

PART 2

Article 3 - Citizens and the Council

3.1 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.

- (i) **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.
- (ii) **Information** - Citizens have the right to:
 - (a) attend meetings of the Council, Cabinet and its Committees, except where confidential or exempt information is likely to be disclosed and the meeting is therefore held in private;
 - (b) find out from the Forward Plan what key decisions will be taken by the Cabinet and when;
 - (c) see reports and background papers, and any records of decisions made by the Council and the Cabinet; and
 - (d) inspect the Council's accounts and make their views known to the external auditor.
- (iii) **Participation** - Citizens have the right to participate in the Council's question time and contribute to investigations by Overview and Scrutiny Committees. Citizens have the right to submit petitions to Councillors or officers about matters that are of local concern.
- (iv) **Complaints** - Citizens have the right to complain to:
 - (a) the Council itself under its complaints scheme;
 - (b) the Ombudsman after using the Council's own complaints scheme;
 - (c) the Monitoring Officer about a breach of the Councillors' Code of Conduct.

3.2 **Citizens' responsibilities**

- (i) 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.
- (ii) Citizens are legally required to register to vote and actively encouraged to exercise their vote as part of their commitment to citizenship and local democracy.