



TODMORDEN TOWN COUNCIL

Community Engagement Policy

Approved by Todmorden Town Council on:

Next Review Due: September 2027

1. Purpose and Commitment

Todmorden Town Council recognises that effective community engagement is vital for good governance, responsive service delivery, and building trust between the Council and the community it serves. We are committed to promoting meaningful participation, open dialogue, and collaboration with all residents, groups, and stakeholders in Todmorden. As part of this commitment, the Town Council aims to support and facilitate activities in the community, helping to foster a vibrant, inclusive, and active local environment.

Through this policy, we aim to ensure that:

- All voices, especially underrepresented and marginalised groups, are heard and valued.
- Decision-making is transparent and informed by the needs and aspirations of the community.
- Residents have opportunities to shape the future of their town through active involvement.
- Facilitate and Support Community activities

2. Policy Objectives

This Community Engagement Policy seeks to:

- Foster strong, two-way communication between the Council and the community.
- Encourage participation in Council activities, services, planning, and decision-making.
- Build partnerships with local organisations, businesses, and community groups.
- Promote inclusivity and accessibility in all engagement practices.
- Strengthen community cohesion, trust, and shared ownership of outcomes.

3. Principles of Community Engagement

Todmorden Town Council will ensure that all community engagement is guided by the following principles:

a. Inclusivity

We will strive to reach all sectors of the community, including underrepresented voices such as young people, older residents, people with disabilities, ethnic minorities, LGBTQ+ individuals, and those facing social or economic disadvantage.

b. Transparency

We will be clear about what decisions are being made, what input is sought, and how community feedback will be used.

c. Respect

We will create safe and respectful environments for all participants, valuing diverse views and experiences.

d. Accessibility

We will ensure that all engagement opportunities are as accessible as possible — physically, digitally, and linguistically.

e. Accountability

We will report back on how community input has influenced decisions and what actions have been taken as a result.

f. Proactivity

We will not wait for feedback but will actively reach out to communities, especially those who may be less likely to engage through traditional channels.

4. Engagement Methods

Todmorden Town Council will use a variety of approaches to suit different circumstances (more details in Appendix 1), including but not limited to:

- **Public consultations and surveys** (online and paper)
- **Public forums, town meetings and workshops**
- **Councillor surgeries and drop-in sessions**
- **Social media and website updates**
- **Community newsletters and noticeboards**
- **Focus groups or targeted listening exercises**
- **Citizen panels or working groups**
- **Partnership working with community groups and voluntary organisations**

We will ensure that methods are flexible and responsive to the preferences and needs of our diverse community.

5. Levels of Participation

We recognise different levels of engagement are appropriate for different decisions and processes. These include:

- **Informing** – providing clear, timely, and accessible information.
- **Consulting** – seeking public feedback on proposals or options.
- **Involving** – working directly with community members to ensure their concerns are understood and considered.
- **Collaborating** – partnering with the public in each aspect of decision-making.

- **Empowering** – supporting communities to lead and influence decisions that affect them.

6. Working with Partners and Stakeholders

The Council will collaborate with:

- Local voluntary, community, and faith groups
- Schools, colleges, and youth organisations
- Calderdale Council and other public service providers
- Local businesses and enterprise networks
- Environmental, cultural, and heritage groups

We recognise that many of these partners are already deeply embedded in the community and have valuable networks and insights.

7. Engaging Young People and Future Generations

We are committed to amplifying the voices of young people in local democracy. The Council will:

- Explore youth panels or advisory groups.
- Work with schools and youth organisations.
- Offer civic education opportunities, such as council open days or shadowing experiences.

8. Digital Engagement

Digital tools are essential for broadening reach and improving convenience. The Council will:

- Maintain an up-to-date and accessible website.
- Use social media to share updates, gather feedback, and foster dialogue.
- Explore interactive platforms for polls, surveys, and virtual town halls.

Digital engagement will complement — not replace — in-person methods, ensuring no one is excluded.

9. Feedback and Evaluation

To build trust and improve future engagement:

- We will clearly communicate the outcomes of consultations and what actions have been taken.
- Engagement activities will be reviewed regularly to assess effectiveness, inclusivity, and impact.
- We will gather feedback from participants on the engagement process itself.

10. Roles and Responsibilities

- **All Councillors** are expected to actively engage with residents and represent community views.
- **The Town Clerk and Council officers** are responsible for facilitating and supporting engagement activities.
- **Residents and stakeholders** are encouraged to take part, contribute ideas, and hold the Council accountable.

11. Policy Review

This Community Engagement Policy will be:

- Reviewed **every three years**, or sooner in response to significant changes in community needs, best practice, or legislation.

- Updated through consultation with the public and stakeholders wherever possible.

Next review due: April 2028

12. Contact

For more information or to get involved in community engagement activities, please contact:

Community Support Officer - Todmorden Town Council

Email: community@todmorden-tc.gov.uk

Appendix 1 - What TTC do to engage with the public

Todmorden Town council engage with the public for consultations in various ways to ensure they gather input and feedback from the community on important issues. Here are the most common methods we use:

1. **Council and Committee Meetings:** TTC hold meetings in public where citizens can attend, listen to discussions, and share their views on different topics. These meetings are advertised in advance and allow for open dialogue between council members and the public on agenda items
2. **Surveys and Questionnaires:** TTC has distribute surveys or questionnaires, both online and in person, to gather opinions from the community. These are focused on specific issues, such as Neighbourhood Plan/ Climate pledge
3. **Online Consultations:** In the digital age, TTC use their websites or social media platforms to run online consultations. This can include interactive forums, comment sections, or dedicated web pages where people can submit feedback on particular issues.
4. **Focus Groups and Workshops:** TTC has invited small groups of residents to participate in focus groups or workshops. These sessions provide an opportunity for more detailed discussions and for council members to gather deeper insights into community concerns.
5. **Newsletters:** TTC has a newsletter that anyone can sign up to, and is used to inform the public about consultations and encourage participation. The materials may include details about upcoming consultations, how to provide feedback, and deadlines as well as activities that TTC are working on
6. **Community Events and Stalls:** TTC have run outreach stalls at the markets and local events to engage directly with residents. These face-to-face interactions allow people to ask questions, offer opinions, and learn about ongoing or upcoming consultations.
7. **Consultation Documents and Reports:** When complex topics or projects are being considered, the Council has produced detailed consultation documents or reports outlining the issue and options available. These were made available in libraries, Todmorden Information Centre, Town Hall or online for the public to review and comment on.
8. **Social Media and Digital Platforms:** TTC use social media platforms like Facebook, X, or Instagram to inform residents about consultations and encourage engagement as well as to inform the residents of Council activities. We may also use interactive tools like polls or live streams to involve the community.

9. **Public Notices and Advertisements:** Legal or formal consultations require public notices to be placed in local newspapers, on notice boards (in 4 Locations), or online. This ensures that the public is aware of the opportunity to participate and this is something TTC does.

10. **Consultation Committees or Panels:** TTC has set up special committees or advisory panels made up of local residents or stakeholders to ensure ongoing engagement with key community representatives on specific issues.