

3. ARTICLE 3 - CITIZENS AND THE COUNCIL

3.1 Citizens' Rights

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

3.1.1 Voting and Petitions

Citizens on the electoral register for the area have the right to:

- (i) vote if they are eligible to do so;
- (ii) sign a petition to request a referendum for an Elected Mayor form of Constitution; and
- (iii) sign and present any other petition they wish to support.

3.1.2 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) see agendas, reports and background papers, and any records of decisions made by the Council except where confidential or exempt information is likely to be disclosed;
- (iii) inspect the Council's accounts and make their views known to the external auditor;
- (iv) obtain a copy of this Constitution;
- (v) ask questions at Council and Committee meetings on matters relevant to the agenda; and
- (vi) speak at meetings of the Development Control Committee and Licensing and Regulatory Committee (or its Sub-Committees) in favour of or against planning or licensing applications, subject to any procedures laid down by those bodies in Part 4 of this Constitution; and
- (vii) such other information as they may be entitled to by law.

3.1.3 Complaint

Citizens have the right to complain to:

- (i) the Council itself under its complaints procedure;
- (ii) The Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman after using the Council's own complaints procedure; or
- (iii) The Policy, Finance and Development Committee via the Monitoring Officer about a breach of the Councillor's Code of Conduct.

3.1.4 Citizens' Responsibilities

- (i) Citizens must not harass or be violent, abusive or threatening towards Councillors or Officers and must not wilfully harm things owned by the Council, Councillors or Officers; and
- (ii) When attending meetings, citizens must not act in a disorderly or improper, offensive or disruptive manner or otherwise interrupt or interfere with the proper conduct of the business of the meeting. If they do so, they will be removed and excluded from the meeting.