

Article 3 – Members of the Public and the Council

This article explains what rights members of the public have to take part in decision making by the Council and also what they must do in return.

3.1 The Public's Rights

(a) Petitions

Under the *Council Procedure Rules*, members of the public have the right to sign and present a *Petition* to the *Council* in accordance with the Council's Petition Scheme.

They also have a right to start and sign a petition calling for a referendum on Mayoral executive arrangements.

(b) Elections and Referenda

The public has a right to take part in European, Parliamentary, Police Commissioner and local elections and referenda.

(c) Information

Under the *Access to Information Rules*, members of the public have the right to:

- (i) attend public parts of meetings of the *Council Meeting*, the *Cabinet* and committees;
- (ii) find out what *Key Decisions* will be taken by the *Cabinet* and when;
- (iii) see public reports and background papers, and any records of decisions made by the *Council Meeting*, the *Cabinet*, individual officers under delegated powers and committees;
- (iv) inspect the Council's accounts and make their views known to the external auditor.

(d) Taking part

Members of the public have the right to take part in meetings of the *Council*, speak during public speaking time at meetings of the *Planning Committee* and contribute to investigations by *Scrutiny Committees* where asked to do so .

(e) Complaints

Members of the public have the right to complain to:

- (i) the Council under its complaints scheme;
- (ii) the *Ombudsman* after using the Council's own complaints scheme;
- (iii) the Council's *Monitoring Officer* about a breach of the *Code of Conduct*

3.2 The Public's Responsibilities

- (a) Members of the public must not be violent, abusive or threatening to *Councillors* or *Officers* and must not deliberately damage items owned by the Council, *Councillors* or *Officers*.
- (b) When attending meetings members of the public must not behave improperly, be offensive or interrupt the business of the meeting. If they do, they will be removed and excluded from the meeting.