

## **ARTICLE 3 – THE PUBLIC AND THE COUNCIL**

### **3.1 Public rights**

3.1.1 Members of the public have the following rights –

#### **Voting and petitions**

3.1.2 People 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**

3.1.3 Members of the public and the media have the right to -

- (i) attend meetings of the Council, the Cabinet and Committees except where confidential information 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, the Cabinet and Committees except where confidential information or exempt information is likely to be disclosed; and,
- (iv) inspect the Council's accounts and make their views known to the external auditor.
- (v) obtain a copy of the Constitution.

3.1.4 Public rights to information are explained in more detail in the Access to Information Procedure Rules in Appendix 7 of this Constitution:

#### **Participation**

3.1.5 The rights of the public to speak and ask questions at meetings, and also to present petitions to Council, are explained in more detail in the Council and Committee Procedure Rules (Appendix 1) and Cabinet Procedure Rules (Appendix 5).

#### **Complaints**

3.1.6 Members of the public 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 Members' Code of Conduct.

### **Citizens' responsibilities**

- 3.1.7 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. Any one causing a disturbance at a meeting will be removed from that meeting.