

## **ARTICLE 3 - CITIZENS AND THE COUNCIL**

### **1 Citizens' Rights and Responsibilities**

1.1 Citizens' rights are set out below. Rights to access information and participate in Council business are explained in more detail in the Access to Information Rules in Appendix 7 of this Constitution:

### **2 Voting and Petitions**

2.1 Citizens on the electoral roll for the City of York have the right:

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

### **3 Information**

3.1 Citizens have the right to:

- a) attend meetings of the Council, its Committees and the Executive, except where confidential information is likely to be disclosed, and the meeting, or relevant part, is therefore closed to the press and public;
- 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, the Executive and its Committees; and
- d) inspect and object to the Council's accounts and make their views known to the external auditor.

### **4 Participation**

4.1 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. The Public Participation Protocol is detailed at Appendix

8 of this constitution. Citizens may also respond to consultation exercises organised by the Council, or make their views known by speaking, writing to or emailing a Councillor or Officer. Citizens may also participate by the presentation of a petition in line with the Council's Petition Scheme (Appendix 2 of this Constitution).

## **5 Complaints, concerns, comments and compliments**

5.1 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.

5.2 Where citizens feel something has gone wrong they may complain to:

- (a) the Council itself under its complaints procedure;
- (b) the relevant Ombudsman e.g. Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman, Housing Ombudsman Service after using the Council's own complaints procedure
- (c) the Monitoring Officer about a breach of the Member Code of Conduct.

5.3 Any citizen who is unsure how to go about making a complaint, concern, comment or compliment should contact the Corporate Governance Team at [haveyoursay@york.gov.uk](mailto:haveyoursay@york.gov.uk) or phone 01904 554145 or write to Corporate Governance Team West Offices, Station Rise, York, YO1 6GA.

5.4 Citizens may raise any comments or suggestions in relation to this Constitution by contacting the Council's Monitoring Officer (the Director of Governance) at West Offices, Station Rise, York, YO1 6GA or with any Councillor.

5.5 Citizens' rights to information and to participate are explained in more detail in the Access to Information Rules in Appendix 7 of this Constitution.

## **6 Citizens' Responsibilities**

6.1 The Council values its Officers 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 Officers and any such incidents may be reported to the Police, or legal action may be taken by the Council.

## **7 Equal Opportunities**

7.1 The Council values the rich diversity of York's local community and it is committed, through effective dialogue with key interest groups promoting equal opportunities for all, regardless of social, ethnic or economic background and to ensure effective compliance with equal opportunity employment practices within the Council.