

APPENDIX 1

CITIZENS' RIGHTS OF ACCESS TO INFORMATION, MEETINGS, ETC

1. Vote at Local Elections

Voting takes place on the first Thursday in May* in three out of every four years. All Citizens registered on the Electoral Roll are notified in advance by poll card.

Citizens can register at their own address throughout the year.

For further information regarding the Electoral Roll please contact the Electoral Registration Officer on 0151 511 7802.

* This date may be adjusted according to the timings of General or other Elections

2. Contact Local Councillors

Members are available by phone

At Members' Surgeries

By E-mail using the following convention

Firstname.surname@halton.gov.uk

Details are also available on the Council's web site www.halton.gov.uk

For further details please contact Member Services on 0151 511 8380.

3. Inspect or obtain a copy of the Constitution

Copies are available at the Municipal Building, Kingsway, Widnes and at the Reception, Runcorn Town Hall, Heath Road, Runcorn.

Inspection is free of charge however, a reasonable fee will be charged for a copy to be obtained. A copy is also available on the Council's web site.

4. Attend meetings of Council etc.

For details of meetings contact the Committee Services Section on 0151 511 8670.

Copies of Agenda for meetings are published five days prior to any meeting at Municipal Building, Kingsway, Widnes.

Copies of Agenda for meetings are also available at Halton Lea Library Runcorn, or Halton Direct Link Offices, during normal office hours.

Agenda are also available on the Council's web site www.halton.gov.uk five days prior to any meeting.

Attendees should be aware that members of the press and public who are present during the public part of a meeting, have the right to film, audio-record, take photographs and use social media (such as tweeting and blogging) to report proceedings of meetings.

5. Petition to request a referendum on a Mayoral form of Executive

Citizens may submit a petition requesting a referendum on a Mayoral Executive. 5% of the electorate would be required in order that a referendum would be required to take place.

6. Contribute to Policy and Performance Boards by Public Question Time

At the start of each Policy and Performance Board a total of 30 minutes will be allocated for members of the public who are residents of the Borough, to ask questions which relate to items on the agenda.

Public questions cannot relate to a planning or licensing application or to any matter which is not dealt with in the public part of a meeting. Written notice of questions must be submitted by 4.00 p.m. on the day prior to the meeting of the Board.

The Chair will ask for people to indicate that they wish to ask a question. One supplementary question (relating to the original question) may be asked by the questioner which may or may not be answered at the meeting. The maximum amount of time each questioner will be allowed is 3 minutes.

If a response is not given at the meeting, a written response may be given.

To help make the most of Public Question Time it is requested that questions are as concise as possible and should not repeat or make statements on earlier questions as this reduces the time available for other issues to be raised.

The Question-time form is available on the Council's Website.

To ask a question at any of the Policy and Performance Boards please contact the Committee Services Section on 0151 511 8670.

7. Speak on planning applications

Public speaking on planning applications has also been introduced at the Development Management Committee (see Appendix 6).

8. Find out from the forward plan what major decisions are to be discussed.

Forward plans will be prepared to cover an initial period of four months, beginning with the first day of any month. They will then be prepared on a

monthly basis and subsequent plans will cover a period beginning with the first day of the second month covered by the preceding plan.

The Plan will contain matters which the Leader has reason to believe will be the subject of a key decision.

9. Attend meetings of the Executive where Key decisions are being discussed or decided;

A Key decision is a decision which is likely.

(a) to result in a local authority incurring expenditure which is significant, or the making of savings which are significant having regard to the local authority's budget for the service or function to which the decision relates;

or

(b) to be significant in terms of its effects on communities living or working in an area comprising 2 or more wards or electoral divisions in the area of the local authority.

For details of meetings contact Committee Services Section on 0151 511 8670.

Copies of Agenda for the meetings are published five days prior to any meeting.

Copies of Agenda for meetings are available as detailed in Section 4.

10. See reports and background papers, and any record of decisions made by the Council and Executive

Copies of reports relating to forthcoming meetings are published 5 days prior to any meeting and are available during normal office hours as stated in Section 4 of this Appendix.

11. Complain to Council

If Citizen's are dissatisfied with the response from any Directorate the Council has a corporate complaints procedure, please refer to Article 3 of this Constitution.

12. Complain to Ombudsman

A Citizen may have recourse to the Ombudsman on the grounds of maladministration.

The appropriate address is:-

Local Government Ombudsman,
Beverley House,
17 Shipton Road,

York YO30 5FZ

13. Inspect the Council's accounts

The Council's accounts are published annually.

Notice of publication is submitted in the local press.

The accounts can be inspected at:-

Chief Executives,
Halton Borough Council,
Municipal Building,
Kingsway
Widnes WA8 7QF.