

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) **Right to petition in accordance with the Council's petition scheme.**
- (c) **Information.** Citizens have the right to:
 - (i) attend meetings of the Council, the Cabinet and its committees as observers except where confidential or exempt information is likely to be disclosed, and the meeting is therefore held in private; (Where these meetings are physical meetings citizens will have the right to attend the meeting venue; where they are virtual they can observe the webcast (if provided) and where hybrid they will be entitled to attend the meeting venue or observe the webcast, as they choose). The Council will decide if the meetings are to be physical presence, virtual or a hybrid of both
 - (ii) participate in the Council's question time. The public provided they are residents of the County, own a business located within the County or are employed within the County may ask questions of members of the Cabinet at ordinary meetings of the Council. present petitions and participate in the way in which the Council operates in accordance with the rules set out in Part 4 of this Constitution.
 - (iii) find out from the forward work programme what decisions will be taken by the Cabinet or Council and which issues the Scrutiny Committees will be considering, and when these matters will be discussed;
 - (iv) see reports and background papers, and any records of decisions made by the Council and the Cabinet; and
 - (v) inspect the Council's accounts and make their views known to the external auditor.

- (d) **Participation.** Citizens have the right to participate in the Council's decision making in accordance with the Council's Participation Strategy and Part 4 of this Constitution. Where these meetings are physical meetings citizens will have the right to attend the meeting venue; where the meetings are virtual citizens will be admitted to the meeting online to ask their question, present their petition or participate (via Video conference or teleconference) and where hybrid they will be entitled to attend the meeting venue or be admitted virtually, as they choose).
- (e) **Complaints.** Citizens have the right to complain :
 - (i) to the Council itself under its complaints scheme;
 - (ii) to the Ombudsman about any injustice they consider they have suffered as a result of maladministration, but they are encouraged to use the Council's own complaints scheme first;
 - (iii) to the Ombudsman where they believe a member or co-opted member of the council has breached the Member's Code of Conduct.

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.