

Article 3 – Citizens and the Council

3.01 Citizens' rights

Citizens have the following rights:

~~Councils have a duty to treat citizens equally under the Constitution. 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. Citizens have a number of rights and responsibilities. The following list is a general summary of rights in terms of information, the opportunity to participate and the ability to make complaints.~~

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- (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) Attend meetings of the Executive when key decisions are being considered except where confidential or exempt information is likely to be disclosed, and the meeting is therefore held in private;~~
- ~~(iii) Find out from the Advanced Notice of Proposed Decisions Under Executive Functions what key decisions and decisions subject to exempt information will be taken by the Executive and when;~~
- ~~(iv)~~ 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
- ~~(viii)~~ 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 34, and make representations at Residents' Forums and contribute to investigations initiated by Overview and Scrutiny Committees (such as Panels or Task and Finish Groups).

- (e) **Complaints.** Citizens have the right to complain to:
- (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.