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Ask for: James Willis
Date: 03/11/2026

Dear Member

GROWTH, ENVIRONMENT & TRANSPORT CABINET COMMITTEE - TUESDAY, 10 NOVEMBER 2026

I am now able to enclose, for consideration at next Tuesday, 10 November 2026 meeting of the Growth, Environment & Transport Cabinet Committee, the following report(s) that were unavailable when the agenda was printed.

Agenda Item No

6 **Petition : KCC to Review and Improve their response to 5th September Dover protest (Pages 1 - 8)**

Yours sincerely



Benjamin Watts
Deputy Chief Executive

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From:	Joel Cook, Head of Democratic Services
To:	Growth, Environment & Transport Cabinet Committee – 10 November 2026
Subject:	**Petition Scheme Debate – KCC to Review and Improve their response to 5th September Dover protest**
Classification:	Unrestricted
Summary:	Details of a petition received which has reached the required signature threshold for debate at the Cabinet Committee, in accordance with the County Council's petition scheme.

For Decision

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1. Introduction

1.1. In accordance with the Petition Scheme set out at sections 14.36-14.41 of the Constitution, any petition on a County Council matter which has between 1,500 and 4,999 signatures will trigger a debate at the appropriate Cabinet Committee.

1.2. The process for the debate on each petition is that the lead petitioner will be given 5 minutes to present the petition at the meeting. There will then be a debate of up to 45 minutes before the Cabinet Member is invited to respond for a maximum of 5 minutes. As the subject matter of this petition relates to a matter which is the responsibility of the Council's Executive, the Cabinet Committee can decide whether to make a recommendation to the relevant Cabinet Member to inform the decision-making process.

2. Petition – Kent County Council (KCC) to Review and Improve their response to 5th September Dover protest

2.1. A petition was received which requested that KCC to review and improve their response to 5th September Dover protest. The change.org petition can be viewed online here. The full wording of the petition is as follows:

KCC Work with Community Safety and resilience partners, including Kent Police, to review and improve the collective strategic response to significant unauthorised protest activity where they pose significant disruption risks. In particular, we urge KCC to:

a) Review the Highways and Community Safety response to the 5 September 2026 protests.

b) Work as part of the Kent & Medway Resilience Forum, alongside key partners such as Kent Police, to ensure joint response and

communication strategies are in place to quickly and effectively respond to large scale disruptive protests.

This petition had a total of 2,100 signatures, thus triggering a debate at the Growth, Environment and Transport Cabinet Committee.

2.2. A statement from the lead petitioner, Mr Rob Yates, is attached at Appendix 1. Mr Rob Yates has confirmed that he would be attending the meeting to address the committee about the petition.

2.3. A position statement prepared by the Cabinet Member for Communities and regulatory service and the Corporate Director of Growth, Environment and Transport is attached at Appendix 2.

Recommendation:

The Growth, Environment and Transport Cabinet Committee is invited to debate the issues raised in the petition and to determine a response.

Appendices:
Appendix 1 – Statement from the Lead Petitioner
Appendix 2 – Position Statement from the Directorate

Background Documents
Constitution of Kent County Council

Contact Details

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Statement to KCC in support of my petition: Kent County Council (KCC) to review and improve their response to 5th September Dover protest.

LAW and ORDER.

This is what this petition is about.

Law and order.

It is about making sure that Kent County Council is doing everything we can to protect residents and businesses from intimidation and serious disruption to nationally important infrastructure. It is a petition about learning lessons from the protest of 5th September that shut down the port of Dover for half a day.

And it is residents we must put front and centre. A female Dover resident recounts what happened that day:

"*Seeing hundreds of people dressed in black with balaclavas descend upon the area I grew up in made me feel unsafe and intimidated. In a place that I've always equated with peace and tranquillity, I felt the exact opposite that day*"

So today over two thousand Kent Residents ask Reform-run Kent County Council, do you take law and order seriously? If so, will you review this Council's community safety response on the 5th of September, and implement any lessons learnt? And will KCC work with Kent Police to ensure joint response and communication strategies are in place to respond to large scale disruptive protests?

So down to the facts:

Kent County Council has statutory duties in regard to transport, communication and public safety. Kent County Council sits on the Kent and Medway Resilience Forum, which plans joint response to protest.

Kent Police were left heavily outnumbered on the 5th of September when just six policemen were outside Dover train station and had to try and manage hundreds of masked protestors arriving by train. This was mentioned at Dover District Councils scrutiny panel.

At 08:48 on 5th September, Kent Police posted on Facebook to say "*We are aware of a protest currently taking place at the Port of Dover. Officers are in attendance and engaging with protesters"*

At 12:52 on 5th September, Kent Highways and Transport team posted on Facebook telling residents travelling to or from Dover to "*check before they travel"* and *"allow extra time for your journey".* This was shared by the official KCC Facebook page. No further information given.

From a GB News TV interview on 5th September the leader of KCC says she was "*troubled*" and "disturbed" by British men wearing balaclavas and agreed that there was "*intimidation".*

The Leader of the Council did not condemn the actions of the protestors on her “Linden Kemkaren KCC” Facebook page, the Council’s official communication channels, or at full Council on the 17th of September, where she failed to include mention of it in the Leaders speech.

With the facts above, there is fear in the community that Kent County Council will not take far right protests seriously and may be supporting them. If the KCC Administration believe in law and order and protecting women and girls from intimidation, they will review this council’s role that day, and together with Kent Police learn the lessons that can prevent further intimidation to residents and disruption to nationally important infrastructure.

From: Richard Palmer, Cabinet Member for Communities and Regulatory Services

Stephanie Holt-Castle, Director, Growth & Communities

To: Growth, Environment and Transport Cabinet Committee – 10 November 2026

Subject: KCC to Review and Improve their response to 5th September Dover protest

Classification: Unrestricted

Electoral Division: Dover Town

Summary
This report provides Kent County Council's response to the petition concerning the recent protest relating to illegal migration in Dover on 5 September 2026.

The report sets out the responsibilities of the County Council in relation to emergency planning and response and its role during the incident on 5 September 2026.

Recommendation
The Cabinet Committee is asked to **NOTE** the petition and the information in the report and **ENDORSE** the review of KCC's response and the work through the Kent Community Safety Partnership and the Kent and Medway Resilience Forum, with an update to a future meeting of the Committee.

1. Introduction

1.1 A petition has been submitted to Kent County Council asking it to review and improve its response to the Dover protest on 5 September 2026. The protest was unannounced and no notice was given to Kent Police. Kent Police led the response.

1.2 Although the protest was centred on Dover, the resulting transport disruption extended beyond the town along the A20/M20 corridor.

1.3 The petition raises concerns about the impact of the disruption on Dover and seeks assurance that appropriate arrangements are in place to respond to similar incidents in the future Specifically, the petition asks for “KCC to work with Community Safety and resilience partners, including Kent Police, to review and improve the collective strategic response to significant unauthorised protest activity where they pose significant disruption risks. In particular, we urge KCC to:

- Review the highways and community safety response to the 5 September 2026 protests; and

- Work as part of the Kent & Medway Resilience Forum, alongside key partners, such as Kent Police, to ensure joint response and communications strategies are in place to quickly and effectively respond to large scale disruptive protest."

2. KCC's responsibilities

2.1 KCC is a Category 1 responder under the Civil Contingencies Act 2004. Its responsibilities include to assess emergency risks, maintain emergency and business continuity plans, warn and inform the public, and share information and work with other responders.

2.2 KCC's Emergency Response Framework sets out these arrangements. KCC manages impacts within its responsibilities and works with partner agencies through established resilience arrangements. Each agency's role depends on the incident.

2.3 It should be noted that, protest activity alone does not trigger an emergency response. Under the Framework, KCC assesses whether an incident exceeds routine arrangements or risks serious harm, damage or disruption to life, welfare or essential services. There is no fixed threshold: each incident is assessed on its circumstances.

3. Highways and community safety response

3.1 KCC's highways and community safety roles focus on managing the effects of disruption on roads, communities and council services, and helping partners prepare for incidents, rather than policing protest activity.

3.2 As Highway Authority, KCC helps keep the road network safe and operating, using its available powers to reduce disruption as far as reasonably practicable. This can include monitoring roads, managing traffic, arranging diversions, sharing travel information and deploying highways resources.

3.3 KCC's Community Safety Team supports countywide and local Community Safety Partnerships, co-ordinates joint working and shares information. It helps partners monitor community tensions, provide reassurance and respond proportionately to disruption.

3.4 The disruption arising from the protest on 5 September 2026 escalated into a multi-agency Major Incident, with Major Incidents declared by initially Port of Dover and then Kent Police. KCC supported the multi-agency response through established resilience and emergency planning arrangements, including co-ordination through the Kent and Medway Resilience Forum Tactical and Strategic Coordinating Groups. The Strategic Coordinating Group (SCG) met at 12 noon on 5 September 2026.

3.5 Kent Police led the response and managed measures to reduce highways disruption. KCC provided tactical support through the multi-agency resilience and emergency planning arrangements described above. Its role was largely

behind the scenes and included supporting police-led public communications by sharing messages through its own platforms. This helped provide consistent information to communities while police managed the operational response.

4. Future learning

4.1 The Cabinet Member for Communities and Regulatory Services has requested an officer review of KCC's response on the day, including its support through the multi-agency resilience and emergency planning arrangements and its sharing of police communications. KCC has not yet competed a separate review of the incident. Kent Police has also requested a College of Policing Learning Review.

4.2 As Chair of the Kent Community Safety Partnership, the Cabinet Member has asked the Partnership to consider the community safety lessons from 5 September. KCC will also ask the Kent and Medway Resilience Forum to consider, with Kent Police, National Highways and the Port of Dover, whether joint response and communications arrangements for large-scale disruptive protest need strengthening, drawing on the findings of the KCC review and the College of Policing learning review

5. Conclusion

5.1 KCC recognises the concerns raised through the petition. The County Council has established arrangements for preparing for and responding to emergencies and works with partner organisations where incidents require a co-ordinated multi-agency response.

5.2 For this incident, Kent Police led the response and KCC provided practical support and shared police communications.

6. Recommendation

6.1 The Cabinet Committee is asked to **NOTE** the petition and the information in the report and **ENDORSE** the review of KCC's response and the work through the Kent Community Safety Partnership and the Kent and Medway Resilience Forum, with an update to a future meeting of the Committee.

7. Report Author

Author	**Relevant Director**
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