

## 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 the Access to Information Rules in Part 4 of this Constitution:

- (a) **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.
- (b) **Information.** Citizens have the right to:
  - (i) attend meetings of the Council and its scrutiny panels and 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 Cabinet except where confidential or exempt information is likely to be disclosed and the meeting is therefore held in private;
  - (iii) find out from the forward plan what key decisions will be taken by the Cabinet and when;
  - (iv) see reports and background papers, except those which are confidential or exempt, and any records of decisions made by the Council and the Cabinet;
  - (v) inspect the Council's accounts and make their views known to the external auditor; and
  - (vi) access information in accordance with the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act.
- (c) **Participation.** Citizens have the right to participate in the Council's area forums (where established) and to speak at meetings with permission.
- (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;
  - (iii) the Standards Board for England about a breach of the Councillor's Code of Conduct.

### **3.2 Citizens' responsibilities**

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