

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 ombudsman¹; 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.