

# SIOBHAN HARPER-NUNES

## GREEN PARTY



Green  
Party



A MAYOR WHO WILL  
WORK FOR US ALL

# IF NOT NOW, WHEN?

I've spent my career supporting communities and community organisations to raise money to make things better where they live.

I know what communities can achieve when they're supported. This means investment to create local jobs, to provide high quality services, and to improve the infrastructure that we all use.

I want to be Mayor of the West Midlands so that I can work for all of the people of the region. If elected, it will be my mission to ensure that everyone benefits from the work done by the Combined Authority.

I want the region to get away from economic plans that have produced such shameful inequality and hardship for many, as well as ignoring the reality of climate change. My plan will ensure our overlooked areas catch up and everyone can have a reasonable standard of living within a sustainable society. Investment in the region over the last few years has not been fairly spread, has not been used to tackle poverty, and not everyone has benefitted.

It is time for a change.

Seven years ago, we said the map and levels of deprivation hadn't changed in 30 years. Since having a Mayor, this has not improved. In fact, after 7 years under the current Mayor, the West Midlands is now the worst region in the country for child poverty. Families in work are struggling to feed their children, school children are too hungry to concentrate, and mental health problems are on the rise. In left-behind communities in the West Midlands, things have got steadily worse even when money comes into the region.

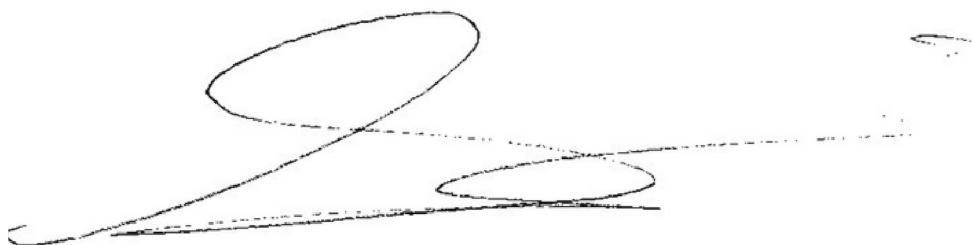
Trickle-down economics doesn't work and neither does putting all our efforts into headline projects in city centres. We need much more investment in local communities, local infrastructure, local housing, and local jobs. We need a Mayor who actually listens to the priorities of our communities instead of chasing photo opportunities in hi-vis and a hard hat.

My campaign is focussing on three things: ensuring that no one and nowhere in the West Midlands gets left behind; seeing much more urgent action to tackle the climate crisis; and making sure our citizens can hold the Mayor and the Combined Authority to account. I have divided this manifesto into three sections: People, Planet and Accountability to make this crystal clear.



The policy pledges listed here are not meant to be exhaustive, as I believe in involving our communities extensively in decision-making, so I cannot be prescriptive about everything in advance. Meaningful consultation means being able to change your mind based on what people tell you.

This Manifesto outlines my priorities and with your support we can send a message that we need much more from the Combined Authority. This includes on tackling poverty, tackling climate change, and being accountable to all the people of the West Midlands.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Siobhan Harper-Nunes".

Siobhan Harper-Nunes



# PEOPLE



To tackle the climate emergency, we must first look after our people. We must give them the support they need to be able to live and work safely and securely.

It's time for a new type of politics. A politics that listens to and involves people, and makes sure that everyone's voice is heard. A politics that takes steps to amplify the voice of the most disadvantaged. A politics that is about working with people, for people, and exercising power together.



# ECONOMIC WELLBEING



We must tackle the scourge of poverty in our region. It is the root cause of so many of the problems which blight our communities.



To tackle poverty I pledge to:

- Appoint a Deputy Mayor charged with championing community wealth building within my first 20 days. They will commission a comprehensive assessment of deprivation across the region. This will inform a clear action plan to address it and to measure the distribution of growth.
- Establish a community wealth building grant fund, to support local community organisations working on a local level to strengthen local economies and wellbeing.
- Establish an investment/business support fund for locally based Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs), Social Enterprises and Co-ops. This will be targeted at the areas of the region that need most support and the sectors that will bring most benefits.

- Ensure that all funding for apprenticeships and internship programmes are targeted at the areas of the region that need most support and the sectors that will bring most benefits, and ensure these internships and apprenticeships are paid at least the real living wage.
- Set up an SME workspace programme which will focus on clean manufacturing and creative industries to provide affordable workspace in sustainable locations.
- Work with colleges across the region to deliver the skills needed for the Green jobs of the future, including those needed for mass home retrofit programmes. Also, undertake a detailed assessment of the skills gaps to ensure our young people are prepared for the future opportunities that investment in Green technology will bring.
- Lobby for a Universal Basic Income pilot programme designed to investigate whether this can help free people to be entrepreneurial and set up businesses without running the risk of losing everything.
- Look for funding to provide more support for employers to overcome barriers to employing people with disabilities, who are currently massively under-represented in the workforce.
- Support the creation of more community banks to help SMEs who cannot access finance through traditional banks and investigate setting up a municipal bank for the West Midlands.



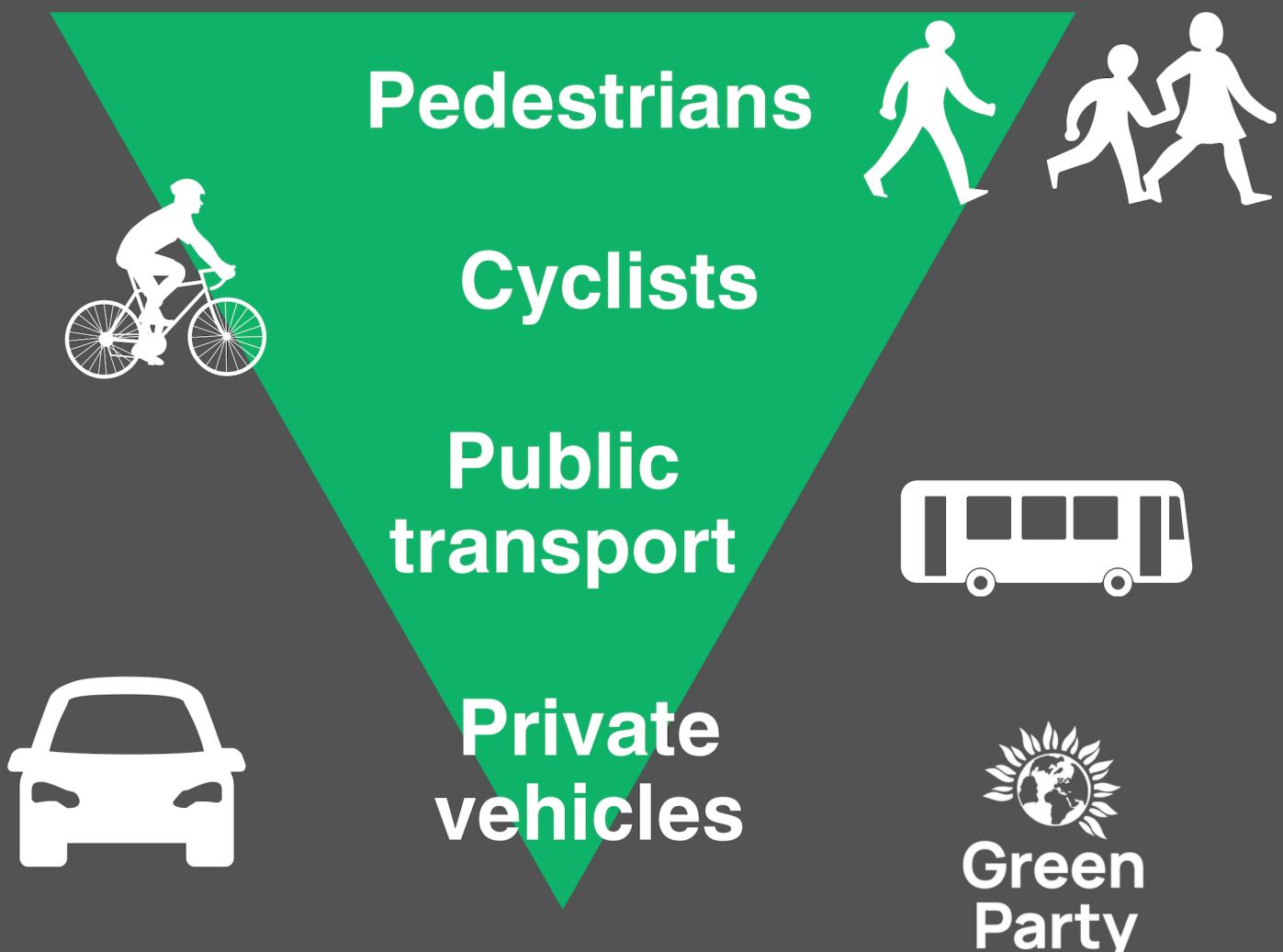
- Lobby for funding for fare free public transport for under 22s, those looking for work, those in full time education and 60-65 year olds., and conduct a study of the feasibility and benefits of extending this to everyone.
- Undertake a deep analysis of local services and local infrastructure available in communities across the West Midlands, and work with Councils and other stakeholders to ensure every community has the services, shops and local infrastructure they need within walking distance
- Work with councils to establish a West Midlands Cultural Asset Protection Plan to protect our arts, culture, heritage and leisure assets of all shapes and sizes.
- Work with Councils to lobby for a better deal for Councils on local funding for local services.



# PHYSICAL AND EMOTIONAL WELLBEING

I want people in the West Midlands to become healthier, happier, and to feel part of the community around them. To achieve this, active travel must become the most frequent way for people to get around the area. It will also play a key role in reducing the region's carbon emissions, so it has a dual purpose.

Our infrastructure must be designed around people, not cars. All development will reflect the hierarchy of pedestrians, cyclists, public transport and then private cars.



I pledge to:

- Adopt a ‘vision-zero’ approach of no deaths or serious injuries on our roads to planning and road safety, to minimise danger to cyclists and walkers and other vulnerable road users.
- Reappoint a Walking and Cycling Commissioner to deliver this approach within 100 days.
- Work closely with the West Midlands Police and Crime Commissioner to ensure that tackling dangerous driving and dangerous parking is a priority and offenders are punished.
- Lobby to retain Fixed Penalty Notice (FPN) fines issued by the police for traffic offences to benefit active travel schemes in the area, rather than being sent to HM Treasury.
- Ensure that 25% of new transport funding that has already been allocated to the region by Westminster is spent on active travel.
- Ensure that all transport projects take an integrated approach that includes cycling and walking. The Walking and Cycling Commissioner will produce guidelines for all transport projects to follow.
- Create a fund for Local Authorities to prioritise pedestrians and cyclists at junctions. This will make walking and cycling easier, safer and more pleasant.
- Proceed with bus franchising, and investigate possibilities of outright ownership of local buses including lobbying for any additional powers needed.
- End funding of road-widening or vehicle capacity projects by the West Midlands Combined Authority or devolved funding.
- Lobby for increased transport funding from Westminster, not stopping until we get the same annual investment in transport per head of the population as London.
- Prioritise new faster transport links such as train and tram and rapid transit bus on those areas least well-connected by public transport.



- Work to ensure re-opening of Castle Vale station, Sutton Park railway line, Walsall to Wolverhampton and other key local lines and stations to local passenger services.
- Introduce tap and cap contactless integrated ticketing

Other measures that I pledge to take to improve wellbeing:

- Ensure WMCA economic plans prioritise raising the incomes of the worst-off in our society , improving their wellbeing and reducing the demand on public services
- Oppose NHS cuts, reductions in Public Health grants to local government, and further privatisation and challenge the lack of consultation in making changes.
- Establish a working group to look into how we can encourage more urban farming and growing across the region.
- Provide support for community orchards and other collaborative food growing initiatives in urban areas.
- Look into ways to support the arts and culture sector through introducing a tourism tax - a small levy on hotel rooms and short-term rentals. The revenue from this would fund local organisations to provide more free activities.

# COMMUNITIES AND HOMES



Creating a sense of belonging and providing opportunities to be an active part of a community is a key part of what we should be doing for people in the West Midlands. I will take a bottom-up rather than top down approach, fostering active communities who work together to improve their neighbourhoods.

I want everyone to have a warm, secure home where they are safe and feel able to thrive as part of the community.



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I pledge to:

- Appoint a Homes Transformation Lead, whose job will be to set up and fund major retrofit programmes across the West Midlands to bring homes to good levels of energy efficiency. This will create thousands of jobs and transform the lives of people who have been struggling to afford energy bills. They will do this by:
  - Using existing devolution funds to kick-start retrofit projects
  - Lobbying government for the increased funds needed for mass retrofit
  - Working with colleges to develop training programmes to develop the skilled workforce needed
  - Providing advice and support to community energy projects to raise money
- Work with councils and housing associations to increase the number of social homes built in the West Midlands, so there is an annual net increase of social homes once losses to the Right to Buy scheme are taken into account. By:
  - Using devolution deal funds to support building of social housing
  - Lobbying for more government investment in social housing
  - Working with councils on having social as well as affordable housing targets for new developments in council planning policies.
- Support Community Land Trusts and the regional Community Led Housing hub, as mechanisms to provide genuinely affordable housing in perpetuity, both for rent and ownership.



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- Work with Councils and government to improve regulation and standards of private rented accommodation by strengthening regulation for HMOs and private rented accommodation.
- Work with community organisations, housing providers and local authorities to bring rough sleeping in the West Midlands to an end by 2028.
- Take a “brownfield first” approach to housing, prioritising building on brownfield sites for any developments the WMCA is involved with
- Introduce a “re-use first” approach for any developments the WMCA is involved with - investigating how housing developments can reuse and refurbish existing buildings and houses rather than demolishing them.
- Ensure new housing developments the WMCA are involved in, are built near existing good transport links, or where transport links can be easily improved. For example railway stations and railway lines, and encourage councils to have planning policies which do the same.
- Ensure that new housing developments WMCA are involved in have the highest possible energy efficiency standards and encourage Councils to do the same with their own housing planning policies - to ensure homes are built for the future.



# PLANET



As Mayor, I commit to being a champion for the natural world and ensuring that we play our part in tackling the climate emergency. The environment is not something which is nice to have, it is essential for our survival as a species on this planet.

We need a Mayor who will focus on cutting pollution, protecting and improving the quality of existing green spaces and making the built environment work with rather than against nature.



# IMPROVING OUR NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

A high quality natural environment helps citizens of the West Midlands feel pride in their region, provides leisure space, helps protect against flooding and excessive heat, and provides habitat for wildlife.



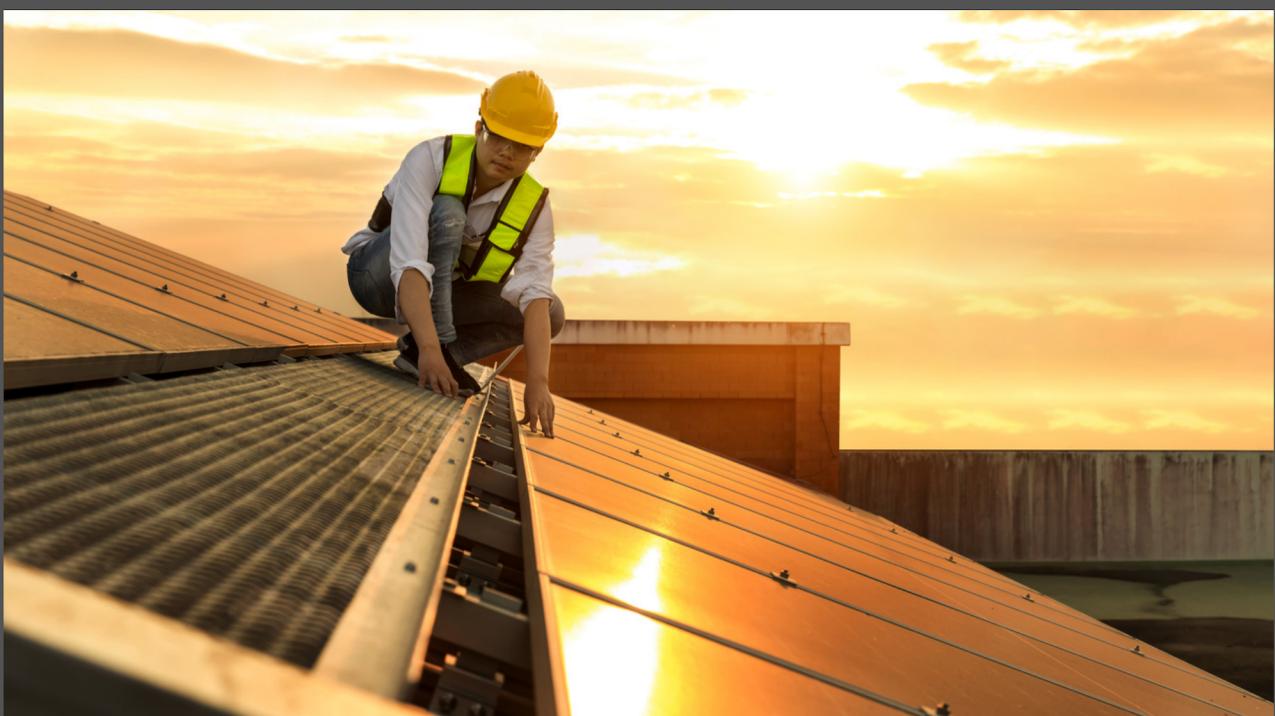
I pledge to:

- Commit fully to the concept of a West Midlands National Park and pledge funding to pilot elements of this to prove the concept within the first two years.
- Consult with partners across the West Midlands to commit to an ambitious, but realistic annual target of street tree planting within the first year, which we will report on annually after this.
- Introduce a Community Greening Fund, which will provide support for small scale, locally led projects to green the public realm with an emphasis on areas that have had little previous investment in such schemes.
- Champion and seek funding for natural solutions to mitigate increased flooding risks across the West Midlands.
- Use all available levers to promote more green roofs to be included in new-build developments. Developers will have to use either green roofs or rooftop solar or other renewable generation technology as a condition of any funding support for projects under the WMCA.

# TACKLING EMISSIONS AND AIR POLLUTION

By making the West Midlands the most ambitious area for transforming its economy away from polluting, fossil fuel industries of the past and embracing the zero carbon future, we can provide a massive boost to the economy, creating sustainable, well-paid jobs.

The actions we take today are crucial. We cannot afford to have targets for some time in the future. We must start the green industrial revolution in our region immediately.



I pledge to:

- Work with Anchor institutions to develop and embed a zero-carbon supply chain.
- Establish a WMCA Carbon Charter and Kitemark – awarded to carbon neutral businesses and embedded in public sector procurement processes.
- Come together with Councils to issue Green Bonds to assist with decarbonisation, fund low-carbon infrastructure and support our low-carbon future. They will draw investment to the region, driving innovation and creating jobs.
- Lead efforts to ensure that public buildings of the WMCA, member councils and others are properly insulated and energy efficient.
- Take all possible steps to divest the West Midlands Pension Fund (WMPF) of its investments in fossil-fuel industries and push for more pension funds to be invested in local energy technologies.



# ACCOUNTABILITY



People, rightly, want and need to have more say over big decisions that impact them.

The West Midlands Combined Authority is out of touch and doesn't look like or represent us. People still don't know what it is and what it does. I want to give communities a stronger voice and make sure the Combined Authority works for and listens to us. I will bring back trust in politics, or in some cases build trust where there has never been any.

There need to be proper mechanisms to check what the Mayor is doing and how they are spending the Combined Authority's money.

I pledge to:

- Lobby central government to allow the WMCA to have a directly elected Assembly.

In the meantime, I will work to improve the existing scrutiny by:

- increasing the number of scrutiny committees
- giving them additional resources to do their work increasing their membership to include representatives of voluntary organisations, community groups, unions, SMEs and under-represented or vulnerable groups;
- having Chairs from other parties
- changing how scrutiny representatives are appointed, to make them less vulnerable to political pressure.

- Promote and engage more with community groups, giving local communities a bigger say over how the mayor's powers protect and develop their local areas. I will meet as regularly with community organisations as I do with business leaders.



- Use Citizens' Assemblies to ensure the direct participation of members of the public in forming policy, investigating issues of real concern to the WMCA and co-producing WMCA plans.
- Work towards setting up to 20% of the mayoral budget through participatory budget setting.
- Lobby for a more diverse and representative WMCA board and sub-groups, with more representatives from groups other than larger businesses.
- Ask WMCA officers to launch a simple communications strategy, setting out what the WMCA is, how its powers differ from or align with Local Authorities, national government and other statutory bodies, and who exactly can make which decisions.
- Develop, substantiate and articulate the case for increased central government funding for the region.
- Lobby central government for taxation policies, such as Council Tax banding and stamp duty, to be fully devolved, as well as powers to determine new taxes like a Land Value Tax, which could replace Business Rates and Council Tax with a much fairer system.



# USE YOUR VOTE ON MAY 2ND



## VOTE SIOBHAN

**Vote Siobhan to send a message:**

**We need more investment in our left-behind communities  
and more urgent action on the climate crisis.**

- Siobhan knows the challenges our communities face and what support they need to thrive.
- 20 years supporting people in our most left-behind communities across the West Midlands.
- Founded a successful business to support women in personal and professional development.

Promoted by Margaret Okole on behalf of Siobhan Harper-Nunes  
(Green Party), both at 2A Blackthorn House, Birmingham B3 1RL