

## **PART 2 – ARTICLES OF THE CONSTITUTION**

### **Article 3 – Citizens and The Council**

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#### **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 Procedure Rules set out in Part 4 of this Constitution.

##### **(a) Voting and Petitions**

- (i) Citizens aged over 16 years and on the register of local government electors for the area are entitled to vote in local government elections for their area.
- (ii) Citizens can seek to raise a matter with the Council by submitting a petition in accordance with the Council's petition scheme.
- (iii) Citizens on the electoral roll for the area have the right to sign a petition to request a referendum for an 'elected mayor' form of Constitution and the right to vote in any such referendum.

##### **(b) Information**

Citizens have the right to:

- (i) attend meetings of the Council, its Committees and the Cabinet except those parts of meetings where confidential information or exempt information is likely to be disclosed, and that business is conducted in private;
- (ii) see reports and background papers of meetings held in public, and any records of decisions made by the Council, the Cabinet and designated senior officers; and
- (iii) inspect the Council's accounts and make their views known to the external auditor.

##### **(c) Participation**

- (i) Citizens have the right to contribute to investigations by Scrutiny Committees in accordance with the Scrutiny Procedure Rules, as set out in Part 4 of this Constitution;
- (ii) ask questions at meetings of the Council, of members of the Cabinet or the Chairperson of a Committee.

##### **(d) Complaints**

Citizens have the right to complain to:

- (i) the authority itself under its Complaint Policy;
- (ii) the Ombudsman about any injustice they have suffered as a result of maladministration, but they are encouraged to use the Council's own Complaint Policy first;
- (iii) the Ombudsman where they believe a Councillor or co-opted member of the Authority has breached the Member's Code of Conduct

### **3.2 Citizens' responsibilities**

Citizens must not be violent, abusing or threatening to Councillors or employees and must not wilfully harm things owned by the Authority, Councillors or employees.