

CHAPTER 3 - CITIZENS

A CITIZENS AND THE COUNCIL

CITIZENS' RIGHTS

- 1 Citizens have the following rights. Their rights to information and to participate are explained in more detail in the Access to Information Rules in Chapter 12 of this Constitution.

voting and petitions: Citizens on the electoral register, who are entitled to vote as electors at the election of councillors for an electoral area which is situated within the area of the Local Authority concerned may vote as electors at an election for the return of an elected mayor under the Local Government Act 2000 as amended. If there are 3 or more candidates, vote is limited to one first preference vote and one second preference vote. Citizens can also still petition, but whether that petition will result in a referendum will depend on the provisions in force at the time of the petition (these are provided by statutory instruments).

- a) **information:** citizens have the right to:
 - (i) attend meetings of the Council, its Committees and the Cabinet except where confidential or exempt information is likely to be disclosed and the meeting (or part of it) is therefore held in private;
 - (ii) find out from the Forward Plan what key decisions will be taken by the executive and when;
 - (iii) see reports and background papers, and any records of decisions made by the Council and the Cabinet; and
 - (iv) inspect the Council's accounts and make their views known to the external auditor.
- c) **participation:** citizens may participate in question time at Council and Area Committee meetings, make representations to the Cabinet, a Cabinet Member or a Committee and may be asked to contribute to investigations by Overview and Scrutiny Committees.
- d) **complaints:** citizens have the right to complain to:
 - (i) the Council itself under its complaints scheme;
 - (ii) the Ombudsman after using the Council's own complaints scheme;
 - (iii) the Monitoring Officer about a breach of the Member's Code of Conduct.

CITIZENS' RESPONSIBILITIES

- 2 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.
- 3 Citizens on the electoral roll should exercise their voting rights.

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