

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 Council Procedure Rules in Part 3 and Access to Information 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 executive when key decisions are being considered;
 - (iii) find out from the forward plan what key decisions will be taken by the executive and when;
 - (iv) see reports and background papers, and any records of decisions made by the Council and the executive; and
 - (v) inspect the Council's accounts and make their views known to the external auditor.
- (c) **Treatment.** Citizens have the right to:
 - (i) be treated equally with understanding and respect;
 - (ii) have equal opportunity with other citizens; and
 - (iii) receive quality services provided to Best Value principles.
- (d) **Participation.** Citizens have the right to contribute to investigations by overview and scrutiny commissions.
- (e) **Complaints.** Citizens have the right to complain to:
 - (i) the Council itself under its complaints scheme;
 - (ii) the Ombudsman after using the Council's own complaints scheme;
 - (iii) the Standards Board for England 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 or recklessly harm things owned by the Council, councillors or officers.