

Article 3 – Citizens and the Council

3.01 Citizens' rights

Citizens have the following rights. Their rights to information and to participate are explained in more detail in the Access to Information Procedure Rules in Part 4 of this Constitution.

(a) Voting and petitions

Citizens on the electoral roll for the area have the right to vote and sign a petition to request a referendum for an elected mayor form of Constitution.

(b) Information

Citizens have the right to:

- (i) attend meetings of the Council and its committees except where confidential or exempt information is likely to be disclosed, and the meeting is therefore held in private;
- (ii) attend meetings of the Cabinet when key decisions are being considered;
- (iii) find out from the forward plan what key decisions will be taken by the Cabinet and when;
- (iv) see reports and background papers, and any records of decisions made by the Council and the Cabinet except where confidential or exempt information could be disclosed; and
- (v) inspect the Council's accounts and make their views known to the external auditor.

(c) Participation

Citizens have the right to participate and to contribute to investigations by Overview and Scrutiny Committees.

(d) Complaints

Citizens have the right to complain to:

- (i) the Council itself under its complaints scheme;
- (ii) the Local Government Ombudsman after using the Council's own complaints scheme; (The Ombudsman requires complainants to have first raised their complaint with the Council and given the Council a chance to respond. Normally the Ombudsman will allow about 12 weeks for a

response but may get involved earlier if there are extenuating circumstances).

- (iii) the Council's Monitoring Officer Legal and Democratic Services Manager about a breach of the Councillor's Code of Conduct.

3.02 Citizens' responsibilities

Citizens must not be violent, abusing or threatening to councillors or officers and must not wilfully harm the property of the Council, councillors or officers.