

## **ARTICLE 3 – CITIZENS AND THE COUNCIL**

### **3.1 Citizens' Rights**

Citizens have the following rights. Their rights to information and to participate are explained in more detail in part 3 of this constitution.

#### **(a) Voting and Petitions**

Citizens on the electoral roll for the area have the right to vote. They may also sign a petition to request a referendum for an elected mayor form of constitution.

Citizens may also present petitions to certain member bodies. The arrangements for receipt of petitions are set out in Part 3 Section 1: Standing Orders.

#### **(b) Information**

Citizens have the right to:

- i. attend meetings of the council, the cabinet, and any committees and leader and portfolio holder decision-making sessions except where confidential or exempt information is likely to be disclosed, and the meeting is therefore held in private;
- ii. find out from the forward plan what key decisions will be taken by the executive or officers and when;
- iii. see reports and background papers, and any records of decisions made by the council, its committees and the executive which are open to the public; and
- iv. inspect the council's accounts during the audit process and make their views known to the external auditor.

#### **(c) Participation**

Citizens have the right to participate in public interest debates, public question time where provided for in standing orders and, where appropriate, in the investigations by overview and scrutiny committees.

#### **(d) Complaints**

Citizens have the right to complain to:

- i. the council itself under its complaints procedure;
- ii. the Ombudsman after using the council's own complaints procedure; and
- iii. the Monitoring Officer of the council about a breach of the Members' Code of Conduct.

### **3.2 Citizens' Responsibilities**

Citizens must not be violent, abusive or threatening to councillors or officers and must not damage property owned by the council, councillors or officers.