

## ARTICLE 3 - CITIZENS AND THE COUNCIL

### 3.01 Citizens' rights

Citizens have the following rights. Their rights to information and to participate are explained in more detail in the Access to Information Procedure 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. People living, working or studying in the Borough may organise or sign petitions in accordance with the Council's Petition Scheme. A copy of the Scheme can be found in Part 4 of this Constitution.
- (b) **Information.** Citizens have the right to:
  - (i) attend meetings of the Council, the Cabinet and committees except where confidential or exempt information is likely to be disclosed, and the meeting is therefore held in private;
  - (ii) find out from the forward plan what key decisions will be taken by the Cabinet 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 have the right to ask questions at meetings of the Cabinet or committees and to speak at meetings of the Plans Committee, provided that they have followed the proper procedures as set out in Council Procedure Rules 39 and 43.
- (d) **Complaints.** Citizens have the right to complain to:
  - (i) the Council itself under its complaints scheme;
  - (ii) the Local Government Ombudsman after using the Council's own complaints scheme;
  - (iii) the Standards Committee about a breach of the Members' Code of Conduct.

### 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.