3. **ARTICLE 3 – LOCAL PEOPLE AND THE COUNCIL**

3.1 **Rights**

Local people have the following rights. Their rights to information and to participate are explained in more detail in the access to information rules in part 2 of chapter 4 of this Constitution:

(a) **Voting and petitions**

Citizens on the electoral roll for the area have the right to vote, and to sign a petition to request a referendum for an elected mayor form of Constitution.

(b) **Information**

Local people have the right to:

- attend meetings of the Council and its Committees except where confidential or exempt information is likely to be disclosed, and the meeting is therefore held in private;

- attend meetings of the Cabinet when decisions are being considered except where exempt or confidential matters are being discussed;

- find out from the forward plan what decisions will be taken by the Cabinet and when;

- see reports and background papers, and any records of decisions made by the Council, the Cabinet and some officer decisions insofar as these are not confidential or exempt;

- inspect the Council’s accounts and make their views known to the external auditor;

- to report on meetings subject to guidelines published on the Council’s website and available at meetings;

- to make representations about why a Cabinet meeting, or part of a Cabinet meeting, should be open to the public when notice of an intention to meet in private is published;

- Inspect the Members’ Register of Interests – available on the Council’s website; and

- Make a request for information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000.
(c) **Participation**

Local people have the right to participate in the Council’s question time and contribute, by invitation, to investigations and reviews undertaken by Overview and Scrutiny Committees.

(d) **Complaints**

Citizens have the right to complain to:

- the Council itself under its complaints scheme;
- the local government ombudsman\(^1\); and
- the Councillor Conduct Committee about a breach of the members' code of conduct. These complaints should be addressed to the Monitoring Officer, Medway Council, Gun Wharf, Dock Road, Chatham.

3.2 **Individuals’ responsibilities**

Citizens should not be violent, abusing or threatening to Councillors or employees and should not harm things owned by the Council, Councillors or employees.

\(^1\) Or through a designated person, to the Housing Ombudsman in relation to social housing matters.