

From: Gary Cooke, Cabinet Member for Corporate & Democratic Services  
Peter Sass, Head of Democratic Services

To: County Council – 26 March 2015

Subject: Petition Scheme Debate

Classification: Unrestricted

Summary: Details of petition received which will be the subject of a debate in accordance with the County Council's Petition Scheme.

## **For Decision**

---

### **1. Introduction**

(1) In accordance with the Petition Scheme agreed at the County Council on 13 September 2012, any petition on a County Council matter that has more than 10,000 signatures will trigger a debate at County Council.

(2) The process for the debate on each petition is that the Lead Petitioner(s) will be invited to speak to the petition for up to 5 minutes. There will then be a debate of up to 35 minutes (with each Member speaking for up to 3 minutes) before the Cabinet Member for Environment & Transport is invited to respond for a maximum of 5 minutes at the end of the debate to advise the County Council how he intends to respond to the petitioners' concerns..

(3) As the subject matter of this petition relates to a matter that is the responsibility of the Council's Executive, the County Council may decide whether to make a recommendation to the relevant Cabinet Member to inform the decision-making process.

### **2. Petition –Right to Light**

(1) A petition requesting “the council, following Kent County Council's decision to switch off 70,000 of Kent's street lights between the hours of 12am and 5:30 am, to reinstate our streetlights whilst more detailed consultation together with detailed risk assessments aided by professional bodies are carried out” has been received.

(2) The petition has attracted 11,065 signatures from Kent residents and therefore has triggered a County Council debate. A statement from the Lead Petitioner, Miss Tina Brooker is attached (**Appendix 1**). Miss Brooker will be attending the meeting and speaking to the petition.

### **3. Recommendation**

The County Council is invited to respond to the Cabinet Member for Environment & Transport in respect of this petition, as appropriate.

**Peter Sass**  
**Head of Democratic Services**  
**03000 416647**

Background Documents: None

### Petition wording

"We the undersigned petition the council to, following Kent County Council's decision to switch off 70,000 of Kent's street lights between the hours of 12am and 5:30 am, to reinstate our streetlights whilst more detailed consultation together with detailed risk assessments aided by professional bodies are carried out."

### 500 word statement from Miss Tina Brooker, Kent resident.

"Councillors

This journey started for me last April when I spoke to engineers as they fitted sensors to the streetlights in my road. Immediately concerned due to the isolated location and number of elderly, disabled and vulnerable people living here, I wrote to KCC including a signed petition asking them to return our street lighting. At the same time I set up a neighbourhood watch scheme to ease my neighbours concerns.

Around two weeks later, after lights out, one of my disabled neighbours had an attempted break in to her downstairs bedroom she was home alone and terrified she hid in her wardrobe for over three hours before she dare come out. Since that incident she has been taken to hospital by emergency ambulance on several occasions.

It was therefore a devastating blow to receive KCCs letter refusing our request and ending with "a minority will be a little inconvenienced". Feeling angry and let down for my neighbours I set up the Right to Light petition through my local council's website. It was around that time I became aware that the local Labour Party were also concerned about the impact this policy was having on people's lives so I enlisted their help.

I started door knocking and speaking to residents, various street stalls were set up in the town centre, which I attended. I was amazed at the strength of feeling over this issue and nearly every person wanted their streetlights restored, not one person was aware that it was going to happen.

The Right to Light petition accumulated 2,221 signatures, a local council debate was held at which I presented the people's petition. This was the first time I had carried out public speaking, I was terrified. When the motion was carried I was elated, I truly, believed my Town would now get its streetlights back.

To my dismay KCC again refused.

This led to me setting up the Right to Light Countywide petition. I worked tirelessly through social media. I gained the support of the Kent Messenger/Kentonline and the Suzy Lamplugh Trust. I also appeared on BBC Radio Kent on a couple of occasions to raise awareness of the campaign and the petition.

I have found myself talking to people throughout Kent, both online and over the telephone. It has been an amazing experience and I have learned so much. The most valuable lesson I have learned is how to listen to people and find out what matters to them in their lives, and unsurprisingly it appears their number 1 priority is their family's safety and wellbeing.

I hope this helps you to understand why I will be standing before you at the next council meeting and why this issue is so vitally important.

Please I ask that you be considerate to people's feelings, many will be watching this meeting via webcam. This is NOT a political football, this is about people's personal safety and wellbeing. What you think or feel is IRRELEVANT, please learn, like I did, to listen.

Real people's lives, real people's concerns, 11,065 reasons to listen.”

Miss Tina Brooker