

9. Citizens' rights

Citizens have a number of rights in their dealings with the Council. Some of these are legal rights, while others depend on the Council's own processes. The local Citizens' Advice Bureau can advise on individuals' legal rights.

Citizens have the right to:

- (a) vote at local elections if they are registered
- (b) contact their local councillor about any matters of concern to them
- (c) obtain a copy of the constitution
- (d) attend meetings of the Council and its committees except where, for example, personal or confidential matters are being discussed
- (e) petition to request a referendum on a mayoral form of Executive
- (f) find out, from the Leader's Forward Plan, what major decisions are to be discussed by the Executive or decided by the Executive or staff, and when
- (g) attend meetings of the Executive where key decisions are being discussed or decided except where, for example, personal or confidential matters are being discussed
- (h) see reports and background papers except those containing personal or confidential information, and any record of decisions made by the Council and Executive
- (i) complain to the Council about any aspect of the borough's services using the Council's formal complaints systems
- (j) complain to the Ombudsman if they think the Council has not followed its procedures properly. However, they should do this only after using the Council's own complaints process
- (k) complain to the Monitoring Officer if they have evidence which they think shows that a councillor has not followed the Council's code of conduct, and
- (l) inspect the Council's accounts and make their views known to the external auditor.
- (m) Inspect the Register of Members' Interests

Where members of the public use specific council services, for example as a parent of a school pupil or as a council tenant, they may have additional rights. These are not covered in this constitution.

The Council welcomes participation by its citizens in its work. A statement of the rights of citizens to inspect agendas and reports and attend meetings is available.