

Section 4 Who do I need to engage with?

1) Elected members

There are 99 elected members (councillors) in the 33 wards across Leeds. They are the democratically elected representatives of their communities. Councillors are based in their constituencies and help to drive our community engagement activities.

Effective community engagement must be focused at all levels - from local councillors acting as elected representatives of local communities through to area management and teams responsible for service delivery.

Include councillors in consultation and engagement activities

It is important to include elected members as part of any consultation or engagement activities because:

- Our Community Engagement Policy specifically refers to councillors being the community engagement 'champion' of their community, so they must be kept up-to-date on any key engagement activities;
- Councillors act as a focal point when representing their communities;
- Citizens or community representatives may like to make their views known to their councillor as well as the service department carrying out the activity - some may even prefer to provide their views directly to their councillor;
- Councillors will understand the strength of feeling about an issue within a community and can make this known; and
- Councillors can feed back information from their communities into any consultation as well.

Keeping councillors informed

We must also make councillors aware of any engagement activities that are planned or about to take place. This is because they may be approached about an issue and need to be briefed on the purpose of the activity and what views are needed from their community.

The councillors that we must keep informed are:

- 1) each relevant councillor for the ward that the activity covers
- 2) the Executive Board member whose portfolio covers the service area

When communicating the outcome of any consultation or engagement activity afterwards, remember to include the relevant councillors. They will also be able to help to communicate the information back to their wider community.

Contacting elected members

To include councillors in consultation and engagement activities;

- find out the relevant ward councillor on the council website (located under 'Council and democracy')
- use the contact information as shown.

See section 8 also for more information and details of the Group Support Offices.