

## 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 considered and where the meeting is therefore held in private;
  - (ii) Attend meetings of the Cabinet except where confidential or exempt information is likely to be disclosed, and the meeting is therefore held in private;
  - (iii) Establish from the Forward Plan what key decisions will be taken by the Cabinet and when;
  - (iv) See reports and background papers, and any record of decisions made by the Council and the Cabinet (except in relation to confidential or exempt business);
  - (v) Inspect the Council’s accounts and complain or make representations to the Council’s external auditors.
- c) Participation – citizens have the right to present petitions at Full Council and address the meeting in line with the Council’s petition scheme. There is also a public participation process which operates immediately after the start of Cabinet and Committee meetings. At the invitation of the Chairperson, citizens may also address any meeting of Cabinet, a Committee (including a Scrutiny Committee) or Sub-Committee. Special procedures for public representations apply at the Development Management and Licensing Committees.
- d) Complaints – citizens have the right to complain to:
  - (i) The Council itself under its complaints scheme;
  - (ii) The Ombudsman, after exhausting the Council’s own complaints scheme;
  - (iii) The Audit and Governance Committee or the Monitoring Officer about a breach of the Councillors Code of Conduct.

### 3.02 Citizens Obligations

Citizens must not be violent, abusive, or threatening to Councillors or Officers and must not wilfully harm things owned by the Council, Councillors or Officers. When attending meetings citizens will be expected to comply with the decision of the Chairperson of that meeting.