**Constitution**

**Article Three: Citizens**

* 1. This Article outlines the general rights that citizens have in relation to the Council. Rights in relation to particular services are not listed here. Throughout this Constitution the term citizens refers to the people of Nottingham who we serve. It does not refer exclusively to those with British Citizenship.
  2. **Voting**

Those on the electoral roll for Nottingham City, and eligible, have the right to vote in elections and referendums.

* 1. **Petitions**
* Those on the electoralrollhave the right to organise or sign a petition requesting a referendum for an elected mayor model of governance for the Council.
* In addition, the Council has a Petitions Scheme (Governance Framework Document B) which enables those who live or have a business address within the city to submit other petitions to the Council. These petitions can be presented by a Councillor at Full Council.
  1. **Information**

The Council is committed to working in an open and transparent manner and will only withhold information where there are valid reasons for doing so. Citizens have the right to:

* attend meetings of the Council and its Committees, and the Executive and its Committees, except where legally confidential or exempt information is to be discussed
* find out from published notices what key decisions are going to be taken by Executive decision makers and when and why executive decisions are going to be taken in private
* with the exception of confidential or exempt information, view reports and background papers, and any records of decisions made by the Council and its Committees, and Executive decision makers
* inspect the Council’s accounts and make their views known to the external auditor
* obtain a copy of this Constitution.
  1. **Participation**

Subject to the terms of this Constitution, citizens have the right to:

* submit a question to the Lord Mayor for response at Full Council
* contribute to the work of the Overview and Scrutiny Committees at the invitation of those Committees
* submit petitions to the Council in accordance with the petitions scheme
* feed back to the Council on their experience of its services and contribute to the development of policies and strategies for the City via routes such as the Citizens’ Panel, Customer Satisfaction Surveys, and Customer Suggestion Schemes.
  1. **Reporting on meetings**

Subject to the Council’s requirements, citizens have the right to report on meetings of the Council or the Executive that are open to the public. This can be by filming, audio-recording, taking photographs and using social media or any other appropriate method of reporting subject to it being conducted in a manner which does not disrupt the meeting. Further detail can be found in Governance Framework Document A - Policy on Recording and Reporting on Public Meetings.

* 1. **Consultation**

Citizens have the right to be consulted on certain areas of the Council’s work where this is required by law or where the Council has taken a decision to carry out a consultation exercise.

* 1. **Providing Feedback**

Citizens can comment on the Council’s services or its performance including highlighting good practice, bringing issues to the Council’s attention, or making suggestions for improvement. This can be done by:

* Contacting the Council – Nottingham City Council is committed to providing the best possible services for the public. The City Council’s have your say scheme gives citizens the chance to tell the Council what they think of the services provided. Full details of this scheme are available in plain English and in other languages from the Consultation and Engagement Manager, Nottingham City Council, Loxley House, Station Street, Nottingham, NG2 3NG or on the Council’s website via the following link, <http://www.nottinghamcity.gov.uk/contact-us/have-your-say-comments-compliments-and-complaints/>. Citizens can also have their say by completing the online form or calling us on 0115 8764921
* Contacting the Local Government Ombudsman where they are not satisfied, after first using the Council’s complaints procedure. The Ombudsman’s address is PO Box 4771, Coventry, CV4 0EH
* Contacting the Council’s Monitoring Officer if they believe they have evidence that which shows that a Councillor or Co-opted Member has not followed the Council’s Code of Conduct
* Contacting the Council’s Chief Finance Officer regarding financial issues
* Contacting the Council’s external auditor regarding the Council’s accounts at certain times.
  1. **Contacting Councillors and Council Officers**

Councillors and Council officers welcome contact from the public and encourage positive engagement. Details of how to contact Councillors and particular Council officers or services can be found on our website. Citizens have a right to expect responses within agreed timescales and respectful behaviour from Councillors and Council officers. If a citizen feels a Councillor or officer has not met the required standard they can complain via the Council’s Have Your Say process in relation to officers or via the Councillor Complaints process in relation to Councillors.

* 1. In return citizens are expected to treat Councillors and Council officers with politeness and courtesy. If members of the public act in an abusive, intimidating or threatening manner Councillors are entitled to stop any conversation or interaction in person or online and report them to the local authority, the relevant social media provider or the police. Council officers will manage such situations in accordance with agreed procedures.