

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 Rules in Part 4 of this Constitution.

- (a) **Voting and petitions.** Citizens on the electoral register for the area have the right to vote and sign a petition to request a referendum for an elected mayor form of Constitution in accordance with the timetable as prescribed under legislation.
- (b) **Information.** Citizens have the right to:
 - (i) attend meetings of the Council, the Cabinet, Cabinet Members and committees except where confidential or exempt information is likely to be disclosed, and the meeting is therefore held in private;
 - (ii) find out from the forward plan what key decisions will be taken by the Leader and Cabinet and when;
 - (iii) see reports and background papers, and any records of decisions made by the Council and the Leader and Cabinet; and
 - (iv) inspect the Council's accounts and make their views known to the external auditor.
- (c) **Participation.** Citizens have the opportunity to participate in the Council's question time and contribute to investigations by overview and scrutiny committees if asked to do so.
- (d) **Complaints.** Citizens have the right to complain to:
 - (i) the Council itself under its complaints procedure;
 - (ii) the Local Government Ombudsman after using the Council's own complaints procedure;
 - (iii) the Standards Committee about a breach of the Council's Code of Conduct.

3.02 Citizens' responsibilities

Citizens must not be violent, abusive or threatening to councillors or officers or the Council's contractors and those acting on the Council's behalf and must not wilfully harm things owned by the council, councillors or officers or its contractors or those working on its behalf. The Council will take all reasonable and proportionate action within its power in pursuance of this provision to secure the legitimate interests of those involved.