

ARTICLE 3 – THE PUBLIC AND THE COUNCIL

Public Rights

1. The public have the following rights.

(a) Voting and Petitions

Any person entitled to vote in local authority elections for the District shall have the right to vote and sign a petition to request a referendum for an elected mayor form of Constitution.

(b) Information

The rights of the public to access information are set out in Article 17. Additionally, the public may:

- (i) attend meetings of the Council and its committees except where confidential or exempt information is likely to be disclosed, and the meeting is therefore held in private;
- (ii) attend meetings of the Executive (Cabinet or Cabinet Committee meetings) except where confidential or exempt information is likely to be disclosed, and the meeting is therefore held in private;
- (iii) find out from the forward plan what key decisions will be taken by the executive and when;
- (iv) see reports and background papers, and any records of decisions made by the Council and the executive; and
- (v) inspect the Council's accounts and make their views known to the external auditor.

(c) Participation

The public have the right to participate in the Council's and the Cabinet's question time and contribute to investigations when invited by the Overview and Scrutiny Committees.

The public will also have the right to attend and address meetings of the Housing Appeals and Review Panel (on matters personal to them) and as applicant (or as an objector in accordance with the Council's policy) for planning consent at an Area Plans Sub-Committee, the District Development Management Committee or for any purpose agreed by the Council at a meeting of the full Council.

(d) Complaints

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; and

(iii) the Council's Monitoring Officer about a breach of the Councillors' Code of Conduct.

Public Responsibilities

2. The public must not be violent, abusive or threatening to councillors or officers and must not wilfully damage property owned by the Council, councillors or officers. Any such behaviour may result in the applications of sanctions in accordance with its complainants policy or legal proceedings.