

Article 3 – Members of the Public and The Council

3.01 Members of the public's rights

Members of the public 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.** Residents on the electoral roll for the area have the right to vote.
- (b) **Information.** Members of the public have the right to:
 - (i) attend meetings of the Council and its Committees/Sub-Committees except where confidential or exempt information is likely to be disclosed, and the meeting is therefore held in private;
 - (ii) attend all meetings of the Executive, except where confidential or exempt information is likely to be disclosed;
 - (iii) find out from the Forward Plan what Key Decisions will be taken by the Executive and when;
 - (iv) see reports and background papers, and any records of decisions made by the Council and the Executive; and
 - (v) inspect the Council's accounts and make their views known to the external auditor.

They will also have rights under the Freedom of Information Act 2000, the provisions of which applied to local authorities from December 2002.

(c) **Participation.** Members of the public have the right to participate in the Council's question time, speak at meetings of the Executive and Overview & Scrutiny and other Committees, and contribute to investigations by Overview and Scrutiny Committees.

- (d) **Complaints.** Members of the public have the right to complain to:
 - (i) the Council itself under its complaints scheme (or the separate Social Services procedure);
 - (ii) the Ombudsman (who will only investigate after the Council's own complaints procedure has been exhausted);
 - (iii) the Standards Board for England about a breach of the Members' Code of Conduct.

(e) **Petitions.** Residents 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.

3.02 Citizens' responsibilities

Members of the public must not be violent, abusive or threatening to Councillors or staff and must not wilfully harm property owned by the Council, Councillors or staff.