

# Thanet District Council

## Housing Strategy Draft

2012-2016

December 2012



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# Executive Summary

The Council recognises that access to good quality housing which people can afford is key to achieving sustainable communities and making somewhere a good place to live. The Housing Strategy for 2012-2016 outlines the key housing issues and sets objectives for how, with its partners, the Council can continue to make Thanet a great place to live for all its residents.

Housing should provide choices, opportunities and aspiration. Thanet residents should have access to high quality housing which they can afford, whether they are renting in the social or private sector, or already own or aspire to own a home. We are determined to use our housing policies and strategies to achieve our wider objectives to create sustainable communities.

Thanet needs to stabilise its approach to new housing developments with a greater emphasis on family homes. The demand for affordable housing currently outweighs supply. We cannot build ourselves out of the shortage of affordable housing and therefore, we need to look at other creative solutions. Whilst we will continue to maximise the delivery of new affordable homes through new build opportunities, we are committed to bringing empty properties back into use, to create a range of additional homes for our residents.

We will work constructively with the private rented sector to drive up standards in this sector, particularly in areas where there is a high concentration of privately rented accommodation, such as Cliftonville West. This activity is also part of the wider regeneration initiatives for the district.

Current reductions in housing benefit are likely to have an adverse effect on the district. We need to ensure our residents are informed about the changes and have access to professional advice from our Housing Options team. We want to support residents to take greater responsibility for their own housing options.

The Housing Strategy links in with the Corporate Plan, the Local Plan, the Economic Strategy and other strategies as outlined in the Strategic Links diagram on p.8.

The main objectives for delivering the housing strategy are as follows:

- Deliver a range of homes to meet the local housing need which residents can afford
- Make better use of the existing housing stock across all tenures and improve housing conditions
- Enable vulnerable people access to good quality housing and to live independently
- Provide an accessible housing options service for Thanet residents
- Deliver housing in support of our regeneration and economic development objectives

We will need to regularly monitor and review the action plan attached to the housing strategy to ensure the housing issues remain current. Creative thinking is required in order to meet the housing objectives set out in this strategy. We need to adapt to our changing environment with changes like the Welfare and Benefit reform and the new powers of the Localism Act to ensure we meet the overall housing objective that Thanet residents have access to good quality housing which they can afford.

# Thanet's Housing Vision

## Introduction

The Local Government Act 2003, requires local authorities to have a Housing Strategy. The Housing Strategy 2012-2016 provides a framework for how Thanet District Council will work with partners to address the housing and related support needs of people living in the district. As well as delivering services directly, the Housing Strategy can provide leadership and guidance to partners and stakeholders.

The Housing Strategy will help towards delivering some of the key Corporate Plan objectives as well as linking in with the Local Plan, Economic Strategy and other key documents.

There have been a number of changes nationally, regionally and locally which inform the context of the Housing Strategy. These changes are outlined in Appendix 1: Strategic Context, p.28. The Housing Strategy covers housing issues across all forms of tenure and considers the impact of housing on individuals, communities and the environment. The strategy sets priorities for action and identifies the resources that will be necessary to achieve the aims, objectives and actions identified. The action plan which accompanies this Housing Strategy will be monitored annually for the duration of this strategy to ensure the aims and objectives are being met and remain current.

## Vision Statement

The overarching housing vision for Thanet for the next four years is:

To provide good quality housing, that is affordable, which meets people's changing needs and aspirations and is located within pleasant, safe and sustainable communities.

The Council recognises that access to good quality housing which people can afford is key to achieving sustainable communities making Thanet a good place to live and contribute to sustainable economic regeneration. The Housing Strategy will outline the key housing issues and set objectives for how, with its partners, we can continue to make Thanet a great place to live.

Housing should provide choices, opportunities and aspiration. Thanet residents should have access to high quality affordable housing, whether they are renting in the social or private sector, or want to own their own home. The Housing Strategy sets out our plans to achieve this vision.

## Deliver a range of homes to meet the local housing need which residents can afford

There are a range of property prices and rents across Thanet, with distinct pockets of prosperity and deprivation sometimes only streets away from each other. In some areas the housing market is buoyant with sought after properties in attractive and sustainable communities. In other areas there is an imbalanced housing market where one tenure dominates, usually sub standard private rented accommodation.

Housing interventions by Thanet District Council and its partners will improve the housing balance in areas which are struggling and enhance already thriving communities. What remains consistent in terms of the housing need is affordability. Outstanding need for affordable homes remains higher than the supply.

Across the district we must deliver homes which our residents can afford to live in. This means providing affordable homes<sup>1</sup> for residents on the housing register, a range of good quality privately rented accommodation and new market housing developments delivering an appropriate mix of homes. The predominant housing need in Thanet is for family accommodation, of two bedrooms or more, but mainly three bedroom accommodation. We have a large supply of smaller units and this housing need is already provided for through existing properties or planning consents which could still be implemented. It is family accommodation which needs to be delivered in Thanet and this is what we expect to see in the majority of new developments.

The demand for affordable housing currently substantially outweighs the supply. There is less funding available to Housing Associations to build new affordable homes. The Homes and Communities Agency funding has now been allocated up to 2015 and it is unlikely there will be additional grant funding to deliver new affordable homes in Thanet until this time. We need to work more innovatively and maximise the delivery of affordable housing. We can do this by working closely with planning colleagues to ensure the planning policies maximise the provision of affordable homes. Housing Associations will be using affordable rents which will generate additional rental income, which can be put back into developing more affordable homes.

Increasing owner occupation is also a key objective, as well as delivering low cost home ownership and shared ownership options as the local housing authority and in conjunction with Housing Associations.

There are affordability considerations to address with the Welfare and Benefit reform and work is being undertaken to look at households who will be affected in social rented properties owned by the council and households on benefits who live in the private sector. We want to support our residents with their housing aspirations and respond to the housing need, by providing family homes.

## Make better use of the existing housing stock across all tenures and improve housing conditions

New build housing plays an important part in creating new homes for Thanet residents and allowing movement within the housing stock, but this must be combined with other initiatives. We also recognise the importance of properly utilising the existing housing stock, which includes both private and public sector accommodation. Thanet has a number of privately owned empty properties which could be providing homes for households in housing need. The Homes and

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<sup>1</sup> As per the definition in Annex 2 of the National Planning Policy Framework, March 2012 (as per Appendix 4, p.52)

Communities Agency funding we have secured will bring back into use up to 190 homes by 2015, consisting of a mix of tenures.

Our homes are central to our family life, so all housing in Thanet should be high quality, no matter what tenure a person is living in. We will continue to improve the quality of our own housing stock even once the national Decent Homes programme comes to an end, but of particular concern is the quality of housing in the private rented sector. Whilst it is a good thing that there are a range of housing options in Thanet, including cheaper housing, we want to make sure we are protecting residents from substandard landlords. The private rented sector will continue to play an important role and provide a variety of good quality accommodation with a range of rents to suit different affordability levels for Thanet residents. Residents will be able to choose where they want to live to suit their lifestyle and household composition. We will continue to work in partnership with the Landlord focus group and forum to create a good quality private rented sector in Thanet.

We will not tolerate poor quality accommodation and targeted housing interventions will tackle concentrations of deprivation and substandard living conditions across the district. The approach in Cliftonville West and Margate Central wards as part of the Live Margate project, is to use planning powers and property standards to improve living conditions and the community. The approach of targeting resources in an area, improving the quality and management in the private rented sector and raising the standards, is working.

We must make the most out of our current housing stock and assets. To do this we will undertake an asset management review of all the Council's Housing Revenue Account assets. This may unlock new opportunities to increase supply, in addition to the five new family homes built in 2010 with help from the Homes and Communities Agency. It will also tackle under occupation and overcrowding.

We will also improve energy efficiency in new and existing homes so that we tackle fuel poverty and energy waste. We will make sure as far as possible that elderly and vulnerable residents have a warm home during the winter.

## Enable vulnerable people access to good quality housing and to live independently

Thanet has an ageing population and the census results show a further increase of people aged over 85. People generally prefer to stay in their own homes as long as possible and we need to ensure a range of housing options are available.

We will seek to incorporate a range of housing in new schemes, including different tenures, which will meet the needs of vulnerable people and people with disabilities. Design features can be incorporated into new developments to ensure homes can be more easily adapted for people with disabilities and make new housing more sustainable. In terms of adaptations to existing properties, we will review the disabled facilities grant policy, to ensure value for money and an improved customer journey.

Partnership working with other agencies, such as Social Services and the NHS are key to enabling vulnerable people to live in safe and secure environments and retain independence.

## Provide an accessible housing options service for Thanet residents

Housing is about more than meeting housing needs. We want to concentrate on how housing is connected to our residents' opportunities and ambitions.

More unemployed people are living in social housing than before. Thanet's housing policy will be about supporting people's aspirations. Residents in low paid employment deserve our support. Local authorities now have more control over the way we manage the housing register and we aim to better manage people's expectations. Demand for social housing will always outweigh the supply. Social housing is not the only secure, high quality housing option available to Thanet residents and the private rented sector can provide a mainstream housing option.

We are reviewing our Allocations Policy to ensure that the way we allocate social housing is fair and transparent. The Localism Act, 2011 gives local authorities the ability to make decisions locally about how we manage allocations of social housing to suit the residents of Thanet more effectively. We will look at how we can recognise the efforts of those who contribute to the community particularly through seeking paid employment. We can manage expectations more effectively of households on the housing register. The demand for social and affordable housing will always outweigh the supply and we need to ensure our residents continue to receive professional advice in relation to their range of housing options.

## Deliver housing in support of our regeneration and economic development objectives

The people of Thanet should rightly be committed to their community and we will support that by building quality neighbourhoods, where people feel safe and where they choose to live, work and stay. That means access to high quality amenities, good transport links and a thriving local economy with jobs for local people.

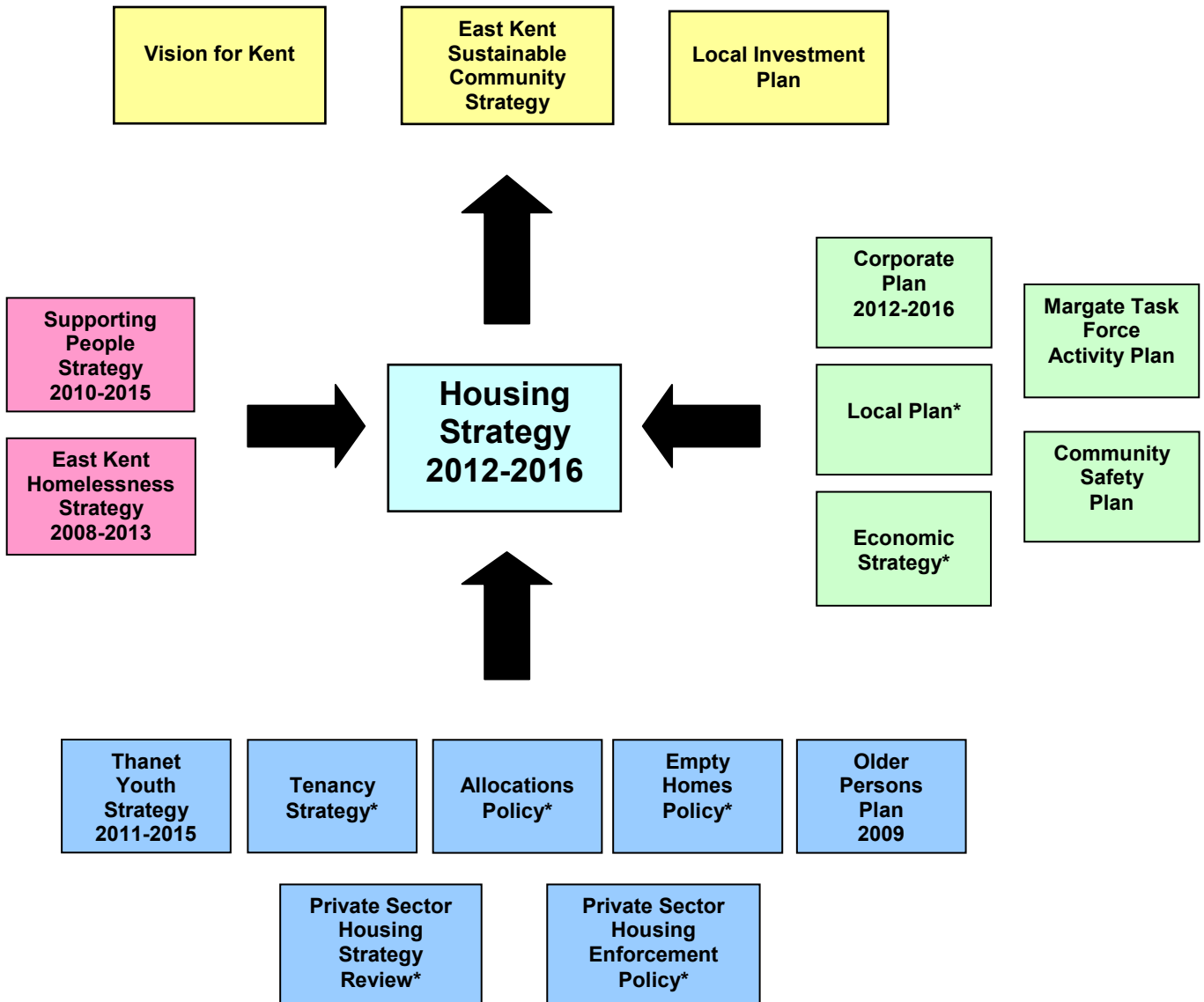
We need to ensure that there are a range of new homes to suit the diverse needs of our residents in line with the economic aspirations of the district. The housing, planning and economic development teams will work together to ensure that through the Local Plan, suitable land is identified for construction of new homes and policies are in place to support appropriate adaptation of the existing stock to meet housing need across all sectors.



**Councillor David Green**  
**Portfolio Holder for Housing and Planning**

# Strategic Links

The diagram below shows how the Housing Strategy fits in with the other relevant strategic documents. The Housing Strategy is the main overarching housing document to set out the strategic priorities accompanied by the action plan. The other housing related plans and strategies cover each area in more detail. Please see Appendix 1, p.28 for further strategic and policy links.



\*Documents to be produced during the lifespan of the Housing Strategy. For further details please see the Action Plan.



## Where are we now?

Despite the economic downturn during the lifespan of the previous Housing Strategy from 2005 - 2010, Thanet District Council made some key successful achievements towards meeting the housing aims and objectives.

These included:

- 421 empty properties were brought back into use
- 316 new affordable homes were delivered for rent and low cost home ownership
- 5 new council homes were built in 2010 for families, with the help of funding from the Homes and Communities Agency
- In partnership with KCC and through the Private Finance Initiative (PFI):
  - 7 additional homes were provided for people with a learning disability
  - 7 additional homes were provided for people with a mental health problem
  - 80 additional homes for older people.
- In 2010, the Cliftonville Development Plan Document was adopted.
- 1026 homeless cases prevented between 2005-2010.
- In 2006/2007 grants totalling £3,036,327 were given for heating, insulation, decent homes and fire safety.

These achievements have all helped towards improving the housing choice and conditions for Thanet residents.

The new strategy for 2012-2016 needs to set new objectives and outline how these will be delivered. The budget consultation demonstrated that Thanet residents view affordable decent housing as an important part of making somewhere a good place to live. Demand is outweighing supply in terms of affordable housing and we need to ensure that delivery of new affordable homes continues in these times of austerity. Bringing empty properties back into use is an important housing objective for Thanet as we can utilise existing housing stock to meet the needs of our residents.

We appreciate that this strategy has been written at a time of uncertainty, in terms of the housing market and economic climate, but we will continue to progress the delivery of new affordable and market housing to meet the needs of local residents. We want our residents to have access to good quality housing across all tenures. Housing is not just about the built environment, but about the people who live in the district. The strategy will also look at how we will set objectives to continue to enable our vulnerable residents' access to good quality housing and provide accessible housing options for our residents.

The external perception of parts of the district from outside of Thanet may be a significant barrier to promoting its economic and social potential and encouraging economically mobile people to stay or migrate into the area. The housing offer in Thanet can help to attract investment, people, skills and knowledge into the area. Many young and skilled people leave the district and we need to give them a reason to stay. We have a unique built environment offering an attractive coastal lifestyle, in close proximity via our improved transport network to London and other major towns and cities in Kent.

National evidence shows a close link between social housing and worklessness, which currently perpetuates a cycle of unemployment, poverty and housing needs. This has a negative impact on physical and mental health. We want to add to our housing offer as the local authority by looking into more shared ownership options to help low income working households buy into a property.

Over the next four years we are committed to tackling the housing issues which Thanet faces, by working creatively and adapting to the changing government policies.

The changes emerging from central government through the Welfare and Benefit Reform will have a significant impact on a number of Thanet residents. We will manage the impacts of these changes by continuing to provide advice to residents and work with private landlords to mitigate the risks of people becoming homeless. We will ensure that we make best use of our housing stock to meet housing need and to reduce the risk of financial hardship. We will work to ensure that we have the right people living in the right housing stock.

Our main interventions are designed to stimulate new housing supply, ensure that developments are well designed, high quality and with the appropriate social infrastructure and services, work with private landlords on better rentals and stimulate private sector renewal of housing and improve the linkages between housing and employment services. The housing team will work closely with the planning, economic development and regeneration departments to ensure that the housing aspirations are translated across the district.

This is still a challenging time for housing providers and will continue to be throughout the lifespan of the strategy. The current property market, along with difficulties in obtaining mortgages means the need for good quality housing, which is affordable, is essential for Thanet. The commitment and leadership provided by Thanet District Council over the next four years will be critical in shaping housing in Thanet.

## Welfare and Benefit Reform

Nearly 1 in 4 of Thanet's working age people claim a key benefit and are likely to feel the impacts of welfare reform when it is introduced in April 2013. Four major changes are being brought in together –

- a) a reduction in levels of Housing Benefit for Council and Social tenants due to the benefits cap of £500 per week per family or £350 per week per single person;
- b) a reduction in Council Tax benefit as new local arrangements apply;
- c) the introduction of social sector size criteria (or the bedroom tax as it is better known) which reduces housing benefit for each bedroom left empty – 14% for one bedroom and 25% for two bedrooms,
- d) the introduction of Universal Credit, or one payment per month arrangements, although this will come in more slowly between 2013 and 2017

Many people will be affected by more than one of these changes at the same time and it is expected that this will have a significant impact on their financial position and on their medium and long term housing options. Some issues will be practical - we are currently planning for, and assisting, those who wish to make a practical change such as exchange an under-occupied house for a smaller one, allowing a family to move on.

But we do believe that there will be a big social change as families move towards more cost effective housing in Thanet by moving out of expensive areas in the South East and beyond. We can manage some of those changes through our Tenancy Strategy and our Allocations Policy and prioritise those with a local connection but it does not help with the additional financial burden that some families will feel through these changes, and we shall be working closely with partners throughout Thanet to mitigate those needs.

# Evidence Base

A Strategic Housing Market Assessment for East Kent (including Thanet) was published in June 2009. Its key findings and recommendations provide an evidence base for the housing need in Thanet.

## Key findings

- Challenge of tackling the impact of an ageing population, especially where the proportion of very elderly people is forecast to increase.
- Single person households are expected to increase, despite the fact that younger age groups (16-24) are continuing to leave the sub-region. However, there is a greater supply and backlog of planning consents for smaller units, compared with larger family accommodation.
- Reflecting ambitions for regeneration and economic development the SHMA identifies a role for housing to provide appropriate and attractive housing options for higher earners and to ensure young families can stay.
- The overall housing provision is dependent on an economic outlook, return of developer confidence, access to mortgages and access to development finance for housing associations. It also notes that an improved housing offer including variety of housing types at differing price levels, market, intermediate and affordable rented should be provided.
- Analysis in the SHMA shows that due to its volume, it is inconceivable that need for affordable housing in the sub region could be met by 2026.

## Recommendations

- A target that 30% of new homes should be affordable (with a higher target in the housing market sub areas of Broadstairs and Thanet villages)
- That this be applied to sites of 15 or more dwellings (or a lower threshold in rural areas where studies suggest this is economically viable).
- That 30% of affordable housing be focused on intermediate tenure, and 70% social/affordable rented homes.
- Focusing provision of new affordable homes on a specific mix of types and sizes to boost supply of dwelling types with the lowest supply: needs ratio e.g. 3 bedroom family houses.
- Guideline proportions on the size-types and market split (entry/medium/high end development) of market housing

The findings of the Strategic Housing Market Assessment will be reviewed and its recommendations will be considered in preparing the Local Plan. The Action Plan (p.19) provides more detail of the tasks which will be undertaken to support this.

We have seen an increase in the submission of 14 unit applications in order to avoid the existing affordable housing policy. We need to maximise the provision of affordable homes, whilst ensuring developments are viable.

# Our Priorities in Detail

## Deliver a range of homes to meet the local housing need which residents can afford

We will work with key partners to increase the supply of affordable homes<sup>2</sup>, including low cost home ownership, across the district and take a proactive role in exploring new housing delivery initiatives.

We need to make best use of planning policies to ensure affordable housing opportunities are maximised in the planning process. This will be addressed in policies in the new Local Plan and based upon viability evidence.

Affordable housing will positively contribute to attractive, secure and sustainable mixed communities. Local lettings plans are produced for all new build affordable housing schemes to ensure the units are allocated appropriately to households on the housing register and in conjunction with the Sustainable Communities Protocol. Affordable rents can now be used providing the additional rental income is put back into delivering more affordable homes. We need to look at how we can best use these rents as a local authority, whilst ensuring a range of affordable homes are delivered.

Increasing the level of owner occupation in the district is an aspiration for Thanet District Council. We want to help people fulfil their housing aspirations. Home ownership is becoming increasingly difficult for first time buyers. Shared ownership options are a more affordable way of making a start on the housing ladder and the planning policies are in place for ensuring shared ownership homes can be incorporated into new build schemes where affordable housing is required. As a local authority we can do more to help people who want to own their own home and we will explore options to help people onto the property ladder. We will be doing a lot more work around shared equity schemes and incorporate this into the empty homes programme and consider it within our asset management strategy. This will enable households on lower incomes to purchase a share in a property and as their circumstances change and improve they can purchase a greater share in their home. Shared ownership can also help to rebalance the housing market, by providing another type of tenure in an area and promote a sustainable community.

New development must be based on high quality sustainable design which meets differing needs. It must complement community cohesion and be supported by local public services and a good transport infrastructure. This approach will be supported by the council's Local Plan and supplementary planning documents.

Good and appropriate design allows people with disabilities to access housing; meeting wider objectives around health and wellbeing, and promoting independent living for vulnerable adults. A range of building standards promoting independent living have been produced in recent years, such as Building for Life, Lifetime Homes and wheelchair accessibility guidance. The application of these standards provides a cost effective solution to addressing the changing needs of residents. It is much more efficient to build in these features where possible as disabled adaptations to properties are costly to incorporate into older housing stock. We need to make homes sustainable for the longer term.

It is important that the housing need of the district is understood. We will undertake rural housing needs surveys in conjunction with the parish councils to ensure the needs of the rural communities are addressed. The Strategic Housing Market Assessment details the housing need of the district and family homes are our main priority.

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<sup>2</sup> As per the definition in Annex 2 of the National Planning Policy Framework, March 2012

Many new developments over the last few years have comprised of flats, delivering a high number of smaller units. There are still a number of planning consents which could be built out providing smaller units for the district. The demand for family homes, however, in the district is high and continuing to rise. Ultimately, the mix of tenures and sizes on individual schemes will be assessed on a case by case basis by the planning department in accordance with planning policies, with input from Strategic Housing on schemes including affordable units. Considerations include the location of the site and the existing housing mix in the area.

There is an increasing demand for student accommodation in the district as a result of the Broadstairs campus of Christchurch University. We recognise the social, economic and cultural benefits that arise from the presence of a University and its students in the area and wish to support the provision of good student accommodation. We should also consider the contribution that the students bring to the local workforce, the community and cultural life of Thanet. We will work closely with the university to ensure the housing needs of students are understood and that a strategic approach is taken to the provision of accommodation.

## Make better use of the existing housing stock across all tenures and improve housing conditions

Thanet has a large private housing sector of which 28.5% is privately rented. In addition 12% of the total housing stock is currently owned by Housing Associations and Thanet District Council. As a result the council is committed to ensuring this existing resource is fully utilised. This means that bringing empty properties back into use and improving the quality of accommodation that is available across the district is a high priority.

There are a large number of empty properties in Thanet. These properties are a blight on the neighbouring properties and are also a waste of housing stock particularly when we have such a high demand for affordable housing. We will utilise the funding from the Homes and Communities Agency, which the authority has been successful in securing, to bring back into use up to 190 units of accommodation over the next 3 years. These units will consist of a range of tenures, to rebalance the housing market. This will also positively impact on the private housing market, by improving the neighbouring areas.

There are areas in Thanet where the private rented sector makes up 85% of the housing available. This imbalance of tenure and a lack of owner occupation creates problems. Areas are over crowded with high numbers of HMOs and densely populated streets. This is partly to do with the nature of the housing stock, as many of the former guest houses are too large to be used as single family dwellings, but also as a result of a number of agencies placing vulnerable people in the area. Interventions such as the 'Live Margate' project will help to rebalance the housing mix by bringing back empty properties into use as a mixture of market and affordable housing.

We will not tolerate poor quality accommodation and where appropriate we will improve the condition and management of privately rented housing in the district. Targeted housing interventions in areas where there is a concentration of poor quality privately rented housing, in particular the selective licensing scheme in tandem with the 'Live Margate' housing intervention, will tackle concentrations of deprivation and substandard living conditions.

Thanet District Council is committed to improving the standard of privately rented accommodation and has a large team dedicated to driving up standards and utilising the sector more effectively. This not only involves intensive enforcement activity, but also demands innovative approaches to working positively with private landlords. Examples of existing projects include tenant referencing, a bond scheme and landlord accreditation, with plans to develop further schemes around property accreditation, landlord liaison and tenancy support. With the powers introduced by the Localism Act, 2011, local authorities can now discharge their homelessness duty into the private rented

sector. This makes the private rented sector even more important and the need to improve standards through these initiatives is a high priority.

There are a number of good quality private rented properties managed by responsible landlords and this should be the normality of the district. Our aim is to rebalance the densely populated areas and improve the quality of accommodation. The private rented sector must play an important role for housing provision with reduced funding to build social housing and the affordability issues people face with being able to purchase their own home. Improving the private rented sector will help create quality neighbourhoods offering an attractive housing option to prospective tenants. Homes need to be well linked to high quality amenities and a local economy that engages the local community.

The Council's Housing Revenue Account assets are managed by the ALMO for East Kent - East Kent Housing (EKH). EKH manage the housing stock for Thanet, Dover, Canterbury and Shepway councils. As part of the Localism Act, the self financing regime for local authorities is now in operation. Thanet can utilise its HRA reserves to build new council homes and by adding empty properties to the portfolio, to bring back as affordable housing and allocate to households on the housing register. Reducing the number of empty properties in this way also reduces the fear of crime and will help make Thanet a safer place to live. A review of all the council's housing revenue account assets will be undertaken in order to ensure we are making best use of our existing stock and adding appropriate properties under the empty homes initiative. Under the re-invigorated Right to Buy, local authorities can retain additional receipts to fund the provision of replacement stock, so these measures will be incorporated into the overall asset management strategy.

As part of the new powers under the Localism Act 2011, we are producing a Tenancy Strategy to set out what tenancies we will offer to tenants in council housing and also what we expect Housing Associations to offer tenants in the district. It will also address the affordable rent policy of the district. The tenancy strategy will tackle under occupation and over crowding issues across all tenures and help to make better use of the housing stock.

In order to reduce fuel poverty and improve the energy efficiency of the existing housing stock across all tenures we will look at the implementation of schemes like the Green Deal.

## Enable vulnerable people access to good quality housing and to live independently

In order to identify and meet the gaps in the provision of the housing related support services for vulnerable people in the district, we will continue to work closely with Supporting People and Families and Social Care. Thanet District Council plays an active role in the Supporting People Commissioning Body, Core Strategy Group and the Joint Policy and Planning Board. These groups provide valuable links across the county with partners such as the health and social care sector.

The population projections for the district indicate that the percentage of older people in Thanet will increase. We need to review the provision of accommodation for older people to ensure their changing needs are being met. Research indicates that people wish to stay in their own home as long as possible. We will ensure that our older population continue to receive support and advice in relation to their housing options. Thanet District Council in partnership with Families and Social Care will ensure that our older population continue to receive support and advice in relation to their housing options and promote the development of housing models that enable independent living such as extra care, supported living and specialist housing.

We will work with private sector landlords, agents and other partners to develop pathways into private sector housing for vulnerable people and utilise the Learning Disabilities Toolkit to help people with a learning disability

To enable vulnerable people to stay in their own home, in a safe and secure environment we will work with the Home Improvement Agency and Families and Social Care to provide telecare solutions

The administration of the Disabled Facilities Grant Programme will continue to facilitate independent living for disabled people in their own homes. We will work with Housing Associations to ensure that disabled units are incorporated into new developments. Promoting independence, social inclusion and keeping people safe all works towards building a sustainable community.

## Provide an accessible housing options service for Thanet residents

We will continue to prevent and reduce homelessness in Thanet. Tackling homelessness is not just about addressing street homelessness, it is also about finding lasting solutions to stop people from becoming homeless in the first place. The council delivers many services to try and prevent homelessness and early intervention is the key to achieving this.

Homelessness applications and acceptances have increased in 2010-11 as have the number of households on the waiting list. The current economic situation and increased unemployment may be responsible for this. The prevention of homelessness continues to be a high priority and this will be closely monitored in conjunction with the benefit changes.

### Housing Options Data 2006 - 2011

Description	2006-7	2007-8	2008-9	2009-10	2010-11
Households on the housing register	3757	3255	4697	4898	5123
Housing register annual percentage increase	+10%	-14%	+30%	+4.3%	4.4%
Homeless applications	178	164	138	131	215
Acceptances	116	101	66	63	123
Percentages of acceptances	65%	62%	48%	49%	42%
Total Lettings	589	624	343 From Aug 08 – March 09	663	660

Some of the joint working which has taken place across the district and county has enabled further solutions and funding streams to actively assist us take a pro-active approach to homeless prevention. We will continue to work alongside MARAC and MAPPA to ensure the best housing solutions for high risk offenders and we recognise our responsibilities to work in partnership with other Criminal Justice agencies to support the rehabilitation of ex-offenders who meet the threshold for priority need.

A review of the allocations policy and the housing register eligibility criteria will be undertaken in accordance with the Localism Act. We need to manage expectations of households on the housing register as the supply of social housing is limited compared with the high demand. To improve the range of housing options available, we will include Low Cost Home Ownership and the private rented sector as mainstream housing options. We can now discharge the homelessness duty into the private rented sector under the powers of the Localism Act and we will work with our statutory partners to do so where appropriate.

As the housing authority we have a duty to provide emergency accommodation to people who may be eligible for assistance, who are homeless and in priority need under the Housing Act 1996 (amended 2002). A review and new options will be considered for this accommodation.

Thanet residents will be affected by the changes as part of the Welfare and Benefit Reform. Housing Options will work closely with the benefits team to manage the impacts. Work is already underway as a result of the social sector size criteria (also known as “bedroom tax”) announcements, which will mean that households currently under occupying their homes will receive reduced benefits. Homes may become unaffordable for some benefit claimants and we need to prevent increased rent arrears and issues for tenants claiming benefits, both in the Council’s housing stock, housing association properties and the private rented sector. We need to be proactive in our approach to ensure our residents are offered professional support and advice.



## Deliver housing in support of our regeneration and economic development objectives

The housing supply in Thanet must reflect the needs and aspirations of a more inclusive community, having regard to prospective economic growth. The housing offer in Thanet can play an important role in encouraging economic growth. As well as re-building our reputation as a visitor destination with a strong and expanding tourist economy, we also have a wide range of housing assets with our rich heritage, coastal location and character properties. The SHMA indicates that many 16-24 year olds leave the district when they leave education and we need to give people a reason to stay. Our housing offer can also attract in-migration of working people in search of a certain lifestyle.

The East Kent Local Investment Plan can promote the regeneration aims of Thanet and ensure housing issues are represented at the East Kent Regeneration Board. Housing issues will be incorporated into the Thanet Regeneration Board to ensure we successfully fulfil our economic aspirations for Thanet. The Housing Strategy, Economic Strategy and Local Plan all link together and work towards achieving the aspirations in the Corporate Plan.

New housing developments must create sustainable and inclusive communities and take advantage of the infrastructure and recently improved transport links. It is the role of the Local Plan to set housing targets for the district, and these should be representative of the housing need for the Thanet.

## How we will manage delivery

The action plan which accompanies this Housing Strategy will be monitored annually for the duration of this strategy to ensure the aims and objectives are being met and remain current.

The key housing issues for Thanet over the next four years have been identified as part of the initial consultation, which was undertaken in December 2011. A review document (Appendix 3) was sent out to 150 stakeholders, to include Housing Associations, developers, landlords and others (full stakeholder consultation list at appendix on p.53).

The review document outlined the achievements since the last strategy and set about identifying the key current housing issues the district faces over the next five years. The main issues are identified below in order of priority as identified during the initial consultation:

<b>High Priority</b>
The continued delivery of affordable housing.
Manage the impacts of the benefit reform and the Localism Bill.
Continue the existing good work to bring long term empty properties back into use.
Make best use of existing and potential new council housing through appropriate asset management.
Make best use of planning policies to deliver affordable homes.
Continued work to improve the conditions of the private rented sector.
A continued focus to prevent homelessness.
<b>Medium Priority</b>
A focus on providing larger family homes.
Further work to review the provision of accommodation for older people in the district.
The provision of new accommodation for people with support needs in line with the Kent Supporting People Strategy.
Review the allocations policy.
Review the under-occupation policy to make best use of existing stock.
<b>Low Priority</b>
<i>None of the issues were considered to be of low priority, all respondents felt that the issues were medium and high priority.</i>

More specific comments were also received which are summarised in Appendix 3 and have helped to inform the draft strategy. In addition to this, internal officer workshops have been held to raise awareness of the changes affecting housing over the next few years and help to ensure the action plan incorporates cross departmental projects.

The comments received as part of the consultation of the draft strategy will inform the final version. The strategy will then go through the Council's adoption procedure.

# Conclusion

Thanet District Council is committed to achieving the housing vision of providing Thanet residents with good quality housing, that is affordable, which meets peoples changing needs and aspirations and is located within pleasant, safe and sustainable communities.

Good quality housing is a vital part of creating sustainable communities. It is essential to the physical health and mental wellbeing of our community. Housing also promotes the independence of vulnerable adults, equality of opportunity, educational attainment, access to work and generally improving opportunities for local people. It can also help to promote the reduction of crime by creating safer communities.

Our Housing Strategy is a key contributor to Thanet District Council achieving the Corporate Plan aims, in particular tackling disadvantage, planning for the right type and number of homes in the right places and influencing the work of other agencies, with the main objective of creating sustainable communities.

The core priorities for our housing strategy are also set within a national and sub regional context. In particular the new powers under the Localism Act, 2011 give us more influence to set objectives in accordance with local needs and circumstances. This means we are better equipped to respond to the housing needs and aspirations of our residents.

We need to focus our resources on seeking imaginative ways of utilising all available housing assets to maximise housing options for local people. The SHMA indicates that we will never be able to meet the housing need for affordable housing simply by building new homes. We therefore need to utilise other initiatives, such as the empty homes programme and also use the private rented sector to meet housing need.

We will bring empty properties back into use, to provide additional homes by utilising the existing housing stock. The private rented sector plays an important role in housing provision for our residents and we will improve standards and continue to work with partners to deliver good quality accommodation.

Targeted housing initiatives will rebalance the housing market in areas dominated by single tenure accommodation. New housing supply must reflect the needs and aspirations of a more inclusive community, having regard to prospective economic growth.

The action plan is the mechanism for delivering the objectives of the Housing strategy. An annual report will be published to monitor the Housing Strategy's implementation, to respond to major policy or financial changes and to identify any amendments to the strategy or action plan.

# Action plan

## Strategic Priority 1: Deliver a range of homes to meet the local housing need which residents can afford.

Action No.	Action	Outcome	Resources	When by	Lead
<b>Objective 1.1</b>	<b>Deliver 280 new affordable homes for rent and low cost home ownership by 2016.</b>				
1.1.1	Work with Housing Associations and other partners to enable the delivery of new affordable homes	Increased supply of affordable housing to households on the housing register.	Officer time.	March 2016	Senior Strategic Housing Officer
1.1.2	Redevelop the Flowing Bowl site in Newington to deliver 15 affordable homes.	The delivery of 15 new affordable houses contributing to the regeneration of The Centre.	Planning application fee. Construction costs. Officer time.	March 2014	Housing Services Manager
1.1.3	Explore the potential to deliver local authority shared ownership accommodation.	Working people on low incomes will be able to purchase a share in a property.	Officer time. HRA reserves.	July 2013	Senior Strategic Housing Officer
<b>Objective 1.2</b>	<b>Maximise the future delivery of affordable housing in the district.</b>				
1.2.1	Develop an affordable housing policy for the Local Plan using the Economic Viability Assessment and Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA).	The current thresholds and requirements for affordable housing will be updated based on the evidence. The recommendations will inform the Local Plan.	Consultant fee. Officer time.	Dec 2013	Strategic Planning and Strategic Housing
1.2.2	Work alongside planning team with Housing Associations and developers to ensure that new development delivers the right amount and type of affordable housing on site and utilise the economic viability assessment in circumstances where off site contributions are necessary.	Schemes which include affordable housing will be actively monitored and their development facilitated.	Officer time.	Ongoing	Senior Strategic Housing Officer

Action No.	Action	Outcome	Resources	When by	Lead
1.2.3	Make recommendations in relation to CIL in respect of affordable housing.	Members and Senior Officers are aware of the implications of CIL on affordable housing delivery.	Officer time.	Dec 2013	Senior Strategic Housing Officer
1.2.4	Develop a strategy for the spend of S106 contributions to provide affordable housing, to ensure best value for money is achieved.	Efficient use of S106 monies on identified sites and schemes to deliver affordable housing.	Officer time.	Dec 2013	Senior Strategic Housing Officer
1.2.5	Develop an Affordable Rent policy.	Thanet have an affordable rent policy for our housing stock and also for Housing Associations to have regard to with their housing stock.	Officer time.	March 2013	Housing Services Manager
<b>Objective 1.3</b>	<b>Understand the housing needs of residents in the district</b>				
1.3.1	Strategic Housing team to work with the planning team to provide evidence and support for the production of the housing elements of the Local Plan.	Strategic Housing priorities and Strategic Planning priorities are interlinked.	Officer time.	Ongoing	Strategic Housing
1.3.2	Provide evidence for local plan policies to support the need for Lifetime Homes.	Planning can implement policies to provide lifetime homes in the district.	Officer time.	Ongoing	Senior Strategic Housing Officer
1.3.3	Gather evidence from Thanet Christchurch University to support the need for student accommodation.	Appropriate student accommodation can be provided for.	Officer time.	Ongoing	Senior Strategic Housing Officer.
1.3.4	Undertake Housing Needs surveys in the rural communities.	The Housing need is understood and can be provided for through the Local Plan process.	Rural Housing Enabler time. Officer time.	April 2013	Strategic Housing Officer

**Strategic Priority 2: Make better use of the existing housing stock across all tenures and improve housing conditions.**

Action No.	Action	Outcome	Resources	When by	Lead
<b>2.1</b>	<b>Bring 290 empty homes back into use.</b>				
2.1.1	Bring 100 empty properties back into use, utilising a range of powers including the no use empty loan scheme.	Successfully brought 100 empty properties back into use across the district.	Officer time	March 2013	Housing Regeneration Manager
2.1.2	Complete the project to bring back into use 30 empty homes as HRA housing stock.	30 new homes are provided through bringing back empty properties to be allocated to households on the Housing Register.	Officer time. £1,386,000 of HRA funding. £535,000 of HCA grant funding.	March 2015	Housing Services Manager/Housing Regeneration Manager
2.1.3	Complete the Clusters of Empty Homes project in Cliftonville/Margate.	Bringing 160 empty homes back into use.	Officer time HCA funding - £4,130,923 HRA funding - £4,000,000	March 2014	Housing Regeneration Manager
2.1.4	Introduce a project to intervene in the housing market in Cliftonville West/ Margate Central (Live Margate).	A balanced housing market providing a range of quality housing options across all tenures including a 10-15 year strategy for developing property in the intervention.	Officer time £2million + HRA Cluster bid funding as above £10million KCC £5million SELEP	Ongoing long term project 2022	Housing Regeneration Manager
<b>2.2</b>	<b>Improve housing conditions in the private rented sector.</b>				
2.2.1	Review the impact of selective licensing 2 years on from scheme becoming operative.	Positive changes have been seen in the designated area around the management of private rented property, housing conditions and anti-social behaviour	Officer time	June 2013	Housing Regeneration Manager

Action No.	Action	Outcome	Resources	When by	Lead
2.2.2	To develop an in-house managing agent/private sector leasing scheme.	Ability to manage private rented property on behalf of landlords in the district to ensure good quality and well managed accommodation.	Officer time	Stage 1 business case March 2013 Stage 2 implementation if agreed March 2014	Housing Regeneration Manager
2.2.3	Monitor licensed HMOs in the district through our inspection programme.	Well managed HMO accommodation that helps support housing need in the district	Officer time	Ongoing	Housing Regeneration Manager
<b>2.3</b>	<b>Ensure acceptable management standards in the private rented sector.</b>				
2.3.1	Develop and introduce a tenant referencing scheme.	To incentivise tenants to be responsible in the rented sector and to assist landlords to make an informed choice over the tenants they take on	Officer time	March 2013	Housing Regeneration Manager
2.3.2	Develop a database to capture data collected through the Your Home Your Health Programme as a pilot for rest of Kent.	An online referral process is in place to assist vulnerable people to access services where needed. Data from the system is being used to provide accurate up to date stock condition profiling.	Officer time £10,000 grant from KHG	March 2013	Housing Regeneration Manager
<b>2.4</b>	<b>Make better use of the Housing Revenue Account assets.</b>				
2.4.1	Develop and monitor a 30 year HRA business plan.	To ensure there are adequate resources to maintain investment in the stock and deliver and effective housing service.	Officer time.	Dec 2013	Housing Services Manager
2.4.2	Produce a Housing Revenue Account Asset Management Strategy.	Maximise opportunities through the strategy for making better use of existing housing stock and assets.	Officer time. Consultant fee.	Sept 2013	Housing Services Manager

2.4.3	Utilise Right to Buy receipts.	Recycling revenue from sales received to build new council homes and enabling tenants who can afford it to become home owners.	Officer time. Potential new build construction costs.	Ongoing.	Housing Services Manager
2.4.4	To set out a repairs and maintenance programme of Housing Revenue Account stock.	That HRA properties will all be well maintained and comply with the Decent Homes standard.	Officer time.	March 2013	East Kent Housing
2.4.5	Consider how TDC can link into and utilise the Green Deal for its housing stock.	A plan of how the Green Deal could benefit tenants is produced.	Officer time.	April 2013	Housing Services Manager/Housing Regeneration Manager
<b>2.5</b>	<b>Increase feelings of community safety in the district.</b>				
2.5.1	Ensure that East Kent Housing develop initiatives to aid the reduction of crime and disorder.	Residents feel safe in their communities and crime is reduced.	Officer time	Ongoing	Housing Services Manager
2.5.2	Ensure that Housing Officers work closely with the Community Safety Team.	Cross departmental working will help to further implement the reduction of crime.	Officer time	Ongoing	Housing Options Manager
<b>2.6</b>	<b>Tackle under occupation and over crowding.</b>				
2.6.1	Develop a joint Tenancy Strategy with Kent Housing Group to cover the broader principles for Kent authorities.	An understanding of the issues affecting all the districts and a greater transparency for Housing Associations.	Officer time.	March 2013	Housing Services Manager
2.6.2	Develop a Thanet specific Tenancy Strategy to detail the specific issues for the district.	To ensure an understanding by Housing Associations, residents and partners of the Thanet specific issues.	Officer time.	March 2013	Housing Services Manager



**Strategic Priority 3: Enable vulnerable people access to good quality housing and to live independently.**

Action No.	Action	Outcome	Resources Required	When by	Lead
<b>Objective 3.1</b>	<b>Review the provision of accommodation for vulnerable groups in the district in conjunction with our statutory partners and stakeholders.</b>				
3.1.1	Provide evidence to support the housing need for wheelchair accommodation, which will inform planning policy.	Wheelchair units will be provided through the planning process. Developers and Housing Association will liaise with Strategic Housing in relation to specific requirements.	Officer time.	Ongoing	Senior Strategic Housing Officer
3.1.2	Review the provision of accommodation for older people in the district to provide evidence to support planning policies.	Planning policies can support the provision of accommodation for older people in accordance with the housing need.	Officer time.	Dec 2013	Senior Strategic Housing Officer
3.1.3	Review the Disabled Facilities Grant policy.	Review the policy to ensure value for money and an improved customer journey.	Officer time	March 2013	Housing Regeneration Manager
<b>Objective 3.2</b>	<b>Enable new supported housing provision that will meet the identified needs of vulnerable groups.</b>				
3.2.1	Continued commitment to the Private Finance Initiative Scheme 'Excellent Homes for All' and select the final preferred bidder and reach financial close of the project.	Thanet will benefit from 40 units of extra care and 9 units of mental health accommodation and have 100% nomination rights over these units.	Officer time. S106 contributions.	Dec 2013	Senior Strategic Housing Officer
3.2.2	Continued commitment to the Private Finance Initiative Scheme 'Better Homes Active Lives'	Attend meetings and letting panels to continue the success of the schemes.	Officer time.	Ongoing	Housing Services Manager
3.2.3	Explore the funding opportunities available through the HCA Care and Support Fund Phase 1.	The HRA could build new wheelchair homes and older persons accommodation.	Officer Time HRA funds	May 2013	Senior Strategic Housing Officer

**Strategic Priority 4: Provide an accessible housing options service for Thanet residents.**

Action No.	Action	Outcome	Resources Required	When by	Lead
<b>Objective 4.1</b>	<b>Allocate social homes to those in most housing need.</b>				
4.1.1	Review the allocations policy.	A revised Allocations Policy which is fit for purpose and incorporates the key priorities for the district.	Time / input from other sources	May 2013	Housing Options Manager
4.1.2	Housing Applications to be registered online enabling sufficient verification to be conducted	Reducing the number of people on the housing register and manage expectations.	Comprehensive Allocation policy / staff time.	April 2013	Housing Options Manager
<b>Objective 4.2</b>	<b>Prevent and reduce homelessness.</b>				
4.2.1	Work with private landlords by creating a specific service to utilise the private rented sector for discharging the homeless duty.	Good quality and well managed private rented sector accommodation as a long term housing option. Ensure suitable, reasonable and tenancy to be for a minimum of 12 months.	Attendance of landlord forum	Ongoing	Housing Options Manager/ Housing Regeneration Manager
4.2.2	Promote the use of the bond scheme, working with the Housing Regeneration team.	Develop a robust bond scheme to enable people to manage and sustain their private rented sector tenancies & ensure an incentive package is developed to encourage landlords to work with us	Staff in both HO and PSH	Ongoing	Housing Options Manager
4.2.3	Continue the Mortgage rescue scheme.	Utilise the small amount of funding supplied by government to clear rent/mortgage arrears to prevent homelessness and refer where appropriate	Staff	Ongoing	Housing Options Manager

Action No.	Action	Outcome	Resources	When by	Lead
<b>Objective 4.3</b>	<b>Prevent and reduce homelessness continued...</b>				
4.3.1	Work closely with partners to ensure that Young People have the appropriate options and support by statutory organisations.	Develop a model with Statutory partners to ensure that young people are reunited with family and support is implemented to the household & conduct joint assessments when required.	Staff and commitment from CSS	Ongoing	Housing Options Manager
4.3.2	Continued involvement in MARAC and make better connections with MAPPA.	To ensure TDC is represented and has input in future housing options for offenders.	Officer time.	Ongoing	Housing Options Manager
4.3.3	Work more closely with Moat, the Homebuy agent to promote low cost home ownership.	Awareness of Homebuy and low cost home ownership is increased amongst residents.	Officer time.	Ongoing	Strategic Housing Officer
<b>Objective 4.4</b>	<b>Reduce the use of temporary accommodation.</b>				
4.4.1	Review the use of temporary accommodation for homeless households and explore new options to include other alternatives to avoid the use of B&Bs.	Reduce the cost of temporary homeless accommodation & in addition explore methods and joint working with other LAs and procuring this service.	EKS / PSH commitment	July 2013	Housing Options Manager
4.4.2	Review the out of hours response to ensure to minimise placements into emergency accommodation.	Minimal placements into emergency accommodation are made to ensure more planned moves.	Officer time.	Ongoing	Housing Options Manager

Action No.	Action	Outcome	Resources	When by	Lead
<b>Objective 4.5</b>	<b>Deliver appropriate services to manage the impact of Welfare and Benefit Reform.</b>				
4.5.1	Monitor the impact of the Welfare reforms and work closely with Housing Benefits.	Ensuring advice and options are given to people facing changes to their housing benefit.	Working with HB / CS / Porchlight	Ongoing	Housing Options Manager
4.5.2	Continue to explore opportunities of funding and support Charities in delivering the Crisis Service which target 25-35 year olds who are the most effected.	More 25-35 years olds will be supported to access accommodation in the private sector.	Officer time.	Ongoing	Housing Options Manager
4.5.3	TDC to develop and deliver a Welfare and Benefit Reform Action Plan.	Mitigation and management of implementation of welfare reform locally.	Officer time.	Ongoing	Strategic Community Manager
4.5.4	Assist residents with their housing options who are affected by the Welfare and Benefit reform and may need to move home.	Residents are able to live in properties they can afford.	Officer time	Ongoing	Housing Options Manager

**Strategic Priority 5: Deliver housing in support of our regeneration and economic development objectives.**

Action No.	Action	Outcome	Resources	When by	Lead
<b>5.1</b>	<b>Ensure the housing objectives link in with the wider strategic objectives for regeneration and economic development.</b>				
5.1.1	Pro-active involvement in the East Kent Local Investment Plan priorities and East Kent Regeneration Board objectives.	Ensure the strategic housing priorities for Thanet are integrated into the East Kent Regeneration Board discussions and objectives.	Officer time.	Ongoing	Economic Development Manager
5.1.2	Support the production of housing policies in the Local Plan to provide the right mix and type of market housing to reflect needs and aspirations, and support Thanet's economic regeneration.	The Local Plan housing policies can support our economic aspirations.	Officer time.	Dec 2013	Senior Strategic Housing Officer
5.1.3	Contact all housing associations with housing stock in Thanet and other Housing Associations working in Kent, to discuss development opportunities in Thanet.	Increased Housing Association development partners working in the district.	Officer time.	June 2013	Strategic Housing Officer

# Appendix 1: Strategic Context

There have been a number of key changes since the previous Housing Strategy 2005-2010 in terms of policy and strategy at the national, regional and local levels:

## National

### **National Housing Strategy**

The Housing Strategy launched by CLG in November 2011, aims to strengthen the local economy by breaking the current cycle in which lenders won't lend, builders can't build and buyers can't buy. The strategy seeks change and it outlines a number of changes which are already being implemented as well as some additional schemes and funding streams.

The proposals in the strategy aim to address the current problems with the housing market by:

- Increasing supply; which will encourage economic growth
- Reforming social and affordable housing
- Encouraging a thriving private rented sector
- Producing a strategy for empty homes
- Improving the quality of the housing experience and support
- Encouraging quality housing which is sustainable and of quality design

### **National Planning Policy Framework (2012)**

This reflects the government's objectives of delivering a wide choice of quality affordable and market homes. It expects planning policies to help widen opportunities for home ownership, to create sustainable, mixed and inclusive communities, facilitate bringing empty properties back into use.

### **Planning Policy Statement 3: Housing (2011)**

The National Planning Policy Framework has now superseded PPS3.

### **Sustainable Communities (2005)**

This is a national strategy for dealing with homelessness, which set out aims to halve the number of households living in insecure temporary accommodation by 2010.

### **Homes for the Future: More Affordable, More Sustainable (2007)**

The government's Housing Green Paper sets out plans for increasing housing supply including affordable housing. Proposals included accelerating the rate of new housing delivery, establishing new growth points, making the most of effective use of existing housing and ensuring homes are well designed and greener.

### **Lifetime Homes, Lifetime Neighbourhoods (2008)**

The national strategy for housing in an ageing society.

### **Creating strong safe and prosperous communities (2008)**

The Statutory guidance on the central and local government, partners and citizens working together through Local Strategic Partnerships and delivery of Sustainable Community Strategies.

**Localism Act, 2011**

The Localism Bill received royal assent on 15 November 2011, becoming an Act. The Act made a number of changes devolving greater powers to councils and neighbourhoods and giving local communities more control over housing and planning decisions.

The housing provisions will:

- Abolish the requirement to have a Home Improvement Pack.
- Reform the Housing Revenue Account system.
- Provide for a new form of flexible tenure for social housing tenants.
- Allow local authorities to discharge their duties to homeless people by using private rented accommodation.
- Give local authorities the power to limit who can apply for social housing within their areas.
- Abolish the Tenant Services Authority and provides for a transfer of functions to the Homes and Communities Agency.
- Amend the way in which a social tenant can make a complaint about their landlord.
- Improve the ability of social tenants to move to different areas.

Other provisions in the Localism Act will also have an impact on housing:

- Abolish Regional Spatial Strategies, so there will no longer be nationally imposed housing targets (this aspect of the Act was challenged in court and RSS are still a material consideration).
- Amend the Community Infrastructure Levy, which allows councils to charge developers to pay for infrastructure. Some of the revenue will be available for the local community. Affordable housing is not currently part of the CIL arrangements, but a consultation is currently asking local authorities if they consider it should be.
- Provide for neighbourhood plans, which would be approved if they received 50% of the votes cast in a referendum.
- Provide for neighbourhood development orders to allow communities to approve development without requiring normal planning consent.

The Act gives local authorities greater freedom to set their own policies about who should qualify to go on the waiting list for social housing in their area. This means that they are now able, if they wish, to prevent people who have no need of social housing from joining the waiting list. Authorities are still obliged to ensure that social homes go to the most vulnerable in society and those who need it most.

**The Welfare Reform Act, 2011**

The Act provides for the introduction of a 'Universal Credit' to replace a range of existing means-tested benefits and tax credits for people of working age, starting from 2013. It followed the November 2010 White Paper, 'Universal Credit: welfare that works', which set out the Coalition Government's proposals for reforming welfare to improve work incentives, simplify the benefits system and tackle administrative complexity.

The Act makes a number of changes which will have significant impacts for social housing landlords and their working age tenants including:

- Reducing HB for working age claimants who are considered to be under-occupying their accommodation
- Capping benefits for working age claimants at the level of the average (after tax) earnings of working households
- Paying support for housing costs directly to the tenant rather than the landlord unless the tenant is 'vulnerable'.
- Provides protection from some of the cuts for pension age claimants

- Makes other changes including tougher sanctions, replacement of Disability Living Allowance with Personal Independence Payment, and time-limited payments of contributory Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) for all but the most seriously sick or disabled.
- Many claimants will experience the cumulative impact of multiple changes over the next few years.

### **Homes and Communities Agency (HCA)**

The HCA was formed in December 2008 bringing together the functions of English Partnerships, the investment functions of the Housing Corporation, the Academy for Sustainable Communities, and key housing and regeneration programmes delivered by Communities and Local Government (CLG). The HCA have recently undergone changes in line with the economic situation and the pressures on funding streams. The Affordable Homes Programme 2011-2015 forms the basis for affordable housing provision for this Housing Strategy. The new HCA framework has introduced the new Affordable Rent Model, which are rents charged at 80% of market rents and the additional income generated is to be re-used for affordable housing provision.

Thanet District Council work very closely with the HCA who are a key partner in achieving the aims in this strategy.

### **New Homes Bonus**

The Bonus commenced in April 2011 and will match fund the additional council tax raised for new homes and properties brought back into use, with an additional amount for affordable homes, for the following six years. It is intended to provide an incentive for growth and mitigate the strain increased population can cause on public services and amenities.

### **Community Right to Build**

These proposals form part of the Neighbourhood Planning framework within the Localism Bill. If the Localism Bill becomes law, developments for new houses, community facilities or shops which have the agreement of the local area through a 'community referendum', and meet a minimum criterion, communities will not need to go through the normal planning application process.



## Regional

### **South East Plan (Regional Spatial Strategy) 2006-2026**

The South East plan previously set housing targets for local authorities, but there has been a shift of control from central government and a top down approach to local authorities and the community deciding their housing targets. The abolition of Regional Spatial Strategies was incorporated into the Localism Act, 2011, although this received legal challenge, which the court supported. Until it is abolished, the targets set by the South East Plan are still a material consideration and carry some weight in terms of planning decisions, although it is for Local Authorities to now decide their housing numbers moving forward.

### **Regional Housing Strategy 2008-2011**

This set out the housing priorities for the region and a framework for investment with the key aims:

- To build more affordable homes
- Bring decent housing within reach of people on lower incomes
- Improve the quality of new housing and existing stock

## Sub Regional

### **Vision for Kent**

In April 2006 the Local Strategic Partnership for Kent published its county wide Sustainable Communities Strategy setting out the 'Vision for Kent' over a twenty year period in terms of improvements to the economic, social and environmental wellbeing of the County. Key themes included; housing growth, economic development, the ageing population and tackling disadvantage and promoting independence.

### **Kent Forum Housing Strategy 2012-2015**

The county-wide Housing Strategy, produced on behalf of and endorsed by the Kent Forum, the political Leaders and Chief Executives of the local authorities in Kent. A Kent and Medway Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) was commissioned in 2009 to inform development of the Strategy and the Strategy features best practice case studies from across the County. The original Strategy was refreshed in 2012 to reflect fast-paced changes in housing policy, including the National Housing Strategy, changes to the planning system and the changes to the welfare benefits system. The Strategy raises a number of issues that are relevant to Thanet and delivery of the recommendations within the Strategy is owned by Kent Housing Group, of which Thanet District Council is a member.

### **Kent Supporting People Strategy 2010-2015**

The Supporting People Commissioning Body for Kent has produced a strategy for the future delivery of housing related support services that will enable vulnerable people to live independently in their community. A key focus of the strategy is on prevention and providing support within people's own homes.

### **Kent and Medway Strategic Plan for Reducing Re-Offending 2012-2015**

Stable, suitable and affordable accommodation is essential to offenders to reduce their risk of re-offending, increase their equality of treatment within the Criminal Justice System and enable inclusive and stable lifestyles within communities. Current data shows that between April 2010 and March 2011, 36% of offenders who started a community order in Kent or Medway were identified as having an accommodation need, this equates to 1247 offenders.

### **East Kent Homelessness Strategy (2008-2013)**

The Homelessness Act 2002 placed a statutory duty on local authorities to publish a homelessness strategy and a requirement that the strategy should be updated every 5 years. The East Kent local authorities have a good track record in joint working and published a joint strategy in 2008. The key strategic priorities are:

1. Maximise housing options and choice for customers.

2. Prevent rough sleeping.
3. Promote sustainable private sector accommodation.
4. Help homeless households to secure and retain good quality accommodation.
5. Reduce the use of temporary accommodation.
6. Tackle youth homelessness.
7. Monitor performance and develop best practice in homelessness.

### **East Kent Sustainable Community Strategy 'Lighting the Way to Success' (2009)**

The East Kent Local Strategic Partnership published the document which places strong emphasis on the regeneration of Dover as well as picking up the Kent Local Strategic Partnership themes of tackling social disadvantage and the need for economic growth.

### **East Kent Local Investment Plan (2011)**

This document was formulated as part of the Single Conversation process with the East Kent Local Authorities, the East Kent Local Strategic Partnership and the Homes and Communities Agency. The purpose of the Local Investment Plan is to translate the vision of the East Kent Sustainable Community Strategy into reality with a programme of projects. The document outlines the key strategic and local priorities for the East Kent districts:

#### Strategic Priorities for Thanet

1. Manston Airport and Central Thanet
2. Dover Port, Waterfront and Town Centre
3. A2 Corridor
4. Dungeness Nuclear Power Station
5. Margate & Cliftonville Housing Intervention and Regeneration Programme
6. Whitfield Extension
7. Folkestone Seafront
8. Canterbury Knowledge City

#### Local Priorities for Thanet

1. Newington and the Flowing Bowl – The Centre, Ramsgate
2. Thanet Small Brownfield Sites
3. Wind Farm
4. Ramsgate Port, Marina and Waterfront
5. East Cliff Regeneration Programme
6. Eco Park at Richborough

The Local Investment Plan priorities have formed the basis of funding discussions with the Homes and Communities Agency relating to the Affordable Homes Programme 2011-2015.

## Local

### **Thanet Vision 2030**

In 2007 Thanet District Council set out its vision for where it wanted the district to be in 2030. The Housing Strategy aims to help Thanet work towards this vision.

### **Corporate Plan, 2012-2016**

The Corporate Plan has now been adopted and runs for the same period as the Housing Strategy from 2012-16.

The three core aims of the Corporate Plan which will help to achieve the Thanet Vision are:

- Working together to make Thanet safe and improve the quality of life and health prospects for all.
- Keeping Thanet beautiful by making the place cleaner and greener.
- Attracting employment especially by supporting tourism and the green economy.

The Housing Strategy and accompanying action plan cross reference with the majority of the Corporate Plan themes in particular Priority 7: We will plan for the right type and number of homes in the right place to create sustainable communities in the future.

The government has introduced a number of changes and proposals that will affect councils, which include reductions in the amount of grant received by local authorities. Thanet District Council's funding has been cut by 5.29% which was finalised in February 2011. Further changes at a national level which will affect Thanet are still emerging, such as the Localism Bill and the Public Service Reform Bill.

### **Community Services Service Plans**

The Service Plans form an important part of the delivery of the Corporate Plan. They detail the projects and work streams which help to achieve the aims in the Corporate Plan.

### **Local Plan**

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) now requires Local Authorities to produce Local Plans instead of Local Development Frameworks. A major review of the Council's Local Plan is in progress. This will roll forward the Council's planning policies relating to quantity, type and location of new homes to be accommodated in the district. The Housing Strategy and Local Plan will be mutually consistent and supportive.

### **Strategic Housing Market Assessment (2009)**

In 2008 consultants were appointed to carry out a Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) for the East Kent sub-region, the purpose being to help determine the amount of affordable and market housing needed across East Kent and within each local authority district.

The key issue arising from the SHMA was that demand is clearly outweighing the supply of affordable housing in East Kent. In the context of the other districts which took part in the SHMA, Thanet had the highest proportion of its total stock in flats and a high proportion of households renting privately. The SHMA noted that on the Housing Register held by Thanet District Council's Housing department, the highest requirement is for 1 bed homes as well as a substantial demand for 2 bed homes. There is, however, a large supply of homes becoming available to re-let and the SHMA recommends focusing on the needs for larger family homes.

In terms of the future housing market, the SHMA noted the projected increase in the elderly population as the largest driver of housing market change, which has implications for the need for aids, adaptations, wheelchair and lifetime home standards, housing support, care and health services.

In relation to aspirations for economic regeneration, the SHMA indicates that future housing market policy should have a substantial element of family housing development at its core. The SHMA concluded that while a proportion of smaller properties are necessary for younger and older single people, the main property types that the future housing market needs are those that will attract more affluent working households with families, and those that meet the needs of younger families facing deprivation and affordability problems.

A new Strategic Housing Market Assessment will be undertaken during the life of this strategy, and any changes in priorities will be addressed through the action plan, when it is monitored and reviewed annually.

### **Economic Viability Assessment**

This will assess the economic viability of housing and other development in Thanet in order to inform planning policies to deliver new homes including affordable housing and supporting infrastructure.

### **East Kent Housing**

East Kent Housing is an Arms Length Management Organisation (ALMO). They are now responsible for the housing management functions for Dover, Canterbury, Shepway and Thanet councils. The contract is for thirty years to provide housing management services on behalf of the local authorities.

The East Kent Delivery Plan 2012-14 sets out the following objectives and how these will be addressed:

- Objective 1 – Excellent customer service.
- Objective 2 – Improving Performance
- Objective 3 – Improving our estates
- Objective 4 – Working with residents to improve services
- Objective 5 – Providing quality homes
- Objective 6 – Supporting a high quality workforce
- Objective 7 – Providing value for money
- Objective 8 – Promoting equality and Equality and Diversity
- Objective 9 – Good governance
- Objective 10 – Adding value - doing things differently

### **Thanet Community Safety Action Plan 2012-13**

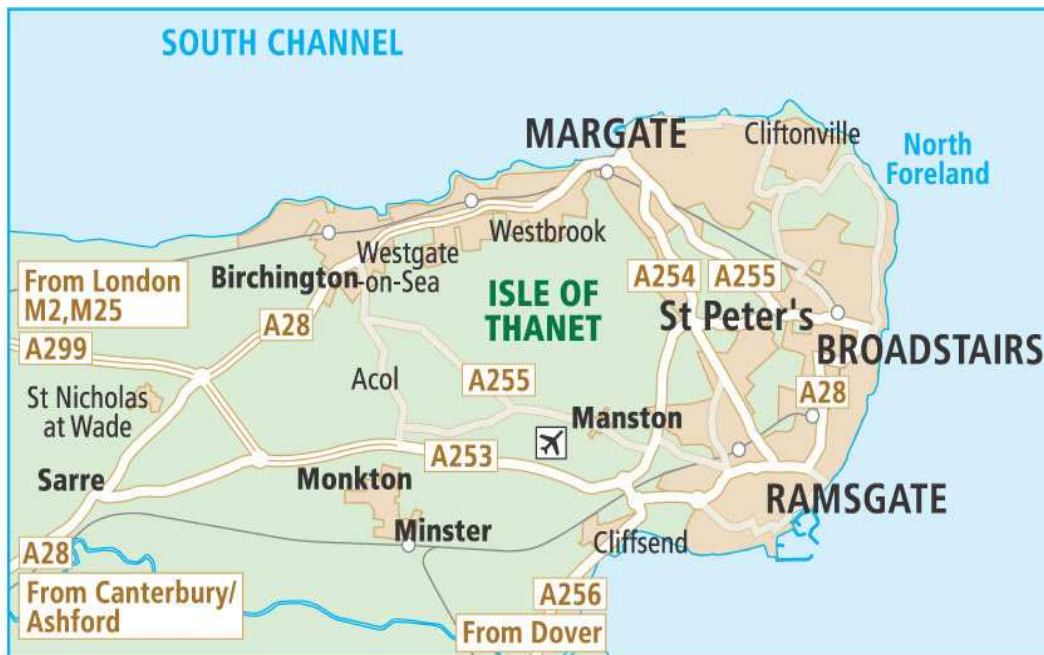
Thanet Community Safety Partnership have a community plan which aims to ensure residents feel safe and involved in the work that the team undertake. The priorities for 2012-13 are to tackle the following:

1. Anti-social behaviour
2. Domestic Abuse
3. Substance misuse
4. Violent crime

The action plan sets out the actions in order to address these priorities.

# Appendix 2: Local Context and Key Issues

## Map of Thanet



## Demographics

### Population

The population of Thanet in 2011 was 134,200<sup>3</sup> and the total number of dwellings in Thanet is 65,473 (2012).

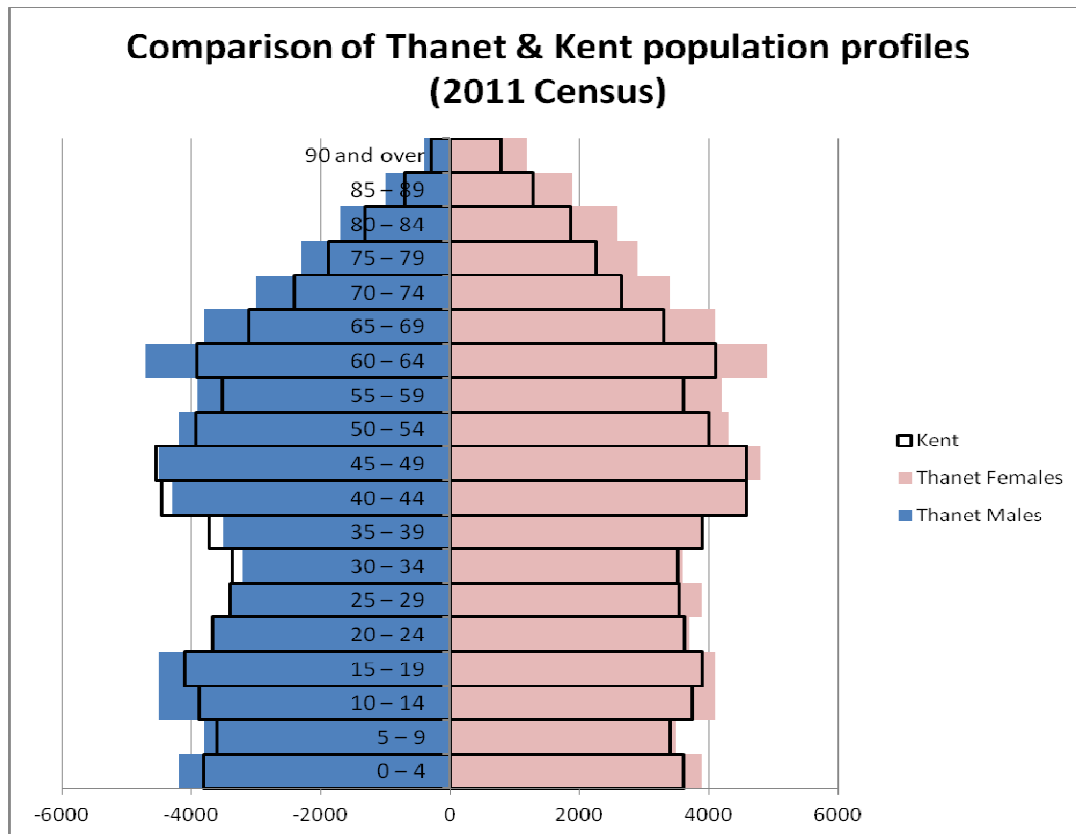
Of the population in Thanet in 2009, 124,230 people lived in urban areas and 6,650 lived in rural areas.<sup>4</sup> Thanet has the second highest density in the County after Dartford.

<sup>3</sup> National Statistics (ONS) Census 2011

<sup>4</sup> Rural and urban areas comply with the 'Rural and Urban Area Classification 2005' by ODPM, DEFRA, NAW, ONS and Countryside Agency.

All statistical data is taken from the State of the District Report (2010), Thanet District Council unless otherwise stated.

**Figure 1 – Thanet’s Age Distribution 2011**

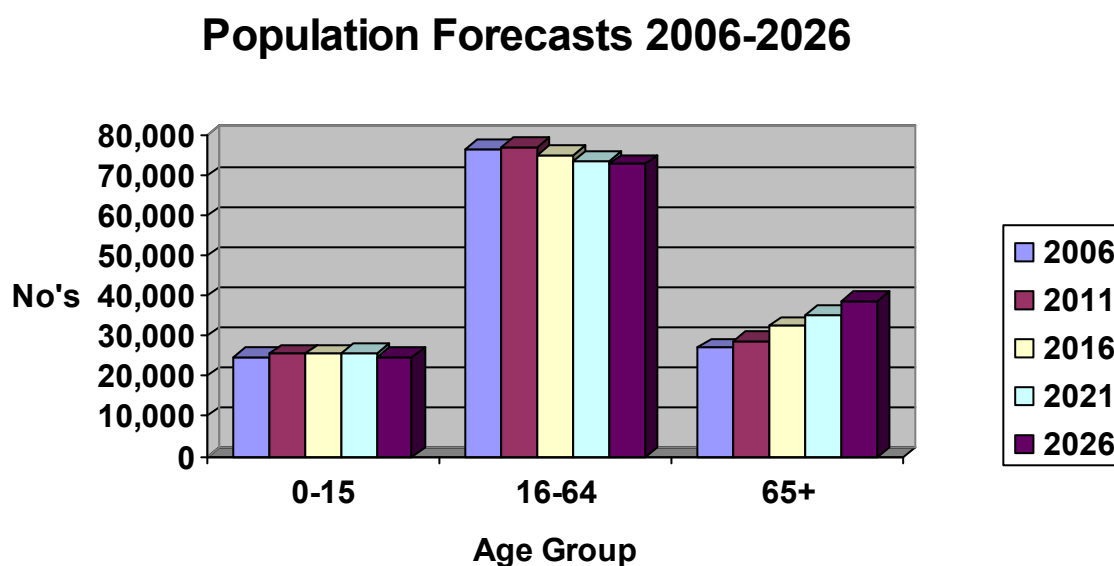


Thanet is the fourth most populous district of the twelve in Kent. It was third in 2001, but has now been overtaken by Swale.

Over the last 10 years there has been a notable increase (over 10%) in the proportion of people in their ‘twenties’, ‘forties’, ‘sixties’ and ‘nineties’, but a notable decrease in the proportion of people in their ‘thirties’.

The proportion of retirement age people living in Thanet (28%) remains higher than both the Kent (25%) and England (22%) averages.

Thanet continues to have the lowest proportion of 15-64 (nearest current approximation to working age) population (60.95% ) of all Kent districts. The Kent average is 64.01%, and the England average is 65.98%.

**Figure 2 – Population Forecasts 2006-2026**

% Population in group		1991	2001	2011 (*1)
Preschool	0-4	6.0	5.6	6.0 (6.1)
School	5-14	11.4	13.2	11.8 (12.0)
Mainly Work	15-64	58.1	59.4	61.0 (64.0)
Mainly retirement	65+	24.4	21.8	21.2 (17.9)
Over 85	85+	2.7	3.1	3.4 (2.5)

(\*1) figures in brackets are the Kent proportions for 2011.

### Older Persons

The most significant rise in population is that of the over 65 age group which is projected to rise from 21% of the total population to 28% by 2026. Thanet already has a significantly higher proportion of over 65s compared to regional figures. The further growth of the older population will have a substantial impact over the next 15 years in terms of housing. We need to plan and incorporate this increase in population into the strategic priorities for Thanet.

### Younger Persons

The population change by age group for younger persons will decrease by 2016. From 2006-2016 the age group 0-15 will decrease by 8.6% and the age group 16-24 will decrease by 0.6%.

63.3% of children and young people in Thanet live in owner occupied accommodation, the lowest in the County.

Thanet also has the highest rates in the country of children and young people living in social rented or private rented accommodation at 19.5% and 15.9% respectively.

Thanet District Council recommends that children over the age of 8 years of the opposite sex have different rooms. This is not a legal requirement, and is used for allocation purposes only.

## The Local Housing Situation

### Housing Current Supply

The total number of dwellings in Thanet as at 1<sup>st</sup> April 2012 is 65,473 (TDC Council Tax records)

- 3077 are owned by TDC, managed by East Kent Housing (Audit Report 2010/11)
- 3714 are owned by 21 different RSL's (HCA 2012)
- 15,029 are owned by way of a mortgage (Stock Condition Survey 2010)
- 20,588 are owned outright (Stock Condition Survey 2010)
- 15,929 are privately rented (Stock Condition Survey 2010)
- 147 are owned by Shared Ownership schemes (Stock Condition Survey 2010)
- The remaining would not disclose.

### House Prices

House prices in the South East have increased three times faster than incomes over the past 10 years. In Thanet, you would need 10.4 times your income to afford a house – source Home-truths 2010 South East.

Thanet experienced the lowest rise in house prices in Kent during 2010 +4.33% compared to the highest 15.1%. The house price to income ratio for Thanet residents is 5.48.

### Average House Prices

In January-March 2012, research showed<sup>5</sup> that house prices in Thanet declined by 9.7%:

Average House Price	£157,204
Semi-detached House	£170,527
Terrace House	£133,649
Flat	£98,794
Total number of sales	416

### Private Rented Sector

Within Thanet approx 10% of the population live in housing which is considered to have poor amenities. 10.98% of children and young people in Thanet live in an overcrowded household. This is far higher than the Kent average of 8.8%.<sup>6</sup>

63.3% of children and young people in Thanet live in owner occupied accommodation, the lowest in the County.

<sup>5</sup> [http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/shared/spl/hi/in\\_depth/uk\\_house\\_prices/html/29un.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/shared/spl/hi/in_depth/uk_house_prices/html/29un.stm)

<sup>6</sup> Facts and Figures 2010, Management Information Unit, Kent County Council



Between 1991 and 2011 there has been a significant fall in the proportion of people living in communal establishments (from 5.4% of population to 1.8%), and a commensurate increase in people living in households.

Changes in type of residence	Thanet		Kent		South East		England	
	% Household residents	% Communal Establishment residents	% Household residents	% Communal Establishment residents	% Household residents	% Communal Establishment residents	% Household residents	% Communal Establishment residents
1991	94.6	5.4	96.7	3.3	96.4	3.6	97.2	2.8
2001	97.5	2.5	97.9	2.1	97.6	2.4	98.2	1.8
2011	98.2	1.8	98.1	1.9	97.8	2.2	98.2	1.8

The poor housing conditions within Thanet can cause problems in communities in regards to noise pollution, overcrowding, anti-social behaviours and poor neighbourhood quality. In Thanet the majority of households have only one or two people in them. Thanet also has the highest rates in the country of children and young people living in social rented or private rented accommodation at 19.5% and 15.9% respectively.

### Affordable Housing - Supply and Demand

The Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) undertaken in 2009 identified that in order to meet the back log of housing need we would need to deliver 1544 new affordable homes per year for 5 years or 690 per year over 10 years. These are very high numbers of affordable homes and the other local authorities in East Kent also had high figures, which would be impossible to achieve.

In terms of actual supply of affordable housing, this has previously been driven by the amount of funding the Homes and Communities Agency have available to give to Housing Associations in order for them to develop new affordable homes. Following the Comprehensive Spending Review the amount of funding has been substantially reduced. This has resulted in an overall decline in the projected delivery of affordable homes up to 2015. Fortunately, Thanet still has a number of homes due to complete in 2012-15 from the previous Affordable Homes Programme.

In terms of previous supply and projected supply the figures are as follows:

### Affordable Housing Supply

Year	Affordable Units produced across Thanet
2007-2008	41
2008-2009	90
2009-2010	196
2010-2011	96
2011-2012	30
2012-2013 projected	150
2013-2014 projected	105

It is not the role for the Housing Strategy to deal with the overall number and location of new homes. That is the task for the Local Plan. We do however need to be mindful of the high need for affordable housing and work together with our partners to ensure affordable housing opportunities are maximised.

## Empty properties

Council Tax records for Thanet show that over 7000 addresses are registered as empty, this is 11% of the districts dwellings. In 2003, the Empty Property Strategy was adopted and since then 648 properties have been brought back into use.

The empty property initiative aims to

- get previously empty properties and derelict land back into productive use
- discourage crime and anti-social behaviour, vandalism and fly tipping
- increase the available housing supply
- reduce loss of housing and business space for the area
- enhance the whole community, making neighbourhoods safer

The empty property strategy is due to be renewed and will form part of the action plan accompanying the strategy.

## Average Council Housing rent charges

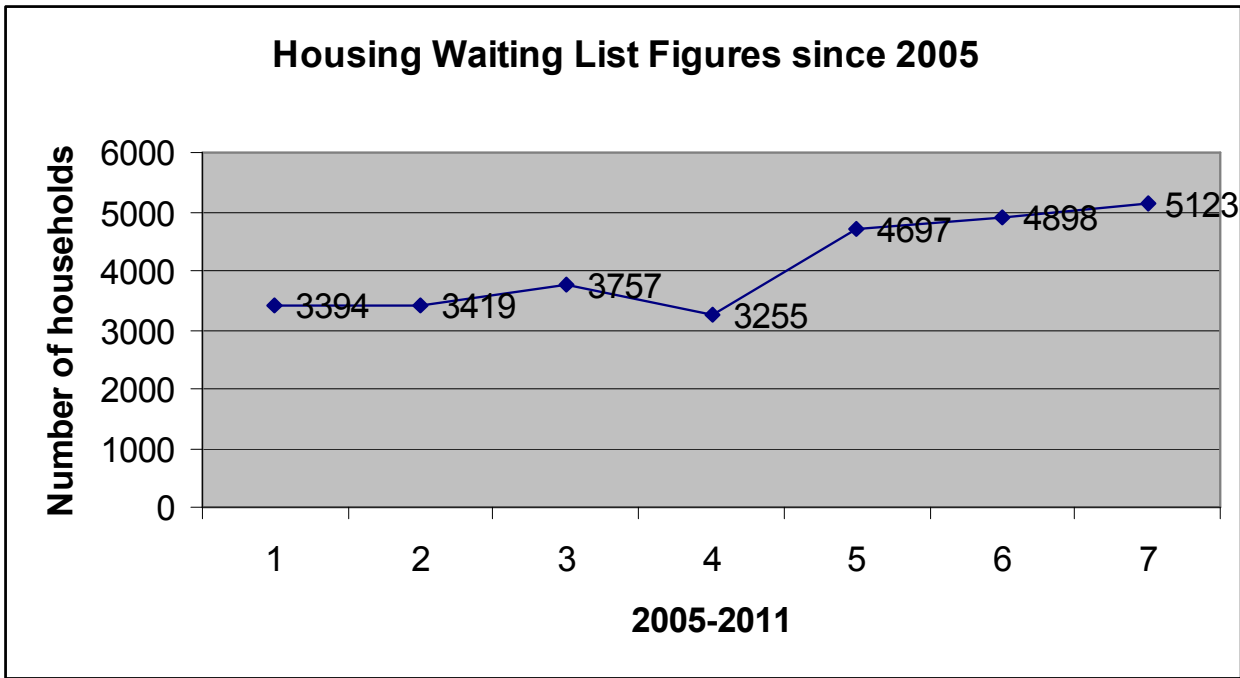
	House	Flat	Maisonette	Bedsit
0 bed	0	0	0	£48.89
1 bed	£69.47	£58.41	£57.97	0
2 bed	£72.28	£65.65	£66.32	0
3 bed	£77.61	£76.75	£70.70	0
4 bed	£85.40	0	£77.45	0
5 bed	£92.89	0	0	0

## Local Housing Allowance Rates – April 2012

Number of Bedrooms	Category	Weekly Amount	Monthly Amount
Shared room rate	A	£58.50	£253.50
1 bedroom	B	£80.77	£350.00
2 bedrooms	C	£114.23	£495.00
3 bedrooms	D	£138.46	£599.99
4 bedrooms	E	£173.08	£750.01

## Housing Register

Housing waiting lists over the last few years have increased by 50%. This includes around 2000 applicants with up to four dependants, 40% of the register.

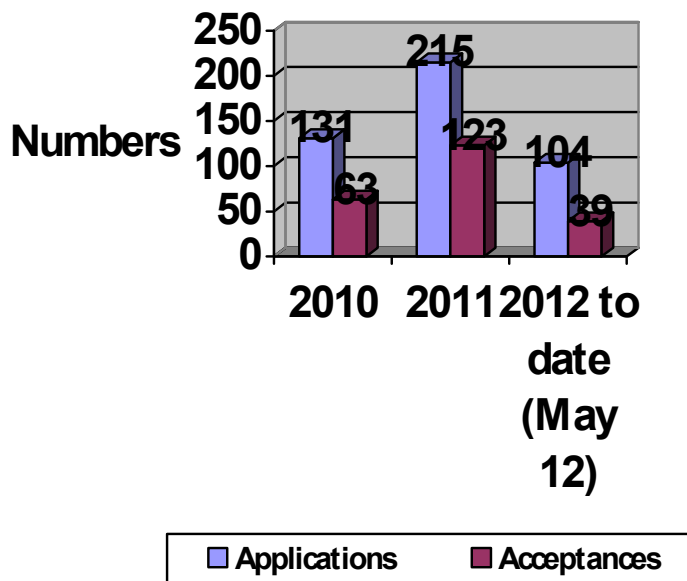


**Homelessness**

Housing Acts of 1977, and 1996 and the Homelessness Act places statutory duty on local authorities to assist households who are homeless or threatened with homelessness. The Homelessness Act 2002 places a duty on the Council and its partners to work together to prevent homelessness, as well as updating the framework for assessing individual applications from homeless households. The Act also sets out how requests for housing may be impacted upon if an applicant has a proven history of Anti Social Behaviour.

**Figure 3 – Homeless Applications and Acceptances**

### Homeless Applications & Acceptances 2010-2012



Homelessness is increasing rapidly within Thanet. Partly due to the current economic climate, and also because the scheme which assisted homeowners for 2 years who were receiving job seekers allowance due to losing their employment, is coming to an end. The Local Housing Allowance rates have also reduced since April 2011 and customers are not able to pay the top-ups on their rent, causing them to be evicted.

### Vulnerable People

The stock condition survey also identified that there were 18,808 vulnerable households in Thanet. A vulnerable adult is defined as someone who is 18 or over:

- Who is, or may be, in need of community services due to age, illness or mental or physical disability.
- Who is, or may be, unable to take care of himself/herself, or unable to protect himself/herself against significant harm or exploitation.<sup>7</sup>

### Number of Vulnerable Households in Thanet

Tenure Type	No	%	Total % of tenure type
Owned - Mortgage	3,823	22.7%	25.4%
Owned - Outright	3,608	21.5%	17.5%
Rented - Private	8,967	53.4%	56.3%
Shared Ownership	147	0.9%	100%
Would not disclose	263	1.6%	6.2%
Total	18,808	100%	30.1%

Of those vulnerable households, 62.2% of them live in non-decent accommodation.

### Number of vulnerable households in Non Decent Housing

Tenure Type	No	%	Total % of tenure type
Owned - Mortgage	1,597	18.2%	41.8%
Owned - Outright	1,877	21.4%	52%
Rented - Private	4,912	56.0%	54.8%
Shared Ownership	127	1.4%	86.8%
Would not disclose	263	3.0%	100%
Total	8,778	100%	62.2%

### BME Population

Of Thanet's population, 7.2% are of Black Minority Ethnic (BME) origin. This is below the English average of 13%.

### The Local Economy

#### Employment

The percentage of people who are of working age in Thanet was 56% in 2009 compared to 62% in the South East, making it the lowest of the districts in Kent. Unemployment levels currently stand

<sup>7</sup> Definition from <http://www.family-action.org.uk/uploads/documents/Protection%20of%20Vulnerable%20Adults%20from%20Abuse%20Policy>.

at 6% in Thanet, the lowest in Kent, compared with an average of 3.4% in the South East and a national average of 3.9%, at January 2012, an increase of 17% since December 2010. Thanet has the highest proportion of long-term Job Seekers Allowance claimants of all Kent districts. There is a poor supply of jobs in Thanet with just 65 jobs per 100 working age people. The Kent average is 75.

Relatively few new business enterprises are set up in Thanet. In 2009 there were 360 compared to the Kent average of 453 for each district.

The withdrawal of Pfizer from its site at Sandwich has focussed national and regional attention on the importance of retaining jobs and creating new employment locally.

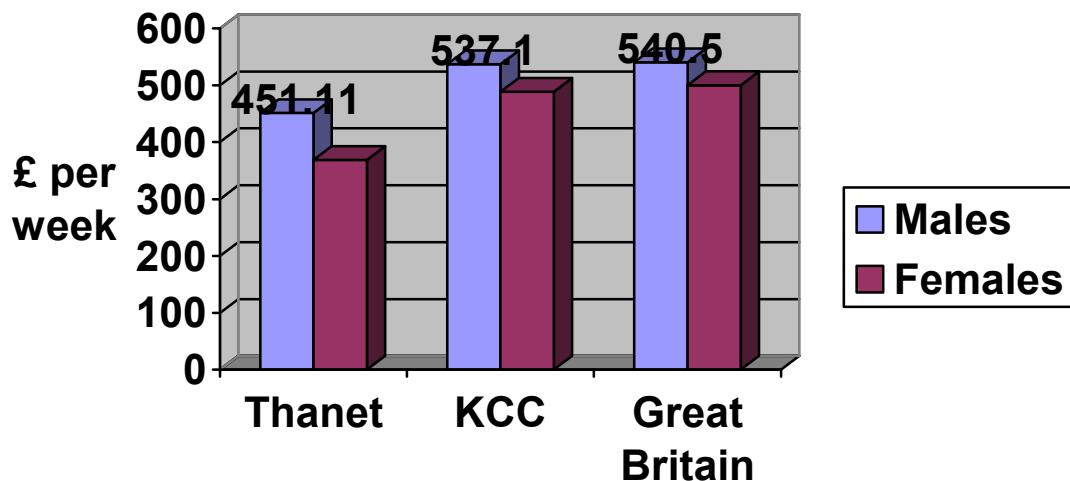
Thanet has the two most deprived wards in the South East; Cliftonville West and Margate Central, with entrenched worklessness.

### Household Incomes

Earnings in Thanet are significantly lower than the rest of the South East and this gap has grown over the past 8 years.

Figure 4 – Median Weekly Full Time Earnings

## Median weekly full time earnings (£) 2010



The above chart shows that earnings in Thanet are 20% lower than the rest of Great Britain and 16% lower than the rest of Kent.

### Education, Skills and Training

Skills levels and health levels are low in Thanet compared to the rest of Kent and there is limited access to affordable childcare which can make it difficult for local people to access jobs when they become available.

Thanet has a higher percentage of young people not in employment, education or training (NEET, 16-24 year olds) than the other Kent districts.

As at November 2011 Thanet had:

- 4682 16 -18 year olds,
- 451 are NEETs = this being 10.04%
- 126 are not known = 1.94%

A culture of worklessness is embedded in some areas and can be intergenerational in nature, perhaps reinforced by the fact or perception that the financial benefits of working are marginal and security can be decreased.

### **Crime and Disorder**

Crime in Kent has fallen by 3.9% from 2010-2011 and it has reduced by 3.2% in Thanet with a reduction of 350 crimes, Thanet Strategic Assessment 2012-13. However, Thanet still has the highest recorded crime out of the 13 districts. Incidents of Domestic Abuse increased by 18%, this also being the highest number in Kent.

Cliftonville West, Margate Central and Eastcliff wards have the highest recorded levels of Anti-Social Behaviour, and repeat ASB incidents in the whole of Kent. The Crime and Disorder Act 1998 and the Anti Social Behaviour Act 2003 are useful tools for tackling anti social behaviour.

### **Housing and Health**

There are strong links between housing conditions and health. The White Paper 'Our Health, Our Care, Our Say' 2006 sets out aims to be achieved by the health and social care services and there are clear links to housing:

- An emphasis on promoting independent living and social well being, care at home, increasing activity, individual choice and prevention.
- Encouraging housing and health services to work together to improve the well being of homeless people and to prevent homelessness.
- Providing care closer to home for as many people as possible, by increasing the use of community services including extra-care sheltered housing.
- Reducing delayed discharges from hospitals.
- Assessing the impact of new housing developments. The NHS will be encouraged to work closely with planning authorities to address increasing demands on health, care and community services.

Poor housing conditions can have a negative impact on people's health particularly relating to physical health and social and mental well-being.

Physical health: cold and damp properties and indoor pollutants, the design quality, injury and safety hazards, ease and safety of active transport such as walking and cycling can lead to excess winter deaths, obesity and heart disease, asthma and respiratory disease.

Social and mental well-being can be affected by noise, over-crowding, unstable housing tenure or threat of homelessness, poor neighbourhood quality and community safety, infrastructure deprivation, access to services, open spaces and transport, can all be detrimental to people's health.

Generally the health of people living in Thanet is worse than the England average. Mortality rates are close to the national average but are significantly worse than the Kent and South East averages.

In 2008-09, 7.86% of children were obese and from 2006-08 of the population aged over 16, 27.04% were obese.

Thanet has high levels of teenage pregnancy and smoking in pregnancy. The highest levels of teenage pregnancy are in Margate Central, Cliftonville West and Central Harbour where they are around three times the South East average.

### The Single Agency Assessment

A Single Agency Assessment should be used where a service user requires re-housing due to a health/support need that cannot be met in, or is being exacerbated by their current accommodation and can be completed by:

- Social Services
- Kent and Medway NHS and Social Care Partnership Trust
- Community Mental Health Teams
- Primary Care Trusts
- Occupational Therapists
- Youth Offending Service
- Probation Service
- Kent Council on Addiction (KCA)

### Decent Homes Standards

The decent homes standard is a minimum standard introduced by the Government for public sector housing. It has now been implemented as a public sector agreement (PSA) target to include properties within the private sector.

<b>DECENT HOMES GUIDANCE</b>	
<b>1) Free from Category 1 Hazards</b>	
The property must be free from category 1 hazards under the Housing Health and Safety Rating system	
<b>2) Reasonably modern facilities and services present</b>	
The property would fail this criteria if it lacks three or more of the following facilities:-	
1. a kitchen which is 20 years old or less	4. an appropriately located bathroom and WC
2. a kitchen with adequate space and layout	5. adequate external noise insulation
3. a bathroom which is 30 years old or less	6. adequate size and layout of common areas for blocks of flats
<b>3) Reasonable degree of thermal comfort</b>	
The property must have an efficient form of heating and have effective insulation	
<b>4) Reasonable state of repair</b>	
The property would fail this criteria if:-	
1. one or more key building components are old and because of their condition need major repair or replacement	
2. two or more other building components are old and because of their condition need major repair or replacement	

### Your Home Your Health

The Multi-agency referral form has been developed to provide a method to support true cross-agency working which will serve to enhance partnership working across all sectors, from health through to housing, fire safety and community safety. The form can be used to address a range of priorities such as take up of benefits, fire safety, home security, hazards in the home, and identifying the need for disabled adaptations or social care for all vulnerable groups, not just older people. The aims of the multi agency referral form can be summarised as the following:

- A preventative tool to address issues which may arise whilst officers are visiting clients but may not necessarily know who to refer to.
- To enable clients to remain safe and secure in their own home
- To reduce accidents in the home, reduce hospital admissions and reduce levels of fuel poverty
- To provide an avenue for vulnerable people to access services
- To assist in reducing the number of people on the housing register.
- To provide an avenue to collect data to assist social care and PCT future planning.
- To improve working relationships between agencies
- To raise awareness of the services available across the disciplines and provide a greater understanding of how the sectors can overlap and achieve common goals/targets

The 'Your Home Your Health' project is an intensive inspection programme of a geographical area that uses the multi agency referral form as a tool to collect information as well as make referrals. This project began in October 2009 and started in Dalby square. The Housing Regeneration team have systematically attempted access to every property within the selective licensing designated area. The inspection programme ends in August 2012.



## Appendix 3 - Copy of Initial Review Document



### Review of Thanet District Council Housing Strategy 2005-2010

The Housing Strategy for Thanet sets out how the council and its partners intend to work together to meet the housing and related needs of the district. The current Housing Strategy was adopted in 2005 and is due to be updated.

This review document sets out the key achievements of the current Housing Strategy and considers the housing issues and challenges which will face the district over the next 5 years. It also proposes a range of priorities for the district which are to be implemented over the lifespan of the strategy.

We are seeking your views on how best we can meet the housing needs of Thanet.

### Housing Strategy 2005-2010 – Key Achievements

The following outcomes have been achieved through the current housing strategy:

Actions	Outcome
Meet the demand for affordable housing across the district.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>316 new affordable homes provided for rent and low cost home ownership between 2005 and 2010.</li> </ul>
Improve choice and access to housing for all communities in the district and work in partnership to expand housing related support schemes.	In partnership with KCC and the Private Finance Initiative - <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>7 additional homes provided for people with a learning disability.</li> <li>7 additional homes provided for people with mental health problems.</li> <li>80 additional homes for older people.</li> </ul>
Take all relevant bidding opportunities for more housing resources.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5 new council homes were built in 2010 for families, with the help of funding from the Homes and Communities Agency.</li> </ul>
Continue to implement Empty Property Strategy to bring empty properties back into use.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>421 empty properties have been brought back into use since 2005.</li> </ul>
Work in partnership with Kent partners to research options for a Kent wide choice based lettings scheme.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Thanet joined Kent Homechoice in August 2008, working in partnership with 32 partners to transform lettings of social housing in Kent.</li> <li>Since 2008 over 15,000 families and 30% of all bidders have been re-housed across Kent.</li> </ul>
Commission new housing needs survey.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In June 2009, the East Kent Strategic Housing Market Assessment was completed which identified the housing need in Thanet.</li> </ul>
Develop lettings agreements to ensure homes are let to those in greatest need, while supporting communities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Local lettings plans are in place for all new affordable housing developments, ensuring allocations create sustainable communities.</li> </ul>

Tackling Homelessness.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In 2005, the government set a target for us to reduce the number of homeless applicants in temporary accommodation by half. In March 2008 we reached this target with only 56 in TA.</li> <li>1026 homeless cases prevented between 2005-2010.</li> </ul>
Review the Thanet District Council Homelessness Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The homelessness strategy was reviewed and updated in 2008 in partnership with the other East Kent authorities.</li> </ul>
Making use of planning policies to increase the provision of affordable housing.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In April 2008 the Planning Obligations and Developer Contributions Supplementary Planning Document was introduced.</li> </ul>
Work in partnership with planning, developers and other partners to ensure appropriate size and tenure mix is delivered in the renewal area.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In 2010, the Cliftonville Development Plan Document was adopted.</li> </ul>
Develop partnerships with the Home Improvement Agency to administer grants and building contractors to improve homes in Thanet	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sanctuary Scheme was developed in Thanet with the Home Improvement Agency to make repairs and make 'safe' properties of applicants who are in threat of domestic violence. This enables people to remain in their properties.</li> </ul>
Develop Private Sector Housing Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In December 2007 the strategy was adopted. Housing Enforcement policy adopted in March 2007.</li> </ul>
Improve standards and fitness of Private Sector Housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In 2005, we were awarded funding for unfit properties, 25 grants were awarded to a total of £350,000.</li> <li>In 2006/2007 grants totalling £3,036,327 were given for heating, insulation, decent homes and fire safety.</li> <li>476 grants were given to improve living conditions across the district.</li> <li>Increase in the amount of housing enforcement notices served from 17 in 2006/07 to 168 to 2010/11.</li> </ul>

### Issues and Challenges for Thanet

Although we have achieved some major milestones during the last five years, Thanet still has some important issues which need to be addressed. The information we have gathered has highlighted the following issues which impact on the well being and community of Thanet:

#### Housing Issues

- The Strategic Housing Market Assessment identifies the need for 1544 new affordable homes per year. Existing planning permissions show that there will be 90 new affordable homes built per year up to 2015, leaving a large gap between the need and actual delivery.
- 1421 homes in the district have been empty for more than six months.
- Over the next 5 years there will be considerably less grant funding available from government, reducing the resources available for the provision of new affordable housing.
- There are approx 4229 households on the Housing Register waiting for council or housing association accommodation, an increase of 29% since 2005.
- The average household income in Thanet is the lowest in the South East.

- Thanet has an over provision of smaller flats and sub-divided family homes and a shortage of larger homes.
- In 2001-2007 Thanet's house prices increased by 132%.
- Average house prices in Thanet are currently more than six times the average household income, one of the highest levels in the country, creating affordability problems.
- The coalition government is proposing a range of changes to national housing policy which may impact on the operation of the local housing market. The council and its partner agencies will follow any policy developments closely.
- The benefit reform and reduced Local Housing Allowance rates will have a financial impact on Thanet residents, particularly single people under 35 affected by changes to the single room rate.

### Housing Priorities for Thanet

- A continued ongoing affordable housing programme for the district to provide homes for affordable rent and low cost home ownership.
- A focus on providing larger affordable homes in the district as larger affordable homes are less readily available.
- Make best use of planning policies and supporting documents to ensure delivery of affordable homes. The overall housing supply figures for the district are being considered as part of the council's Local Development Framework Core Strategy.
- Make best use of existing and potential new council housing through appropriate asset management.
- Continue the existing good work to bring long term empty properties into use.
- Continued work with private sector landlords to improve conditions and the standard of management arrangements in the sector, making best use of privately rented properties.
- A continued focus on our work to prevent homelessness.
- Further work to review the provision of accommodation for older people in the district.
- The provision of new accommodation for people with support needs in line with the Kent Supporting People strategy.
- Review the under-occupation policy to make best use of existing stock.
- Review the allocations policy and ensure need is not imported from outside the area.
- Manage the impacts of the benefit reform and the Localism Bill.

### Housing Strategy 2012-2016

#### 1. Do you think that the Housing priorities identified are the correct priorities for Thanet?

Please take time to answer the questions below to let us know your views and tell us which you think are the most important priorities.

Please select which level of priority you think is most relevant for the following housing priorities:

Housing Priority	High Priority	Medium Priority	Low Priority
The continued delivery of affordable housing.			
A focus on providing larger family homes.			
Make best use of planning policies to deliver affordable homes.			
Make best use of existing and potential new council housing through appropriate asset management.			
Continue the existing good work to bring long term empty properties back into use.			
Continued work to improve the conditions of the private rented sector.			
A continued focus to prevent homelessness.			
Further work to review the provision of accommodation for older people in the district.			

The provision of new accommodation for people with support needs in line with the Kent Supporting People Strategy			
Review the under-occupation policy to make best use of existing stock.			
Review the allocations policy.			
Manage the impacts of the benefit reform and the Localism Bill.			

You will also have a further opportunity to let us know your views when we publish a draft version of the Council’s Housing Strategy in spring 2012.

**2. Are there any other priorities that you feel should be included in the new strategy?**

If there is anyone else who could be included in the consultation of the Housing Strategy, please provide their contact details below:

.....

If you would like to receive updates on the progress of the Council’s Housing Strategy review, please let us have your name and email address below:

**Name**.....

**Organisation**.....

**Email address**.....

If you would like further information about the Council’s Housing Strategy review, please contact Lauren Hemsley (Senior Strategic Housing Officer) [Lauren.hemsley@thanet.gov.uk](mailto:Lauren.hemsley@thanet.gov.uk) 01843 577062 or Ashley Stacey (Strategic Housing Officer) [Ashley.stacey@thanet.gov.uk](mailto:Ashley.stacey@thanet.gov.uk) 01843 577280.

## Initial Consultation Results

159 partners, agencies, colleagues, letting agents and housing developers were sent the Housing Strategy initial review document.

26 responses = 16% response rate

Housing Priority	High Priority	Medium Priority	Low Priority
The continued delivery of affordable housing.	17 11%	2 1%	0
A focus on providing larger family homes.	5 3%	15 9%	0
Make best use of planning policies to deliver affordable homes.	11 7%	6 4%	1
Make best use of existing and potential new council housing through appropriate asset management.	13 8%	5 3%	1
Continue the existing good work to bring long term empty properties back into use.	14 9%	4 3%	0
Continued work to improve the conditions of the private rented sector.	11 7%	6 4%	1
A continued focus to prevent homelessness.	10 6%	6 4%	0
Further work to review the provision of accommodation for older people in the district.	5 3%	14 9%	1
The provision of new accommodation for people with support needs in line with the Kent Supporting People Strategy	8 5%	11 7%	1
Review the under-occupation policy to make best use of existing stock.	6 4%	8 5%	3 2%
Review the allocations policy.	7 4%	9 6%	3 2%
Manage the impacts of the benefit reform and the Localism Bill	15 9%	4 3%	0

### Summary of results

The top three priorities were:

5. The continued delivery of affordable housing.
6. Manage the impacts of the benefit reform and the Localism Bill (this has now gained royal assent and is now the Localism Act).
7. Continue the existing good work to bring long term empty properties back into use.

These issues are prominent issues within the Housing Strategy and Action Plan.

### Comments

The review document also asked for comments from respondents. The majority of these comments raised issues which were already included in the strategy and the action plan. The remaining comments have resulted in additional information being incorporated into the strategy and action plan.

## Appendix 4 – Full Consultation Results

The 6 week public consultation ran from 22 October 2012 until 3 December 2012. We emailed out a link to the draft Housing Strategy to over 150 stakeholders to include housing associations, developers and other Kent local authorities amongst others. (A full list of stakeholders is available on p.61). A dedicated page was uploaded onto the TDC website for the duration of the consultation and there were also links from the communications consultation pages. An online form was created for comments to be submitted. Hard copies were made available for collection at the Gateway and were posted out to residents on request who were unable to access a computer or call into the gateway.

In total we received 7 responses from stakeholders and 2 responses via the online comments survey form from residents. We had a number of requests for copies of strategies which were posted out to residents and copies were also available at the Gateway for residents and stakeholders to collect.

In summary the stakeholder responses were positive and the following stakeholders made comments on the draft strategy:

- Kent Probation
- KCC Strategic Housing
- Orbit South Housing Association
- East Kent Housing
- Kent Police
- Minster Parish Council
- KCC Families and Social Care

Some of the comments made related more to the Local Plan and other more detailed policies, such as the Allocations Policy. These will all be subject to their own consultation and scrutiny. The following issues relating to the content of the strategy were raised from the responses and have been incorporated into the final revised strategy:

- The strategy should address accommodation needs of offenders.
- The importance of safety and the reduction of crime should be emphasised.
- We should include more detail about the re-invigorated Right to Buy receipts.
- More reference should be made to the welfare and benefit reform and under occupation.
- More reference to Building for Life and Wheelchair Accessible Housing should be made.
- We need to refer to people with a learning disability in the strategy.
- We should refer to the Care and Support Fund (HCA funding opportunity)
- We should refer to the Local Authority Mortgage Scheme.
- More detail of the new powers under the Localism Act should be included relating to the new powers to discharge our homelessness duty into the private rented sector.
- We need to address the impact of the Welfare and Benefit Reform on the potential migration of benefit dependent households into Thanet in search of cheaper housing costs.
- Need to include more about Affordable Rent.

These comments have now been addressed in this final version of the strategy. None of the feedback requested changing any of the key priorities or disagreed with any actions in the action plan. They referred to drawing out certain issues in more detail and have not substantially altered any of the principles of the housing strategy.

## Appendix 5 – Extract from National Planning Policy Framework – Annex 2

### Annex 2: Glossary

**Affordable housing:** Social rented, affordable rented and intermediate housing, provided to eligible households whose needs are not met by the market. Eligibility is determined with regard to local incomes and local house prices. Affordable housing should include provisions to remain at an affordable price for future eligible households or for the subsidy to be recycled for alternative affordable housing provision.

Social rented housing is owned by local authorities and private registered providers (as defined in section 80 of the Housing and Regeneration Act 2008), for which guideline target rents are determined through the national rent regime. It may also be owned by other persons and provided under equivalent rental arrangements to the above, as agreed with the local authority or with the Homes and Communities Agency.

Affordable rented housing is let by local authorities or private registered providers of social housing to households who are eligible for social rented housing. Affordable Rent is subject to rent controls that require a rent of no more than 80% of the local market rent (including service charges, where applicable).

Intermediate housing is homes for sale and rent provided at a cost above social rent, but below market levels subject to the criteria in the Affordable Housing definition above. These can include shared equity (shared ownership and equity loans), other low cost homes for sale and intermediate rent, but not affordable rented housing.

Homes that do not meet the above definition of affordable housing, such as “low cost market” housing, may not be considered as affordable housing for planning purposes.

## Key terms/glossary

**Affordable housing:** As per the definition in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) Annex 2 (p. 52)

**Affordable Rent Housing:** As per the definition in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) Annex 2 (p. 52)

**Arms Length Management Organisation – ALMO:** A situation where an organisation is established to manage council housing stock. The properties remain council owned and tenants retain secure tenancies.

**Black and minority ethnic (BME):** a term commonly used to refer to all people who are members of minority ethnic communities, including Gypsy and Traveller communities.

**Building for Life:** a national standard for well designed homes and neighbourhoods.

**Decent Homes Standard –** All social housing must meet the Decent Homes Standard, to be warm, weatherproof, and have reasonably modern facilities.

**Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG):** a mandatory grant, subject to means testing, which is available to provide certain adaptations to a dwelling for disabled persons.

**East Kent Local Investment Plan EKLIP –** The East Kent Local Investment Plan has been developed by the Council in partnership with Canterbury, Dover and Shepway Councils, sets out the priorities for Homes and Communities Agency investment for housing and regeneration in the District and the rest of East Kent over the next fifteen years. The focus of the document is the level of funding required to deliver housing and regeneration priorities across East Kent, including both new affordable housing and investment in the private sector housing stock.

**East Kent Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA):** a study carried out by ECOTEC to assist in determining the location and amount of affordable and market housing in East Kent: for whom it is required; and within what timescale it need to be provided.

**Empty Dwelling Management Order (EDMO):** an Order that enables the council, in certain circumstances, to take management control of a dwelling in order to secure occupation of it.

**Empty Property:** For statistical purposes, empty properties are those which have been vacant for more than 6 months.

**Extra Care Housing:** housing schemes comprising self-contained dwellings designed to enable older people to self-care for longer and give them access to care and other services, which help them retain their independence.

**House in Multiple Occupation (HMO):** a dwelling occupied by more than one or numerous households.

**Floating Support:** Is a service that is delivered to a family or an individual that is not tied to accommodation. Floating support services provide service users with a support package that is based upon their assessed needs and as independence increases, the level of support is reduced.

**Handyperson Scheme:** a service provided by the In touch Home Improvement Agency covering essential repairs and maintenance that are too small for general contractors to price but are too difficult for older and disabled clients to tackle on their own.



**Homes and Communities Agency (HCA):** A body set up by the Government, which provides assistance, regulation and control of Registered Providers landlords (RP's). It also allocates funds for the development of new affordable housing.

**Housing Options Team:** The team manage the housing list, choice based lettings, housing advice and homelessness functions and ensures that the Council discharges its statutory duties to households in housing need in a fair and transparent manner, complying with statutory obligations, guidance and best practice.

**Housing Revenue Account (HRA):** This is the Council's landlord's account, which shows all of a Local Authority's income and expenditure arising from its role as the owner of housing. The account is 'ring fenced'; that is, no transfer can be made between it and the rest of the Council's accounts, the 'General Fund'. Other powers and duties of a Housing authority, for example the duty to the homeless, the 'enabling' role in promoting Housing Association activity in the area, and grants for private sector housing are General Fund activities.

**Intermediate housing:** As per the definition in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) Annex 2 (p.52)

**INVOKE:** an East Kent Adult Social Services project that supports the residents of Ashford, Shepway, Canterbury, Swale, Thanet and Dover to live independently in their communities. The project is funded through the Partnerships for Older People Projects (POPP's).

**Joint Policy and Planning Board (JPPB):** This represents all local authorities, social services and health to prioritise, monitor and review the provision of supported housing across Kent.

**Kent Homechoice (KHC):** Choice Based Lettings scheme partnership in Kent, the largest CBL partnership in the UK. All of the Kent councils are part of the partnership. Vacant council and housing association homes are advertised on a fortnightly basis through KHC. Housing applicants have to bid/express an interest to be considered for them. The homes are allocated to the applicant who bids and has the highest level of priority points for re-housing.

**Kent Forum Housing Strategy:** This is a county-wide document that takes a new radical look at housing and how it is delivered.

**Kent Housing Group (KHG):** This is a forum for social housing organisations in Kent. Acting as the "Voice of Housing in Kent" the group serves to represent the collective voice of Kent's housing bodies providing advice and a "Kent perspective" to regional and national bodies.

**Kent Reconnection Policy:** a county-wide policy designed to help vulnerable people access housing in the area where they have a connection.

**Lifetime Homes:** the Lifetime Homes standard is a set of design criteria that provide a model for building accessible and adaptable homes.

**Lifetime Neighbourhoods:** a government strategy for ensuring that housing and planning policies take account of the aspirations and changing lifestyles of people as they grow older.

**Local Development Framework (LDF):** This replaces the old system of Local Plans and sets out the Council's plans for all land use and development in the District, along with its policies for planning issues such as affordable housing.

**Local Housing Allowance (LHA):** This is a simplified housing benefit system for people on benefits or low incomes who rent from private landlords. LHA is based on the number of rooms people are allowed, not how much rent is charged. The number of rooms allowed depends on who lives with the tenant.

**Local Investment Plan (LIP):** A document developed in partnership with the HCA to set out the local investment priorities for the district.

**LDF Core Strategy:** This is the principal document in the LDF. It contains the Council's overall ambitions and priorities for the District and will be used to decide what the District should be like in 2026. **Market Housing:** Private housing for rent or sale, where the price is set in the open market.

**Multi Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA):** Is the name given to arrangements for the responsible authorities tasked with the management of high risk offenders.

**Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC):** Is part of a coordinated community response to domestic abuse.

**NEET:** Stands for Not in Education, Employment or Training. It is a measure used nationally to identify how many young people are not engaged in learning or work after the end of compulsory schooling.

**New Homes Bonus:** Provides local authorities with a grant payment equal to the national average for the council tax band on each additional property built. Grant payment is paid for a six year period (per completed property), as a non ring fenced grant. Includes enhancement for new affordable homes completed.

**No Use Empty:** a collaboration between Kent County Council and local authority partners including Dover District Council, and Shepway District Council which provides a resource to support the existing work being carried out by the Council to bring empty homes back into use.

**Private Finance Initiative (PFI):** a particular form of Public Private Partnership by which a public sector organisation contracts with a private sector body to construct a facility and provide associated services of a specified quality over a sustained period.

**Private Sector Enforcement:** Private sector enforcement work completed by the Private Sector Housing Team to improve the condition of accommodation in the Private Sector.

**Private Sector Stock Condition Survey:** The condition survey provides a detailed picture of the current housing conditions across the whole of the district. The Survey includes information about the housing stock such as type, size and age of properties whether they are rented or owned; the type of repairs required and information on the energy rating of properties.

**Porchlight:** a Kent based charity providing a range of support services for vulnerable and homeless people in Kent.

**Primary Care Trust (PCT):** these are local National Health Service organisations responsible for commissioning all NHS services in the area on behalf of local people – including local GP and other primary care services.

**Private Sector Leasing Scheme:** a scheme operated by an RSL or local authority whereby private housing is leased for a period of time and used to meet the needs of households on the housing register.

**Registered Social Landlord (RSL):** - A social housing organisation that is registered with the Homes & Communities Agency and is often referred to as a housing association.

**Registered Providers:** Registered Provider landlords are independent non-profit making housing associations aiming to provide affordable homes for people in housing need. Also known as Housing Associations.

**Rent Deposit Scheme:** a scheme designed to help individuals on low incomes who cannot afford the initial outlay of an advance rent and deposit payment to access homes in the private rented sector.

**Right to Buy:** Government policy that allows tenants of local authorities to purchase their home from the council.

**Rural Housing Enabler (RHE):** Rural Housing Enablers work with rural communities providing independent advice and support, acting as a facilitator and helping them through the complicated process of providing affordable housing. The RHE covering the Thanet District is employed by Action with Communities in Rural Kent.

**S106 Sites:** Sites subject to a S.106 Agreement under the Town & Country Planning Act 1990: often referred to as planning gain or planning obligations. It relates to financial contributions paid by developers to local planning authorities in order to offset the costs of the external effects of development and to the possible provision of affordable housing as part of the development.

**Section 215 Notices:** Section 215 (s215) of the Town & Country Planning Act 1990 (the Act) provides a local planning authority with the power, in certain circumstances, to take steps requiring land (including a building) to be cleaned up when its condition adversely affects the amenity of the area. It is one of the tools that can be used to tackle empty properties.

**Secured by Design:** a national scheme which focuses on crime prevention at the design, layout and construction stages of homes and commercial premises.

**Single Conversation:** the process by which the Homes & Communities Agency engages with local authorities at a sub regional level to plan investment across the full range of housing, infrastructure, regeneration and community activities that are within its scope.

**Shared Ownership:** Shared ownership homes offer a low cost way to get on the home ownership ladder. Shared Ownership makes housing affordable.

**Sheltered Housing:** Homes for persons over the age of 60 years or vulnerable people with a support need, usually with a Scheme Manager on site or on call to offer to help and support with a 24 hour lifeline service.

**Social Rented Housing:** As per the definition in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) Annex 2 (p.52)

**Special Needs:** People with special needs including older people, those with physical or learning disabilities, mental ill health or people who are vulnerable for other reasons.

**Super Output Areas SOA:** Super output areas is a geographical area designed for the collection and publication of small area statistics. It is used on the Neighbourhood statistics site, and has a wider application throughout national statistics. SOA's give an improved basis for comparison throughout the country because the units are more similar in size of population than, for example, electoral wards.

**Supporting People:** is a Government programme to provide housing-related support services, like homeless hostels, women's refuges and sheltered housing, to help vulnerable people live independently. The programme is administered across the county by the Kent County Council Supporting People Team.

**Vulnerable People:** The following people are considered to be vulnerable:

- Older people/young people leaving care
- Single homeless people and rough sleepers
- People with mental health issues

- People with a physical or sensory disability/or a learning disability
- Survivors of domestic violence
- Black and minority ethnic groups
- People with aids or who are HIV positive
- Refugees who have been granted leave to remain

## Stakeholder List

Accent Peerless	Gillcrest Homes	Oasis – Womens Refuge
Amicus Horizon	Gravesham BC	Orbit South
Anchor Retirement Housing	Golding Homes	Paul Letchford Management
Appleton Lettings Agents	Haig Homes	Pearson Properties
Ashford Borough Council	Hanover Housing Association	Pie Music Factory
Avante Partnership	Hodges & Andrews	Places For People
Baricks	Homes & Community Agency	Porchlight
Barratt Homes	Hyde Housing Group	Quarterdeck Youth Centre
Belmonte Lettings Agents	Jenners	Regency Properties
Breyer Group	KCA	Riverside Group
Café IT	KCC	Russett Homes
Canterbury City Council	Kent Community Organisation	Sanctuary Housing
Casa Support	Kent Housing Group	Sevenoaks DC
CASE Kent	Kent Police	Shelter
Catch 22	Kent Youth Offending Service	Shepway DC
Cliftonville Developments	Kenward Trust	Six Bells Children Centre
Cliftonville Partnership	London & Quadrent Housing	Southern Housing Group
Citizens Advice Bureau	Lovell Partnerships Ltd	Supporting People
Connexions Kent & Medway	Maidstone BC	Surestart Millmead
Cockett Henderson	Margate Civic Society	Swale BC
Croudace	Medway Council	Templars
Dover District Council	MHS Homes	The Land Group
East Kent Housing	Milton Ashbury Ltd	Tonbridge and Malling BC
East Kent Mencap	Millwood Homes	Town & Country Housing Group
Ellis Builders	Moat Housing	Tunbridge Wells BC
English Rural Housing	My 4 walls	United House Ltd
Explore Living	National Landlords Association	West Kent Housing Association

## Document History

- The Housing Strategy will now be in place until 2016. Following the Comprehensive Spending Review in 2015, we will be able to begin to review the strategy.
- The Action Plan will be reviewed annually and any new projects will be added. This will ensure the strategy is current and relevant.

<b>Version</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Meeting</b>	<b>Minute ref</b>
Draft	June 2012	Members Briefing	
Draft	August 2012	SMT/Cabinet Briefing	
Final draft	Jan 2013	Cabinet	
Final draft	Jan 2013	Overview and Scrutiny	
Final document	Feb 2013	Full Council	

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