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Date: 9 July 2026

Dear Member

COUNTY COUNCIL - THURSDAY, 16 JULY 2026

Please find enclosed, for consideration at the Full Council meeting on 16 July 2026, the reports for Item 12. These were not available when the main agenda was published.

Agenda Item No

12 **Motions for Time Limited Debate** (Pages 1 - 14)

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ben Watts', is written over a faint, larger signature.

Benjamin Watts
Deputy Chief Executive

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By: Joel Cook – Head of Democratic Services

To: County Council – 16 July 2026

Subject: Motions for Time Limited Debate

Classification: Unrestricted

Summary

County Council may consider and resolve Motions for Time Limited Debate submitted by Political Groups, in accordance with section 14.34 of the KCC Constitution.

Four Motions for Time Limited Debate are included in the agenda for the 16 July 2026 meeting of the Full Council.

1. In advance of each ordinary meeting of the Full Council, each Political Group may submit one Motion for Time Limited Debate for debate and decision. Motions are placed on the agenda in the order they are received by Democratic Services.
 2. Motions for Time Limited Debate are different from most normal Committee or Decision papers as they are not prepared by KCC Officers, which would involve standard assurances and operational guidance. The Motions and any Background Information supplied for context are developed and submitted by the Political Groups, who are responsible for their content. They are therefore prepared and considered on the basis that they are political matters, allowing the Council to debate and resolve political positions on a range of issues outside of the main substantive decision-making framework for functions within the responsibility of the County Council.
 3. The official adoption of any substantive changes, if relevant, to strategies or policies referenced in a Motion approved by Full Council, where applicable to matters for which the Council has powers and responsibilities, would be subject to separate and additional relevant governance processes and decision-making.
 4. A maximum of 45 minutes will be allowed for each debate. The Motions must meet the general requirements of Motions as set out in the constitution and the debate is conducted in accordance with normal procedure rules along with any relevant directions given by the Chairman of the Council.
 5. The submitted Motions for Time Limited Debate are appended to this covering report.
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Recommendation:

The County Council is asked to consider and determine the submitted Motions for Time Limited Debate

Appendices:

1. MTLD – Green Group – Water Resilience
2. MTLD – Reform UK Group – Equality Act and Public Sector Equality Duty
3. MTLD – Restore Britain Kent Group – Solar Developments
4. MTLD – Liberal Democrat Group – SEND Transport

Report Author:

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Motion for Time Limited Debate

KCC Action Plan for Strengthening Water Infrastructure and Resilience

Proposer: Mr Stuart Heaver

Seconded: Mr Mark Hood

Motion:

This Council resolves to:

1. Welcome the Water Supply Short Focused Inquiry (SFI) report, thank the Members and Officers involved for their work examining the water outages in Winter 2025/2026 and note the requirement for the Executive to provide a response to the report and its recommendations to the Scrutiny Committee in due course but also recognise that there are a range of other water related issues that merit immediate consideration by the Council.
2. Recommend that the Executive to write to Southern Water and request that its published CSO spill data is condensed into a concise Kent-wide Combined Sewer Outfall (CSO) spill report and submitted on a quarterly basis to enable more effective scrutiny of water borne pollution and the progress of spill reduction efforts,- across the county.
3. Recommend that the Executive to write to Southern Water to request a concise quarterly report on the county-wide progress of the Clean Rivers and Seas Task Force and to offer Southern Water any appropriate support from KCC for their efforts to reduce CSO spills across the county and with particular regard to encouraging SUDS on KCC owned buildings and infrastructure such as schools and libraries.
4. Recommend that the Cabinet Member for Environment, Coastal Regeneration and Public Health to write to the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government to recommend that any future fines imposed by the regulator on water companies (or other private or public bodies) for water related failure incidents in Kent, are ring-fenced for water infrastructure and pollution/sewage release prevention improvements.
5. Recommend that the Flood Risk and Water Management Committee consider; asking the Environment Agency to provide a report on the number of pollution incidents for each category report by the Water Companies, many of these resulted in inspections in Kent over the last 5 years; and consider recommending that the Quarterly Environment Agency updates on this matter form part of routine performance monitoring by the Committee.
6. Request that the Executive investigate the feasibility of setting up, facilitating and promoting via Plan Sea or any other appropriate means, the development and support of citizen science testing teams on key bathing water areas and rivers seek greater partnership working between all responsible authorities, including water companies, Districts and the Environment Agency alongside supporting existing projects and research to improve monitoring of bathing water quality.

7. Recommend that the Scrutiny Committee consider requesting a Public Health report on the impact, risks of and KCC responsibilities in relation to water outages and in particular, waterborne pollution in Kent.
8. Recommend that the Executive engages with relevant stakeholders to ensure the first Kent and Medway Spatial Development Strategy has due regard to issues relating to water supply, wastewater management and water demand throughout the preparation, adoption and delivery of the strategy.

Background Information Provided by the Green Group:

Kent has experienced a growing number of incidents that highlight the vulnerability of the county's water infrastructure and the real-world consequences for residents when systems fail. Water outages, contamination events, and wastewater spills have caused significant disruption to daily life, placed added pressure on local services, and raised legitimate concerns about public health.¹

The recent Water Supply Short Focused Inquiry (SFI) report makes an important contribution to address this issue by highlighting key concerns and making important recommendations. Recognising that the SFI was designed to be short and focused on water outages in the winter of 2025.²⁶ it did not seek to cover all aspects of Kent's water infrastructure, this motion seeks to address some of those other aspects.

The Royal Academy of Engineering reports failing wastewater systems can expose communities to harmful pathogens in rivers and coastal waters, reinforcing the risks to public health.² These failures can limit access to safe drinking water and reduce hygiene standards in homes, schools, and care settings, placing vulnerable groups at higher risk. National reviews have also warned that ageing water infrastructure and underinvestment are increasing risks of leaks, service failures, and sewage discharges, emphasising the need for more proactive and coordinated planning across the sector.³

Ensuring the resilience of Kent's water infrastructure requires effective implementation of national policy, careful regulation, transparent reporting, strong partnership working, long-term investment. It also requires robust local governance.

Local authorities can support clear scrutiny arrangements, the timely sharing of operational and regulatory information, and proactive communication during incidents, all of which are essential to maintaining public confidence, supporting emergency preparedness, and enabling informed decision-making. Greater visibility of regulatory activity, alongside monitoring approaches such as community-based and citizen science initiatives, can strengthen understanding of local conditions and enhance accountability.

¹ **The Guardian**. South East Water could lose operating licence after outages in Kent. Available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/business/2026/jan/14/south-east-water-operating-licence-ofwat-review-outages-kent-sussex>

² **Royal Academy of Engineering**. Wastewater Risks. Available at: <https://nepc.raeng.org.uk/wastewater>

³ **Gov UK**. Water and sewerage companies in England: pollution incident report 2016 to 2024. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/water-and-sewerage-companies-in-england-pollution-incident-report-for-2016-to-2024>

As the SFI highlights, water companies should be integral to the planning processes, Strengthening the integration of water infrastructure within planning and policy-making would support more sustainable growth by enabling earlier identification of constraints and more effective investment planning. Existing planning arrangements can constrain the ability of water and wastewater providers to deliver upgrades in line with development, increasing pressure on already constrained networks as growth continues.

While KCC is not responsible for the UK's water industry there are sensible and pragmatic measures it can take now to protect residents from the vulnerability of local water infrastructure.

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Motion for Time Limited Debate, County Council, 16 July 2026

The Equality Act 2010, the Public Sector Equality Duty and Kent County Council's Approach

Proposer – Mr Spencer Dixon

Seconder – Mr Luke Evans

Motion

This Council resolves to agree the following principles:

The Council will;

- (a) comply with the Equality Act 2010 and the General and Specific Duties placed on it by that legislation, but shall not extend any activity(ies) whatsoever beyond the statutory duties.
- (b) not support any divisive 'Diversity, Equity and Inclusion' agenda, which may penalise people without specific protected characteristics.
- (c) positively promote, encourage and support aspects of Kent life that unite people, rather than those that divide and not promote, encourage and support those that divide people.
- (d) strongly oppose discrimination of any type and on any grounds against all persons, take steps where appropriate to root it out and shall take firm action whenever it is found.
- (e) be a meritocracy, where opportunities are open to all persons based on ability, contribution and talent, and shall not pander to any difference, but shall treat all persons with equal care and consideration.
- (f) be an equal opportunities employer, welcoming and unprejudiced, responsive to the needs of the staff and the requirements of the Service.
- (g) ensure that Equality Impact Assessments are produced for all policies and key decisions in order to comply with current legislation.
- (h) not favour 'positive action' ever being taken to give advantage to any group(s) or individual(s).
- (i) ensure that its promotional and recruitment images and literature are proportionate and representative of the demography of Kent and are lawful so far as is reasonably possible.
- (j) Ask the Chief Executive to review the use of resources in pursuance of the principles identified by resolutions (a) – (i) of this Motion.

(k) Ask the Chief Executive, subsequent to the above review, to update the Leader of any related governance processes that may be required for policies or strategies so as to reflect the principles set out within this motion as may be appropriate to give effect to resolutions (a) – (h).

Background Information Provided by the Reform UK Kent Group

1. The Reform UK administration in Kent does not wish to go beyond the statutory minimum required to comply with the current legislation.
2. The Labour government's Equality Act 2010 was introduced with the best intentions of addressing real or perceived inequalities in society. However, through its permissive power of encouraging the promotion of 'positive action' intended to level the playing field, in our view it has resulted in dividing people and increasing separateness; two-tier treatment by police and the state; and allowing Americanisation of the equalities agenda to infiltrate UK institutions. All this does nothing for unity, coherence or perceived fairness under the law.
3. Although introduced by Labour, the negative impact of the legislation has been allowed to grow in society by the Conservatives. In our view, the negative implications of the Equality Act 2010 have gone too far and common sense and balance should be returned. The County Council must comply fully with the legislation but can attempt to bring balance, perspective and common sense into its response to the legislation, to the operation of the County Council for its own work and that with partner organisations in Kent.
4. DEI is not the same as equality. Equality means everyone has equal moral worth and is treated the same under the law. EDI divides people into groups and trying to engineer outcomes between them. We believe that is wrong and un-British, so we reject it.
5. Britain has a long and proud tradition of encouraging equality of opportunity. It didn't come from modern ideology. It came from centuries of constitutional development, common law, and the Christian belief that every person has equal value.
6. We are concerned about the issue of public sector over-reach in the wider diversity, equity and inclusion arena, in work that was developed and promoted widely as a response to the Equality Act 2010 and the Public Sector Equality Duty. This motion reaffirms that the authority fully complies with relevant legislation, whilst ensuring merit, equality of opportunity and action to combat discrimination against all members of staff, service users and the public are at the forefront of KCC policy and action. However, the Administration is concerned that the authority should not be over-zealous in its wider equalities work to the detriment of fairness, merit and equality of opportunity for all.

7. As KCC is the largest employer in the County and operates as the largest local authority of its type in the UK, it is important to be clear about how it intends to function given the Strategic Statement brought forward by the administration and agreed by County Council.
8. The Leader of KCC has written to the Kent Police and Crime Commissioner and the Chief Constable seeking reassurance about the conduct of Kent Police; confirmation that Kent Police remains fully committed to ending any perception or practice of 'two-tier policing', and to championing the principle of equality before the law. High profile incidents have occurred in Southampton, Manchester, Southport and Nottingham where emphasis on some protected characteristics appear to have been considerations. Whilst realising that these incidents did not happen in Kent, she said that the issues raised are national issues and will affect public confidence in policing, knife crime and equal treatment under the law.
9. Our approach to equality is straightforward. Councils should treat everyone as an individual, respect their dignity, and focus on merit in terms of employment. We will follow the law sensibly, protect people's freedoms, and be transparent with the public. That's all. These principles are not extreme or complicated. The only people who object are those who are politically invested in DEI or who financially benefit from it.
10. This is not a culture war or an overreach. It is simply ensuring the council is focused on its proper job: treating everyone fairly, spending public money responsibly, and following the law.
11. The Equality Act 2010 and the Public Sector Equality Duty provide the legal framework within which the County Council must operate. In light of the Council's new Strategic Statement, the Motion stresses that in meeting its statutory obligations, KCC should ensure equality, fairness, merit and act lawfully against all discrimination at all times, but our strong view is that it does not need to go further beyond that which is mandated by current legislation.
12. The Administration of Kent County Council will work to make Kent a fair and meritocratic society, where achievement can be made irrespective of identities and backgrounds. We take the view that a clear message was given by the public during the May 2025 local elections in Kent that Kent County Council should no longer concentrate on differences between people, but instead upon the things that can unite them, such as the commonality of living in Kent, patriotism and the St George's, Kent and the Union flags. A clear message was given by the voters, who gave Reform UK such an overwhelming mandate in Kent, that 'common sense has to prevail'; that 'Diversity, Equity and Inclusion' (DEI) is an 'industry' that has no place in Kent County Council, but that equality of opportunity, merit and fairness do! This approach is made clear in the Council's new Strategic Statement.

13. This Motion recommends that until there is a change of government and a resulting change in the law, the Council should continue to comply with the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) under the Equality Act 2010.
14. This motion argues that KCC should comply fully with its statutory equality duties, while reviewing wider DEI activity to ensure it is proportionate, absolutely necessary under the law, focused on fairness and merit, and does not create unnecessary bureaucracy or perceived preferential treatment.
15. The Council should also consider the opportunity cost of any DEI activity reflecting on the costs (including officer time, training budgets and management capacity) devoted to activity beyond statutory requirements. A proportionate review by the Chief Executive would help ensure that equality-related work is specifically mandated by law, necessary and efficient, with bureaucracy kept to a minimum and resources focused where they deliver clear public value in line with the strategic statement.
16. Commitment of Kent County Council to the Equality Act 2010 and the Public Sector Equality Duty remains, ensuring that KCC fully complies with the law. However, in order to inform staff, the public and external organisations, the Motion clarifies the perspective of the Reform UK Administration at County Hall.
17. The Motion emphasises the Authority's commitment to compliance under the law and nothing more; emphasises the principles of fairness, equality of opportunity and merit, and states its opposition to discrimination of any type whatsoever.

Motion for Time Limited Debate

Protecting Kent's Best and Most Versatile Farmland from Large-Scale Solar Developments

Submitted by the Restore Britain Kent Group

Proposed by: Mrs Maxine Fothergill

Seconded by: Mr Paul Thomas

MOTION

This Council notes that:

- Kent contains some of the United Kingdom's most productive agricultural land and that the protection of Best and Most Versatile farmland (Grades 1, 2 and 3a) is essential for food security, the rural economy and the long-term sustainability of the county's countryside.
- Kent's agricultural and agrifood sectors make a significant contribution to the county's economy, employment and national food production.
- Kent County Council is due to approve its Position Statement on Solar Developments through Cabinet Member Decision 26/00026, supporting a balanced approach to renewable energy whilst encouraging solar generation to be prioritised on rooftops, commercial buildings, car parks and brownfield land over greenfield and agricultural land.
- Kent County Council has recognised that the cumulative impact of multiple solar developments and the potential impact on food security require careful consideration.

This Council resolves to request that the Executive;

1. Ensure that Kent County Council's consultee responses to planning applications for large-scale solar developments consistently reflect the approved Position Statement on Solar Developments, with particular regard to proposals involving Best and Most Versatile agricultural land, significant landscape harm or unacceptable cumulative impacts, and ensuring that infrastructure considerations such as secured grid connectivity are robustly assessed.
2. Continue working collaboratively with District and Borough councils and other relevant bodies to monitor the cumulative impact of large-scale solar development proposals across Kent and provide periodic briefings to Members on emerging applications and trends.

3. Bring forward a report to the relevant Committee by the end of 2026 providing an update on the implementation of the Position Statement on Solar Developments, including any operational, resource or policy considerations arising from Kent County Council's consultee role.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION PROVIDED BY THE RESTORE BRITAIN KENT GROUP

Kent is widely recognised as the Garden of England and contains some of the most productive agricultural land in the United Kingdom.

The county's agricultural sector plays a vital role in supporting food production, rural employment and the wider Kent economy. Kent's agrifood sector contributes approximately £2 billion annually to the county's economy, directly employs more than 17,700 people and supports over 536,000 acres of farmland. Kent produces around 40% of England's top fruit and 30% of its soft fruit, whilst also supporting significant arable farming, vegetable production, vineyards, dairy farming, beef cattle, sheep and pig farming. This makes Kent one of the country's most important and diverse food-producing counties.

At the same time, Kent has seen a growing number of proposals for large-scale solar developments, many of which involve agricultural land. Whilst renewable energy has an important role to play in supporting energy security, there is strong and growing concern from residents and local representatives about the loss of productive farmland to large-scale solar developments and the long-term impact this may have on food security, rural communities and the character of the Kent landscape.

The Council is in the process of approving a Position Statement on Solar Developments through Cabinet Member Decision 26/00026. The report supporting that decision recognised that the cumulative impact of multiple solar projects across Kent must be carefully considered and that the impact on food security from the use of high-grade agricultural land for energy generation may become significant as deployment of ground-mounted solar accelerates.

The report further states that Kent County Council encourages solar generation to be prioritised on rooftops, car parks and brownfield land over ground-mounted installations on greenfield and agricultural land.

This motion seeks to strengthen the protection of Kent's farmland by ensuring that the Council takes a firm and consistent approach in resisting inappropriate large-scale solar developments on Best and Most Versatile agricultural land, while supporting alternative locations for renewable energy.

This motion reflects the clear concerns of residents and Members and supports the strong protection of Kent's farmland while encouraging renewable energy to be delivered in more appropriate locations.

Making Sure SEND Transport Actually Gets Children to School.

Proposer: Mr Richard Streatfeild, MBE

Seconded: Mr Antony Hook

Motion

The County Council resolves to call on the Cabinet Member for Education and Skills to:

1. Review the implementation of the council's post-16 SEND transport policy to ensure it supports every post-16 young person with SEND who needs help to get to school safely receives the support that they need.
2. Collate and report on information to better assess and explain the true impact of KCC's post-16 transport policy, including:
 - a. Among young people who applied for more than a PTB but were refused, how many of them are safely attending education.
 - b. Whether any shortfall between the PTB and the actual cost of transport to families is affordable is for the affected families.
3. Review the appeal and right of review arrangements for families who can show that the fixed Personal Transport budget does not meet the reasonable cost of safe transport to make it as clear and simple as possible.
4. Review all post-16 SEND transport decisions already made under the current model, in relation to the application and impact of the existing policy and report the findings to the relevant Cabinet Committee.
5. Report back to the Children, Young People and Education Cabinet Committee, no later than 17 November 2026, on the action taken on points above.

Background information provided by the Liberal Democrat Group:

Kent County Council's new post-16 transport policy, which comes into effect from the 2026/27 academic year, reduces transport support is provided to young people with SEND. Most post-16 learners, including many with SEND and EHCPs, will be expected to use a Kent 16+ Travel Saver pass and public transport where possible. Young people who are unable to travel safely or reasonably in this way must apply for additional support and provide evidence of their needs. Where support is agreed, from September 2026 a Personal Transport Budget (PTB) will become the standard offer for eligible post-16 SEND learners, rather than dedicated transport. As a result, some young people will receive less support than under previous arrangements. The change has already prompted a significant number of appeals, with some families

reporting that the PTB offered falls far short of the actual cost of providing safe transport, including one reported shortfall of around £14,000 per year.

Kent County Council calculates its PTBs using a rigid fixed-band system based solely on the straight-line distance between home and school, known as “as the crow flies”: £2,000 for journeys under five miles, £3,000 for journeys between five and ten miles, and £5,000 for journeys over ten miles. These payments are not linked to the actual cost of securing appropriate transport for an individual young person, nor do they directly reflect factors such as route complexity, travel time or the level of support required.

In June 2025, the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman ruled against Derby City Council in a case concerning their post-16 SEND transport policy. The Ombudsman found fault where the council had provided fixed PTB payments, instead of arranging transport for over-16s with SEND. The Ombudsman found that Derby had accepted these young people needed help, but then handed over a flat payment without checking two simple things: would the money actually get the child to school, and could the family afford the difference if it did not? The Ombudsman was clear that every family must be offered a solution that is practical, safe and affordable for their own situation. A one-size-fits-all payment is not good enough. Derby was ordered to pay the families and to rewrite its policy.