

Article 3 – Citizens and the Council

3.01 Citizens' rights

Citizens have a number of rights. The following list is a general summary of rights in terms of information, the opportunity to participate and the ability to make complaints.

- (a) (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) **Petition scheme.** Citizens who live, work or study in the authority's area and are concerned about a Council service or a decision that is about to be made, may send the Council a petition which shall be considered and responded to in accordance with the Petition Scheme as outlined in the Public Participation and Engagement Rules set out in this 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) See agendas, reports and background papers, except where confidential or exempt information is likely to be disclosed , and any records of decisions made by the Council and the executive; and
 - (iii) 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) **Public Engagement.** Citizens have the right to ask questions, receive answers and make comments at committee meetings in accordance with the Public Participation Rules in Part 4 and make representations at Residents' Forums
- (e) **Complaints.** Citizens have the right to complain to¹:
 - (i) The Council itself under its complaints scheme;
 - (ii) The Local Government Ombudsman (after using the Council's own complaints scheme);
 - (iii) The Monitoring Officer about a breach of the Members Code of Conduct.

¹ In addition citizens have the right to raise issues with their local councillors outside of the formal complaints process.