

Article 3 – Citizens and the Council

3.01 Citizens' rights

The Council has adopted a Public Participation Protocol. Citizens' rights to information and to participate are explained in the Access to Information Rules in Part 4 of this Constitution. Broadly speaking, they are as follows:

- (a) **Information.** Citizens have the right to:
 - (i) attend meetings of the Council and its committees except where confidential or exempt information is likely to be disclosed, and that part of the meeting is therefore held in private;
 - (ii) attend meetings of the District Executive;
 - (iii) find out from the Executive Forward Plan what key decisions will be taken by the District Executive and when;
 - (iv) see reports and background papers, and any records of decisions made by the Council and the District Executive; and
 - (v) inspect the Council's accounts and make their views known to the external auditor.
- (b) **Participation.** Citizens have the right to participate in the question time of meetings of the Council, of District Executive and of area committees. They may contribute to policy reviews, as appropriate.
- (c) **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 Councillors' Code of Conduct (set out in Part 5).
- (d) **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. The Council has also adopted a Petition Scheme, which is set out in Part 8