

## 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 Procedure Rules in Part 4 of this Constitution:

- **Voting and Statutory 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.

- **Information**

Citizens have the right<sup>1</sup> to:

- (i) attend meetings of the Council and its Boards/Panels;
- (ii) attend meetings of the Executive when Key Decisions are being considered;
- (iii) find out from the List of Forthcoming Key Decisions 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;
- (v) inspect the Council's accounts and make their views known to the external auditor;
- (vi) Make a request for information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000; and
- (vii) inspect the Members' Register of Interest available on the Council's website.

- **Participation**

Citizens have the right to submit deputations to Community Committees and full Council, and petition the Council. They may be asked to contribute to investigations by Scrutiny Boards.

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<sup>1</sup> The rights set out in this article are subject to the Executive and Decision Making Procedure Rules and the Access to Information Procedure Rules, but in addition to a citizen's other private rights. An individual's private rights include the right to make a subject access request under the Data Protection Act 1998 to obtain details from the Council of the information the Council holds in relation to them.

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### • **Complaints.**

Citizens have the right to complain:

- (i) to the Council itself under its complaints scheme;
- (ii) to the Local Government Ombudsman<sup>2</sup> after using the Council's own complaints scheme; and/or
- (iii) about breaches to the Members' Code of Conduct, in accordance with the procedure set out in Part 5 of this constitution.

### **3.2 CITIZENS' RESPONSIBILITIES**

Citizens must not be violent, abusing or threatening to Councillors or officers and must not wilfully harm things owned by the Council, Councillors or officers.

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<sup>2</sup> Or through a designated person, to the Housing Ombudsman in relation to social housing matters