

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

### **3.01 People's Rights**

People's rights to information and to participate are explained in more detail in the Access to Information Rules in part 4 of this Constitution. Local people have the following rights:

#### **(a) Voting and Petitions**

People on the electoral roll of the Royal Borough have the right to vote and to sign a petition to request a referendum for an elected mayor form of Constitution. All residents have the right to sign a petition on any matter within the Council's purview and for any such petition to be considered by the Council.

#### **(b) Information**

Local people have the right to:

1. 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;
2. attend meetings of the Cabinet when key decisions are being considered;
3. find out from the Executive's Forward Plan what key decisions will be made by whom and when;
4. see reports and background papers, and any records of decisions made by the Council and the Cabinet;
5. inspect the Council's accounts and make their views known to the external auditor;
6. know how to contact all Councillors; and
7. the name and telephone number of the Council officer responsible for the provision of any Council service.

(c) Local people can, with the permission of and at the discretion of the chairman, speak at committee meetings.

(d) The Council is committed to conducting good quality, co-ordinated consultation with its key stakeholders. The Council has a detailed set of good practice guidelines for consulting with the public. Any consultation carried out by the Council, or in partnership with any other organisation, will be conducted within the spirit of these guidelines. The Council will use a variety of methods to hear the voice of residents including the Residents' Panel and the Resident Reviewers mystery shopping project.

### 3.02 **Complaints**

People have the right to complain to:

- (a) the Council itself under its complaints scheme;
- (b) the Ombudsman after using the Council's own complaints scheme;
- (c) the Monitoring Officer and Independent Person about a breach of the members Code of Conduct.
- (d) the Data Commissioner or Freedom of Information Commissioner.

### 3.03 **Responsibilities**

With rights come responsibilities. The Council expects its Council tax payers, and any person who uses a Council service for which there is a charge, to pay promptly. When exercising their rights to attend meetings, local people have the responsibility to ensure that their behaviour does not disrupt the conduct of the meeting and that the business being discussed can be carried out. Local people must not be violent, abusive or threatening to Councillors or officers, and must not wilfully harm property owned by the Council, Councillors or officers.