

Article 3 - Citizens and the Council

Councils and their Constitutions should be outward looking and seek to engage with the public wherever possible. Setting out what citizens can expect from their Council and what rights they have is therefore an important part of the Constitution. However, with rights come responsibilities and it is also the role of the Constitution to show how the Council expects to be treated in return.

1 Citizens' Rights

Citizens have the following rights. Their rights to information and to participate are subject to the general law of Access to Information and/or meetings. There are set out and explained in more detail in the **Access to Information Rules in Part 4** of this Constitution:

2 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. To be a valid petition for a referendum must contain the signatures of 10% of the Council's registered electors.

3 Information

Citizens have the right to:

- a) Make a petition in accordance with the Council's Petition Scheme;
- b) Attend meetings of the Council, it's Committees, the Cabinet and Overview & Scrutiny Boards except where confidential or exempt information is likely to be disclosed, and the meeting is therefore held in private. Where meetings are physical meetings citizens will have the right to attend the meeting venue and where they are virtual they can observe the webcast (where provided) and if hybrid they will be entitled to attend the meeting venue or observe the webcast);
- c) Find out from the Forward Work Programme what decisions will be taken by the Cabinet or the Council meeting, which issues the Overview & Scrutiny Boards will be considering, and when these matters will be discussed;
- d) See reports and background papers, (subject to the Access to Information Rules) and any records of decisions made by the Council and/or the Cabinet; and
- e) Inspect the Council's accounts and make their views known to the external auditor.

4 Participation

Citizens have the right to participate in the Council and Cabinet question times and attend meetings of Overview & Scrutiny Boards (subject to Access to Information Rules).

5 Complaints

Citizens have the right to complain:

- a) To the Council itself under its Complaints Scheme;
- b) To the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales about maladministration after using the Council's own Complaints Scheme;
- c) To the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales where they believe there has been a breach of the Councillor's Code of Conduct;
- d) To the Social Services Complaints Officer where appropriate.