

## WHO ELSE CAN HELP?

You need to think about whom will be best able to help you out and who will be most supportive. You might want to contact more than one person, depending on what you want to achieve.

### **Council officers**

As officers take most administrative decisions, they are often the right people to contact, at least to begin with. Officers can also make recommendations to councillors and a letter or representation from you might be taken into account when the officer advises the councillor.

### **Your local councillors**

Since 2007 Local Government has moved to Multi-member wards so there will be 3 or 4 Councillors representing every area. It is councillors who vote to determine the council's policy so you should definitely contact them if you want to influence policy decisions. Councillors rely on support from the public for their positions, so they have a strong reason for taking your concerns seriously and acting on them.

### **Other councillors**

You are not restricted to only contacting the councillors for your ward. It may be that your issue will be of more interest to someone else on the council, perhaps a councillor from a different political party or on a relevant committee. If you get their support, you have an important ally. There is nothing to stop you from contacting them and you can find out the names of all these figures simply by calling the council or checking their website.

### **MSP – Members of the Scottish Parliament**

If you have established that it is an issue for MSPs then the next question is 'is it a constituency matter?' – ie specific to your local area?

If so, your first port of call will probably be your constituency MSP.

If you feel you need to contact others, eg to get support from different parties, or because you are not satisfied with the response of the constituency MSP, you also have 7 local MSPs that represent you at a regional level, due to the additional member system used for Scottish Parliament elections. So with your constituency MSP and the regional (or 'list') MSPs, you have a choice of 8 MSPs who are potentially interested in matters affecting your local area.

### **Non-Government or Voluntary Sector Organisation**

Many local or national network or advocacy organisations are able to offer either practical support or advice and information to community groups or campaigns. They are often also in key positions to influence policy and political decisions.

