicles.
- To prepare for disasters, cooperation between the districts, the state, aid organisations, the fire service, the THW and the Federal Office for Civil Protection and Disaster Assistance (BBK) must be stepped up.
- We are campaigning for the abolition of the 'dangerous breeds' list in the Berlin Dog Act (HundeG Bln).
- We want to strengthen the protection of responsibly kept dogs against blanket stigmatisation, thereby improving animal welfare and the chances of rehoming at animal shelters.

Cleanliness and order

- Parks, green spaces and street trees must be kept in good condition and carefully maintained. We want to improve the quality of green spaces, regularly replant our street trees and ensure their ongoing maintenance and watering.
- Funding for the upkeep of parks, streets and public spaces should be increased in the budget of the State of Berlin, as well as in all boroughs. This means that, for us, this long-term public responsibility is more important than funding politically motivated flagship projects.

- We are also committed to greater cooperation with private initiatives. Neighbourhood initiatives, as well as private individuals and businesspeople, should be enabled – without red tape and with legal certainty – to take on the maintenance of parts of public spaces, such as roadside trees or green spaces.
- We are securing ongoing funding for the 'Parkläufer' project to de-escalate conflicts between users and residents of public green spaces in an accessible manner and to ensure compliance with park regulations.
- We are committed to ensuring that all green spaces currently still cleaned by the boroughs will in future also fall under the responsibility of the BSR. This will ease the burden on public finances overall and ensure clear and consistent accountability, as well as more efficient cleaning.
- Clean public toilet facilities are a good example of effective public-private partnerships. The State of Berlin or the boroughs should continue and intensify their cooperation with private providers and install further accessible toilet facilities across the board, particularly in heavily frequented locations such as squares, railway stations, lakes and green spaces. The long-term functionality of publicly accessible toilet facilities operated on behalf of the State of Berlin must be ensured. To this end, existing operating contracts must be rigorously monitored and, in the event of breaches of duty, appropriate contractual measures must be taken to ensure that the facilities are restored to working order without delay. As part of the public infrastructure, public toilets should be available free of charge to people of all genders.
- Cleanliness must once again be universally regarded as a value and put into practice. Local residents, business owners, schools and clubs all have a role to play here. Neighbourhood-wide clean-up days on 'World Cleanup Day' (21 September) offer an opportunity to raise public awareness of cleanliness and foster a sense of community engagement. City-wide coordination of these initiatives must be ensured.
- The provision – and the frequency of emptying – of litter bins, bins and containers in parks should be significantly increased. Care must be taken to ensure that litter bins are not placed directly next to park benches, where they may cause odour nuisance. To prevent them from becoming full too quickly, underground waste collection systems should increasingly be established as the standard.
- Bulky waste of any kind should be collected free of charge following appropriate consultation with the BSR.
- BSR neighbourhood days should take place more frequently and in more locations.

- To minimise waiting times at recycling centres, an online, fee-based time-ticket system ('Fast Lane') should be offered in addition to the regular walk-in service. At the same time, illegal dumping must be punished more severely. When new centres are built, good public transport links must be ensured.
- The recycling of building materials and the reuse of building components are essential elements of sustainable resource management. Berlin should lead the way in this regard and, particularly in public construction projects, consider the circular economy from the outset and incorporate it into the planning process. Accordingly, Berlin should also significantly increase the proportion of recycled building materials and reused building components in public construction projects.
- We want to drive forward the introduction of digital route planning for cleaning and emptying intervals, initially at railway stations. In addition, in pilot areas, rubbish bins and public litter bins are to be fitted with digital fill-level sensors that automatically transmit a request for emptying, for example via LoRaWAN.
- We call for the consistent use of cleaning robots in parks and green spaces. Using an artificial neural network, these robots will be able to independently scan defined areas for litter and remove it. At the same time, we call for the development of transparent standards for the systematic evaluation of the effectiveness of such systems in various urban environments.
- The monitoring of illegal waste disposal should be prioritised by the public order authorities over other tasks. To this end, additional posts should be created within the general public order service.
- We wish to place particular emphasis on the more consistent cleaning of public transport areas. This also applies to station forecourts. To this end, we intend to hold public transport service providers accountable through their transport contracts. There must be no more dirty and smelly stations.
- The number of city pigeons is to be reduced through an effective strategy. This includes the removal of wild nesting sites and the use of pigeon deterrent systems in heavily affected locations such as railway stations, bridges and public buildings. We also support the use of animal-welfare-compliant deterrents such as Ovisstop. Should these measures prove ineffective, pigeons are to be included in the Pest Control Regulations.

- Among other things, we want to place greater emphasis on closed waste management systems, clean public spaces and the systematic removal of food sources as key measures against rat infestations.
- We support all forms of pest population management that aim to reduce pest numbers and are consistent with animal welfare.

Justice

- All legal proceedings should be conducted expeditiously; citizens' rights should not be jeopardised by delays in legal redress. Tax and similar audits to ensure compliance with the law should be carried out in a consistent manner, in a way that is reasonable for those affected, and efficiently.
- To enable the police, judicial authorities and the courts in Berlin to work effectively, they require adequate, state-of-the-art facilities, equipment and resources to enforce the rules of coexistence and to sanction breaches swiftly, reliably and proportionately.
- We want to improve staffing levels in the courts, the public prosecutor's office, the prison service, the fire service and the police. This includes fair pay, attractive working conditions and improvements to the physical infrastructure. We want to launch a programme to recruit young talent.
- We want to ensure sufficient capacity for the accommodation of prisoners so that every custodial sentence can be enforced immediately following conviction. To this end, we are also open to public-private partnership (PPP) projects. This also forms the basis for achieving the objective of the prison system: to empower prisoners to lead a life free from crime and with a sense of social responsibility in the future.
- A specific form of social assistance is legal aid, which enables even those without means to access justice. Unfortunately, applicants are repeatedly told by the Berlin courts that an application for legal aid can only be made by a solicitor. This contradicts the law (Section 117(1) of the Code of Civil Procedure); furthermore, if legal aid is refused, the applicant incurs avoidable costs. We, the Free Democrats, call for a corresponding

directive from the Senator for Justice to the legal aid offices to ensure that the legal position is observed.

- The state must consistently counter the threat to our free and democratic order posed by organised crime. We want to combat criminal clan structures effectively and establish suitable preventive measures that offer young people alternatives to getting involved in crime. Where there is sufficient suspicion of a crime, we want to exhaust all legal options, including the reversal of the burden of proof, in order to seize money and assets derived from criminal activities.
- We want proceedings against young offenders to take place as soon as possible after the offence has been committed, in order to dissuade young offenders from pursuing a 'criminal career' ('Neukölln Model'). We will therefore continue and consolidate measures that make this possible.
- We will specialise family court proceedings and provide better training for all those involved in cases of domestic violence (judicial officers, family court judges, youth welfare service staff).
- We want to strengthen victim protection. Victims of violence, including politically motivated violence, must be given immediate access to psychological support. Protection against stalking and hate crime must be strengthened through tougher penalties under the Protection Against Violence Act and better enforcement of the Act. The necessary structures will be established or expanded.
- We want to abolish the existing right of the Senator for Justice to issue individual instructions to the Public Prosecutor's Office in accordance with Section 147 of the German Judicial Organisation Act (GVG)

Disaster Preparedness

- Our aim is to ensure that, in the event of a disaster, every citizen knows who is responsible for what, right down to the tasks that each and every one of us can carry out personally. Everyone is familiar with the support cascade. All Berlin households stock up on essential appliances and equipment (hand-crank radio, candles, etc.).
- We want the Senate Department for the Interior to assume overall authority to issue instructions, with automatic escalation triggers in the event of widespread power cuts.
- We will establish a city-wide crisis management system with a 24/7 operations centre, standardised reporting channels and a bottleneck alert system.

- We will draw up binding minimum standards for all boroughs (emergency power, IT, command structures) funded by permanent appropriations rather than project-based funding.
- We will introduce a three-tier emergency power system: districts (basic level), the state (major reserve), and regional depots, which must be kept ready for use at all times.
- There will be annual joint exercises across all districts involving the Bundeswehr and the THW, designed to identify shortcomings and rectify them immediately.
- We will ensure that all flagship civil protection centres are 100 per cent operational: with test plans, staffing models and transparent status updates in the situation report.
- We call on the federal government to expand the Federal Office for Civil Protection and Disaster Control (BBK) into a federal central authority with the power to issue instructions in the event of major cross-state incidents, as well as to include civil protection in Article 87(1), second sentence, of the Basic Law and to grant nationwide legislative competence under Article 73(1)(10) of the Basic Law.
- From Year 7 onwards, we integrate age-appropriate civil protection content into the compulsory curriculum using materials from the BBK, the fire service and aid organisations.
- Every year, we organise a Berlin-wide action day for civil protection in collaboration with the Senate Department for the Interior and Education. During this event, Berliners are also provided with information on potential ways to get involved in this field.
- We are improving the Senate's volunteering strategy to better reconcile work commitments with voluntary civil protection service.
- We are improving the quality of warning messages sent via cell broadcast so that they are issued in good time, are easy to understand and contain clear instructions on how to prepare for crises at home.
- We call for the immediate establishment of a State Office for Disaster Management to act as a central coordinating body: standardised situation reports, standards, logistics and exercises – with the districts carrying out the work!

Civil Rights

- The fundamental right to property requires special protection in Berlin against expropriation and socialisation. We promote home ownership amongst as many people as possible and protect property holdings that have already been acquired.
- We wish to implement the constitutional mandate to promote home ownership (Art. 28(1), sentence 2 of the Berlin Constitution) and reject bans on conversion.
- The law must also be consistently enforced in and around ‘scene properties’ (Rigaer Straße, etc.). There must be no ‘no-go areas’ for the police and building authorities.
- Due to its lack of benefit and the continuing lack of transparency, we wish to delete the police database ‘Szenekunde Sport’ without replacement, as well as evaluate the costs and benefits of unwarranted video surveillance and, where necessary, scale it back accordingly.
- The requirement for judicial authorisation of surveillance measures must not be watered down, so that oversight by the courts in accordance with the rule of law is guaranteed from the outset. The courts must be staffed in such a way that they are able to establish an on-call service.
- The right to freedom of expression and the active acceptance of other views in social and parliamentary discourse are matters of particular concern to us, the Free Democrats. Democracy thrives on a lively exchange of views. Freedom of expression must be consistently protected. At the same time, however, personal honour must also be protected as a legal right. False factual claims and personal insults do not constitute an opinion and, in individual cases, may even lead to those affected withdrawing from public discourse and no longer exercising their freedom of expression. We reject, however, the tendency of the legislature to increasingly restrict the scope of what is still to be accepted as an opinion protected by fundamental rights. The decision as to whether a preliminary investigation should be initiated on the basis of a suspected honour-related offence should remain with the person concerned in future, in that the relevant offences should continue to be offences requiring a complaint to be filed. We wish to put an end to the practice by the police and the public prosecutor’s office of actively drawing the attention of members of governments and parliaments in particular to possible honour-related offences on the internet and urging them to file a criminal complaint

is a practice we wish to put a stop to. We firmly reject new laws against so-called 'hate', as they infringe upon freedom of expression and unnecessarily tie up state resources. At the same time, Berlin's politicians must ensure that the freedom of expression is possible at all times and in all places – in Berlin, this applies in particular to the protection of pro-Israeli demonstrators and those who campaign against anti-Semitism.

- We oppose the introduction of a state-designated day of remembrance against Islamophobia.
- The measures for online search and source telecommunications surveillance by means of malware ('state Trojans') or backdoors in hardware and software ('back doors') as disproportionate. Furthermore, state involvement in the black market trade in security vulnerabilities – which is necessary for the use of these measures – threatens IT security. We want to immediately repeal the amendment to the Police Act, which will in future allow investigators in Berlin to conduct covert searches of suspects' premises. Furthermore, we reject the use of 'silent text messages', IMSI catchers and similar methods as unacceptable infringements of privacy.
- Berlin has become home to many people who have fled tyranny. For example, the Iranian community, Ukrainians and Kurds have become a valuable part of our city. We stand in solidarity with these people's courageous struggle for freedom and stand by their side. We resolutely oppose global Islamism and any relapse into brutal imperialist logic, and we support, on the ground, the freedom fighters with whom we share liberal values. We take a firm stand against transnational repression by autocratic regimes (particularly here in Berlin), strengthen the protection and support for those affected, and are establishing a central point of contact to provide advice and coordinate protective measures.
- Berlin is an important centre of progressive Islam. We strengthen and protect institutions of liberal Islam such as the Ibn Rushd-Goethe Mosque and the Berlin Institute for Islamic Theology at the Humboldt University of Berlin.

Jewish life

We, the Free Democrats, want to strengthen Jewish life in Berlin through unbureaucratic support for religious and community institutions, as well as by promoting Jewish life in education and public life. We aim to achieve the consistent integration of Jewish tradition and culture into urban society through interaction, exchange and visibility.

We reject any form of violence against groups or individuals who express their identity in public. We are shocked by attacks on Jewish people and condemn them in the strongest terms. We are aware of our special responsibility towards Jewish people. It is unacceptable for Jewish people here to feel unsafe again or even to consider leaving their home city of Berlin out of concern for their safety. In Berlin, it must be possible at all times and in all places to move about openly as a Jewish person in public spaces without risk to life or limb. We resolutely oppose all forms of anti-Semitism. The rise in anti-Semitism must be combated through prevention and education programmes as well as through consistent criminal prosecution; there is zero tolerance for anti-Semitism. Our friendship with Israel and its right to exist are matters of national interest for us, which we will always defend.

- Jewish festivals and days of remembrance, as well as Jewish culture, should be given greater prominence in schools in order to foster a better understanding of Judaism. Important Jewish festivals should be celebrated in a way that is visible to the public.
- Jewish art and cultural events should be promoted and supported.
- The specific security needs of Jewish institutions such as synagogues, community centres and schools should be met without bureaucratic hurdles.
- We call for legally binding provisions to ensure that religious holidays and the Sabbath are taken into account in relation to examinations and assessments at schools and universities, with an unbureaucratic right to alternative or rescheduled dates.
- We want to establish a genuine, state-wide minute's silence on the Day of Remembrance for the Victims of National Socialism, modelled on Yom HaShoah.
- We support cooperation between Berlin-based and Israeli partners in academia and education, business and public administration.

- Public authorities must recognise all forms of anti-Semitism at an early stage. We advocate for the comprehensive adoption of the IHRA (International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance) working definition of anti-Semitism within state authorities. We advocate for extensive training programmes for the police, the public prosecution service and the courts to raise awareness of anti-Semitic statements and criminal offences. In other public authorities too, frontline staff in particular should be made aware of the issue so that they can react swiftly to anti-Semitic propaganda in public spaces, remove it and, where necessary, report it to the authorities.
- We call for the mandatory introduction of a compulsory visit to a former concentration camp memorial site for all Berlin school pupils in Year 9 or Year 10.
- We reject the ‘Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions for Palestine’ (BDS) campaign, which is anti-Israeli in its methods and objectives and clearly anti-Semitic. We will exclude organisations that support the BDS campaign from receiving grants and subsidies from public funds. We will not let or make available any state-owned premises to these organisations. At the same time, it is unacceptable for anti-Semites to be supported through state funding for culture, education or NGOs.
- State educational institutions must take decisive action against anti-Semitism and demonstrably protect Jewish students, as well as Jewish teaching staff and employees, from attacks. Occupations, such as that at the Alice Salomon University of Applied Sciences, and inhumane events such as the ‘Globalise the Intifada’ event at the Free University must no longer be tolerated; universities must enforce their right to manage their premises. Academic freedom must be defended; lectures must not be prevented by political agitation, and political protests must not lead to damage to property or vandalism. The ‘GalileA’ room at the Free University, which is managed by students, must be put to another use.
- The position of the State of Berlin’s anti-Semitism liaison officer must be better staffed and funded. Organisations such as the Jewish Forum for Democracy and Against Anti-Semitism (JFDA) and monitoring bodies such as the Research and Information Centre on Anti-Semitism (RIAS) should continue to be supported, as they document anti-Semitic incidents even where they fall below the threshold for criminal prosecution. In doing so, they make an important contribution to data collection on anti-Semitism and enable efforts to combat it.

- The prevention of anti-Semitism must be made a mandatory part of the curriculum in schools and educational institutions. We call for compulsory educational programmes against anti-Semitism that combine historical education with a clear link to the present day. This includes, in particular, the incorporation of Jewish perspectives, cooperation with Jewish organisations, and formats for interaction that break down prejudices and foster empathy.
- Civil society in the boroughs must be strengthened through targeted support for local initiatives that raise the profile of Jewish life, promote encounters and actively counter anti-Semitic sentiment.
- To improve dialogue and mutual understanding, we are committed to ensuring that schools in Berlin are supported in organising exchanges with Israeli schools. We will also strengthen exchanges with Berlin's twin city, Tel Aviv, and expand dialogue on issues such as faith and democracy.
- We want to provide greater support for encounter projects such as the Central Council of Jews in Germany's **'Meet a Jew'** and similar initiatives in Berlin's schools. Such programmes make an important contribution to combating anti-Semitism, prejudice and ignorance by facilitating personal encounters and raising the profile of Jewish life in Germany. Berlin schools should therefore be better informed about such projects and explicitly encouraged to take part in them on a voluntary basis. We reject compulsory participation. It is crucial that schools have easy access to high-quality educational and engagement programmes and can integrate these into their lessons or project work on their own initiative.

Domestic violence

- With the ratification and entry into force of the Istanbul Convention, Germany has committed itself at all levels to combating domestic violence in accordance with the four-pillar principle (prevention, protection and support, prosecution, and interlinked policy measures), which also places a responsibility on us here in Berlin. Children and women – and, to a lesser extent, men – must receive protection and support quickly and without red tape if they have suffered violence.
- Protection and counselling services are to be expanded and funded on a regular basis in accordance with the Act on Assistance for Victims of Violence. The number of places in women's shelters and refuge flats must be increased. Accessibility and

places for mothers and children – including for older sons – must be taken into account. The domestic violence support centre must be secured financially in the long term

- For us Free Democrats, combating sexual harassment of all genders is an ongoing task for society as a whole and for the state. We are aware that women and girls (43 per cent) are at a significantly higher risk of sexualised violence than men (17 per cent). Up to 70 per cent of women experience sexual harassment.
- All publicly funded organisations working with children and young people must, as a condition of funding, submit an organisation-specific policy on protection against violence and sexual harassment. Compliance with this policy must be regularly monitored. Non-compliance must be sanctioned. Violence and sexual harassment in organisations receiving public funding may result in the complete withdrawal of the relevant funding.
- We are committed to establishing publicly funded centres dedicated to preventing domestic violence. These centres should bring together all support services for victims of domestic violence under one roof. The whole family receives psychological and socio-educational support. Prevention work and support for perpetrators are key components of this.
- Work with perpetrators will be significantly expanded. We want to break the cycle of violence.

Freedom through emancipation

- We want every person, regardless of their gender, to find suitable conditions in which to fully realise their potential and shape their lives according to their own vision. We aim to support early awareness-raising among parents – to break down traditional gender roles in children from an early age – through information initiatives. Nurseries and childcare centres practise gender-sensitive education.
- We are committed to ensuring that girls and women have the same opportunities as boys and men in the so-called STEM subjects (science, technology, engineering and mathematics). Above all, we rely on training ambassadors who visit schools across the board as part of career guidance to convey a positive image of STEM careers, as well as on more work placements, particularly in STEM subjects. We call for

further training for lecturers and teachers on this topic.

- We want to make it easier to access reliable counselling on pregnancy-related conflicts and terminations in Berlin. Those affected must not be held back by organisational, administrative or logistical hurdles. Pregnancy conflict counselling should therefore be further developed: towards genuine, comprehensive counselling that not only provides information but also, as far as possible, offers concrete support to those affected in finding suitable medical services and in carrying out the procedure. The aim is low-threshold, local and non-discriminatory access to counselling and care.
- We call for equal pay for equal or equivalent work.
- We expect the public sector, as an employer, to make a special effort to enable women and men to work on an equal footing, particularly in leadership roles.

For an open society in Berlin, the capital of the rainbow

The quality of an open society is demonstrated by how it deals with the diversity of its people. The state must not disadvantage anyone on the grounds of sexual orientation or gender identity. Berlin must be a place where queer people can, as a matter of course, live safely, visibly and with self-determination.

- We, the Free Democrats, call on the State of Berlin to highlight diversity as a competitive advantage, in order to specifically attract international skilled workers against a backdrop of authoritarian trends worldwide and to position the city as an open, safe and forward-looking place to live and work.
- We support queer networks in public enterprises, the civil service and the business sector. Berlin's state-owned enterprises should become role models for an inclusive corporate culture.

- Hate crime is an attack on an open society. Anti-queer violence must be clearly identified, brought to light and consistently prosecuted with firmness and resolve. We advocate for training programmes within the police, the judiciary and the civil service to raise awareness of anti-queer violence and hate crime.
- Berlin must do more to provide safe accommodation and counselling services for queer people, particularly queer refugees and people with a migrant background.
- Minority rights are civil rights. The state must not discriminate against anyone on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity. Berlin must be a place where queer people can, as a matter of course, live safely, visibly and with self-determination.
- Additional funding for fertility treatments provided by the State of Berlin must not place same-sex couples and single people at a disadvantage. At federal level, we are campaigning for health insurance to extend funding for fertility treatments to include unmarried people, same-sex couples and single people.

Sport

- Berlin needs world-class sporting events in both elite and grassroots sport. Sporting events such as the Berlin Marathon, the ISTAF, the men's DFB Cup final and others are an integral part of the city and an important economic factor that we will continue to support.
- Recreational sport plays a central role in promoting health and social values. We want to support it by funding sports clubs.
- We support Berlin's bid to host the Olympic and Paralympic Games in Berlin in 2036, or alternatively in 2040. To host the Games, existing sports facilities are to be modernised and renovated as a matter of priority. New facilities will only be built where there is an urgent sporting need.
- We want to secure the long-term future of the Berlin Olympic Training Centre's sites. Centred around the Sportforum Berlin, we aim to establish a 'Sportstadt Berlin-Hohenschönhausen', which is to serve as an international flagship for inclusive urban development, comprising research, development and active sport.

- Existing sports facilities must be utilised more effectively for sporting purposes. To this end, we will set up an online portal for the booking of sports facilities and make school playgrounds and sports facilities available for sporting activities outside school hours. We also want to improve the conditions for making more frequent use of the Maifeld.
- We want to put the maintenance of sports facilities on a new footing, enabling users to carry out construction work as independently as possible and with financial planning certainty. During refurbishment, particular focus must be placed on ensuring accessibility.
- We want to adapt the capacity of sports facilities to match population growth. For example, we want to integrate sports and exercise areas into parks and green spaces in the form of open-workout facilities.
- We will support Hertha BSC in building a new, self-financed football stadium in Berlin. In this regard, we regard the Olympic Park as the preferred location, given its existing infrastructure and links to the training and academy facilities, and call on the Senator for the Interior and Sport to finally facilitate a decision. Furthermore, we will
 1. FC Union to press ahead with the planned, self-financed stadium expansion.
- We want to establish Berlin as a long-term host city for Formula E.
- We support the upgrading and development of the Olympic Park within the limits of its capabilities.
- We support the Berlin State Sports Federation in keeping the diversity of Berlin's sporting life tangible and visible in all its facets by guaranteeing reliable, long-term funding.
- To ensure safety at sporting events, we are committed to dialogue between fans, clubs and the authorities on an equal footing. We see this dialogue as the key to breaking down prejudices and resolving problems, and to finding peaceful solutions for football together. As part of this, discussions on the possible use of pyrotechnics must be resumed. We advocate a renewed pilot project based on the so-called 'Chemnitz approach/model'. This involves the peaceful setting off of pyrotechnics by trained staff in a designated and pre-registered area.

Media

- We advocate for Berlin, as a media hub, to become even more open and are firmly opposed to excluding international companies from this process, as has happened in the past. Not only large corporations but also start-ups in the media sector are a key economic driver in our city.
- We support daily newspapers, radio and television broadcasters as they transition into the digital age. One of our objectives in this regard is to maintain and strengthen the competitiveness of private providers in relation to public service broadcasters.
- We want to support cinema operators as they move towards the digital future of the film industry, in particular through the European networking of film festivals and active support for Berlin as a film hub.

Public service broadcasting

- We are fundamentally committed to public service broadcasting and its role within our constitutional order, as defined by the Federal Constitutional Court.
- However, we see a fundamental need for reform. The last three years, particularly at rbb, have shown that public service broadcasting is not capable of this on its own, and that the supervisory bodies are also unable to drive this process forward decisively. There is no apparent willingness to change from within the institution.
- Respect and fairness towards licence fee payers demand that the licence fee be significantly reduced. Public acceptance is closely linked to this. In this context, we criticise the increase in the licence fee to 18.36 euros.
- Public service broadcasting must become leaner, more efficient and more digital. Duplicate structures must continue to be dismantled. The number of special-interest and third-party channels should be reduced. In the medium term, we are aiming for a fundamental structural reform. There must be no taboos here, not even regarding the merger of regional broadcasters that are not viable in the long term. We must examine whether a fund-driven broadcasting system modelled on the New Zealand system could be a viable alternative.

- We do not wish to dictate to broadcasters exactly how they should structure their programmes. However, we share the growing criticism of the proliferation of entertainment programmes such as quiz shows, cookery programmes, soap operas and crime series, as well as their increasingly spiralling costs, including in sport. We therefore call for a stronger focus on the remit to provide information, education and culture, particularly during prime time, which would highlight the public value of public service broadcasting more clearly.

Energy, Environment and Climate Policy

Energy security is non-negotiable. Berlin needs a reliable, affordable supply. Whilst others rely on ideological experiments that jeopardise security of supply and drive up prices, we are committed to a holistic vision: climate-neutral, yes – but above all cost-effective, reliable and innovative. Berlin must become a pioneer in new energy technologies: hydrogen as the key to industry, heating and electricity generation; geothermal energy and smart heating networks; and solar energy with high-performance storage systems. We want high-capacity electricity grids to meet growing demand, a decarbonised district heating system achieved through technological openness rather than state paternalism, and private investment rather than central planning. Security of supply through backup power stations, storage facilities, redundancies and smart safety infrastructure is non-negotiable. No one should be left sitting in the dark or in the cold for days on end. We want a city that uses rainwater as a resource, whose waterways are of bathing quality, and which, as a 'sponge city', can cope with heavy rainfall. But we will not achieve all this through bans, but by mobilising private capital and market-based incentives. We believe in technological progress and in the fact that environmental protection and economic growth go hand in hand.

Energy

- Climate protection and resource conservation must take place where they are most economically viable, whilst remaining affordable for both tenants and landlords. In the building sector, we therefore place particular emphasis on the use of renewable energy for heating. We oppose any further tightening of energy efficiency requirements for buildings, whether new or existing.
- We want to make greater use of the potential offered by small-scale wind turbines. We are also committed to the massive expansion of geothermal energy in Berlin in order to make the heat supply climate-neutral.
- We want to significantly reduce CO₂ emissions from district heating and expand district and local heating networks within the city. Third parties generating heat (e.g. waste heat from data centres and industry) should be allowed to feed this into the heating networks, provided that minimum technical requirements are met, and they should be appropriately remunerated for doing so.

- We want to further expand opportunities for sector coupling, such as the use of surplus wind power for district heating or for hydrogen production.
- The proportion of smart metering systems (smart meters with communication links) in Berlin is currently still low, and the roll-out is proceeding slowly. We are committed to an accelerated and comprehensive roll-out across Berlin's electricity grid to enable Berliners to access dynamic and system-supporting electricity tariffs as quickly as possible.
- We generally welcome the expansion of solar installations. However, we oppose the mandatory installation of solar panels on new and existing buildings. We aim to reduce bureaucratic restrictions that hinder the expansion of solar installations.
- We want to implement a comprehensive, joint, large-scale hydrogen strategy for Berlin and Brandenburg. This should involve significantly increasing hydrogen production capacity, primarily in Brandenburg but also in Berlin, and stimulating investment in hydrogen transport networks and storage facilities. Major consumers of hydrogen, such as the steel and chemical industries in Brandenburg, must be specifically included in the strategy, as must the potential use of hydrogen for heating and transport in Berlin.
- We also intend to launch pilot projects for the installation of fuel cells for combined heat and power generation in buildings.
- In the field of hydrogen mobility, we want to develop Berlin into a flagship region in Europe, drive forward pilot projects in all areas of mobility – such as lorries, trains, ships and cars – and establish the necessary refuelling infrastructure.
- We are launching a 'Hydrogen Development Park', which will be planned and operated by a private development company. The state will provide land, handle the initial external communications, apply for real-world laboratories and pay performance-based bonuses – whilst the development itself remains in private hands. We are bringing together research organisations, start-ups and established companies from across the Berlin-Brandenburg metropolitan region and covering all aspects: the production, distribution and use of hydrogen in a single location. Start-ups should be able to grow into larger companies locally until a critical mass is reached for independent further development.

Environment and Climate

- In addition to climate protection, we Free Democrats place a particular focus on climate adaptation measures, as the climate in our region is changing. We want to strengthen our city's climate resilience through measures relating to urban ventilation and shading, water management, preparedness for extreme weather events, health prevention and the regular monitoring of climate change.
- Urban green spaces and biotopes make our city a better place to live and make an important contribution to nature conservation and biodiversity. We want to preserve Berlin's remarkably high level of biodiversity. Through comprehensive city-wide planning, we want to secure sufficient green spaces in Berlin and link them together to enhance their ecological value. That is why we want to develop tools to finally ensure the long-term protection of the biotope network. We want to preserve the ecological quality of high-value natural areas such as riverbank strips, cemetery grounds and moors.
- Parks, green spaces and street trees must be kept in good condition and carefully maintained. We want to improve the horticultural and ecological quality of green spaces, regularly replant our street trees and ensure their ongoing maintenance and watering.
- Furthermore, we want to draw up a development plan for the use of riverbanks and water bodies, without privatising riverbanks that have hitherto been open to the public.
- Clean water bodies are an important part of Berlin's urban landscape. We therefore intend to implement the European Water Framework Directive without delay. To this end, we plan, amongst other things, to install an additional treatment stage in all sewage treatment works to address contamination from pharmaceutical residues and microplastics.
- In future, we intend to largely prevent the still far too high volumes of wastewater discharges into Berlin's waterways. To this end, we will initiate and promote comprehensive measures for rainwater management across the board. In addition to measures to create storage capacity within the sewerage system, we are focusing above all on decentralised approaches to collecting and allowing rainwater to infiltrate at buildings and in street spaces. These include green roofs and green façades, the creation of infiltration facilities in courtyards, on streets and in squares, and the increased use of rainwater for watering trees and

green spaces. We intend to designate pilot areas where rainwater management measures are implemented and promoted as best practice.

- We want to further improve air quality in Berlin. To this end, we are focusing, amongst other things, on optimised digital traffic management, improved urban ventilation and suitable planting that can absorb pollutants.
- We want the depots run by the state, districts and municipal enterprises to play their part in promoting climate-friendly transport. To this end, appropriate refuelling and charging infrastructure for hydrogen, electric vehicles and so on should be established on municipal land.
- There are varying rules across the country regarding the sorting of packaging and other recyclable materials. Following examples from abroad, we want to commission the development of an app that uses the printed barcode to reliably show citizens how to sort packaging correctly. As the country's largest city, Berlin should lead by example here and encourage the development of a user-friendly app. This should also enable households to make savings.
- We, the Free Democrats, want to tackle the rat infestation in Berlin in a sustainable manner and permanently reduce the rat population. To this end, we are focusing on reducing food sources (ensuring bin lids are kept closed, disposing of food waste), carrying out regular checks of the sewer system and green spaces for infestations, and identifying heavily affected areas. In these areas, potential hiding places should be reduced, for example by sealing open spaces in buildings. Furthermore, residents and property owners should be informed and encouraged to also reduce hiding places and food sources.

Digitalisation

For us, digitalisation and the use of artificial intelligence (AI) are not isolated technical tasks. They are simply part and parcel of life in a modern metropolis – from the morning journey on the underground, through an efficient public administration, to the inclusive participation of all residents. Through greater digitalisation and the use of AI, we aim to make Berlin a smart and citizen-friendly city, in which the administration acts as a service provider for its citizens. In doing so, we want to focus in particular on resilient, digitally sovereign and, as far as possible, European solutions, whilst reducing existing technological dependencies on individual providers or nations.

Artificial intelligence for greater freedom and a city that functions ‘ly’

- We are deploying ‘digital office assistants’ to simplify communication between citizens and public authorities. AI tools will translate official texts and notices into ‘plain language’, making bureaucratic procedures and official communications understandable for people with learning difficulties or limited knowledge of German.
- Berlin is a cosmopolitan city. AI-powered real-time translations enable communication in citizens’ native languages. This takes the pressure off staff in the district offices.
- For appointments at the Citizens’ Office and other public authorities, we are introducing an AI system that optimises appointment slots in real time. Cancelled appointments are immediately identified and proactively allocated to citizens on a digital waiting list via push notifications.
- The intelligent use of AI supports administrative staff with routine tasks and standard procedures, leaving them more time for personalised advice.
- The use of AI and automated processes in public administration must be transparent, traceable and subject to oversight. To this end, we are establishing a clear procedure involving impact assessments, transparency requirements and a publicly accessible register for automated decision-making systems. In this way, we

ensure that AI opens up opportunities without jeopardising fairness, civil rights and democratic control.

- Before an application is processed (e.g. for parking permits or housing benefit), an AI first checks the submitted documents for completeness. Errors are reported to the citizen immediately after uploading, which avoids months of back-and-forth enquiries.
- To this end, we intend to rapidly expand and improve the BärGPT AI pilot project. The knowledge base must be continuously expanded and updated, and open web searches must also be made possible in a timely manner. To ensure safe and straightforward use, the protection of personal data must be guaranteed at all times. Through ongoing training programmes and integration into processes, BärGPT is to be used as a standard tool by all staff within the Berlin administration. In the long term, this is set to develop into a freely accessible digital citizen assistant that simplifies dealings with public authorities and offers round-the-clock personalised support with applications.
- We are optimising traffic flow through AI-controlled traffic light systems. This reduces congestion and lowers CO₂ emissions.
- We are relying on AI-supported co-ordination of roadworks to put an end to Berlin's traffic chaos and avoid unnecessary road closures. Through the use of intelligent software, roadworks across districts, utility companies and the State of Berlin will be synchronised in such a way that road closures are minimised and work is consolidated. We are also calling for an AI-based monitoring system that automatically detects downtime on construction sites, so that road closures are immediately penalised or lifted in the event of inactivity.

Digital infrastructure

- We want to drive forward mobility-related data collection in the city, including through direct investment by the State of Berlin. We intend to make the anonymised data collected available free of charge for the development of innovative mobility solutions, optimised traffic management and projects relating to autonomous driving.
- The Berlin administration possesses a wealth of data, funded by taxpayers' money, which could be used by start-ups and other providers of value-added services in Berlin to develop new, innovative business models – such as geodata, weather data, data on traffic volumes,

road conditions and more. This data is to be made available for public use, free of charge, via open application programming interfaces (APIs) in real time, in machine-readable form and using non-proprietary file formats – including for commercial value-added services – provided that this does not conflict with the protection of trade secrets and personal data. In doing so, personal data must be anonymised or pseudonymised in accordance with the law to enable the development of products based on aggregated data (such as traffic data).

- Sensor technology and data management should contribute to a higher quality of life, for example in relation to waste disposal, noise protection, energy consumption, traffic management systems and CO₂ emissions. To this end, a comprehensive infrastructure for networked sensors in public spaces is to be established and operated using the Long Range Wide Area Network (LoRaWAN) and antennas ('gateways').
- We want to equip Berlin with a fibre-optic network covering the entire city. We are therefore campaigning at federal level against vectoring and aim to make 'Fibre to the Home' the standard in Berlin.
- A sufficiently fast internet connection is no longer a luxury, but part of basic public services. We therefore intend to campaign at federal level for the introduction of an affordable universal service offering a minimum bandwidth of 100 Mbit/s, to which every citizen has non-discriminatory access. As with the electricity supply, the internet service provider (ISP) responsible for the universal service could be the one that supplies the most connections within the city. Such a universal service would also ensure access to digital learning for school pupils and students from low-income families.
- To make Berlin the leading metropolis for health tech and evidence-based medicine, we will radically simplify registry-based research. Today, excellent research and AI development often fail due to fragmented data silos and a restrictive interpretation of Berlin's Data Protection Act. We want to foster a culture of enabling data protection and establish an independent, state-owned data trustee system. This trustee will ensure that research institutions and start-ups can access anonymised and pseudonymised register data quickly, securely and without red tape, so that innovations can be put into practice.

Integration and Migration

Immigration is an opportunity; integration is a duty. But only with order and clear rules. In times of skills shortages, we are reliant on the immigration of people willing to work. Anyone who wishes to become a productive member of our society is warmly welcome. But we also stand for the enforcement of existing law, for order and a liberal interpretation of the concept of assistance: support to help people help themselves, with freedom always tied to responsibility. Irregular migration must be prevented; those who arrive legally are given genuine opportunities. Integration demands effort from everyone involved: language and integration courses from day one, teaching our free and democratic constitutional order, and respect for equality, different ways of life and religious diversity. Anyone who does not accept our values cannot be part of our society. We promote immigration into the labour market and regulate access to social welfare systems in a targeted manner. Berlin is and will remain a city of immigration. But we want to make it a city that prioritises a willingness to contribute, integration and the recognition of our values.

Immigration and expectations

- For us, it goes without saying that immigration and integration always require two components. On the one hand, a society that is open and willing to welcome people; and on the other, people who are prepared to contribute to the society that wishes to welcome them. For us, this includes recognition of the Basic Law and acceptance of our democratic way of life.
- We are committed to ensuring that refugees are provided with accommodation swiftly and in a manner befitting human dignity. Collective accommodation must be subject to clear standards and serve only as emergency and initial reception facilities. Given the current housing shortage in Berlin, container villages are an acceptable interim solution, but one that must be phased out as soon as possible. The rates at which the State of Berlin rents refugee accommodation are unacceptable; therefore, we will, on the one hand, only enter into short-term tenancy agreements and, on the other hand, campaign at federal level to ensure that these accommodation facilities fall under the scope of the so-called 'rent cap'.
- We want vulnerable individuals, such as women – particularly pregnant women – and unaccompanied children, not to be housed in mixed initial reception centres if no suitable, protected area is available there. Alternatively, accommodation should be sought in youth welfare facilities or in

special accommodation for women with children. These facilities must also be staffed by sufficient numbers of professionally qualified personnel. Where the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees issues a favourable prognosis regarding the likelihood of the applicant remaining in the country, the aim in the medium term should be decentralised accommodation in flats ('Leverkusen model').

- In future, asylum seekers should be subject to a means test, similar to that already in place for German citizens who have been unemployed for a prolonged period. Assets such as jewellery, bank deposits or cash exceeding a certain exemption threshold could be used to cover the costs of the asylum procedure and living expenses when an application for asylum is made.
- Berlin – as the last federal state to do so – is to introduce the payment card for refugees without delay. This applies to both newly arriving refugees and those already in the system.
- The State of Berlin should work towards expanding the entry and exit centre at BER Airport planned by the federal government and the State of Brandenburg, and contribute its own funds where necessary. The aim must be to expand capacity for detention pending deportation and to speed up procedures whilst strictly upholding fundamental and human rights.
- The number of deportations of persons subject to a legally enforceable obligation to leave the country must be increased. The frequency of reviews of the conditions for temporary leave to remain for persons required to leave the country must be increased. We reject a de facto suspension of deportations during the winter.

Education as the key to integration

- We are committed to ensuring that school and vocational qualifications held by immigrants are recognised more quickly, with less red tape and in a manner that is comparable across the country, provided they are equivalent to existing qualifications. The recognition of qualifications must be coordinated nationwide. Similarly, we wish to ensure that parts of a vocational training programme are better recognised, which can then be supplemented, for example, with additional credit points or certificates. The waiting times for the recognition of medical professions at the State Office for Health and Social Affairs are unacceptable.
- We want to offer refugee children good educational opportunities as well as opportunities for integration. Parents in these families also bear the primary responsibility for enabling their children's integration into our society. Nevertheless

our schools and nurseries will have to take the lead in integrating young refugees from the very start. To do this, they need additional teachers and nursery staff. At the same time, language assessment in nurseries must be improved and properly monitored. Targeted support for their language skills before they start school is particularly important for refugee children.

- We advocate compulsory schooling for young refugees under the age of 25 who have not undergone vocational training, in order to facilitate their long-term integration into our labour market. If they lack the school education required for vocational training, they must catch up on it.
- The integration of refugees must also be accompanied by a pragmatic approach to educational qualifications. Instead of repeating training courses, assessments of knowledge levels, modelled on the external examinations held by the Chamber of Industry and Commerce (IHK), are required. Where appropriate, vocational skills should be given greater weight than language skills.
- The children of asylum seekers should be required to attend nursery from the age of three in order to learn the German language and values. In future, refusal by parents should be subject to penalties.
- We want to launch a programme that allocates an extra budget to schools in neighbourhoods with particularly high integration needs, to be used for additional integration measures (both in terms of resources and staffing). These schools should offer compulsory all-day programmes in order to convey our values and foundational knowledge to pupils even more effectively.
- Asylum seekers who cannot demonstrate a command of the German language at least at level B1 (advanced language proficiency) should be required to enrol in a language course without delay, with the aim of reaching at least level A2 as quickly as possible.
- German language courses should be compulsory and linked to residence status and state benefits. Exceptions to this rule are foreign skilled workers who can already present a valid employment contract upon entry.

Integration into the workplace and society

- We want immigration procedures to be simplified and accelerated, particularly for skilled workers. Applicants with an employment contract should be able to move to Berlin and start work within a maximum of six weeks, from the time they book an appointment at the German diplomatic mission abroad until their work permit is issued.
- We are committed to ensuring that skilled workers with particularly high scores in the immigration process are offered a fast-track procedure for obtaining an unlimited residence permit (Blue Card). Where this high score is achieved, the waiting time should be reduced by half.
- People who have successfully completed their vocational training or degree studies here should be given one and a half years to find a job. Advisory and support services must be established for this purpose. Thanks to the qualifications they have obtained in Germany, this group of people has particularly good prospects of finding a job commensurate with their training and of contributing to the economic success of our city and our state. After this period, people must be able to support themselves.
- We believe there should be no benefit without a corresponding contribution. We therefore want refugees to take up employment as soon as they are able to do so. That is why we are campaigning for the immediate abolition of the ban on asylum seekers working.
- We want to place a particular focus on the integration of women into the labour market in order to ensure their equal participation in our society in the long term, to overcome traditional gender roles and to reduce the risk of dependence on partners or social decline.
- We need better and earlier German language support for skilled workers at suitable educational institutions. It must become easier to learn German through targeted support as part of a (dual) vocational training programme. To this end, we need more German language courses at vocational colleges. The FDP Berlin calls for the swift recognition of medical licences from abroad in order to tackle the shortage of doctors. To this end, we demand that the processing time be limited to a maximum of one year.
- Anyone living alongside us should also be able to become a fellow citizen with all the rights and responsibilities that entails. We are committed to ensuring that the authorities actively reach out to those who meet the requirements for naturalisation,

to inform them about the naturalisation process. Naturalisation ceremonies should take place in a festive setting, such as the ceremonies held in the Berlin House of Representatives. We are committed to enabling multiple citizenship and speeding up the naturalisation process. We, the Free Democrats, recognise the diverse identities of our citizens and are committed to ensuring that these are also reflected in multiple citizenships.

- We welcome even closer links between Berlin's business community and entrepreneurs from migrant backgrounds.

The cosmopolitan and European metropolis

- We want Berlin to be a cosmopolitan metropolis. Newcomers, tourists, cultural practitioners, businesses and start-ups, researchers and students enrich our city and drive it forward. We therefore oppose other political movements and parties that call into question this city's openness through a hostile attitude towards migrants, refugees, tourists or newcomers.
- In coordination with other major European cities, we wish to drive forward policy areas within the EU that visibly improve the lives of Berliners and residents of other major cities. We want to re-establish responsibility for European affairs within the Senate Chancellery.
- We want to better coordinate and fund the city's and the boroughs' twinning schemes, and strengthen our links with our partners through themed years. In doing so, we also want to involve and support voluntary initiatives more closely. When used properly, town twinning schemes can enrich our city with exchange and new ideas, and serve to strengthen human rights and the market economy.

Culture

Berlin is a cultural capital. And it should remain so. Art and culture are paramount in their own right. Art, culture and creativity form the foundation of a free society. They are also an economic driving force, a magnet for tourism and a decisive factor in attracting businesses from all over the world. Our city thrives on its cultural diversity, on theatres and opera houses, clubs and museums, on street art and world-class institutions. But culture needs freedom. Freedom from political interference, from ideological dictates, from censorship. Freedom of art is our top priority and we will defend it. We are committed to transparent funding, to accountable staffing decisions, and to a strong sense of self-confidence in the value of our cultural institutions. Berlin should be a place of freedom for art and culture, where creative people from all over the world can find a home. Culture should, as far as possible, be self-financing through economic dynamism, even though we recognise that in some areas it cannot manage without funding. Berlin is the city of freedom, including – and especially – in the cultural sphere.

- We are committed to Berlin's cultural scene as a key factor in the city's appeal, which must be further nurtured and expanded. We want to strengthen Berlin's cultural diversity. To this end, we also call for the federal government to continue contributing to the funding of Berlin's (state) cultural sector as part of its responsibilities for the capital.
- Queer clubs, festivals, archives and community projects shape Berlin as the rainbow capital of Europe and are an important economic factor. We will protect and support this culture specifically by cutting red tape. Berlin must be a safe space for queer culture, freedom and remembrance.
- We aim to strengthen the protection of listed buildings by clearing the backlog of investment in listed buildings owned by the state or the city, such as schools and town halls. The protection of listed buildings must be both preservative and conducive to a vibrant community life. We intend to limit the stock of listed buildings to those structures and building complexes of outstanding significance for the city's urban and historical identity.
- Improving relations between the state and the federal government is a key priority for us. We welcome the existing cooperation with the Berlin Philharmonic Foundation, the Opera Foundation and ROC ('Rundfunk Orchester und Chöre gGmbH'), but believe there is still scope for further development. In particular, structures and cooperation should be more precisely defined and developed.

- We support the digitisation of works of art and archival material. This should initially serve to make all works publicly accessible in digital form. The practice of ‘hiding away’ works in art depots and archives must come to an end. We want to make grants to institutions conditional upon their collections of works and documents being made digitally accessible.
- We are committed to copyright. It goes without saying that this right must also apply without restriction in the digital world. Copyright must not stand in the way of artistic freedom and freedom of expression.
- The development of artificial intelligence is still in its infancy. Even now, the implications for artistic creation are already foreseeable. We consider respect for copyright to be indispensable in the development of innovation.

Cultural promotion and funding

- We call for a fundamental review of institutional and project funding. Clear criteria must be established for eligibility for institutional funding, along with standards for assessing the appropriate use of public funds.
- We wish to promote personal responsibility and initiative on the part of cultural institutions. It must be an ongoing obligation for every institution to secure private donations and sponsorship funds as well. To this end, the State of Berlin should create an incentive scheme. Funding for museums, theatres, opera houses and other cultural institutions should enable a varied, comprehensive and interesting programme of events. The work of support associations should be strengthened.
- The use of public funding must always be transparently documented and reviewed for effectiveness, including in the cultural sector.
- In this context, the ‘quasi-institutional’ funding of many cultural institutions in Berlin through regular project funding from various budgetary sources should, in future, either be replaced by institutional funding or discontinued.
- We call for a transparent account of all forms of institutional cultural funding. To this end, appropriate criteria must be developed for each sector. In our view as Free Democrats, private initiatives are, in principle,

also private organised organised, although by the
improving the framework conditions (within the framework of tax law, etc.).

- Cultural institutions must be run on a self-governing basis. In order to mitigate the direct influence of politics and the administration on the content of cultural institutions' programmes, we call for the conversion of all cultural institutions into organisational forms governed by private law (e.g. foundations, gGmbHs, associations), whose supervisory bodies are to be composed jointly of specialist representatives from the respective institution and the investors, and which have political representation as well as strong representation from civil society, and with dual leadership (i.e. artistic and commercial management separated, but with joint representation). Strengthening autonomy and accountability leads to improved performance. Cultural institutions should be enabled to operate as independent entities, to manage and plan their budgets, and to determine their own staffing levels and requirements, as well as their medium- and long-term investments. Greater powers and freedom of action for cultural institutions will then also enable individual institutions to better tailor their services to the needs of their visitors.
- Even 15 years after the ratification of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, Berlin is still failing to consistently implement the prescribed number of accessible seats in stadiums and theatres. We therefore wish to reverse this principle: in future, capacity and public funding should be based on the standard of inclusion actually achieved. Anyone offering only half the prescribed number of accessible seats should be permitted to use only half the seats or receive correspondingly less funding.
- We want to ensure permanent, affordable access to museums, particularly for Berliners, but also for EU citizens. This includes, alongside the existing concessions for certain visitor groups and in addition to existing offers for tourists, an annual pass valid for as many Berlin museums as possible. In the medium term, we want to establish partnerships with museums in the state of Brandenburg.
- We want to commission a study on indirect economic returns to assess the positive economic impact of the cultural sector.
- Museums should decide for themselves whether to extend their opening hours.

- We will continue to support studio funding in order to provide spaces for all art forms, particularly for the independent arts scene. However, we are also seeking dialogue with private property owners to expand the range of available spaces.
- We want to strengthen Berlin's position as a filming location for the international film industry through targeted measures. We are generally in favour of taxing streaming services and imposing investment obligations on them, as well as maintaining the current division of responsibilities between the federal and state governments. Funding criteria and investment conditions should be clear in the long term, but should be regularly reviewed to ensure they remain fit for purpose.

Cultural education

- We are committed to Berlin as a centre of excellence for artistic education and wish to strengthen this position. Only the promotion of world-class achievement, combined with a review of funding levels, can achieve this.
- We will significantly improve the quality of arts and music education in Berlin's schools. To this end, we want to make it the new standard for these lessons to be taught by qualified specialist teachers.
- We intend to completely reform the system of Berlin's music schools. Music teachers should teach music and not have to spend a significant amount of time on administrative tasks.
- As in the education sector as a whole, we are committed to ensuring that music schools are also allowed to manage the budgetary funds allocated to them independently. The burden of administrative tasks is to be significantly reduced.
- We want to provide cultural institutions with the financial means to offer discounted tickets for young people.
- Queer clubs, festivals, archives and community projects shape Berlin as the rainbow capital of Europe and are an important economic factor. Berlin must be a safe space for queer culture, freedom and remembrance.

Individual cultural institutions

- Berlin Central and State Library
 - We advocate for the ZLB to be located at – or for a new building to be constructed at – the site of the former Amerika-Gedenkbibliothek on Blücherplatz. The fragmentation across different locations must end. The ZLB must be integrated into a library concept for the whole of Berlin. The ZLB must become a flagship library for all citizens.
- Kulturforum
 - We call for the urban planning impasse at the Kulturforum to be resolved once and for all, and for a comprehensive redesign of the Kulturforum to ensure that, in future, it offers a welcoming and attractive environment for art lovers. An urban planning competition should be organised to develop proposed solutions, taking into account accessibility by all modes of transport.
- Berlin Opera Foundation
 - The Berlin Opera Foundation has demonstrated its financial viability and its ability to achieve the desired synergy effects. This work must be continued with the aim of establishing excellent opera houses with international appeal in Berlin.
 - We wish to drive forward the strengthening and expansion of the opera workshops and their cooperation.
- City Museum Foundation
 - The City Museum is to vacate the first floor of the Humboldt Forum;
 - restoration of the Märkisches Museum to the standard of a modern museum building; extension of the Märkisches Museum via a connecting building on the site of the former Köllnisches Gymnasium and the park building;

- Expansion of the Ephraim Palace to house the special collections: fashion, theatre, photography and graphic art;
- Creation of a Berlin Cultural Forum at Köllnischer Park with catering facilities and high-quality public spaces.
- Museum of Technology
 - We support the redesign of the entrance area.
- Natural History Museum
 - We strongly support the work being done to reorient and update the collection.
 - In view of current and future challenges, such as climate change and declining biodiversity, we believe it makes sense to raise the profile of the research activities carried out by the Museum of Technology and the Natural History Museum through joint projects. We regard the historical collections, particularly those of the Natural History Museum, as part of the rich cultural heritage of human and natural history.
- Memorial sites
 - We aim to build on the memorial concept: our goal is to conduct research to shed light on the past and to communicate history through coherent educational concepts with a view to universal human rights education.
- Art storage
 - The storage situation of Berlin's collections and the construction of a modern zero-energy storage facility should be examined.
 - In order to catalogue the artworks in the storage facilities of the state-owned museums, particular emphasis must be placed on advancing the digitisation of the collection items, so as to make information on the location of specific artworks accessible worldwide and, where applicable, to enable rightful claimants to assert their claims to looted artworks.

- Nazi-looted art, claims for restitution from illegal GDR expropriations as well as colonial appropriations and other contexts
 - The process of addressing unlawful and illegitimate acquisitions must be carried out actively, professionally and pragmatically, whilst taking into account national and international legal frameworks and practices, as well as sustainable exhibition opportunities. We are committed to bringing about changes to the legal framework, in particular budgetary law, that will enable these requirements to be met.
 - We call for efforts to address Nazi-looted art to be stepped up and, in line with the federal government's existing funding, for state funding to be made available for research into the state's own collections.
 - When returning colonial art objects, safe custody and public display in the country of origin must be guaranteed in accordance with UN agreements. Upon transfer, public access should be ensured.
- Zoo, Aquarium and Wildlife Park
 - The zoo and wildlife park are, and will remain, important institutions for all Berliners and visitors to Berlin. We do not question the independence of Zoo AG, nor will we do so in future, and we recognise its scientific significance.
- Urban culture and historic parks
 - Berlin's cityscape has continued to change over recent decades. Brownfield sites have given way to new buildings or parks. Unfortunately, however, Berlin's urban green spaces have also become more polluted and have degenerated into makeshift rubbish bins. We want Berlin's urban green spaces – that is, not only the large parks and gardens but also the central traffic islands and green belts along the roads – to be given greater priority once again, in order to improve the quality of life for all residents. To achieve this, it is particularly important to engage with the public and encourage better care of these valuable urban green spaces.

- We want to drive forward the historic restoration of parks, such as Treptower Park. We will emphasise the importance of parks as living monuments.
- In addition to traditional park use, we want to introduce modern landscaping to various green spaces, thereby enhancing the quality of the environment for visitors.
- Allied Museum
 - We call for the swift relocation of the Allied Museum from its current premises on Clayallee to the hangar at the former Tempelhof Airport. At this location, the history of the Western Allies can be told in an appropriate manner. We hope that the new location will, in particular, provide better conditions for educational work, as there are no rooms available for this purpose at the current premises.
- Tempelhof Airport
 - The buildings at Tempelhof Airport are a unique architectural monument whose future is uncertain. We call for a master plan for the further development of the entire Tempelhof Airport site in order to make appropriate use of its potential. This should also include the development of an overall utilisation concept for the airport buildings, taking into account the needs already expressed and involving private investors.
- International Building Exhibition
 - We are committed to bringing the International Building Exhibition (IBA) to Berlin in the near future.
- Reunification Monument
 - We do not want the Unity Monument to be built in its current form and call for the removal of the plinth that has already been erected, as well as for a new urban design solution to be found for the square surrounding the listed plinth of the former Friedrich-Wilhelm Monument.

- Humboldt Forum and Museum Island
 - We call for the Neptune Fountain to be moved back to its original location.
- Prussian Cultural Heritage Foundation
 - The State of Berlin should urge the Federal Government to spin off the State Library, the Ibero-American Institute and the Secret Prussian State Archives, thereby making them independent institutions.
- Alte Münze
 - The cultural administration should review its entire property portfolio. As an example, the Alte Münze should be sold off again. Not only is the refurbishment a financial black hole, but its use for cultural purposes will also be unviable without subsidies for decades to come.

Club scene

- Clubs are just as much a part of Berlin's cultural landscape as museums and orchestras, and are therefore worthy of protection. This applies in particular where the established rights of clubs clash with new claims made by local residents. We advocate that, in such cases, the established rights should take precedence.
- However, the categories into which cultural institutions such as museums or monuments are classified cannot be applied identically to clubs. We reject the categorisation of individual clubs as 'monuments'. Nevertheless, we consider club culture as a whole to be worthy of specific protection.
- Clubs, music venues and open-air events must be taken into account at an early stage in urban development, neighbourhood planning and licensing procedures. Anyone planning new neighbourhoods or increasing the density of existing ones must consider noise and fire safety, access, delivery routes and visitor flows from the outset. This will help to avoid future conflicts and better safeguard established cultural venues.
- We advocate for clear, practical and reliable framework conditions for clubs. We reject blanket closing times or bans on dancing on public holidays. Conflicts between residents, boroughs and

Disputes involving club operators should be resolved through early mediation, in particular via the Nightlife Office.

Social Affairs

Social security means helping people to help themselves, not creating dependency.

Our social security systems should function like a trampoline: they catch people as they fall and provide the momentum, strength and skills needed to make a fresh start on their own two feet. Anyone can find themselves relying on the solidarity of the community following a stroke of misfortune, but our aim must be to get people back into personal responsibility and work as quickly as possible. Where our social systems are abused or where people refuse to cooperate, there must be clear and tangible consequences. We do not want a city where it is normal for a healthy person to live permanently off the labour of others. We are committed to targeted support for people with limited opportunities to get started in life, to comprehensive support structures for families, and to housing benefit rather than property subsidies. Family carers deserve relief, people with disabilities genuine participation, and single parents support. But social policy must not take away people's autonomy; it must empower them. Work gives meaning to individuals and society. Our aim is a Berlin in which everyone has the chance to lead a self-determined life – through their own efforts, not through comprehensive state provision. We want to reduce poverty in old age through targeted training on the interrelated topics of part-time work, wealth creation and accumulation, and personal pension provision. We want to make it more difficult to abuse powers of attorney for healthcare. Therefore, the revocation of a power of attorney for healthcare should be subject to the same formal requirements as the power of attorney itself. Thus, a notarised power of attorney for healthcare should only be revocable by means of a notarised declaration.

- In the social sector in particular, we are seeing that bureaucracy is drastically exacerbating the shortage of skilled workers. Instead of being able to care for the people in their charge, carers, doctors and nursery staff have to spend a great deal of time on administrative and statistical tasks. We want to change this through a digitalisation drive. We are placing child- and patient-centred care at the heart of our approach and aim to significantly improve working conditions for all staff in the health and social care sectors.
- To tackle homelessness, we are calling for a comprehensive 'Housing First' strategy as an additional tool for integrating homeless people. As well as enabling a more effective and personalised approach to reintegration, 'Housing First' can also reduce costs for society as a whole.
- We are committed to enabling homeless people from Germany and other (EU) countries to return home. Not all homeless people are Berliners. Some homeless people in our city were lured to Germany under false pretences and have consequently found themselves in a precarious situation. Local authorities in

Germany and, in particular, European countries of origin remain responsible for their citizens. We want to enable homeless people to return to their home countries and resume their lives there. To this end, the city should offer a one-off travel voucher to each person to return to their home country.

- Homeless children and young people: Our aim is to get them off the streets as quickly as possible and provide them with appropriate support.

Family

- Families must be relieved of the ‘stress of registration’. We will create a digital platform that enables real-time registration for nurseries and schools and takes multiple registrations into account.
- To better support single parents and their children, we call for maintenance advances to be paid out more quickly by the district offices and consistently recovered from the defaulting payer.
- Families should receive state benefits such as child benefit, parental allowance and nursery vouchers quickly and without red tape. Decisions on benefit applications must be made and payments made within four weeks of the application being submitted in full.
- Young families, too, must be relieved of bureaucratic burdens wherever possible. Within one week of the birth, parents should be able to access a copy of the birth certificate and the nursery voucher via an online portal, and, where possible, find pre-filled applications for state support benefits (child benefit, parental allowance, etc.), which should be processed automatically and paid out as a matter of priority.
- We want to ensure a permanent supply of sufficient nursery places or places with childminders and with more flexible opening hours. This includes emergency care overnight or at weekends, as well as provision for people who work shifts – in other words, ‘24-hour nurseries’. For people who work shifts, state support should also be provided for childcare at home. Here, we want to significantly expand the ‘Mobile Childcare Service for Parents with Unusual Working Hours’ (MOKIS).
- Where families are affected by violence, swift solutions must be found to put an end to the violent situation both in the short term and in the long term.

- We are committed to ensuring that all cemeteries have places to commemorate 'star children'. This will enable mothers, fathers and siblings to have a place of remembrance if the child could not be buried following a miscarriage.

Health

- Anyone requiring hospital treatment must be able to receive the best possible medical care round the clock, seven days a week and 365 days a year. That is why we are committed to strengthening hospitals offering the full range of care and to specialising inpatient care. We want to modernise the ambulance service and make emergency care structures more needs-based and better integrated. In doing so, we continue to be guided by the principle of 'outpatient care before inpatient care'. We aim to relieve the burden on Berlin's ambulance services and hospital A&E departments by providing telephone pre-assessment through on-call medical services. To ensure that Berlin's hospitals can continue to provide medical care of the highest standard even in an interconnected world, we are committed to ensuring long-term, GDPR-compliant data processing by third parties.
- High-quality care must be funded effectively, soundly and reliably for the benefit of patients and those working in the healthcare sector. We will therefore campaign for a reform of hospital funding that is based on patients' actual medical needs and is designed to eliminate the outdated distinction between outpatient and inpatient care. In doing so, we also wish to reward experience, efficiency, quality and patient satisfaction. We are just as firmly opposed to unequal treatment of private providers compared with public and denominational providers as we are to health insurance funds having planning authority over healthcare provision structures.
- We want to ensure efficient, comprehensive outpatient care across Berlin that is well-networked across different care sectors and works together to meet individual patients' needs. We are committed, particularly at federal level, to removing barriers to setting up practices in general and specialist medical care, to overcoming the outdated and long-obsolete separation of care sectors with the aim of achieving patient-centred care, to reducing bureaucracy in patient care, and to introducing innovations into patient care more quickly.
- We are committed to creating framework conditions that will continue to ensure the innovative capacity of research and the healthcare sector in our country in the future

and guarantee that innovations benefit the public. Berlin is to become a model region for digital and innovative healthcare solutions (telemedicine, health apps, research and development, start-up support). We want to improve the integration of healthcare, research and the healthcare sector. We will make use of the flexibility provided by the European General Data Protection Regulation to accelerate research, enable new research approaches, promote innovations in care and reduce bureaucracy in data protection. We reject centralised state-run data collection centres that consolidate large volumes of data and, in particular, advocate for fiduciary data management by independent institutions. In future, the state data protection authority should not only carry out effective supervision, but also provide advice to stakeholders from business and public administration on how to handle data processing. Cyber-attacks on hospitals and other healthcare facilities jeopardise health data, healthcare provision and, ultimately, every single individual. We will ensure that cyber security in healthcare facilities can always be guaranteed at the highest technical standard.

- Good and lasting health for every individual begins with the best possible prevention and health promotion. When it comes to preventing illness, we want to go beyond the health sector to incorporate and link all the information, expertise, perspectives and experience necessary for improving health. Rather than imposing bans, we want to further improve and promote health education right from nursery and school age. Reliable, scientifically sound information on health, nutrition and physical activity should be quickly and easily accessible to all citizens. We want to provide better support for regional networks and clubs that offer sports and leisure activities, thereby encouraging children in particular to take up more sport and physical activity. Vaccination, as a major social achievement, makes a significant contribution to the safe prevention of diseases, some of which are fatal. We want to provide greater support for vaccine research and ensure that vaccinations are made even more accessible.
- We want to make Berlin more attractive to healthcare professionals. To this end, we intend to expand training opportunities for healthcare professions and ensure that tuition fees are waived.
- Digitalisation in the health sector should enable cost transparency as well as targeted, personalised care and treatment for all patients, whilst at the same time providing new impetus for health research that benefits every single individual.

- We want to put public health and infection control in Berlin on a more stable footing and make them more effective. To this end, we intend to establish a state-level authority for public health and infection control, which will take over specialised public health and infection control tasks from the boroughs and coordinate their general public health responsibilities.
- Digitalisation and other technical innovations, such as care robots, as well as the reduction of red tape in care work, should help to ease the burden on the care sector and give carers more time for those in need of care. By strengthening outpatient care provision, we want to ensure that people in need of care can remain in their familiar living environment, thereby safeguarding their self-determination. We want to better support people in need of care and their relatives through a digital marketplace for care and support services, and make it easier for those affected to access these services.
- We support the voluntary association of care workers to represent their interests. However, we firmly oppose compulsory membership, for example in a nursing chamber.
- In the field of obstetrics, we want to tackle the shortage of midwives in both inpatient and outpatient settings, including through better working conditions in hospitals and a fixed staff-to-patient ratio. In this regard, the state will, for example, also cover the insurance costs for midwives working in obstetrics, as many midwives have had to cease this part of their work because the necessary insurance was no longer affordable. In doing so, we are guided by the World Health Organisation's one-to-one standard.
- We are committed to providing non-judgemental support during life transitions, psychological counselling services and medical care. There is a need for a structured provision of queer-sensitive care across the entire city, particularly in relation to trans identities.
- We are strengthening women's health. We will bolster research into women-specific conditions and their diagnosis and treatment. With regard to the widespread condition of endometriosis, we wish to significantly expand research and the existing clinic at the Charité in order to meet the high demand for the endometriosis clinic.

Addiction & Drugs

- We, the Free Democrats, are committed to an evidence-based drugs and addiction policy that prioritises help over punishment and is guided by scientific findings rather than ideology. Berlin has a strong and diverse support network, which must be strengthened across the spectrum from prevention to addiction support. At the same time, the need for action is growing, as the number of drug-related deaths is also rising to new annual highs in Berlin. In particular, the use of crack and cocaine is increasing sharply, whilst synthetic opioids such as fentanyl pose a high risk of addiction and overdose. As both legal and illegal drugs carry risks and are widespread, we must not turn a blind eye to this reality. Our aim is to solve problems, not to shift them elsewhere. That is why we do not stigmatise people or leave those affected to fend for themselves, but support them in minimising risks and regaining their freedom from addiction.
- We Liberals want to expand drug consumption rooms and street outreach teams, reduce waiting times for therapy places and expand low-threshold services, particularly to better reach young people and those in socially disadvantaged circumstances.
- Drug checking is a key harm-reduction measure that promotes safe consumption and reduces potential health risks. However, since its introduction, demand has been significantly higher than the current supply. We want the Berlin drug-checking project to be significantly expanded, made available on a mobile basis, and linked to a Berlin-wide early-warning system for dangerous substances. The distribution of naloxone to prevent overdoses should be made possible through recognised addiction support and social work services.
- Addictions to alcohol, nicotine and medication are, despite their scale, taken for granted, even though they have the most severe consequences for society as a whole. In particular, the structure of alcohol and medication counselling services in the boroughs is inconsistent and inadequately organised. State-wide coordination is needed to ensure comprehensive, high-quality and reliable care.
- We need improved access and the integration of social and health services. We, the Free Democrats, are committed to expanding prevention efforts – with a clear focus on young people, starting with prevention in schools and youth settings, digital counselling services and better access to counselling and therapy.

- In the Kurfürstendamm neighbourhood, we are safeguarding night cafés and drug consumption rooms in cooperation with drug support services and the State Addiction Commissioner.
- We want to consistently implement the 'Housing First' approach to provide homeless people who use drugs with secure, long-term accommodation and thus break the cycle of addiction and homelessness. Particular attention should be paid to the under-servicing of affected women.
- We are committed to ensuring that addiction and prevention work within the prison system is safeguarded as a central component of rehabilitation. This requires access to substitution and therapy options. This applies in particular to access to diamorphine therapy, as well as seamless follow-up care and medical and psychological support following release from prison.

The potential of older people

- We advocate the abolition of discriminatory age limits. We regard rigid maximum age limits in laws and statutes as a form of age discrimination. We therefore advocate a review based on objective and merit-based criteria, with the aim of having such limits removed or adapted to demographic developments.
- We want every person, regardless of their age (including those of advanced age), to be able to develop, and for our society to benefit from the life experience of older people. To this end, we are deepening intergenerational dialogue.
- We are committed to promoting inclusion and participation in the State of Berlin by creating favourable conditions. To this end, we are ensuring the mobility of older people by further removing barriers, facilitating their access to the digital world, and creating additional age-appropriate educational opportunities for lifelong learning.
- We want older people to be able to make their voices heard more directly. To this end, we will strengthen the legal and financial standing of senior citizens' representative bodies, but in return we will abolish the State Senior Citizens' Advisory Council.

Accessibility

- We want to enable greater mobility for people with disabilities and swiftly and consistently remove barriers in public spaces and on local public transport (ÖPNV). In doing so, accessibility must take priority over the preservation of historic monuments.
 - All underground and suburban railway stations must be accessible without steps. We will not accept the postponement of this target to 2029.
 - Barrier-free access to public transport must be ensured at S-Bahn and underground stations. Lifts and escalators must operate reliably. Sudden access barriers, such as faulty lifts, must be reported immediately via public transport apps, and alternatives must be highlighted. In the event of service disruptions, penalties must be agreed with the railway operator and the BVG that are equivalent to those for train cancellations and delays.
 - Even 15 years after the ratification of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, Berlin is still failing to consistently implement the required accessible seating in stadiums and theatres. We therefore want to reverse the principle: in future, capacity and public subsidies should be based on the standard of inclusion actually achieved. Anyone offering only half the prescribed number of accessible seats should be permitted to use only half the seats or receive correspondingly less funding. For theatres owned by the state, the State of Berlin should consistently implement accessible refurbishment within a four-year transition period.
- We want to equip all traffic lights with audible signals by 2030, rather than by 2050 as planned.
- New state-funded buildings must ensure comprehensive accessibility, i.e. they must be wheelchair-accessible and fitted with tactile paving systems for the visually impaired in accordance with the 'two-senses' principle.
- To enable people with reduced mobility to use transport services spontaneously and on an individual basis, we want a reliable special transport service, including inclusive taxis and flexible on-demand bus systems (such as 'Mova').
- All official communications should be issued in accordance with the two-senses principle, so as to reach blind and deaf people as well.

- The digitalisation of administrative services should be implemented in an accessible manner, where appropriate.
- Plain language should be used in official communications, particularly in guidance documents.
- We want to strengthen the independence of district disability officers by ensuring they continue to be elected.
- We want to open up opportunities for people with disabilities in the open labour market. To this end, barriers under employment law – such as unequal treatment compared to people without disabilities (increased protection against dismissal) – should be removed.
- People with disabilities should receive a ‘work budget’ which they can use independently to facilitate their integration into the labour market within companies.
- Workshops for people with disabilities should no longer be a dead end. We want to significantly increase the current placement rate into the open labour market – which stands at just one per cent – for example by strengthening specialist integration services.
- We want to give particular support to voluntary work carried out by people with disabilities.