

From: Joel Cook, Democratic Services Manager

To: Environment & Transport Cabinet Committee – 17 July 2025

Subject: **Petition Scheme Debate – Gravesend-Tilbury Ferry Service**

Classification: Unrestricted

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

For Decision

1. Introduction

1.1. In accordance with the Petition Scheme set out at sections 14.34-14.39 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 invited to speak to the petition for a total of 5 minutes. 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 – Gravesend-Tilbury Ferry Service

2.1. A petition was received which requested that the Gravesend – Tilbury Ferry be reinstated. The full wording of the petition is as follows:

Open letter to Kent County Council: please reinstate the Gravesend/Tilbury ferry service!

The Gravesend/Tilbury ferry service was stopped on April 1st, 2024. This service provided an essential and convenient way for people to travel between Gravesend and Tilbury and was widely used by people locally to get to school and work, as well as providing an essential service to connect both communities.

The ferry cancellation has deeply affected local communities. It has had a significant impact on businesses in the Gravesend town centre who are reporting a noticeable downturn in revenue. It is causing more pressure on the already over-used Dartford Crossing and surrounding roadways by removing an alternative form of cross-river transport.

Many people in Tilbury and Gravesend communities relied on the ferry as an easy way to get across the river, providing them with a lifeline to local amenities. This has now been removed.

There has been a ferry service between Gravesend and Tilbury for hundreds of years - it's part of our history, as well as our community. Its discontinuation has disrupted so many people's lives and routines, that many rely on for comfort and connection.

We understand the financial pressures that led to the ferry cancellation, but the ferry was a vital service to people and businesses locally. Losing it has really hurt local communities.

We beg Kent County Council to act now and secure the funding to reinstate the Gravesend/Tilbury ferry, and to safeguard a long-term future for this vital local service.

This petition had a total of 2,437 signatures, thus triggering a debate at this Cabinet Committee.

2.2. A statement from the lead petitioner, Rebecca Drake Hopkins, is attached at Appendix 1. Mrs Rebecca Drake Hopkins has confirmed that she would be attending the meeting to address the committee about the petition.

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

Recommendation:

The Environment and Transport Cabinet Committee is asked to debate the issues raised in the petition and to make recommendations to the Cabinet Member as to whether they should or should not take the actions requested by the Petition.

Background Documents

[Constitution of Kent County Council](#)

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