

## **PART 5 - CITIZENS AND THE COUNCIL**

### **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 in Part 4 of this Constitution:

- (a) **Voting and Petitions** - Citizens on the electoral roll for Borough have the right to vote and sign a petition to request a referendum for an elected mayor form of Constitution.
- (b) **Information** - Citizens have the right to:
  - (i) attend meetings of the Council and its Committees, Sub-Committees and Panels 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 and Executive Committees when key 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, or on behalf of, the Executive and when;
  - (iv) see reports and background papers, and any records of decisions made by the Council and the Executive;
  - (v) see reports and background papers, and any records of “Key Decisions” made on behalf of the Executive; and
  - (vi) inspect the Council’s accounts and make their views known to the External Auditor.
- (c) **Participation** - Citizens have the right to participate in the Council’s meetings according to the Council’s Scheme for Public Participation and in any meetings of the Council’s committees which operate a similar scheme, and to contribute to investigations by Scrutiny bodies, where invited.
- (d) **Complaints** - Citizens have the right to complain to:
  - (i) the Council itself under its Complaints’ Scheme;
  - (ii) the Ombudsman, if dissatisfied after using the Council’s own Complaints Scheme;
  - (iii) the Standards Board for England about a breach of the Councillor’s Code of Conduct.

### **Community Representation**

Citizens have the right to contact either their local Member or officers of the Council about any matter of concern to them concerning the functions and responsibilities of the Council.