

Article 3 – Citizens and the Council

3.01 Citizens' rights

The Council welcomes participation by its citizens in its work.

Citizens have a number of rights as part of their engagement with the Council:

- vote at local elections (if they are registered);
- contact their local ward Councillor about any matters of concern to them. Councillor details can be found on the [Council's website](#);
- attend all public meetings of the Council and committees (except where confidential or exempt items are being discussed);
- to view and identify from the Executive's Forward Plan what key decisions will be taken by the Executive and when;
- to attend meetings of the Executive where key decisions are being discussed or decided;
- to see reports and background papers, and any record of decisions made by the Council and Executive (excluding confidential or 'exempt' information);
- to inspect the Council's accounts and make their views known to the external auditor;
- request information and to view a copy of the Constitution;
- to petition a request for a referendum on moving to an Elected Mayor and Cabinet form of governance;
- to ask questions at all meetings of the Council, Executive and at Scrutiny Committees, with the exception of Annual Council and Special meetings subject to giving notice to the Council. See [Details on public speaking](#) for more information;
- to speak at Planning Committee in support of or in opposition to a planning application being considered by that Committee subject to the agreed procedure. See [Details on speaking at Planning Committee](#) for more information;
- to use the Council's complaints procedure if they are unhappy about an aspect of the Council's service;
- to complain to the Ombudsman if they believe the Council has not followed its procedures properly (but only after using the Council's complaints process); and
- to complain to the Council's Monitoring Officer if there is evidence that a Councillor has not followed the Council's Member Code of Conduct.

Citizens' rights to information and participation are explained in more detail in the Access to Information Rules in Chapter 3 of this Constitution

Additional rights for members of the public using specific Council services e.g. council tenants, are not covered in this Constitution.

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.