

ARTICLE 3 - CITIZENS & THE COUNCIL

Citizens' Rights and Responsibilities

Citizens have the following rights:

1 Voting and Petitions

Citizens on the electoral roll for the area have the right:

- a) to vote at Council elections; and
- b) to sign a petition to request a referendum for a different form of Constitution.

2 Information

Citizens have the right to:

- a) attend meetings of the Council, its Committees and the Executive, except where confidential information (as defined in the Access to Information Procedure Rules contained in Part 5 of the Constitution) is likely to be disclosed, and the meeting, or relevant part, is therefore held in private;
- b) find out from the forward plan what decisions will be taken by the Executive and when;
- c) see reports and background papers (except where these contain confidential information), and any records of decisions made by the Council and the Executive; and
- d) inspect the Council's accounts and make their views known to the external auditor.

3 Participation

Citizens have the right to speak at meetings of the Council, the Executive and Committees (including Scrutiny and Ward Committees) in accordance with the procedures for each of these bodies. Citizens may also respond to consultation exercises organised by the Council, or make their views known by speaking, writing or emailing to a Councillor or member of staff.

4 Comments and Complaints

- 4.1 Citizens have the right to comment on the Council's services and/or its performance. Good performance can be praised; constructive suggestions for improvement are always welcome.
- 4.2 Where citizens feel something has gone wrong they may complain to:
- (a) the Council itself under its complaints procedure;
 - (b) the Local Government Ombudsman after using the Council's own complaints procedure
 - (c) the Joint Standards Committee about a breach of the Code of Conduct for Local Authority Members.
- 4.3 Any citizen who is unsure how to go about making a comment, suggestion or complaint should write to the Chief Executive's office at West Offices, Station Rise, York, YO1 6GA.
- 4.4 Citizens may raise any comments or suggestions in relation to this Constitution by contacting the Council's Monitoring Officer (the Assistant Director Legal and Governance) at West Offices, Station Rise, York, YO1 6GA or with any Councillor.
- 4.5 Citizens' rights to information and to participate are explained in more detail in the Access to Information Rules in Part 5 of this Constitution.

5 Citizens' Responsibilities

The Council values its staff and the work they do on behalf of its citizens. The Council asks that citizens remain polite and patient and are encouraged to use the complaints procedure if upset or aggrieved. The Council will not tolerate violent, abusive or threatening behaviour towards Councillors or staff and any such incidents may be reported to the Police.