

ARTICLE 3 – CITIZENS AND THE COUNCIL

<p>3.01 Citizens' Rights</p> <p>Citizens have the following rights. Their rights to information and to participate are explained in more detail in the Access to Information Rules in Part 4 of this Constitution:</p>	
<p>(a) Voting and Petitions</p> <p>Citizens on the electoral roll for the area have the right to vote and sign a petition to request a referendum for an elected mayor form of Constitution.</p>	
<p>(b) Information</p> <p>Citizens have the right to:</p>	
<p>(i) 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;</p>	
<p>(ii) attend meetings of the Executive except where confidential or exempt information is likely to be disclosed, and the meeting is therefore held in private;</p>	
<p>(iii) find out from the forward plan what key decisions will be taken by the executive and when;</p>	
<p>(iv) see reports and background papers, and any records of decisions made by the Council and the executive; and</p>	
<p>(v) inspect the Council's accounts and make their views known to the external auditor.</p>	

<p>(c) Participation</p> <p>Citizens have the right to participate in the Council's question time and contribute to investigations when invited by Overview and Scrutiny committees via the Authority's consultation policy and the scrutiny rules set out in Part 4 of this Constitution.</p>	<p>1. ADD "and the Cabinet's" after "Council's" in the first line.</p> <p>2. ADD new sentence as follows:</p> <p>"Citizens will also have the right to attend and address meetings of the Complaints and the Housing Appeals and Review Panels (on matters personal to them) and as applicant (or as an objector in accordance with the Council's policy) for planning consent at an Area Plans Sub Committee, the District Development Committee or for any purpose agreed by the Council at a meeting of the full Council.</p> <p>REASON: To reflect the introduction of public questions at Cabinet meetings and other bodies where citizens can address Council bodies."</p>
<p>(d) Complaints</p> <p>Citizens have the right to complain to:</p> <p>(i) the Council itself under its complaints scheme;</p>	
<p>(ii) the Ombudsman after using the Council's own complaints scheme; and</p>	
<p>(iii) the Standards Board for England about a breach of the Councillors' Code of Conduct.</p>	<p>DELETE "Standards Board for England" and substitute "Epping Forest District Standards Committee" in the first line.</p> <p>REASON: Complaints are now referred to the Standards Committee under the Local Government etc Act 2007.</p>
<p>3.02 Citizens' Responsibilities</p> <p>Citizens must not be violent, abusive or threatening to councillors or officers and must not wilfully damage property owned by the Council, councillors or officers. Any such behaviour may result in the applications of sanctions, which might include termination of correspondence or telephone contacts, or, in appropriate cases, institution of legal proceedings or the reference of the matter to the Police.</p>	