

2026 Election Manifesto

Osnabrück

Think differently.

Acting on a European scale.

Make a difference locally.

Volt

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OUR VISION

Osnabrück is more than just a city in Lower Saxony – we are part of a united Europe. In our City of Peace, we bear a historic responsibility for fostering understanding and cooperation across borders. For us, Europe is not an abstract project, but a part of our everyday lives: EU directives protect our environment, and European funding strengthens our infrastructure and education.

We're not reinventing the wheel. Volt brings successful solutions from across Europe (**best practices**) straight to our doorstep. Our approach to politics is pragmatic, evidence-based and collaborative. For us, participation isn't just a formality, but the foundation of sound decision-making. Together, we're shaping an Osnabrück that moves forward with courage, thinks in terms of European networks, and sees diversity as a strength.

In varietate concordia – United in diversity.

We bring Europe's best ideas to Osnabrück to shape the City of Peace of tomorrow.

Mobility: For the freedom not to have to drive

Osnabrück is at a turning point: decades of prioritising car traffic have led to congestion, noise and land consumption. We are committed to a mobility concept that does not impose bans, but creates genuine freedom of choice: the freedom to walk safely, cycle comfortably and rely on a robust public transport system. Our goal is the **15-minute city**, where all everyday destinations can be reached within 15 minutes.

Our key demands for the transport revolution:

- ➔ **Vision Zero:** We redesign road spaces to ensure there are no more road deaths or serious injuries. This includes accessible crossings and systematically secured routes to school.
- ➔ **A genuine cycling city:** We call for a continuous, safe cycle path network instead of a patchwork of routes. We take our cue from the Dutch model with wide dedicated cycle lanes and 'green waves' for cyclists.
- ➔ **Strong public transport:** The bus network must be expanded rather than cut back, with more frequent services and reliable connections. We conduct a thorough and transparent assessment of the feasibility of innovative systems such as the 'Sunglider'.
- ➔ **Fair road space:** We reduce through traffic in the city centre (e. g. on Lortzingstraße and at the Domhof) and put an end to the blocking of pavements to reclaim space for green areas and social interaction.
- ➔ **Public services:** Home care workers and social services will be allocated designated parking bays so that mobility does not hinder social work.

Best practice:

Pontevedra (Spain): This model pedestrian city uses the 'Metrominuto' signage system, which indicates distances in walking minutes. The result: the highest quality of life and safety in public spaces.

Education: Growing together from nursery to university

Education is the key to personal development and social participation. We want educational success in Osnabrück not to depend on family background. Our aim is an educational landscape that is consistently geared towards the needs of learners – from early childhood support to lifelong learning.

Our key demands for a modern education system:

- ➔ **Nurseries & Daycare Centres:** We campaign to ensure that nurseries remain free of fees, as early childhood education must not be a luxury. We call for the reliable recording and publication of available nursery and crèche places, as well as information on closures, and for attractive working conditions for nursery staff.
- ➔ **Forward-looking schools:** Education must be a priority in the city's budget. We call for up-to-date digital equipment, high cleaning standards and free, locally sourced and organic food in all schools.
- ➔ **A needs-based structure:** We call for a comprehensive survey of demand figures for comprehensive schools and for the possibility of establishing a third comprehensive school in the southern districts, based on a parent survey.
- ➔ **A hub for science:** With 26,000 students, Osnabrück University and Osnabrück University of Applied Science are the driving forces behind our city. We promote the exchange of knowledge with the wider community, support international cooperation and advocate for affordable student housing.
- ➔ **Lifelong learning:** We develop adult education centres and libraries into open learning and meeting places, following the Scandinavian model.

Best practice:

Denmark: Here, the education system is consistently tailored to the learners. Self-organised and interest-driven learning sets the foundation for a lifetime of curiosity and growth.

Housing: Community-focused concepts for everyone

Housing is a human right and a central social function for the cohesion of our city. As Osnabrück is constantly growing, we need sufficient affordable housing for all life circumstances. We focus on concepts that prioritise the common good and promote vibrant neighbourhoods.

Our key demands for fair housing:

- ➔ **Local responsibility:** We call for long-term preservation of WiO as a local housing association and its further development, in order to ensure affordable rents.
- ➔ **Social housing quota:** In new public housing projects, at least 40 % must be allocated to social housing or rent-controlled accommodation.
- ➔ **Strengthening cooperatives:** We want to specifically support housing cooperatives by prioritising the allocation of suitable sites.
- ➔ **Fair distribution:** We advocate for a consistent obligation to report vacancies and a progressive vacancy charge for speculative vacancies. We also support home-swapping schemes.
- ➔ **Housing first:** We tackle homelessness by providing rapid, unbureaucratic access to permanent housing – without preconditions such as therapy or abstinence requirements.
- ➔ **Space efficiency:** We prioritise construction of multi-unit housing on new sites and facilitate the extension and conversion of existing buildings.

Best practice:

Vienna (Austria): In Vienna, half the population lives in council or subsidised housing. This model ensures long-term affordable rents for the whole of society.

Climate & Environment: Quality of life for today and future generations

Climate change has long been felt in Osnabrück through increasing heatwaves and heavy rainfall. We combine consistent climate protection with necessary adaptation to climate impacts to preserve our city as a liveable place for future generations. The basis of our actions is the determined implementation of the '100 % Climate Protection Master Plan'.

Our key demands for a climate-resilient Osnabrück:

- ➔ **Energy transition:** We call for the renovation rate to be increased to 3 % per year, with priority given to particularly energy-intensive buildings.
- ➔ **Clean heating:** We are committed to expanding renewable heat sources such as deep geothermal and solar thermal energy in conjunction with modern district heating networks.
- ➔ **Sponge City principle:** Through large-scale soil unsealing and the creation of multifunctional green spaces, we make Osnabrück resilient to heavy rainfall and cool the city during heatwaves.
- ➔ **The 3-30-300 principle:** We aim for every person to be able to see three trees from their window, for 30 % of each neighbourhood to be covered in tree canopy, and for the nearest green space to be no more than 300 meters away.
- ➔ **Nature conservation:** The 'Green Fingers' must be permanently protected and strengthened as vital corridors for cool air and local recreational areas.
- ➔ **Circular economy:** We promote reuse and repair of resources by supporting repair cafés and regional swap meets.

Best practice:

Copenhagen (Denmark): Following severe flooding, Copenhagen has radically transformed its urban landscape. As a 'sponge city', it makes targeted use of parks and squares as rainwater retention basins in order to protect its infrastructure.

Participation & Health: A supportive Osnabrück for all generations

A people-friendly city is judged by how it treats those who need support. We want an Osnabrück that facilitates integration, makes inclusion the norm, and actively combats loneliness. For us, participation is not charity, but the foundation of genuine social cohesion.

Our key demands for a society based on solidarity:

- ➔ **Integration in practice:** We strengthen community spaces in neighbourhoods and link language courses and vocational training directly to local businesses.
- ➔ **Inclusion as the norm:** Urban planning must be accessible. We call for information materials in plain language and the consistent expansion of inclusive sports and cultural activities.
- ➔ **Strong youth support:** We provide reliable funding for open child and youth work and create safe spaces for queer young people.
- ➔ **Health & Care:** We bring support services together digitally and transparently. Caregivers must be given tangible relief through low-threshold services.
- ➔ **Overcoming loneliness:** Community work needs long-term funding. We support initiatives such as neighbourhood breakfasts and mobile services like Rikscha rides for older people.
- ➔ **True equality:** We promote safe public spaces through better lighting and financial support for women's refuges. Menstrual products should be available free of charge in public facilities.

Best practice:

Cycling for all ages: Following the example of international initiatives, volunteer-run Rikscha rides enable older people and those with reduced mobility to participate in city life once again and promote intergenerational exchange.

Safety in Osnabrück: Objectively strong, subjectively noticeable

Safety is the basic prerequisite for freedom in public spaces. Osnabrück is objectively safe, yet the subjective sense of safety often differs from the statistics. We advocate a fact-based safety policy that combines prevention, smart urban design and transparency.

Our key demands for a safe Osnabrück:

- ➔ **Data-driven prevention:** We rely on detailed local analyses and joint site visits with youth support services and the hospitality industry to deploy resources where they are needed.
- ➔ **'Bright & Clear' programme:** We call for modern, smart LED lighting on pavements and at public transport hubs to make areas that make people feel unsafe more welcoming and to demonstrably reduce crime.
- ➔ **Safe nightlife:** The NachtBus service must be safeguarded and expanded. We continue to support and promote awareness campaigns such as 'Staying Safe on the Nightlife Scene'.
- ➔ **Early prevention:** We embed evidence-based programmes such as 'Communities That Care' (CTC) at local level to strengthen social skills at an early stage and prevent escalations.
- ➔ **Transparency builds trust:** We introduce a biannual safety barometer that combines objective data with citizens' perceptions.
- ➔ **Showing a presence:** Security services and street workers must be present in the right place at the right time – particularly in the evenings at key hubs.

Best practice:

Copenhagen (Denmark): The Danish capital is regarded as one of the safest cities in the world. The key lies in the close, institutionalised cooperation between schools, youth clubs, social services and the police.

Democracy: Actively shaping and experiencing our city

A strong democracy thrives on dialogue and active participation. We want citizens of all ages to be able to actively experience democracy in Osnabrück. Our aim is to establish transparent structures that explain political processes in an accessible way and enable genuine participation – from the local neighbourhood right up to the European level.

Our key demands for a vibrant democracy:

- ➔ **Empowering young people:** We call for the mandatory involvement of young people in local decision-making. The Osnabrück Youth Parliament should be strengthened as an expert body on their own lives and be systematically consulted on issues such as the environment, culture and mobility.
- ➔ **Expanding participation:** We expand citizens' councils and topic-specific future forums so that people can have a say in matters where decisions directly affect their daily lives. Mobile formats should also involve groups that are difficult to reach.
- ➔ **Digital transparency:** We call for digital participation platforms that provide clear feedback on outcomes and political decisions. Political Education must also strengthen media literacy to enable people to deal safely with (digital) disinformation.
- ➔ **Europe Advisory Service:** We set up a one-stop shop for European funding programmes. This service actively supports clubs, schools and initiatives with submitting applications, in order to attract more EU funding for local projects in the region.
- ➔ **Protecting diversity:** We call for long-term funding for projects combating discrimination and extremism. Democratic values must remain visible and tangible in the public through exhibitions and dialogue formats.

Best practice:

Citizens' Assemblies: Following the international model (e. g. in Ireland or France), we advocate for citizens' assemblies selected by lottery. These bodies develop evidence-based recommendations on complex political issues, thereby strengthening trust in democratic processes.

Economy: An innovative, sustainable and connected region of the future

Osnabrück is one of Germany's strongest hubs for small and medium-sized enterprises. We want to harness this strength to make the region socially, environmentally and economically resilient for the future. Through innovation, digital transformation and international networking, we safeguard local jobs and quality of life.

Our key demands for a strong business location:

- ➔ **ICO as driver of innovation:** We promote the Innovation Centre (ICO) as a European innovation laboratory and provide targeted support to young companies in internationalisation and the acquisition of funding.
- ➔ **Attracting skilled workers:** We tackle the skills shortage through a massive expansion of childcare and all-day schools. We call for the rapid recognition of foreign qualifications and a local talent service for international skilled workers.
- ➔ **Digital administration:** By 2030, all approval and planning processes for businesses must be fully accessible online without the need to switch between different platforms. We speed up procedures through clear lines of responsibility and digital workflows.
- ➔ **Future technologies:** We expand regional innovation clusters in the fields of AI, agricultural technology and sustainable logistics. In doing so, we make intensive use of funding from the 'StadtLandZukunft OS' future region.
- ➔ **Sustainable business practices:** We support companies in their transition to climate-neutral production, promote local energy innovations and strengthen circular economy programmes for the construction and agricultural sectors.

Best practice:

Estonia: As a digital pioneer in Europe, Estonia enables people to set up businesses and complete almost all administrative procedures online in a matter of minutes. This level of administrative efficiency serves as our model for a digital town hall that is citizen- and business-friendly.

Culture: Safeguarding diversity and making it accessible to everyone

Culture is the heartbeat of a vibrant urban community. We want an Osnabrück where cultural participation is possible regardless of income or background. We support a diverse cultural scene that preserves the best of tradition whilst boldly creating space for innovation – both in the city and across the entire district.

Our key demands for a vibrant cultural landscape:

- ➔ **Participation for all:** We call for socially graded admission prices and free events for children and young people. Cultural venues must be structurally designed to be consistently accessible, both linguistically and digitally.
- ➔ **Strengthening the independent arts scene:** Artists and independent initiatives need planning security. We are committed to multi-year funding models and the provision of affordable rehearsal and studio spaces.
- ➔ **Connecting culture:** The city and the district should share resources. We call for the expansion of joint projects and better integration of rural areas to the city's cultural offerings.
- ➔ **Youth engagement:** We embed cultural education firmly in nurseries and schools and support youth cultural initiatives designed and run by young people themselves.
- ➔ **European exchange:** We strengthen Osnabrück as a hub for European encounters. Initiatives such as the Morgenland Festival are being promoted, and the use of EU cultural funding programmes such as 'Creative Europe' is actively supported.
- ➔ **Sustainable culture:** We support cultural practitioners in planning climate-friendly events and call for the resource-efficient refurbishment of public cultural buildings.

Best practice:

Würzburg (Germany): The former Bürgerbräu site has been successfully transformed into a vibrant cultural and creative hub. It demonstrates how historic buildings can be turned into a new focal point for the local community through shared use.

Digital: Sovereign infrastructure and citizen-focused services

Digitalisation is the key to a modern, efficient and citizen-focused administration. We want Digital Osnabrück to become a reality by 2030 – secure, transparent and independent of individual software providers. Technology must serve people and make dealing with public authorities noticeably easier.

Our key demands for a digital Osnabrück:

- ➔ **Administration 2030:** We consistently implement the framework strategy for digitalisation. Our goal: by 2030, all municipal departments will be digitally supported.
- ➔ **Quality before technology:** We do not simply digitise poor analogue processes. Before any technical implementation, we analyse and optimise the workflows across the board.
- ➔ **Digital sovereignty:** We advocate the use of open-source software and open standards. A self-managed IT structure safeguards our independence from large corporations.
- ➔ **Citizen Services 2.0:** Dealing with public authorities must be fully digital, fast and straightforward. We call for secure authentication for online forms and the option to submit documents digitally.
- ➔ **Information security:** Protecting your data is our top priority. We consistently implement an Information Security Management System (ISMS) in accordance with the highest standards (BSI).
- ➔ **Open communication:** We strengthen the city's presence in independent digital spaces and promote additional services on open platforms such as Mastodon.

Best practice:

Estonia: As a digital pioneer in Europe, Estonia demonstrates how a paperless administration works: almost all administrative procedures can be completed online in a matter of minutes. This level of efficiency and citizen-centred approach is our goal for the digital town hall.

Sports: Exercise, fairness and safety for all

Sports are far more than just a leisure activity – it is a key space for social interaction, health and social integration. We want to develop Osnabrück into a modern sporting city that creates reliable conditions for clubs and enables accessible exercise opportunities for everyone in public spaces.

Our key demands for an active sporting city:

- ➔ **Modernising infrastructure:** We call for the maintenance and refurbishment of sports halls, swimming pools and skateparks based on a fully transparent priority list.
- ➔ **Exercise in everyday life:** We create attractive, free opportunities in public spaces. These include illuminated running routes for the evening hours and the further expansion of outdoor fitness equipment in the city's neighbourhoods.
- ➔ **Strengthening clubs:** Sports clubs do vital work. We call for reliable financial support for youth development and a noticeable relief for volunteers through targeted advice.
- ➔ **Protection and safety:** We call for the consistent implementation of the Safe Sport Code. Binding protection policies and clearly designated points of contact must be standard practice in all clubs to ensure that there is no scope for abuse of power or violence.
- ➔ **Making smart use of space:** Through a structured partnership with the University of Osnabrück, we aim to make its sports facilities more accessible to school and club sports, in order to make the best possible use of existing capacity.

Best practice:

Utrecht (Netherlands): Utrecht integrates 'Active Design' directly into urban planning. Sport and physical activity do not only take place in indoor facilities, but are an integral part of daily outdoor life thanks to attractive routes and play stations.

City of Peace: Shaping peace locally and thinking on a European scale

For us, the title 'City of Peace' is not a marketing ploy, but a mission. Peace begins locally: in our neighbourhoods, schools and clubs. We want to show how peace works in the 21st century – through participation rather than exclusion, and prevention rather than escalation.

Our key demands for the City of Peace 2.0:

- ➔ **Social security:** Peace requires justice. We strengthen neighbourhood centres and community spaces to directly promote social cohesion in local areas.
- ➔ **Living participation:** We call for the mandatory expansion of citizens' councils and the strengthening of the youth parliament. Those who feel heard contribute constructively in society.
- ➔ **Learning about peace:** We firmly embed peace and democracy education, as well as media literacy, in education for children, young people and adults.
- ➔ **Fostering on open-minded attitude:** A City of Peace sees diversity as an opportunity. We call for an institutionalised culture of welcome and strong anti-discrimination across the entire administration.
- ➔ **Focus on prevention:** We prioritise conflict prevention through street work and mediation in public spaces. We take women's and minority groups' sense of personal safety seriously and work to improve it through dialogue and smart urban planning.
- ➔ **Internationally connected:** We position Osnabrück as a European forum for dialogue and use town twinning schemes to foster social and environmental innovation.

Osnabrück, City of Peace: Our legacy of the Peace of Westphalia is our daily motivation to resolve conflicts through dialogue, the rule of law and cooperation. We bring this European foundation directly into the politics on your doorstep.

Your three votes for Europe in Osnabrück.

TIME FOR THE NEXT STEP.

Osnabrück has the potential to become one of the most liveable and modern cities in Europe. We have the ideas, the plans and the courage to reshape the City of Peace together with you. Our politics don't stop at the city limits – they start right here.

On 13 September 2026, cast your three votes for Volt!

FIND OUT MORE

Is the summary not enough for you? You can find our full local election manifesto, with all the details and analysis across 63 pages, on our website (<https://voltdeutschland.org/niedersachsen/osnabrueck>) or via the QR code (in German).

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