Article 3 – Citizens and The Council

3.01 **Citizens' Rights**

Citizens have the following rights. Their right to information and to participate are explained in more detail in the Access to Information Rules in Part 4 of this Constitution:

a) **Voting and petitions.** Citizens 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 and any other issues of significant public concern. The Council's Petition Scheme is contained in Schedule 5.

b) **Information.** Citizens have the right to:

    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 Cabinet when key and other decisions are being considered 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 Cabinet and when;

    iv)   see reports and background papers, and any records of decisions made by the Council, the Cabinet and non-Executive Committees; and

    v)   inspect the Council's accounts and make their views known to the external auditor.

c) **Participation.** Citizens have the right to make representations to the Council directly or through their Ward Member (except where there is a conflict of interest and another member, by agreement, takes on the matter) and contribute to investigations by the Scrutiny Committee, where this is determined by the Committee as part of its enquiries.

d) **Complaints.** Citizens have the right to complain to:

    i)   the Council itself under its Complaints Scheme or the Member Code of Conduct;

    ii)   the Ombudsman

3.02 **Citizens' Responsibilities**

Citizens must not harass or be violent, abusive or threatening to Councillors or officers and must not wilfully harm things owned by the Council, Councillors or officers.