

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 Access to Information Rules in Part 4 of this Constitution:

- (a) **Voting and Petitions.** Citizens have the right to present a petition, in accordance with the Council's adopted petition scheme and to address members in support. This is however subject to the Rules of Procedure in Part 4 of this Constitution and the petition scheme. A copy of the petition scheme is available on the Council's website.
- (b) **Information.** Citizens have the right to:
 - (i) attend meetings of the Council, monitoring bodies, boards and committees except where confidential or exempt information is likely to be disclosed;
 - (ii) attend meetings of the Cabinet when decisions are being considered;
 - (iii) find out from the Executive Decision Notice what decisions will be taken when and by whom;
 - (iv) see reports and background papers, and any records of decisions made by the Council, Cabinet and officers;
 - (v) speak at meetings of the Planning Committee or the Licensing Committee in favour of or against planning or licensing applications, subject to the procedures laid down by those bodies; and
 - (vi) inspect the Council's accounts and make their views known to the External Auditor.
- (c) **Participation.** Citizens have the right to participate in the Council's question time and that of the Scrutiny Committees and contribute to investigations by those committees.
- (d) **Complaints.** Citizens have the right to complain to:
 - (i) the Council under its complaints scheme;
 - (ii) the Ombudsman after using the Council's own complaints scheme;
 - (iii) the Monitoring Officer about a breach of the Council's Code of Conduct for Members.

3.02 Citizens' Responsibilities

- (a) Citizens must not be violent, abusive or threatening to councillors or officers and must not wilfully damage things owned by the Council, councillors or officers.
- (b) When attending meetings citizens must not behave improperly, offensively or interrupt the business of the meeting. If they do, they will be removed and excluded from the meeting.