

## Article 3 – Citizens and the Council

### 3.01 Citizens' rights

Citizens have the following rights. Their rights to information and to attend and participate at meetings are explained in more detail in the Access to Information Rules in Part 4 of this Constitution and the Public Participation Scheme in Appendix 1:

- (a) **Voting and petitions.** Citizens on the electoral roll for the area have the right to:
  - sign a petition to request a referendum for an elected mayor form of constitution;
  - vote in any such referendum;
  - vote in any local elections.
  
- (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 reports and background papers (except where these contain confidential or exempt information) and any records of decisions made by the Council and its Committees;
  - (iii) inspect and obtain a copy of the Council's Code of Conduct and inspect the Register of Members' Interests;
  - (iv) inspect the Council's accounts and make their views known to the external auditor.
  
- (c) **Participation.** Citizens have the right to take part in any of the public participation sessions at the start of Council meetings and meetings of Executive Committee, Planning Committee (although not relating to individual planning applications or specific proposals in the Local Plan), Area Development Control Committees, Overview and Scrutiny Committee, Standards Committee and Audit Committee, in accordance with the Council's Public Participation Scheme set out in Appendix 1 to this Constitution. Citizens may also be invited to contribute to investigations by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee or any of Task and Finish Groups.
  
- (d) **Complaints.** Citizens have the right to complain to:
  - (i) the Council itself under its complaints scheme;
  - (ii) the Ombudsman about maladministration, after first 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, abusive or threatening to Councillors or officers and must not wilfully harm things owned by the Council, Councillors or officers.