



**Berlin Mitte for everyone — not just a few**

**Our local election manifesto**

**- Summary -**

**2026–2031**

## Dear neighbours!

Berlin-Mitte is the city's most densely populated, diverse and politically prominent district. At the same time, more and more people are coming under pressure: rising rents, displacement, an overstretched social infrastructure and public spaces under constant strain. For the SPD, one thing is clear: these developments are not inevitable — they are the result of political decisions, and they can be changed. **We want a district that protects rather than displaces, that includes rather than excludes, and that takes action instead of merely managing problems.**

We also take our cue from inner-city neighbourhoods in major European cities such as Barcelona and Paris. Our manifesto focuses on what the district itself can do. In the face of tight public finances, we set clear political priorities and press at every level for the conditions needed to deliver them.

- **Our goal is a district defined by solidarity, diversity and the ability to act — a Berlin-Mitte that not only works, but holds together as a community.**

**Note:** On the following pages, we have summarised our local policy visions and ideas. If you would like to know more, we would be happy to send you the full version of our local election manifesto. Please send an email to [Kreis.Mitte@spd.de](mailto:Kreis.Mitte@spd.de).

## 1. Housing and Urban Development – Affordable Housing and Vibrant Neighbourhoods

Berlin-Mitte is our home. Affordable housing is the defining social issue of our time.

- **We want a district where everyone – regardless of income, background or personal circumstances – can live securely and affordably, and remain in their homes.**

We stand firmly with tenants and will take decisive action against rent gouging, misuse of housing, long-term vacant properties, illegal short-term lets and the speculative neglect of residential property. Existing housing protections must be rigorously enforced, with the maximum available fines applied. We will also make use of trusteeship powers for neglected buildings to bring homes back into use and protect tenants.

We will strengthen controls on exploitative rents and clamp down on them through effective penalties. The practice of letting furnished accommodation on a short-term basis to circumvent rent controls drives up costs dramatically – this is a business model we are determined to end.

We will make full use neighbourhood protection regulations across the district's 12 conservation areas to prevent further displacement from our communities.

We welcome the establishment of the Berlin Rent Review Office (Mietpreisprüfstelle) and will implement the proposed Housing Protection Act (Wohnraumsicherungsgesetz) in full. We will continue to provide free advice services for tenants and ensure they are not left to face excessive rents alone.

We will push for greater transparency in the conversion of rental homes into owner-occupied properties through a publicly accessible register. We will also advocate for tighter restrictions on evictions for owner-occupation and longer protections periods for tenants.

- **We are committed to delivering new homes for young people, older residents and families.**

We will unlock all available land and intensification potential, and wherever possible convert vacant office and commercial space into housing. We will actively engage with property owners, offering guidance and encouraging a shift from planned office developments towards residential use.

In new developments, we will secure a substantial share of genuinely affordable housing. At the same time, we will promote accessible homes, intergenerational living and housing models that help tackle loneliness. Sustainable construction is not a luxury—it is responsible local governance. This includes making more efficient use of space, for example through mixed-use development.

Public land must be prioritised for social housing, delivered by publicly owned housing companies or cooperatives. We will work constructively with private developers to deliver new homes, provided they adhere to clear and fair rules.

- **Strong neighbourhoods are built through participation and urban development in the public interest.**

We will safeguard and strengthen neighbourhood councils (Quartiersräte) and local initiatives (Stadtteilinitiativen), and ensure stable, long-term funding for civic participation at community level.

- **Art, culture and social initiatives must also have space in the city.**

We will improve the identification of vacant properties and make them available for temporary cultural and community use - such as pop-up cultural spaces and studios (Ateliers). In doing so, we will protect the diversity and vibrancy of our district. We will continue to support cultural projects and ensure that cultural uses are embedded in new developments.

## **2. Public spaces and safety: at all times, everywhere, and for everyone**

Public spaces form the social infrastructure of our densely populated city centre. Our aim is a public realm that is fairly shared more space for pedestrians and cyclists, green areas and places for people to meet, rather than through traffic. In this way, we are creating a liveable, safe and sustainable city centre for everyone.

- **Streets, squares and parks must be safe, clean and accessible. A fair district is measured by how well these places can be used.**

Public spaces are places for socialising, exercise and relaxation — especially for children, older people, people with disabilities and families without their own private spaces. That is why we are improving the quality in public spaces: with seating, accessible toilets, shaded areas and play and activity zones, as well as rainbow benches as visible symbols of diversity and against discrimination.

- **For us, safety is more than just the absence of crime. We want protection, inclusion and respect in everyday life for everyone.**

We are strengthening prevention, neighbourhood-based social work and a visible, approachable presence of the public order office and the police. We want to reduce areas where people feel unsafe through better lighting, clear sightlines, the pruning of bushes and, where necessary, improved path layouts in green spaces and parks. Lively places are safe places. That is why we are creating more opportunities for activity and use, for example through sport and culture. We will provide particular protection for groups affected by discrimination.

We focus on early intervention and strong neighbourhood networks: we are expanding outreach social work, neighbourhood mothers' initiatives, round tables, the Prevention Council and attractive activities for young people in public spaces. We also support the introduction of a Prevention Advisory Board.

- **For us, cleanliness in public spaces is a social issue.**

We are improving waste collection and street cleaning throughout the district, supporting civic engagement, taking firm action against fly-tipping, and expanding initiatives for reuse and waste reduction. We are actively implementing the legal requirements for mandatory reusable packaging. We will designate a clear point of contact for safety and public order at the within the district administration.

- **Parks, green spaces, squares, streets and public monuments must be well maintained**

We will develop binding maintenance plans for all larger parks and green spaces and align maintenance accordingly. We will also enter into agreements with vocational schools and trade guilds to support heritage-appropriate conservation, repairs and green space maintenance. We want to support meeting places, such as cafés in parks, as venues for community-oriented culture and social interaction. We aim to make park running routes permanent and complement them with multilingual information. Drinking water facilities will be added to the amenities.

### **3. Climate and environmental policy in the district: visible, effective and socially just**

For us, climate and environmental policy is a core responsibility of local public services — and, at the same time, social policy. People in densely built-up neighbourhoods in particular suffer from heat, sealed surfaces and a lack of green space.

- **We are creating green corridors through the city centre and redesigning major transport routes.**

We want to reallocate the space along the Unter den Linden, Friedrichstraße, Torstraße and Straße des 17. Juni in favour of walking and cycling, as well as improving the quality of the public realm. The area between the Brandenburg Gate and the Victory Column, the area will be further developed as a central civic and event space.

➤ **We are working towards a climate-resilient district with more green space and accessible open areas for everyone**

To this end, we will establish a district-level for land de-sealing, with measures prioritised according to social need. School playgrounds, nurseries, senior centres, side streets and courtyard parking areas can thus be de-sealed, greened and made permeable. Action will begin where heat stress and social vulnerability are greatest. Funding will be drawn from a range of existing and planned programmes. Expanding urban greenery is central to improving the local climate. For every tree felled, two new climate-resilient trees will be planted within the same neighbourhood. At the same time, we will strengthen tree care, irrigation and long-term maintenance strategies.

Through de-sealing, new tree planting, rainwater retention and green roofs and façades, we are creating more greenery and cooling across the district. Private land can also contribute to climate action. We will therefore support de-sealing, courtyard and façade greening, as well as neighbourhood gardens and community green projects. A dedicated advisory service within the district administration will complement these measures. Their impact will be made transparent through existing technical services and geodata portals.

➤ **We are launching a district-wide shading initiative.**

Shaded areas, durable pergolas or green pavilions will be integrated into new or refurbished playgrounds, school yards and public spaces. Temporary shading solutions will also be introduced at existing sites through an immediate program. In addition, we will pilot temporary measures – such as shade structures, seating and potted trees in public spaces – to test their effectiveness. Major streets and squares will be redesigned to improve climate resilience, for example through permeable surfaces, new tree planting, and layouts that priorities walking, cycling as well as the quality of the public space. Implementation will begin at with key locations such as Alexanderplatz, Potsdamer Platz, Rosenthaler Platz and the main railway station.

#### **4. Mobility for everyone in Mitte: safe, climate-friendly and well organised**

Our goal is a transport system that is safe, accessible and open to all — for children on their way to school, people commuting to work and older people in their daily lives. Mobility is a social issue.

➤ **Traffic calming, safe cycle paths and strong public transport make mobility in Mitte safer, environmental-friendly and less stressful.**

Safe routes to school are our top priority. We are improving junctions, creating school zones and expanding safe footpaths and cycle routes. At the same time, we are strengthening public transport and campaigning for good connections across all neighbourhoods. As part of a broad alliance, we want to develop the largely car-free 'Green Campus Mitte' at Humboldt University.

We remain committed to traffic-calmed neighbourhood blocks. These reduce through traffic and improve the quality of life in residential areas. Emergency services and residents with reduced mobility will, of course, continue to have rapid access.

➤ **We are committed to strengthening cycling and walking.**

This includes continuous cycle routes, sufficient and secure parking facilities at stations, and more space for cyclists and pedestrians. Where safe cycle routes replace car lanes and parking spaces, more people choose to cycle, thereby reducing overall traffic. We will appoint Berlin's first cycle infrastructure manager (Radwegemeister\*in), responsible for maintaining cycle routes — from cleaning to minor repairs. Our aim is a consistently high-quality network, whether for children's bikes, racing or cargo bikes. We will make tram tracks safer for cyclists and improve cobbled surfaces so that cyclists no longer have to use pavements.

➤ **For motorists (drivers), we focus on practical solutions and honest dialogue.**

The fewer cars on the road, the less congestion there is. We want to offer attractive alternatives to car use rather than relying on bans. Parking management schemes are already making it easier for residents to find spaces. We are examining parking management models for employees. Rentable neighbourhood garages and better utilisation of existing car parks are intended to further reduce parking pressure, allowing on-street parking to be repurposed. We are expanding charging infrastructure, including on district-owned properties.

➤ **Clear rules & regulations for e-scooters**

Designated parking zones, mobility hubs and improved delivery zones will increase safety and support efficient urban logistics.

## **5. Strengthening Mitte as a diverse and dynamic business and employment hub**

Small and medium-sized enterprises in particular secure jobs and training opportunities and shape our neighbourhoods.

➤ **We provide tailored support for small businesses**

We support start-ups, retail, tourism, the creative industries, skilled trades and social enterprises. That is why we advocate for reliable administrative procedures, sufficient commercial space, good accessibility and a high-quality local environment. Vibrant ground-floor zones, temporary uses and a diverse commercial structure - combined with measures to prevent long-term vacancy, such as a progressive vacancy tax (Leerstandssteuer) – strengthen our neighbourhoods.

➤ **Mitte remains a centre for industry and manufacturing with strong employment**

We support the development of industry and manufacturing in appropriate areas of the district. We promote location-based initiatives, such as property and business improvement districts, while ensuring balanced development that avoids displacement and monocultures. We will push forward measures to address rising commercial rents and long-term vacancy.

Good work is a priority for us — we therefore support the creation of a district-level office for “Good Work”.

➤ **A global city - for sustainable, attractive and socially responsible tourism**

Mitte is an international metropolis and a key tourist destination. Tourism should be developed in a sustainable and socially responsible manner, in harmony with the interests of local residents. To achieve this, we are focusing on a tourism concept for Mitte, improved visitor management supported by the digital tourism data hub, and close cooperation with local stakeholders, for example through a citizens' advisory board. However, being a cosmopolitan city also means a vibrant restaurant scene in some neighbourhoods, and with it noise into the evening hours. This is a long-standing tradition in some parts of Mitte — and applies to new residents too.

Mitte is an international metropolis and a key destination for tourism. Tourism must be sustainable, socially responsible and aligned with the interests of residents. We will develop a tourism strategy for Mitte, improve visitor management using digital tools, and work closely with local stakeholders, including through a citizens' advisory board. At the same time, being a global city also means vibrant nightlife and gastronomy in some neighbourhoods, including noise into the evening — something that is part of Mitte's character and applies to new residents as well.

➤ **Modern infrastructure and mobility concepts ensure future-proof business locations.**

Modern infrastructure is a key factor. We promote innovative logistical solutions, sustainable mobility, digital coordination of construction sites, and more efficient use of delivery zones and parking. Our aim is a future-proof, climate-friendly infrastructure — with Mitte moving towards a zero-emission zone in the medium term — that serves businesses, workers and residents alike.

## **6. Good education and strong youth support – the key to equal opportunities and participation**

The SPD Berlin-Mitte is committed to a strong, fee-free education system — from early childhood through to adulthood. The district should become a certified child-friendly community. Educational institutions should reflect the realities of their neighbourhoods and work more closely with extracurricular learning opportunities.

To achieve this, we will establish a district coordination unit to align local and state-level provision.

➤ **Strong support for children and families in Mitte**

We are expanding family centres and the Family Service Office, with more localised services so families receive reliable day-to-day support. This will be complemented by digital, multilingual and accessible information. Filling vacancies in the Youth Welfare Office will be prioritised.

➤ **Early childhood education is key to social integration and future success.**

We safeguard both local authority and independent nurseries, use any vacancies to improve quality, strengthen staffing levels and campaign for the preservation of language-focused nurseries and nursery social work. We use the Daycare Forum to exchange ideas and further develop early childhood education, and in doing so we strengthen the perspectives of people with a migration background. Children should be able to play safely. That is why we are calling for the continuation of the programme for the refurbishment of daycare centres and playgrounds (KSSP).

We will safeguard both public and independent nurseries, use available capacity to improve quality, strengthen staffing and support language-focused provision and social work in nurseries. We will continue to develop early years education through exchange platforms and ensure diverse perspectives are represented. Safe play is essential, and we support the continuation of investment programmes for childcare facilities and playgrounds.

➤ **Schools in Mitte are for everyone!**

Our schools must be places of equal opportunity. We support comprehensive schools and strengthen school social work. Schools should work more closely with local communities and extracurricular learning centres. Every child should leave school with a qualification and future prospects. We will expand upper secondary provision, establish at least one campus school and strengthen outreach school social work. Safe routes to school remain a priority, alongside continued investment in school infrastructure. Ensuring safe school travel is a priority for us, and we are committed to advancing the continued refurbishment of schools (e.g. Ernst-Reuter-Oberschule, Puttbusser Straße, Neubau Guineastrße als Gemeinschaftsschule).

➤ **Lifelong learning means more than education: we support interaction, culture and social connection.**

We aim to further develop our district-run institutions – adult education centres, music schools, and libraries – and strengthen them as open spaces for education, culture, and community exchange. This will be achieved through extended opening hours and new services, a permanent location for the Bruno-Lösche-Library, and an additional library in Alt-Mitte.

➤ **Young people are the future.**

We must not make cuts to youth services. Alongside ring-fenced funding, the district will seek to secure more grants and donations for youth work in the future. By doing so, we will strengthen youth centres (Jugendfreizeiteinrichtungen) and expand the work of the Child and Youth Participation Office (Jugendbeteiligungsbüro). Projects for and with young people – such as a youth history workshop (Jugendgeschichtswerkstatt) and a queer youth centre in Mitte – will complete our provision. Special attention will be given to young people from migrant backgrounds and to youth employment initiatives.

## **7. From sport halls to parks – great conditions for all sport enthusiasts.**

➤ **Inclusive sports opportunities for children, young people, adults and older people: not only a matter of health, but a source of social cohesion in our diverse district**

We are proud of the wide range of club-based sport in Mitte and want to continue supporting it. We will support coaches and volunteers in sports clubs by enabling affordable parking at sports facilities. The allocation of usage times for sports halls and facilities will finally be simplified, and we will expand evening provision through more “midnight sport” programmes.

We are committed to the refurbishment and further development of additional sports facilities (for example the Erika-Heß-Stadion) and to expanding swimming opportunities, including projects such as river swimming and open-water swimming (Flussbad-Projekt und Freiwasserschwimmen am Plötzensee). In our parks, public squares and green spaces, we will expand the availability of free sports facilities and support additional urban sports, for example through the development of a skate park in Nord-Wedding.

## 8. Social Affairs and Health

- **We want a social infrastructure that provides security, enables participation and offers reliable support to people in difficult situations.**

Berlin-Mitte is a district with very different living realities. Support services must be accessible in everyday life, low-threshold, barrier-free and available close to where people live.

We are strengthening advisory and support structures across the district—from care support centres and family and migration counselling services to assistance for people without health insurance. We will expand digital services while continuing to ensure face-to-face advice and offline access. Benefits provided by the social welfare office must be delivered promptly, as they are essential for those in need. We will tackle loneliness through long-term funding for meeting places, social projects and voluntary engagement

- **Support instead of displacement**

In cases of housing insecurity, homelessness and other emergencies, we focus on support rather than displacement. We are expanding prevention services, outreach social work, emergency accommodation and programmes such as Housing First. We will create additional safe spaces for vulnerable groups, for example day centres at Alexanderplatz and Osloer Straße.

In the field of drug support, we also prioritise counselling, outreach services and drug consumption rooms. We leave no one to face these challenges alone and work closely with service providers and city-wide structures.

- **Health must not depend on where you live, the language you speak or your personal circumstances – we aim for accessible, local healthcare**

We are strengthening local healthcare provision, expanding preventive services and deploying skilled professionals where social pressures are particularly high. Multilingual information and improved access to medical services ensure that no one is excluded.

Integration and participation begin from the outset. That is why we work closely with migrant organisations, expand advisory and support services for refugees, and create spaces for encounter and social participation within the district.

## 9. Culture as a human right, participation and a force for integration

The SPD Berlin-Mitte is committed to ensuring that cultural opportunities remain accessible to all people—free from discrimination, inclusive and open across generations.

We are therefore securing the funding of key cultural and educational institutions such as libraries, adult education centres (Volkshochschulen), music schools, youth art schools, the Mitte Museum and municipal galleries, as well as a refurbished education and cultural centre at Turmstraße 75.

- **Cultural diversity is a strength of our district—intercultural exchange counters racism and discrimination**

We promote the experience, learning and expression of the diverse cultures of people in the district, as well as intercultural exchange and cultural education, particularly for children and young people. Cultural venues and civil society initiatives will be more closely connected and supported.

We will preserve and further develop art in public space. This includes accessible formats such as designated areas for legal graffiti and street art. They are an expression of urban culture and strengthen identification with the local neighbourhood.

➤ **A vibrant culture of remembrance is part of our democratic responsibility**

We advocate for the visible reappraisal of colonial history, for new memorial sites and for a historically conscious design of public space—for example through a remembrance trail marking the 1848 March uprisings in Mitte (Märzaufstände). This also includes preserving the Peace Statue in public space in Moabit.

## **10. The district administration as a partner to the people**

➤ **The district administration puts people at the centre – not bureaucratic regulations**

We want an administration that is oriented towards people’s needs. Processes should become simpler, more transparent and more service-oriented. Together with the business community, civil society and experts, we will review existing regulations and reduce unnecessary bureaucracy.

We will significantly shorten processing times—among other things through simplified procedures, clear checklists and transparent performance indicators for administrative processes.

Public buildings should be opened up more to civil society initiatives. The roof of the new town hall in Alt-Mitte will be developed as a place for culture, neighbourhood interaction and civic engagement.

We are expanding civil protection in line with needs and placing a strong emphasis on informing the public. We aim to secure additional funding and provide better support to initiatives when applying for programmes at EU, federal and state level. As an employer, the district administration should stand for good working conditions, modern forms of work and a family-friendly HR policy.

➤ **Digital administration is essential for a future-proof democracy.**

The district administration must become faster and more digital. We are strengthening digitalisation, ensuring accessible online services and advancing digital record-keeping. Free Wi-Fi in town halls and citizens’ offices (Bürgerämter), as well as modern communication channels, will make access to administrative services easier.

➤ **In Mitte, being close to the people means multilingualism**

An administration for all requires linguistic accessibility. Information and key forms should be available at least in English. Multilingual services and pilot projects such as English-speaking service counters in citizens’ offices (Bürgerämter) will make access easier for international residents.

## **11. Diversity and participation strengthen the community and democracy**

➤ **Different backgrounds, cultures, religions and ways of life are an enrichment. We take a firm stand against hate-motivated violence**

We promote encounter, dialogue and participation so that trust and cohesion can grow. Equal

participation requires open participation structures and a discrimination-sensitive approach. This also includes regular, secularly guided cooperation with religious communities in the field of social work. We are strengthening prevention and advisory services as well as registers and reporting centres for discrimination. We will continue the district's Participation and Integration Award and introduce an additional award against discrimination. We will further expand anti-discrimination structures and strengthen queer infrastructure in the district. Berlin-Mitte must remain a safe place for queer people. We take a firm stand against antisemitism, anti-Muslim racism and all forms of hostility towards others, and promote dialogue and cooperation between religious and civil society actors.

#### ➤ **Mitte remains a safe haven for refugees**

We are committed to promoting integration and participation from the outset and to consistently implementing the Participation and Migration Act. We will continue to recognise the commitment of initiatives and individuals through the district's Participation and Integration Award and complement it with an award against discrimination.

#### ➤ **International conflicts also affect our district**

Many people in Mitte have family ties to regions affected by global crises. We stand in solidarity with those affected, promote dialogue between communities and advocate for democracy, human rights and respect for international law.

In the Middle East conflict, we recognise the suffering of all civilians without relativising violence. We take seriously the grief and concern of Jewish people, Israelis, Palestinians and Muslims, and support commemorating 7 October for the victims of Hamas terror in Israel and 8 October for Palestinian civilians who have been killed.

We condemn Russia's unprovoked war of aggression against Ukraine, in violation of international law, and the targeted attacks on the Ukrainian civilian population.

## **12. Our democracy is strong — it thrives on participation**

We are committed to genuine participation for all residents—regardless of background or nationality. Participation formats will be expanded, made more accessible and designed to be inclusive through multilingual provision. Randomly selected citizens' assemblies will be permanently established in the district so that residents' perspectives are incorporated into political decision-making at an early stage.

Democratic participation requires space and resources. We oppose cuts to democracy projects and instead strengthen political parties and civil society initiatives, including through free access to premises.

#### ➤ **Our democracy is resilient: no space for the far right, no cooperation with the AfD.**

We consistently combat right-wing extremism and strengthen our cooperation with local democratic initiatives.

Responsible for the content: Annika Klose  
SPD Berlin-Mitte District Association  
Müllerstraße 163, 13353 Berlin

