

9 Rights of Members of the Public

Members of the public, service users and residents have a number of rights in their dealings with the Council. Some of these are legal rights, whilst others depend on the Council's own processes.

Where members of the public use specific Council services, for example as a Council tenant, they have additional rights. These are not covered in the Constitution.

Public Rights

Members of the public have the right to:

- a) vote at local elections if they are registered on the electoral roll;
- b) stand for election as a Councillor if they live or work in the Council's area, in line with guidance from The Electoral Commission;
- c) present Petitions in accordance with the Council's rules;
- d) contact their local Councillors about any matters of concern to them relating to the functions of the Council;
- e) respond to any consultations which the Council issues

Access to information

Members of the public can access information in the following ways:

- a) attending meetings of the Council, Cabinet or Committees except that part of the meeting where confidential or exempt information is likely to be disclosed and therefore needs to be in private;
- b) seeing up coming Key Decisions in Cabinet forward plan of decisions;
- c) seeing reports and background papers, and any records of decisions made by the Council, Cabinet and Committees; and
- d) inspecting the Council's accounts and make their views know to the External Auditor.

Public Participation

Members of the public can (in accordance with the Procedure Rules set out in **Part 3**) participate in meetings of the Council in the following ways:

- a) Addressing meetings of **Full Council** to ask [questions](#), where prior notice is given.
- b) Addressing meetings of **Cabinet** to ask [questions](#), where prior notice is given.
- c) At Planning Committee in accordance with the Committee's rules on [public speaking](#) in the **Councillors' Planning Code of Conduct**.
- d) [Making representations to the Licensing Committee](#) as applicants or objectors in respect of individual applications; and speaking at Licensing Committee meetings on certain items in accordance with the Committee's rules on public speaking.
- e) [Reporting on the proceedings](#) at all open meetings of the Council by filming, photographing, audio-recording, using social media such as tweeting and blogging, or by any other means, and providing written commentaries during a meeting and oral commentaries outside of a meeting.

Complaints

Anyone can make a complaint to:

- a) The Council under the Council's [Complaints Procedures](#);
- b) The [Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman](#) after first having used the Council's own complaint procedures and given the Council the chance to respond to the complaint;
- c) The Monitoring Officer about an alleged breach of the [Councillor's Code of Conduct](#) in part 4 of this Constitution.

Members of the public must not be violent, abusive or threatening to Councillors or Officers and must not willfully harm things owned by the Council, Councillors or Officers.