

Thanet District Council

# Thanet Local Plan

Issues and Options  
Consultation Document



# Contents

Contents .....	2
<b>1. Introduction .....</b>	<b>4</b>
1.1 The purpose of this consultation .....	4
1.2 The new Local Plan .....	4
1.3 What is included in this document.....	4
1.4 What we have done, where we are now and what we need to do next .....	6
1.5 This Public Consultation .....	8
1.6 What we need to take into account.....	9
<b>2. Thanet - the key issues and opportunities .....</b>	<b>13</b>
2. 1 Profile of Thanet .....	13
<b>3. The Vision, Strategic Priorities and Objectives .....</b>	<b>16</b>
3.1 Thanet 2031 – the vision .....	16
3.2 Strategic Priorities .....	17
3.3 Objectives.....	18
<b>4. The Issues and Options for Thanet.....</b>	<b>21</b>
4.1 The Economy .....	22
Issue 1 - What level of employment growth should be planned for? .....	24
Issue 2 - How much employment land is needed and where? .....	28
Issue 3 - How can we promote our Economic Infrastructure Assets? .....	32
Issue 4 - How should Thanet’s town centres develop? .....	34
Issue 5 - How can we support the rural economy? .....	41
Issue 6 - How can we support the visitor economy? .....	45

## Local Plan Issues and Options Consultation Document

Issue 7 - How can we support communications infrastructure and home working? .....	49
4.2 Housing .....	51
Issue 8 - How many homes do we need to provide? .....	52
Issue 9 - Where should our new homes be provided? .....	57
Issue 10 - What types of new homes do we need to provide? .....	62
4.3 Environment and Quality of Life .....	71
Issue 11 - How do we maintain a physical separation of open countryside between Thanet's towns and villages? .....	73
Issue 12 - How do we ensure that new development respects Thanet's important and valued views and landscapes? .....	76
Issue 13 - How do we protect, maintain and enhance Thanet's green infrastructure to better support wildlife and human health? .....	78
Issue 14 - How can we adapt to, and mitigate against, the effects of climate change? .....	84
Issue 15 - Which policies do we need to maintain a safe and healthy environment? ....	93
Issue 16 - How can we provide high quality homes, developments and neighbourhoods? .....	96
Issue 17 - How can we protect and enhance Thanet's heritage assets and their settings? .....	101
Issue 18 - How should we plan for community facilities? .....	104
4.4 Transport .....	106
Issue 19 - How can we enable an efficient and effective transport system? .....	107
Annex 1 Glossary of Terms .....	110
Annex 2 Background and Evidence Documents .....	116

# 1. Introduction

## 1.1 The purpose of this consultation

Thanet is preparing its new Local Plan. This consultation is taking place to seek your views on our proposed approach to planning for the future of Thanet.

We need to decide what level of growth is right for Thanet and how we can plan positively for that growth, through the Local Plan. There are a number of issues and options that we are asking for your comments on. This is an important part of the process and it is crucial that we get your views.

## 1.2 The new Local Plan

The Plan is a key Council document that is required to guide and deliver the Council's plans and aspirations for growth. It is essential to shaping change in a form which is desired by the Council and Thanet's communities, and for the delivery of development projects and infrastructure.

The Plan must be prepared with the objective of contributing to the achievement of sustainable development, and be in accordance with national planning policy.

The Plan should be aspirational but also realistic and should provide sufficient flexibility to adapt to rapid change. The Plan must be based upon up to date, sound evidence. We have to be able to demonstrate that the Plan will be deliverable and therefore the proposals included within it must be viable and realistic. The Plan will be delivered by a number of partners, including the private sector. These are important considerations to have in mind when responding to this consultation.

The Plan will set out policies and proposals that will be used to guide decisions and investment on development and regeneration over the period to 2031. It will set out how and where the homes, jobs, community facilities, shops and infrastructure will be delivered and the type of places and environments we want to create. It will also identify land to be protected from development, such as open space. The Plan will form the statutory planning framework for determining planning applications. It will replace the 'saved' policies from the Thanet Local Plan 2006.

## 1.3 What is included in this document

To set the scene and explain the context to this consultation, the rest of Chapter 1 introduces the purpose and context of the consultation explaining:

- previous work that has taken place, including consultations;
- why we have had to re-assess the approach we have taken previously;
- the proposed consultation process and what happens next;
- how to respond to the consultation; and
- what we have to take into account in developing the Local Plan.

Chapter 2 presents a portrait of Thanet identifying the specific issues and opportunities for Thanet.

## Local Plan Issues and Options Consultation Document

Chapter 3 includes:

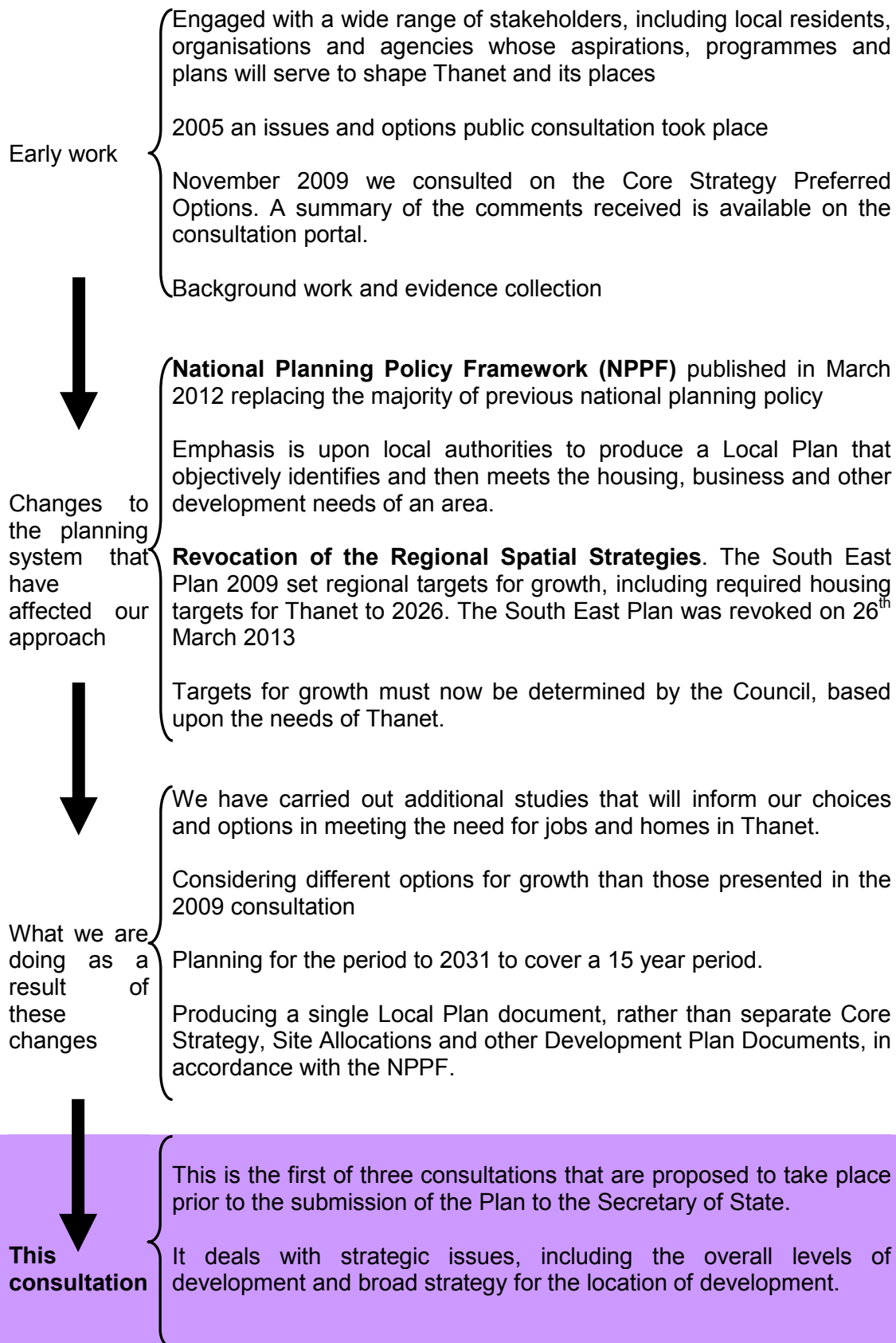
- The Vision for Thanet – where we want to be in 2031
- Strategic Priorities – what are the priorities in order to get there
- Objectives – what are the detailed proposals for delivering the priorities

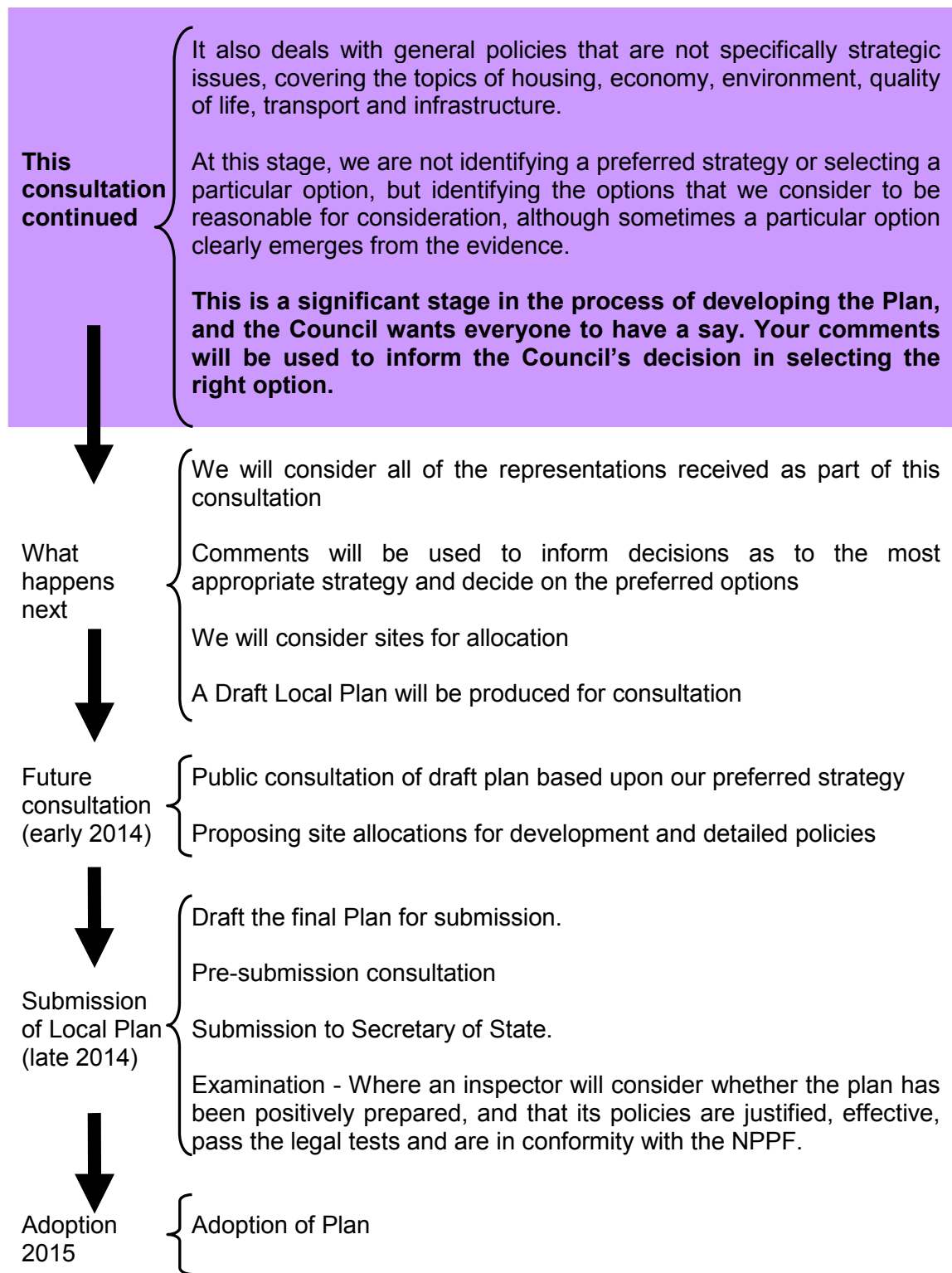
Chapter 4 is the main body of this consultation, where the issues and options are set out. This part is structured across the following topic areas:

- Economy
- Housing
- Environment and Quality of Life
- Transport

This document refers to technical terms and other documents; these are set out in the glossary at Annex 1.

# 1.4 What we have done, where we are now and what we need to do next





## 1.5 This Public Consultation

### **When you need to give us your comments**

The consultation period runs from INSERT DATES and comments must be received during this period.

### **How to give us your comments**

Go to <http://consult.thanet.gov.uk> where you will need to register to comment.

(If you have already registered during a previous consultation simply enter your username and password)

We would prefer all comments to be made electronically, via this online consultation portal. This is also the quickest and easiest way of responding.

If you are not able to respond this way, you can download a questionnaire from INSERT LINK or pick up a paper copy of the questionnaire from the Thanet Gateway, Cecil Street, Margate, and at public libraries in the District. Please send completed questionnaires to [local.plans@thanet.gov.uk](mailto:local.plans@thanet.gov.uk) or Strategic Planning, Thanet District Council, PO Box 9, Cecil Street, Margate, Kent, CT9 1XZ.

### **Consultation Events**

Check our website for details of the consultation events we will be holding. Details will also be available at the Thanet Gateway and at public libraries.

### **How we will use your comments**

Your comments will be open to public inspection and cannot be treated as confidential.

This is a significant stage in the process and the Council wants everyone to have a say. Your comments will be used to inform our future decisions on the Local Plan.



## 1.6 What we need to take into account

There are a number of other policies and strategies, as well as evidence, assessments and stakeholder involvement that we must take into account in developing a Local Plan, and are explained below:

- Other Policies, Plans and Strategies including
  - National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)
  - Sustainable Community Strategy
  - Thanet Corporate Plan 2012-16
  - Other local strategies
- Community Engagement
- Duty to Co-operate
- Research and evidence
- Sustainability Appraisal
- Habitats Regulations Assessment

### **Other Policies, Plans and Strategies**

The Local Plan process does not start with a blank canvas. It needs to be all encompassing and take into account and reflects the various policies, plans and strategies of Government and other bodies who have a role in delivering and influencing the future of the places in which we live.

#### National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

Account must be taken of the context of national planning policy, the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), which sets the Government's view of what sustainable development in England means in practice for the planning system.

#### *Sustainable Development*

Sustainable Development is defined as meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. The UK's Sustainable Development Strategy set out five guiding principles of sustainable development; living within the planet's environmental limits; ensuring a strong, healthy and just society; achieving a sustainable economy; promoting good governance; and using sound science responsibly.

The purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. The NPPF sets out what this means in practice for the planning system.

There are three dimensions to sustainable development; an economic role; a social role and an environmental role.

**An economic role** – contributing to building a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right type is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth and innovation, and by identifying and coordinating development requirements, including the provision of infrastructure;

**A social role** – supporting strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by providing the supply of housing required to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by creating a

high quality built environment, with accessible local services that reflect the community's needs and support its health, social and cultural well-being; and

**An environmental role** – contributing to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment; and, as part of this, helping to improve biodiversity, use natural resources prudently, minimise waste and pollution, and mitigate and adapt to climate change moving to a low carbon economy.

To achieve sustainable development economic, social and environmental gains should be sought jointly and simultaneously through the planning system.

The Plan needs to positively seek opportunities to meet the development needs of the area. It should be aspirational but also realistic and should provide sufficient flexibility to adapt to rapid change. The Plan must be based upon up to date, sound evidence. We have to be able to demonstrate that the Plan will be deliverable and therefore the proposals included within it must be viable and realistic.

### Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS)

The East Kent Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS), covering Thanet and its neighbouring Districts, was adopted in 2009. It identifies the challenge for East Kent and how we can best contribute to the success of wider community objectives. The Strategy identifies climate change, community cohesion, educational underperformance and a more balanced housing market, without sacrificing, and indeed asserting, aspects of the area's distinctiveness. The SCS' vision, work themes and priorities provide fundamental context for the Local Plan. Context for the Local Plan is also provided by Kent's Sustainable Community Strategy - Vision for Kent 2012-2022.

### Thanet Corporate Plan

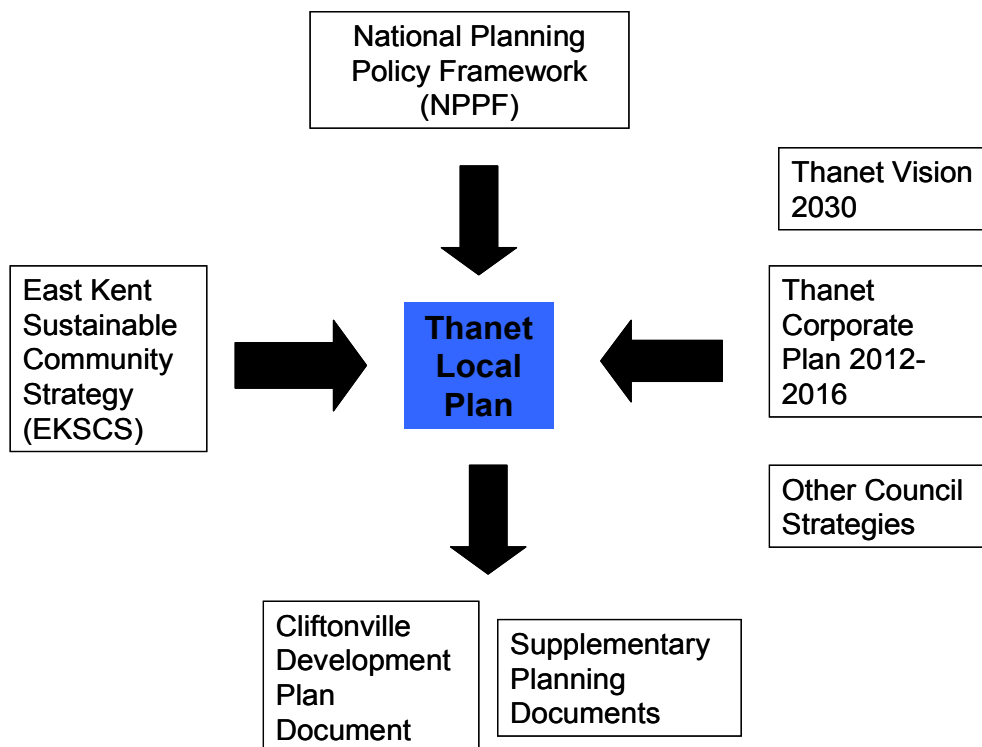
The District Council's Corporate Plan 2012-16 sets aims, priorities and actions the Council proposes to deliver to the community in meeting the Council's Vision 2030. The Plan was developed in consultation with the community and identifies 11 priorities. This includes supporting the growth of our economy and the number of people in work, tackling disadvantage, improving parking and transportation, planning for the right number and type of homes in the right place, supporting cultural, sports leisure and coastal activities, as well as protecting our public open spaces.

The Local Plan will aim to help deliver the key priorities and actions of the Sustainable Community Strategy and the Corporate Plan.

### Other Local Strategies

The Council has a number of other plans and strategies, such as the Economic Strategy and Housing Strategy. The Local Plan will be informed by these and will also help to deliver actions within them.

The following diagram explains the relationship of the Local Plan with other key plans and strategies.



### **Community Engagement**

As an essential part of the process we will continue to seek the views of individuals and organisations, including from the public, private and voluntary sectors, and this consultation forms an integral part of this.

Previous consultations have included a series of conferences, and formal public consultation periods, as well as informal and ongoing discussions with a number of key stakeholders, including statutory consultees. Representations received in response to previous consultations have been used to inform this consultation document, and in particular the vision, strategic priorities and objectives.

### **Duty to Co-operate**

Planning issues are not constrained to local authority boundaries. National policy requires that public bodies cooperate on planning issues that cross administrative boundaries, particularly those that relate to strategic priorities.

We are working with other authorities to ensure that strategic issues are properly coordinated and clearly reflected in the Plan.

## **Research and Evidence**

The Local Plan needs to be based on adequate, up-to-date and relevant evidence about the economic, social and environmental characteristics and prospects of Thanet.

The evidence we have collected, and will continue to collect includes specific studies and a variety of statistical and other information. A list of the relevant studies is provided in Annex 2 and these are available to view at [INSERT LINK](#)

## **Sustainable Development and Sustainability Appraisal**

The Local Plan will be founded upon the principles of sustainable development, and what this means for Thanet.

Over the course of its preparation the Local Plan will be subject to a Sustainability Appraisal which is a continuous appraisal of the sustainability of its proposals.

The following two documents have been produced and provide background and supporting information to this consultation:

- Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report
- Sustainability Appraisal Interim Assessment

These documents are available to view at [INSERT LINK](#)

## **Habitats Regulations Assessment**

The Local Plan will also be subject to and informed by "Appropriate Assessment" or Habitats Regulation Assessment (HRA) which is required under the European 'Habitats Directive'. This is an assessment of the potential impacts of implementing a plan or policy on European sites of nature conservation importance (Natura 2000 Sites) and aims to avoid any potentially damaging effects. There are a number of these sites within Thanet. We also need to consider those sites within the neighbouring Districts of Dover and Canterbury.

A formal assessment will be undertaken when the draft Plan has been prepared.

## **Equalities Impact Assessment**

The Local Plan will be subject to an Equalities Impact Assessment.

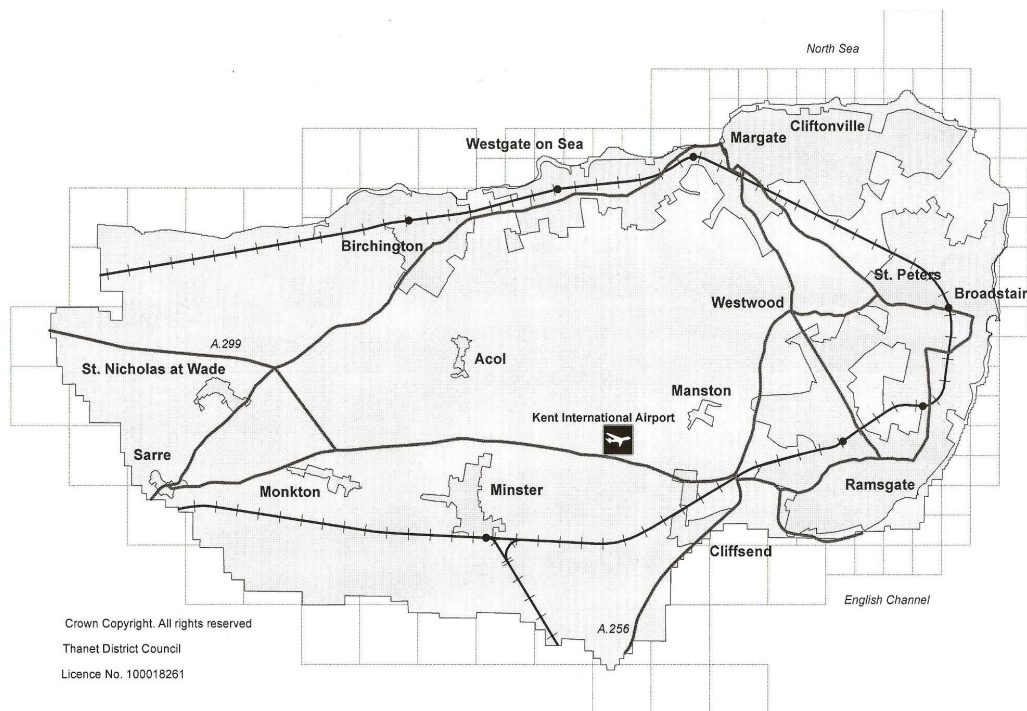
## 2. Thanet - the key issues and opportunities

In order to inform the plan for the future, we must have a good understanding of the characteristics of Thanet today, and the issues and opportunities that it presents. These are set out in the evidence and background papers supporting this consultation document.

The following profile of Thanet provides an overview of the key characteristics, problems, issues and opportunities that need to be addressed.

### 2.1 Profile of Thanet

Thanet lies at the eastern end of Kent, in close proximity to continental Europe. It has three main coastal towns of Margate, Ramsgate and Broadstairs. The built up area is densely populated and forms an almost continuous urban belt around the north east coast. This is separated by areas of countryside between the towns and providing relief in the built area. There are also attractive coastal and rural villages.



The district has an area of 103 square kilometres and a resident population of 134,400<sup>1</sup>. About 30% of the district is urban with 95% of the population living in the main urban area around the coast. Thanet is the fourth most populated district in Kent, with the second highest population density. Thanet is a popular area for retired people to live, and has the highest number of over 65 year olds in the county whilst having a lower proportion (59.6%) of 16-64 year olds than the county (62.6%).

<sup>1</sup> ONS mid-year population estimates (2011)

INSERT PICTURE OF BEACHES AND CLIFFS

The district of Thanet is a unique and vibrant coastal area, with an attractive environment and a number of unique features. There are 32 kilometres of coastline with attractive chalk cliffs and beautiful sandy beaches and bays, many of which have been awarded European Blue Flag status. Much of the coast is also recognised for its internationally important habitats, including coastal chalk and significant populations of coastal birds. This is reflected in the coast's designation under international and national legislation, including Sites of Special Scientific Interest, Special Protection Areas, and Special Areas of Conservation. These areas are protected by legislation to prevent harm to them from development change and other activity.

Thanet is also rich in history, with over 2,600 listed buildings and 21 Conservation Areas. Its historic landscape contains many archaeological sites dating back to pre-historic times.

Outside of the urban area, much of the land is high quality and intensively farmed agricultural land.

Thanet has some areas which are at risk from flooding. These are confined to the low lying areas of the countryside to the south west of the district, and along the very edges of the coast, affecting small areas of Margate and Ramsgate.

INSERT PICTURE OF TOWNS/COUNTRYSIDE

In 2005, a new town centre was established at Westwood. This brought many retailers not previously represented in Thanet, which has significantly reduced the 'leakage' of retail spend from the District. The centre continues to attract investment, with further development planned over the next few years. The area does however suffer from traffic congestion, and accessibility around the centre, particularly by foot, is not convenient.

The district benefits from excellent road access to and from the M25 and London via the M2 and dual carriageway A299. Access to Dover and beyond is via the A256, with the recently completed East Kent Access Road providing dual carriageway for the majority of the route. Access to the nearby cathedral city of Canterbury and to Ashford is via the single carriageway A28. Thanet has rail links to London, Canterbury, Dover and Ashford, and since 2009 High Speed domestic rail services operate from Thanet to London St Pancras using the High Speed 1 route via Ashford.

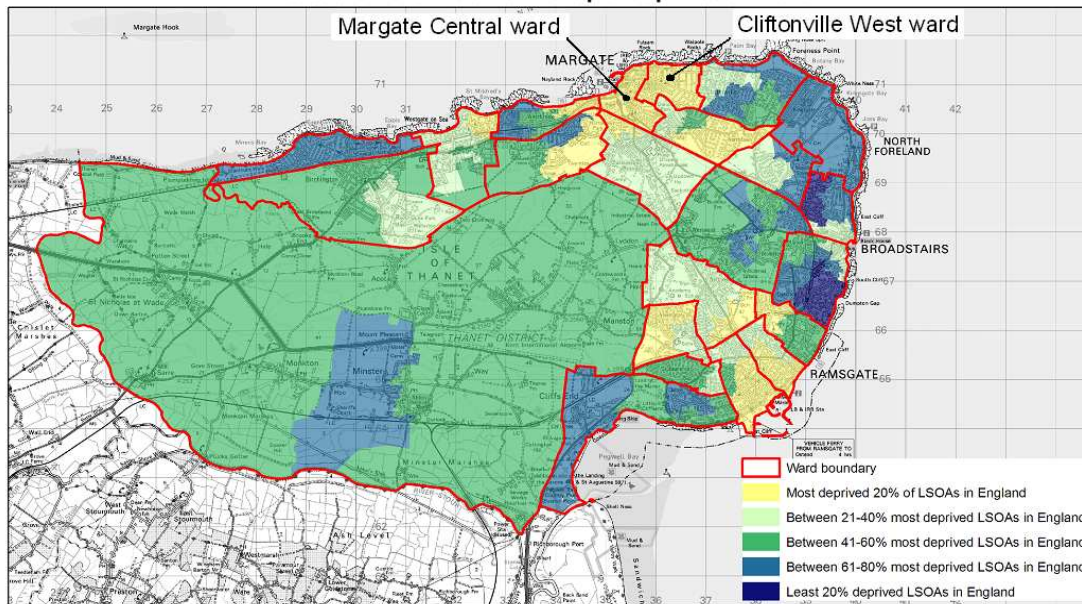
Thanet has an international airport whose current activity is predominantly in the freight market, but with some passenger services. Ramsgate is a major cross channel port with passenger and freight services to Belgium. It has also recently established itself as a base for servicing offshore wind farms.

The tourism sector has continued to grow over the last couple of years, compared with declines in the SE and England. However, Thanet has a generally weak economic and employment base, and is underperforming when compared to the region. Productivity is below the county average and Thanet experienced a steeper decline in total employment in 2011 than the South East and England. Thanet's Business Parks have been slow to develop, and there is a significant amount of undeveloped employment land.

The towns' high streets have continued to suffer, particularly Ramsgate and Margate, with vacancy rates significantly above the national average. However, alongside the opening of the Turner Contemporary Gallery in April 2011, Margate's Old Town and lower High Street has seen a significant number of new businesses opening,.

The district is ranked as the 49<sup>th</sup> most deprived district out of 326 authorities in England with the highest average proportion of households in poverty within Kent. Average skills levels of Thanet's residents are lower than the rest of Kent and England, with unemployment levels (claimant count 2012) at 6.2%, twice that of Kent. Wage levels are also lower than the national and regional average.

**National Rank of Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs) in Thanet based on the Index of Multiple deprivation 2010**



The overall quality of life of Thanet's residents is extremely varied. Some residents in enjoy a very high quality of life, including living in high quality residential environments. However, Thanet also has a number of highly deprived wards with many people with support needs. These areas are also characterised with pockets of urban decline and poor housing stock. A key challenge is to ensure that everyone has the same opportunities by reducing inequalities in the area and improving quality of life for all.

### **3. The Vision, Strategic Priorities and Objectives**

A proposed vision, strategic priorities and objectives have been developed following an analysis of the characteristics of the area, the key issues and challenges we face, stakeholder consultation and other plans and strategies.

They build upon the proposed vision and objectives that were presented in the 2009 consultation and have been refined taking into account the comments we received on that consultation, and the Council's current Corporate Plan.

This section firstly sets out what we want Thanet to be like in 2031 – The Vision. This is followed by the Strategic Priorities that we consider to be critical to achieving the vision. The objectives then provide more detailed proposals for delivering the priorities.

#### **3.1 Thanet 2031 – the vision**

**TO FOLLOW**



## 3.2 Strategic Priorities

These are the strategic priorities we have identified in order to achieve the vision.

- Create additional employment and training opportunities, to **strengthen and diversify the local economy** and improve local earning power and employability.
- Facilitate the continued **regeneration of the coastal town centres**, developing their individual and niche roles, whilst also **consolidating the role and function of Westwood** as Thanet's primary retail centre, ensuring retail expenditure is retained within the district.
- Provide **homes** that are accessible to, and suited to the needs and aspirations of, a settled and balanced community.
- Safeguard local distinctiveness and promote awareness, responsible enjoyment, **protection and enhancement of Thanet's environment**, including the coast, countryside, rich seaside heritage, historic environment, diverse townscapes and landscape, biodiversity and water environment.
- Provide an efficient and effective transport system, delivering the **transport infrastructure** required to support existing communities and new development.

## 3.3 Objectives

The draft objectives of the plan are set out below:

### **Strengthen and diversify the local economy**

- Support the diversification and expansion of existing businesses in Thanet, particularly in the tourism and green sectors, and provide the right environment to attract inward investment.
- Retain and attract skilled people.
- Support the sustainable growth of Manston Airport and Ramsgate Port.
- Support additional improvements to the high speed rail links that will achieve further reduction of journey times.
- Provide a sufficient and versatile supply of land to accommodate expansion and inward investment by existing and new business.
- Facilitate the provision of accessible, modern and good quality schools, as well as higher and further education and training facilities to meet the expectations of employers as well as a confident, inclusive and skilled community.
- Facilitate the tourism economy to take advantage of the area's unique coast, countryside, and the townscape and cultural heritage and potential of the coastal towns, while safeguarding the natural environment.
- Support a sustainable rural economy, including best and most versatile agricultural land.

### **Regeneration of the coastal town centres and consolidation of Westwood**

- Guide investment in the coastal towns to support the tourism economy and provide for the needs of local communities.
- Reshape Margate town centre and seafront to achieve a sustainable economic heart celebrating its traditions as a place of relaxation, leisure and seaside fun and growing reputation as a cultural destination.
- Assist Ramsgate to achieve its full potential capitalising on its historic and nautical heritage and visitor economy.
- Retain and enhance Broadstairs' role as a popular location for visitors and residents.
- Enable Westwood to consolidate and evolve as an accessible, successful and sustainable residential and business community with an excellent range of homes, schools, leisure, sports, shops and other facilities in an attractive environment.

## **Housing**

- Plan for sufficient new homes to meet local community need so that, irrespective of income or tenure, people have access to good quality and secure accommodation.
- Meet the housing needs and demands of a balanced and mixed community and to support economic growth.
- Safeguard family homes and the character and amenity of residential areas.
- Increase the supply of affordable homes.

## **Environment and Quality of Life**

- Accommodate the development needed to optimise access to jobs, key services and facilities required to promote the physical and mental well-being, independence and quality of life of all sections of the community, and retain young people.
- Preserve and enhance Thanet's exceptional built historic environment and ancient monuments and their settings.
- Safeguard and enhance the geological and scenic value of the coast and countryside, and facilitate its responsible enjoyment as a recreational and educational resource.
- Retain the separation between Thanet' towns and villages as well as their physical identity and character.
- Protect, maintain and enhance the District's biodiversity and natural environment, including open and recreational space to create a coherent network of green infrastructure that can better support wildlife and human health.
- Mitigate and adapt to the forecast impacts of climate change (including the water environment, air quality, biodiversity and flooding)
- Use natural resources more efficiently, increase energy efficiency, the use of renewable and low carbon energy sources, to reduce the District's carbon footprint.
- Facilitate improvements within areas characterised by poor quality housing, empty property and poor physical environment.
- Ensure that all new development is built to the highest attainable quality and sustainability standards and enhances its local environment.
- Reduce opportunities for crime and the fear of crime
- Ensure Thanet's community has access to good quality social and health services
- Broaden and improve the range of active leisure facilities to encourage greater participation within the local community.
- Support the social, economic and physical revitalisation of Margate and Cliftonville West in line with community aspirations and through partnership working.

## **Transport and other Infrastructure**

- Promote development patterns and behaviour that will minimise the need to travel or use private cars to access services and amenities.
- Facilitate the enhanced integration of the High Speed 1 network with wider public transport and highway network by supporting infrastructure that would maximise its benefits
- Promote an efficient public transport system alongside expansion of larger scale transport infrastructure.
- Facilitate provision of direct walking and cycling routes to reduce potential congestion, noise and pollution.
- Deliver required improvements to the road network in order to reduce congestion and pollution, and to accommodate new development.
- Facilitate the provision of infrastructure required to support new development and communities, including water, energy, telecommunications, utilities, waste, health, social care, education, flood risk and coastal change management.

## **4. The Issues and Options for Thanet**

This section looks at the issues and options we are considering in order to deliver the vision and objectives of the Local Plan, deciding on our approach to planning for the future of Thanet. This includes the levels of growth that should be planned for and how the growth should be accommodated. We also consider how we can shape growth through the Local Plan.

The document is structured in the topics of economy, housing, environment and quality of life, and transport.

## 4.1 The Economy

### What is included in this section

This section covers the topic area of the economy and considers the following issues:

1. What level of employment growth should be planned for?
2. How much employment land is needed and where?
3. How can we promote our Economic Infrastructure Assets?
4. How should Thanet's town centres develop?
5. How can we support the rural economy?
6. How can we support the visitor economy?
7. How can we support communications infrastructure and home working?

### Strategic Priorities and Objectives

It is a proposed strategic priority of the Local Plan to **create additional employment and training opportunities, to strengthen and diversify the local economy and improve local earning power and employability**

It is also a strategic priority to **facilitate the continued regeneration of the coastal town centres, developing their individual and niche roles, whilst also consolidating the role and function of Westwood at the District's primary retail centre, ensuring retail expenditure is retained within the District.**

In achieving this we consider the following draft objectives to be appropriate:

#### Strengthen and diversify the local economy

- Support the diversification and expansion of existing businesses in Thanet, particularly in the tourism and green sectors, and provide the right environment to attract inward investment.
- Retain and attract skilled people.
- Support the sustainable growth of Manston Airport and Ramsgate Port.
- Support additional improvements to the high speed rail links that will achieve further reduction of journey times.
- Provide a sufficient and versatile supply of land to accommodate expansion and inward investment by existing and new business.
- Facilitate the provision of accessible, modern and good quality schools, as well as higher and further education and training facilities to meet the expectations of employers as well as a confident, inclusive and skilled community.
- Facilitate the tourism economy to take advantage of the area's unique coast, countryside, and the townscape and cultural heritage and potential of the coastal towns, while safeguarding the natural environment.
- Support a sustainable rural economy, including best and most versatile agricultural land.

### **Regeneration of the coastal town centres and consolidation of Westwood**

- Guide investment in the coastal towns to support the tourism economy and provide for the needs of local communities.
- Reshape Margate town centre and seafront to achieve a sustainable economic heart celebrating its traditions as a place of relaxation, leisure and seaside fun and growing reputation as a cultural destination.
- Assist Ramsgate to achieve its full potential capitalising on its historic and nautical heritage and visitor economy.
- Retain and enhance Broadstairs as a popular location for visitors and residents.
- Enable Westwood to consolidate and evolve as an accessible, successful and sustainable residential and business community with an excellent range of homes, schools, leisure, sports, shops and other facilities in an attractive environment.

## Issue 1 - What level of employment growth should be planned for?

### Introduction

#### Why do we need to address this issue?

We need to understand the number and type of jobs that will be created over the next 20 years to ensure that we can plan for them and provide the right conditions to enable them to be delivered.

National planning policy requires us to plan for all foreseeable types of economic growth and the Local Plan should:

- set out a clear economic vision and strategy for their area which positively and proactively encourages sustainable economic growth;
- set criteria, or identify strategic sites, for local and inward investment to match the strategy and to meet anticipated needs over the plan period;
- support existing business sectors, taking account of whether they are expanding or contracting and, where possible, identify and plan for new or emerging sectors likely to locate in their area. Policies should be flexible enough to accommodate needs not anticipated in the plan and to allow a rapid response to changes in economic circumstances;
- plan positively for the location, promotion and expansion of clusters or networks of knowledge driven, creative or high technology industries;
- identify priority areas for economic regeneration, infrastructure provision and environmental enhancement; and
- facilitate flexible working practices such as the integration of residential and commercial uses within the same unit.

Thanet Council's Corporate Plan 2012-2016 sets out the priorities for the District. Priority 1 of the Plan states that the Council will support the growth of our economy and the number of people in work.

The Council's Draft Economic Strategy aims to achieve the following:

- Develop the right environment and conditions to deliver real economic growth and prosperity
- Place businesses at the forefront to give an enterprise-led focus to activities and programmes of the public sector
- Capitalise on our natural assets, heritage and culture that are our unique selling points, to encourage private sector investment and support the visitor economy
- Capture potential opportunities from moving to a low-carbon future
- Encourage the business community to exploit the opportunities of new technologies to improve productivity and resilience
- Work with education and training providers to develop a skilled and ambitious workforce, in current and future generations.

#### What evidence we have on this issue

We have carried out an analysis of the likely job creation in the district by looking at three different options for the economic future in Thanet. A summary is provided below, a more detailed consideration and the evidence supporting this is available in the following documents:

- Employment Topic Paper



- Employment Land Review 2010
- Economic and Employment Assessment 2012 (Experian)

### **Key Facts and Information**

The following key facts are important when considering what level of employment growth should be planned for.

- Thanet's economic productivity has been consistently below the South East and England.
- In Thanet tourism and the green sector comprise a larger proportion of total businesses in comparison to the South East and England.
- Skilled trades and caring, leisure and other service occupations are dominant.
- Thanet has fewer professional and managerial occupations than the South East and also England although the number of people employed in these occupations has been rising for the last few years.
- Manston airport is of regional significance and currently handles approximately 37,000 passengers and 27,000 tonnes of freight per annum.
- Unemployment has historically been above the Kent average and has grown from 3.2% in 2009 to 5.6% in 2012.
- Thanet has fewer individuals with no qualifications (8.6%) than the Kent average (11.4%), but also a lower number of people with qualifications at NVQ level 3 and above.
- In terms of economic output Thanet declined in output by 0.4% in line with the UK as a whole, this is in contrast to the South East which grew by 0.2% in 2011.

### **Considering what level of employment growth should be planned for**

Along with the key facts and information above, the following are factors to take into account and to help you consider what level of employment growth should be planned for.

#### Future Employment Growth

Our evidence includes an assessment of the future employment growth in the District between 2011 and 2031, and outlines three potential economic scenarios.

Predicting what may happen in the future is not an exact science, and there are a number of factors which may affect the likely outcome. Whilst there should be an element of ambition, the Local Plan needs to be realistic and demonstrate that its proposals are deliverable.

#### *Baseline*

The evidence from the Economic and Employment Assessment 2012 suggests that the most likely future is one where the economy continues to perform in a way which it has done in the past, taking into account what is expected to happen in the national economy, but factoring in local patterns. Where the economy in Thanet has performed better in a particular sector when compared to the national picture, this is taken into account.

In this scenario the District would see continued growth in education, health, residential and social care, accommodation and food services and professional services, with declines in manufacturing. This results in an additional 3,100 jobs in the District over the 20 year plan period.

### *Economic Higher Growth*

In this scenario the economy will perform better in some sectors than it has in the past. It takes specific account of the Council's Draft Economic Strategy which identifies the tourism and green sectors as potential significant growth opportunities. Analysis shows that if this were to happen 5,100 jobs could be created in the District.

### *Economic Lower Growth*

This scenario is based around the uncertainty in relation to the national economy, addressing the possibility that the economy could return to recession, and analysis indicates this could have a negative effect on the future job growth, with only 1,200 jobs being created in the district.

Table 1 outlines other factors to consider in deciding what level of employment growth should be planned for

**Table 1 - Options for Employment Growth**

<b>OPTIONS</b>	<b>NUMBER OF JOBS</b>	<b>FACTORS TO CONSIDER</b>
Based on past patterns of growth 'Baseline'	3,100	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Jobs would be provided for local people.</li><li>• There would be growth in the visitor economy, including creative industries and green economy in line with Council's Corporate Plan and draft Economic Strategy.</li><li>• There would be growth in sectors that will attract a younger working age population.</li><li>• Skills of local people will need to be developed to take advantage of these jobs.</li><li>• There is competition for labour supply within East Kent, due to our ageing population.</li><li>• There would need to be additional housing to accommodate in-migration of workers.</li></ul>
Additional growth in visitor and green economy 'Economic higher growth'	5,100	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Further job opportunities would be provided for local people.</li><li>• Strong growth in the tourism and green sectors would have a knock-on effect for the rest of the economy.</li><li>• Significant intervention and support likely to be required from the Council and its partners making this level of growth more challenging to deliver.</li><li>• There would be a need to plan for a higher level of housing. However there is a risk that, if the jobs are not delivered, more housing will attract economically dependent migrants.</li></ul>
Based on economy returning to recession 'economic lower growth'	1,200	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• There would be limited opportunities for local people.</li><li>• Levels of socio-economic deprivation in Thanet would be unlikely to be improved significantly.</li><li>• This is a pessimistic approach not supported by national policy.</li></ul>

The role of the Airport in delivering future employment growth

Through the Local Plan we need to decide whether to plan for growth at the airport within the overall employment growth. If the airport were to grow, it is important that the Local Plan takes account of this to ensure that the effects of this can be planned for, for example providing sufficient housing and employment land.

The above job growth scenarios do not take into account any potential growth at Manston Airport.

A separate assessment has therefore been made of job growth taking into account two varying levels of growth in airport operations. One of the scenarios assumes that the airport will grow in line with the current owner's Airport Masterplan. This would result in an additional 2,420 jobs by 2031.

The other lower growth scenario compares the airport with other airports of a similar size in similar locations. This scenario assumes that passenger numbers would reach 200,000 per year and results in an additional 240 jobs by 2031.

There is current uncertainty over the future growth of the airport. The targets in the Masterplan have currently not been met and there is also uncertainty regarding the Government's future policy for aviation in the South-East. However, a new domestic flight service commenced at the airport in April 2013, with flights to Amsterdam, providing further international connections.

## Issue 2 - How much employment land is needed and where?

### Introduction

#### Why do we need to address this issue?

For the Local Plan to adequately plan for employment growth it is necessary to understand the amount of land and floorspace that is needed to facilitate the employment growth. We also need to understand what type of land is needed and where the jobs should be located.

The National Planning Policy Framework says we should plan for and accommodate all foreseeable types of economic growth.

#### What evidence we have on this issue

The Economic and Employment Assessment 2012 assessed likely job growth and resulting floorspace requirements. Other key pieces of evidence are the Council's Employment Land Review 2010. The Employment Topic Paper also draws together a range of evidence.

### Key Facts and Information

The following key facts are important when considering how much employment land is needed and where.

- Only 30% of employment growth is expected to be in the traditional B use<sup>2</sup> classes traditionally found on business parks.
- The visitor and green economies are expected to provide employment growth.
- Other sectors of growth are education; accommodation and food services; professional services; health; residential and social work; administrative and supportive service activities; land transport, storage and post; retail; real estate and specialised construction activities.
- Approximately 74 hectares of the land allocated in the Local Plan 2006 is currently vacant and available (Table 2).
- We also have a number of existing developed employment sites that are protected by the Local Plan 2006 (Table 3).

The allocated and protected sites have existing infrastructure such as roads and utilities, and many of them are either fully or partly occupied. The protected sites are occupied by established business and built units potentially ready for occupation.

Much of Thanet's allocated employment land is located around Manston and Westwood. The evidence concludes that the majority of growth in the B Use Classes is likely to be in offices (B1) and Storage and Distribution (B8) It is predicted that there will be a net loss in industrial floorspace (B2).

Table 2 identifies the allocated sites from the Thanet Local Plan 2006.

---

<sup>2</sup> B Use includes Office, Industrial, Storage and Distribution uses

**Table 2 – Allocated sites from Thanet Local Plan 2006**

SITE	Developable Area (hectares)
Manston Business Park	46.07
Eurokent Business Park	19.85
Thanet Reach Business Park	4.59
Manston Road, Ramsgate	1.07 1.59
Hedgend Industrial Estate	1.47
TOTAL	74.64

Table 3 identifies a range of existing employment sites which are retained under Policy EC12 of the Thanet Local Plan 2006

**Table 3 - Existing Protected Employment Sites**

Site Name	Area (ha)
Westwood Industrial Estate	26
Pysons Road Industrial Estate	22.8
Dane Valley Industrial Estate, St. Peters	8.5
Haine Road Industrial Estate	6.52
Laundry Road (Telegraph Hill) Industrial Estate	3.68
All Saints Industrial Estate	2.45
Manston Road Depot	2.97
Tivoli Road Industrial Estate	2.45
Cromptons Site	2.26
Jentex	2
140-144 Newington Road	1.12
Princes Road Depot	0.98
Whitehall Road Industrial Estate	0.95
Northdown Industrial Estate	0.89
Pioneer Business Park	0.64
Suffolk Avenue Factories	0.45
Manston Green	0.38
Magnet and Southern	0.29
St Lawrence Industrial Estate	0.19
Fuller's Yard	0.17

### **Considering how much employment land is needed and where**

Along with the key facts and information above, the following are factors to take into account and to help you consider how much employment land is needed and where.

As stated above only 30% of employment growth is expected to be within uses that would traditionally be found on our Business Parks. The other 70% of employment growth will be in sectors that will be located elsewhere in Thanet, including within the town centres, and for example in schools, hospitals and care homes, which will also be facilitated through the Local Plan. This section considers the need for traditional business parks in the District.

### Amount of land

The Employment Land Review 2010 and the Economic and Employment Assessment 2012 considered this issue. Table 4 identifies land requirements associated with different methods of calculating the requirements, as well as maintaining the existing supply of employment land.

**Table 4 – Amount of Employment Land needed**

<b>Method</b>	<b>Approx Needed to 2031 (ha)</b>
Based upon the employment growth scenarios determined by Experian	Range between 3 and 15 (ha)
Based upon past take up rates	26 (ha)
Maintain the existing supply of employment land as identified in Thanet Local Plan 2006	74 (ha)

The lower level of B Use Class employment land required as a result of the predicted employment growth could be restrictive and unoptimistic given historic take up rates. It is also inflexible and may not sufficiently accommodate any significant unforeseen developments and alternative uses. Furthermore restricting supply could have the effect of limiting the variety of site opportunities for potential investment.

We also need to acknowledge that there are potential inaccuracies in forecasting, and therefore additional land may need to be provided as a buffer, to ensure that we are providing sufficient land to accommodate all potential economic development.

Maintaining the supply of employment land at existing levels may mean that land remains vacant, although the generous supply does allow for flexibility in accommodating one off developments or alternative uses. However the National Planning Policy Framework requires us to review sites and if they are not likely to come forward for employment use we should consider alternative uses.

There is need to provide sufficient land to:

- ensure there is a choice of sites to attract inward investors;
- compensate for loss of employment land to other non B uses; and
- ensure that contingency provision exists to accommodate significant unforeseen developments within the existing supply rather than finding further land for the development

### Type and Location of Land

The Employment Land Review 2010 included an appraisal of existing sites and scored them according to marketability, sustainability, deliverability and strategic planning factors. This appraisal is contained in Table 27 on page 71 of the Employment Land Review May 2010. The main aim of the exercise was to establish whether the existing sites satisfy the future

requirements of employment growth in the District. We will be reviewing this assessment of existing allocations and this consultation will help to inform this review.

Thanet's allocated employment sites provide a range and type of employment land in various locations. Manston Business Park acts as the District's prime business location strategically located at the centre of Thanet and adjacent to the airport.

We need to decide where to locate employment land and whether the existing allocations are in the appropriate location.

The employment sites protected in the current Local Plan 2006 are occupied by existing business premises, are often small in size and located in residential areas. It is concluded in the Employment Land Review that these sites are of importance because they are ready for occupation and provide a particular function in the Thanet economy, as they provide low cost, affordable premises. However a lot of the premises are in poor condition and current market indications suggest that redevelopment to provide improved premises may not be viable. However, if these sites are not protected they may be vulnerable to pressure for alternative uses, such as residential development.

#### Accommodating Other Uses

Certain other uses such as motor car showrooms are not provided for through other means in the Local Plan. These and are also difficult to predict and it would therefore be inappropriate to designate specific land for these uses. An option to accommodate these uses would be to allow flexibility on all or some of the Business Parks that will be identified.

## **Issue 3 - How can we promote our Economic Infrastructure Assets?**

### **Introduction**

#### Why do we need to address this issue?

The port and airport are important infrastructure assets as they support economic growth in the District. They provide important links to the continent and beyond and also provide job opportunities. We therefore need to consider how these can be supported through the Local Plan.

The introduction of the High Speed rail link has greatly decreased commuting times to London improving our connectivity with the region. We need to consider how we can ensure that this benefits the Thanet economy.

#### What evidence we have on this issue

The main evidence on this issue comes from the Employment Topic Paper and the Airport Masterplan. We will also need to take into account the Council's Port Masterplan.

### **Key Facts and Information**

The following key facts are important when considering how we can promote our economic infrastructure assets

#### Manston Airport

- At present the airport handles mainly freight. In 2011 figures indicate that it handled 37,000 passengers and 27,000 tonnes of freight per year.
- Dutch airline KLM has recently signed up to run a shuttle service to Schipol Airport in Amsterdam where a significant number of onward connections can be accessed.
- The current terminal is capable of handling up to 700,000 passengers per year.
- The Thanet Local Plan 2006 supports the development, expansion and diversification of the airport subject to visual, noise, air quality, traffic generation and groundwater quality restrictions.
- The Thanet Local Plan 2006 reserves certain land for airside development and also for a new terminal.

#### Ramsgate Port

- The Port is important existing infrastructure that currently deals with in the region of 130,000 tonnes of freight per year and 200,000 passengers per year.
- It has the potential to support future economic growth particularly in the green economy.
- The Thanet Local Plan 2006 permits further development at the Port if it improves shipping, traffic through the port, new routes and complementary land-based activities, and there is a need for the development. It requires development to be compatible with the character and function of the seafront, and acceptable in terms of environmental impact and restricts further land reclamation beyond the western extremity of the Port.

#### Rail Infrastructure

- The High Speed Rail Network was introduced in 2009 and has reduced journey times to and from London to 76 minutes



- Further improvements to the line have been agreed to further reduce journey times
- KCC's Local Transport Plan "Growth without Gridlock" includes proposals for a new station on the high speed line to the south of the airport.

### **Considering how we can promote our Economic Infrastructure Assets**

Along with the key facts and information above, the following are factors to take into account and to help you consider how we can promote our economic infrastructure assets.

#### The Airport

The current owners of the airport, Infratil, produced a Masterplan in 2009 which estimated a significant increase in passenger and freight numbers for the airport to 2033. It also includes details of future airport expansion such as a new terminal building. The airport remains an important economic asset and provides an opportunity to encourage growth in Thanet.

The Airport Masterplan identifies land adjacent to the airport on the Northern Grass as being suitable for office, industrial and warehouse (B1, B2 and B8) uses. This site will be considered alongside other employment sites, however it is considered in the Employment Land Review that allocating this site could have a negative impact upon the development of Thanet's other established Business Parks.

Specific policy support for the airport is likely to be required in order to safeguard the airport and in order to positively support development that would enhance its function and contribution to the wider economy. Another important consideration is the impact of any growth upon the environment and quality of life in the District. These issues were recognised in the Local Plan 2006 which includes a policy supporting development at the airport, subject to specific criteria. The principle of this policy approach is an option in dealing with this issue.

#### The Port

Thanet is preparing a Port Masterplan which will guide future development. The Local Plan will need to reflect and support this. It will therefore be necessary to review the current policy to ensure that it remains consistent with the Masterplan.

#### High Speed Rail Link

The introduction of faster trains on the Ramsgate to St Pancras route, utilising the High Speed rail link (HS1), in December 2009, means that Ramsgate is only 76 minutes from London. This may have positive benefits for Thanet, whether this be by attracting additional business to the area, or with people living here any working outside of the District.

A Parkway Station located to the west of Ramsgate on the existing rail line is being explored by Kent County Council and is set out as a proposal in the Local Transport Plan. This would be accessed from the new East Kent Access road, and designed to serve both the airport and to act as an accessible parking location for commuters.

Another option is to utilise the existing stations and to plan for their increased use. In order to achieve this it may be necessary to increase capacity at Ramsgate station, which is the closest to the airport and has the shortest connection time to London. This could include for example additional parking provision.

KCC's Local Transport Plan also looks at other ways of improving connectivity, facilities and infrastructure at other stations across Thanet. Funding is in place to improve both Margate and Ramsgate railway stations in terms of accessibility by public transport.

## Issue 4 - How should Thanet's town centres develop?

### Introduction

#### Why do we need to address this issue?

Town centres play an important role in the economy and the community as a whole and often reflect how the wider economy is performing. It is important that the Local Plan sets out a clear strategy for their growth and development. Thanet's coastal town centres are in need of attention and intervention and a strategy that facilitates growth and synergy of Thanet's centres is a priority.

National planning policy recognises the importance of town centres and a core principle of the NPPF is ensuring their vitality and viability. It requires us to recognise town centres as the heart of their communities and pursue policies to support their viability and vitality. In order to do so national policy requires us to:

- define a network and hierarchy of centres;
- define the extent of town centres and primary shopping areas and set policies to make clear which uses will be permitted in such locations
- allocate a range of suitable sites to meet the needs for all town centre uses, including residential and this should not be compromised by limited site availability;
- include policies for the consideration of proposals for main town centre uses which cannot be accommodated in or adjacent to town centres;
- promote competitive town centres that provide customer choice and a diverse retail offer and which reflect the individuality of town centres;
- recognise that residential development can play an important role in ensuring the vitality of centres; and
- plan positively for the future of town centres that are in decline in order to encourage economic activity.

#### What evidence we have on this issue

The Town Centre Assessment 2012<sup>3</sup> carried out an assessment of retail need, a commercial leisure assessment and an assessment of tourism and cultural uses across Thanet looking at existing facilities and the requirements of Thanet to 2031. The Employment Topic Paper also contains evidence on this issue.

### Key Facts and Information

The following key facts and information are important when considering the future of the town centres in Thanet.

Town centres have been in decline for reasons including the global recession, success of internet shopping and the rationalisation of retailing. Many retailers are choosing to serve larger catchments from a single location with a larger scale store. Thanet has not been

---

<sup>3</sup> Town Centre Retail, Leisure, Tourism and Cultural Assessment 2012 (produced by Nathaniel Litchfield and Partners, commissioned by Thanet District Council)

immune to this decline and the traditional coastal town centres of Margate, Broadstairs and Ramsgate have experienced high vacancy rates.

Westwood Cross opened as a new town centre in June 2005. Its purpose was to 'clawback' expenditure lost to Canterbury and beyond. An Expenditure Survey carried out in 2000 showed that the District was losing approximately £100 million in retail expenditure outside Thanet. Westwood Cross delivers the larger scale premises in a single location that retailers now seek and a range of national multiples not previously seen in Thanet have located here. Westwood Cross has proved successful in retaining shopping spend within the District. At 2000 we only retained 53.4% of shopping spend and this has now improved to 84% for High Street goods and 98% for food shopping<sup>4</sup>

National planning policy requires that commercial town centre development should be located in existing town centres. Where this is not possible it should be accommodated on suitable edge of centre sites. Where that is not possible the need should be met in other accessible locations that are well connected to the town centre. This is called the sequential approach.

Town centres uses are defined by the National Planning Policy Framework as

- retail development (including warehouse clubs and factory outlet centres)
- leisure, entertainment facilities, the more intensive sport and recreation uses (including cinemas, restaurants, bars and pubs, night-clubs, casinos, health and fitness centres, indoor bowling centres, and bingo halls)
- offices
- and arts, culture and tourism development (including theatres, museums, galleries and concert halls, hotels and conference facilities)

#### Role of the town centres (hierarchy)

We are required by national planning policy to set out a network and hierarchy of centres. Identifying the existing hierarchy allows us understand the role and function of the town centres and their inter-relationship. A major factor in determining the role of the centres is the catchment which they serve. The role and hierarchy of the centres is set out below:

Westwood. This centre sits at the top of the hierarchy as it caters for high order need, attracts the major national retailers and has a catchment that includes the population of the whole of Thanet as well as areas beyond the District boundary, attracting people from outside the District.

The Coastal Town Centres: Margate, Broadstairs and Ramsgate. The catchments of these town centres are their individual town populations and tourist trade with a wide range of shops to cater for everyday need, special interest and the tourist trade. These towns have traditionally attracted national retailers and services as well as local businesses.

District Centres Cliftonville, Westgate, Birchington and Minster. These centres cater for local needs and services. They serve large residential and semi rural locations but catchments are limited and these locations are not appropriate for large scale retail development.

Local Centres: Several across the District such as Westbrook and St Peters. These cater for a more restricted local need and tend to have a small catchment. These centres provide services such as takeaways, hairdressers and small convenience stores. Business is often local rather than the national multiples. These centres are not appropriate for large scale

<sup>4</sup> Given factors such as the level of internet shopping nationally these latest figures are probably a best case scenario

### Retail Need

In order to provide and adequately plan for town centre development it is essential to identify the need for the different uses. Assessing future town centre need is also a national planning policy requirement. When devising a strategy for the town centres we have to consider how we can accommodate this need including considering whether to increase or decrease the size of the town centre boundaries.

National growth rates along with information about local spending habits, obtained through a telephone survey in 2012, have been used to estimate the need for retail development to 2031.

The assessment concluded the following additional need for food (convenience) shopping floorspace (gross) over the period 2011 to 2031:

- There is very little need in the District for more food shopping floorspace. Only 3,941 sq.m by 2031.
- There is no need for any additional food floorspace at Westwood and Broadstairs until after 2021.
- There is no need for any additional food floorspace at Ramsgate until after 2026.
- Birchington and Westgate together have a small need of further 192 sq.m by 2016 increasing to 510 sq.m by 2031.

The assessment concluded the following additional need for high street (comparison) goods floorspace over the period 2011 and 2031:

- The need at Westwood Cross is small at 448 sq.m by 2016 but increases to 7,459 sq.m by 2021, 16,487 sq.m by 2026 and 27,870 sq.m by 2031.
- Broadstairs has a need for a further 4,091 sq.m by 2031.
- Elsewhere there is very little need for additional floorspace for high street goods.
- Increasing the market share of Westwood result in the need for an additional 9,603 sq.m of high street goods floorspace by 2031 in addition to the 27,870 sq.m identified above.

### Other retail uses

The Town Centre Assessment assumed that a further 20% of the identified retail need should be provided to accommodate restaurants, cafes, takeaways and drinking establishments, as well as financial and professional services, showing that:

- There is a need for 9,500 sq.m of such floorspace across the District at 2031.
- Reflecting the retail need, the greatest need is at Westwood with Ramsgate and Margate having a much smaller need.

### Commercial Leisure

The Town Centre Assessment showed there is no quantitative need for commercial leisure development, including cinemas and bowling alleys. However given the potential of the visitor economy in Thanet, further provision could be supported.

### Vacancy rates at 2012

Table 5 shows the amount of vacant floorspace in the town centres in 2012.

**Table 5 - Vacant floorspace compared to floorspace need by 2031 in the Town Centres (2012)**

Town	Current Vacant Floorspace sq.m	Total Floorspace Need to 2031 sq.m
Westwood	480	36,280
Margate	2,970	3,119
Broadstairs	600	6,104
Ramsgate	3,230	1,200

### District and local centres

District and local centres perform an important role in the retail hierarchy catering for basket and top up shopping located in sustainable locations often in walking distance from people's homes. The current Local Plan aims to maintain provision in these centres at an appropriate level and this is reflected in Policy TC8 which says that proposals for additional shopping provision will be permitted where they meet a local need, widen the choice and quality of facilities and are of an appropriate scale. An appropriate scale was considered to be no more than 1000 sq.m.

### Primary and Secondary Frontages

National Policy says that the Local Plan has to define Primary<sup>5</sup> and Secondary<sup>6</sup> frontages within the Town Centre boundaries and decide what uses are appropriate in each.

Thanet's current planning policy allows shops, financial and professional services, restaurants, cafes, drinking establishments and hot food takeaways in the Primary Shopping Frontages. It is also supportive of leisure, culture, heritage and tourism uses in this area. The Thanet Local Plan 2006 does not identify a secondary frontage policy for the town centres.

## **Considering How Thanet's Town Centres Should Develop**

### The future role of the town centres

We need to consider whether the existing role of the towns remains appropriate for their future development, and ensure they are resilient to anticipated future economic changes.

#### *The role of the coastal towns in providing for people's everyday needs*

Evidence from the Retail Needs Assessment Survey 2009 and the Town Centre Assessment 2012 shows that people do their food shopping at the large supermarkets located around Westwood. There are however benefits in terms of sustainability of food shopping need being met within the town where people live. An option for consideration is increasing the role of the coastal towns in their provision of food shopping. Providing such provision in the coastal towns would result in additional people visiting the towns on a regular basis to fulfil their everyday needs. This could have the effect of increasing footfall in the towns and supporting other shops and businesses, further supporting the objectives of

<sup>5</sup> Primary frontages are likely to include a high proportion of retail uses which may include food, drinks, clothing and household good (NPPF)

<sup>6</sup> Secondary frontages provide greater opportunity for a diversity of use such as restaurants, cinemas and businesses (NPPF)

the continued regeneration of the coastal towns. If this option were considered appropriate, it may result in the need to identify specific sites or land for allocation.

We have considered whether this would also be appropriate in relation to high street goods. However, food shopping catchment areas are much smaller than the catchment areas for high street goods. Increasing the role of the coastal towns for high street goods would result in catchments that would overlap and compete with each other, and for this reason large scale retail development in the coastal towns is unlikely to be viable. To support the objectives for the coastal towns, their future role should be to develop with a diversity of uses, including tourism, cultural and leisure uses, to complement the higher order retail need provided at Westwood and also to support the visitor economy.

#### *Westwood's role*

An option considered in the Town Centre Assessment is increasing the role of Westwood in the sub-region. The Assessment looked at what level of floorspace would be needed if we were to increase market share for high street goods. This assumes that people who live in Thanet at present and still shop outside of the District, primarily at Canterbury, would shop at Westwood instead. The potential for this may be greater if Westwood becomes more attractive and accessible. This option should not result in additional competition for the coastal town centres but rather claw back shopping spend that is currently lost to areas outside Thanet's district boundary. If this were to be proposed, there would be a much greater need to provide for shopping floorspace at Westwood (an additional 9,603 sq.m). In considering the merits of this option it is relevant that the current retention rates are particularly good when comparing them to other towns.

#### The need for other Retail Uses

With regard to the need for uses such as restaurants, cafes and drinking establishments, the Town Centre Assessment concludes that an additional 20% of the floorspace identified for retail need should be provided for these uses. This reflects the typical composition of town centres.

At Westwood this results in a significant amount of additional floorspace due to the amount of need identified for retail development. It therefore may not be appropriate to plan for this amount of additional floorspace for such uses at Westwood. However, these uses play an important role in attracting tourists to the town centres and are therefore particularly important for the coastal towns.

#### How do we accommodate the need for retail development

Margate and Ramsgate have a high level of vacant commercial premises in their town centres. This is nearly enough vacant floorspace to meet the retail need identified for these towns until 2031, although there may be the need for some reconfiguration or redevelopment to make this suitable for future occupiers. This is not the case at Westwood and Broadstairs where vacancy rates are much lower. It will therefore be necessary in these towns to consider specific allocation of sites to accommodate the need.

The Town Centre Assessment suggested that the floorspace requirements at Broadstairs could be accommodated at Westwood due to space constraints within and around Broadstairs town centre.

At Westwood, within the existing commercial areas<sup>7</sup> there are opportunities for redevelopment and potential reconfiguration of the retail areas in order to accommodate the need for development. It is important to note there are also existing planning permissions (totalling approx 20,000 sq.m), including the redevelopment of Sainsbury's at Westwood that will meet some, but not all, of the retail need.

### Commercial Leisure Development and tourism and cultural uses

It is clear from the assessment that Thanet does not have a quantitative need for further major commercial leisure development and arts and cultural uses. However it is also necessary to consider qualitative factors such as regeneration and the need to increase the attraction of the towns for visitors by providing year round facilities, including creative and cultural facilities. Whilst it might not be appropriate to allocate specific sites for such development, the plan could adopt a flexible approach to enable such developments to be considered favourably if they did come forward.

### District and Local Centres

When looking at District and Local Centres the Council envisaged that any new retail shops within these centres should be local shops, to serve the local catchment of the particular centre. It was recognised that there may be a need for local food stores that may be larger than other local shops, but these should have a maximum floorspace of 1000 square metres. The role of the District and Local Centres is still considered important and an option is the continuation of this approach.

### Primary and Secondary Frontages

Traditionally planning guidance has discouraged uses other than retail within the core areas of town centres. This is no longer a requirement of national policy and Local Planning Authorities must now propose what uses they consider to be appropriate.

We can use the required definitions of primary and secondary frontages to try and shape the future of the town centres, identifying where we consider the focus of the town centres should be and what uses we want to see in them.

Given the nature of the Coastal town centres and their role in attracting tourism growth it may be appropriate to allow a greater range of town centre uses within the core town centre. Allowing an element of residential would also add footfall and vitality to the town centres.

### Determining planning applications for town centre development which is proposed outside of a town centre

National planning policy requires local authorities to set policies for the consideration of proposals for main town centre uses which cannot be accommodated in or adjacent to town centres.

It requires impact tests to be carried out for all town centre development proposed outside of town centres and not in accordance with a development plan. If a local threshold for this impact test is not set then the NPPF suggests a 2,500 sq.m threshold. As development should be appropriate in terms of scale and nature to the centre in which it is located, the

---

<sup>7</sup> The existing commercial area comprises the main Westwood Cross Shopping and Leisure Development, the Former Grupo Antolin site and Sainsbury's superstore, Westwood Gateway Retail Park, Westwood and East Kent Retail Parks, DFS, Former Westwood School and Fire Station sites, Tesco Extra, and Broadstairs Retail Park.

Town Centre Assessment considered this issue for Thanet and concludes that impact tests should be applied at the following thresholds for Thanet's towns:

- Westwood Cross, Margate and Ramsgate – 1000 sqm
- Broadstairs, Cliftonville, Birchington and Westgate – 500 sqm
- Everywhere else in the District – 280 sqm

The recommendation states that that this should apply to all edge and out of centre food and non food retail proposals. The assessment states that developments in local parades and centres should primarily serve the community within which it is located and therefore catchment areas should not be more than 800 metres.

An example of applying the above impact thresholds would mean that outside of the town centre boundary in Margate but within the Margate area any development over 1000 sq.m would need to apply an impact test.



## Issue 5 - How can we support the rural economy?

### Introduction

#### Why do we need to address this issue?

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) dedicates a specific section to the rural economy and says that Local Plan policies should support economic growth in rural areas in order to create jobs by taking a positive approach to sustainable new development. It says local plans should

- support the sustainable growth and expansion of all types of business and enterprise in rural areas, both through conversion of existing buildings and well designed new buildings;
- promote the development and diversification of agricultural and other land-based rural businesses;
- support sustainable rural tourism and leisure developments that benefit businesses in rural areas, communities and visitors, and which respect the character of the countryside; and
- promote the retention and development of local services and community facilities in villages, such as local shops, meeting places, sports venues, cultural buildings, public houses and places of worship.

In Thanet given the size of the rural area and its proximity to the urban area and existing employment land, as well as its relatively affluent socio economic profile it is not considered that rural economic growth is one of Thanet's priorities. However, it is acknowledged that economic growth in the whole District is desirable particularly in terms of rural tourism and delivering services to the local population.

The issue of rural tourism is dealt with under the issue of how we support the visitor economy.

#### What evidence we have on this issue

Evidence relating to this issue is contained in the Economic and Employment Assessment 2012, Employment Land Review 2010, and in the Employment Topic Paper. We have also carried out an audit of village services and businesses.

### Key Facts and Information

The following key facts are important when considering how to support the rural economy:

- 9% of firms are located outside of the urban area in Thanet.
- Sectors which have an above average proportion of rural firms include wholesale, retail and construction.
- The green sector in particular the secondary green sector<sup>8</sup> has an above average proportion of firms within rural locations (20%).
- Village services contribute to the rural economy.
- The majority of Thanet's agricultural land is classified as best and most versatile.

---

<sup>8</sup> Secondary green sector includes activities which are partly 'green' such as electricity, manufacture of energy equipment, quantity surveyor and sustainable transport.

- Nationally agriculture accounts for 1% of the economy (GVA) and 1% of employment but it produces 60% of the food we eat and manages 70% of the total land area.
- In terms of the wider economy agriculture supplies the food processing industry which is a much greater contributor to the economy and provides business to ancillary industries.

Current policies from the Local Plan 2006 support the rural economy including the following issues:

- Support of village services through the use of existing residential properties (Policy R3)
- Positive support to retaining a reasonable level of shopping provision in Thanet's rural settlements (Policy R4)
- Support for farm diversification subject to criteria including that the proposed use is complimentary to the farm holding, impact upon landscape setting and nature conservation, best and most versatile land, traffic generation and utilisation of available farm buildings (Policy CC10)

### **Considering how we can support the Rural Economy**

Along with the key facts and information above, the following are factors to take into account and help you consider how to support the rural economy.

The Thanet Economic and Employment Assessment 2012 suggests that given the split of businesses in Thanet the focus for economic growth should be within the urban area. However, a focus on transport and communications infrastructure is recommended as it would ensure that businesses within rural areas have access to high speed broadband that could unlock growth opportunities and further enable home working. The transport network must also be robust in order to easily access larger centres and support networking opportunities such as those provided at the Kent Innovation Centre.

One of the major factors to consider is the proximity of the rural settlements to Thanet's urban area and the reliance of the rural population on the towns for employment and services. A considerable number of rural residents both work and use services in the towns as well as in Canterbury and Dover. The level of car ownership in the villages also tends to be higher than in the towns. This could suggest that Thanet's villages perform more of a suburban function than a rural one; however, the majority of residents are reliant upon a car. It is also important to consider the character and attractiveness of the villages and the rural area.

#### Conversion of existing buildings and the development of new buildings

The reuse of rural buildings for economic development is particularly desirable as it supports the rural economy without land take and brings redundant buildings back in to use which can enhance the appearance of the rural area. Uses that may be appropriate for conversions include rural tourism, retail, offices or industrial and storage providing they were compatible with the location. This could also be beneficial in terms of reducing reliance on the car, providing that they are located within or in close proximity to the villages.

The NPPF also supports sustainable new build development that is well designed. The concern with supporting this is that it may lead to sporadic economic development in the countryside which could bring about cumulatively significant changes in the distinctive open countryside that is characteristic of Thanet. In rural area outside of the villages such

development is unlikely to be sustainable because of the impact upon landscape, the character of the countryside and greater reliance upon the car for accessibility.

However there may be circumstances where development requires a rural location such as equestrian uses.

### Agricultural Diversification

The NPPF states the Local Authorities should support farm diversification that would strengthen and protect the productive base of farm units and allow the continued viability of farms. This is important as farm diversification would support the needs of the food production industry and contribute towards the aim of food security for the UK. However, farm diversification projects can also bring with them problems of traffic, landscape and the irreversible loss of agricultural land. An option is to develop a policy which supports farm diversification, subject to criteria.

### Village Services

Village services include local shops, meeting places, sports venues, cultural buildings, public houses and places of worship.

The proximity of Thanet's villages to the town centres and high levels of car ownership in the villages may make their shops and services vulnerable given market forces. However these services are essential for the elderly and people without access to a car and it is not sustainable for residents to have to travel several miles by car for everyday items and services.

Currently Acol, Cliffsend, Manston, Monkton, St Nicholas and Sarre lack accessible services to meet the day to day needs of their residents. Large scale development in these settlements would not be appropriate. Small scale top up and basket shopping would be beneficial to the rural economy and is more compatible with the form and character of the villages.

As well as supporting the provision of new facilities it is also important that existing village services are protected. The Thanet Local Plan 2006 contains a policy protecting existing and supporting new community facilities (Policy CF1). It states that planning permission for the change of use of an existing community facility to a non-community facility will only be granted where it can be demonstrated that there is no longer a sufficient need for the facility or that adequate alternative accommodation is provided. Village shops and services are considered under the umbrella of community facilities and currently considered by this policy. It is considered important to maintain the principle of this protection through the same or a similar policy.

### Needs of the food production industry

The NPPF states that Local Planning Authorities should identify barriers faced by the food production industry. These could include issues such as flexibility for farmers to diversify farming business in order to make the business viable. This often includes converting redundant agricultural buildings to other uses such as shops, leisure uses and offices.

Supporting the protection of best and most versatile agricultural land in the light of food security requirements is also important for the food production industry, and therefore it may be appropriate for the new Local Plan to contain such a policy.

The need to support the sustainable intensification of farms is also important so that they can remain competitive in the current market dominated by large scale supermarkets. New technologies that assist farming, such as renewable energy technologies and on farm water storage, need to be supported. Approval for new and replacement farm buildings where the old ones are unsuitable is also important. Farm retail units are a further way to increase income for farmers and support the continuing function of the farm business. An option is therefore to include policy supporting agricultural related development.

## Issue 6 - How can we support the visitor economy?

### Introduction

Thanet has a wealth of tourist, leisure, hotels and other facilities, many of which remain from before the decline in the British tourism industry. Some of these are well used and are of great benefit to the economy.

These facilities are located in both urban and rural areas and include town centre, cultural, arts and heritage uses. Thanet's natural assets and built environment attract visitors in their own right.

### Why do we need to address this issue?

The NPPF says that Local Planning authorities should support existing markets and identify and plan for sectors and clusters in the general economy. Tourism is an existing sector that has strong growth potential.

It also says that to ensure the vitality of town centres a range of sites should be allocated to meet the scale and type of tourism and cultural development needed in town centres.

National planning policy also states that in order to support a prosperous rural economy Local Plans should support sustainable rural tourism and, leisure developments that benefit businesses in rural areas, communities and visitors, and which respect the character of the countryside.

Creating a distinctive profile as a visitor destination is one of the priorities of the Sustainable Community Strategy 2009. The strategy highlights current low visitor spend and the need to attract the staying visitor. The Council's Corporate Plan and the Draft Economic Strategy also aim to support the visitor economy for residents and visitors. This is being developed through a Destination Management Plan for Thanet.

### What evidence we have on this issue

Evidence for this issue is contained within the Employment Topic Paper and the Town Centre Assessment 2012.

### Key Facts and Information

The following key facts are important when considering how we can support the visitor economy.

- Tourism accounts for 9% of the economy<sup>9</sup>, a significant contribution to the local economy.
- There were around 2.5 million tourism day trips to Thanet in 2009 which was an 11% increase on 2006<sup>9</sup>
- The number of overnight tourism trips is estimated at 521,000, 83% of which were domestic visitors and 17% were from overseas<sup>9</sup>

---

<sup>9</sup> according to the 2009 Visit Kent Survey "The Economic Impact of Tourism of the District on Thanet"

- Around £93,453,000 was spent by overnight visitors which suggest that each overnight visitor generates £179. Over half of all domestic overnight visitors stayed with friends and family<sup>9</sup>
- Thanet's beaches were awarded 9 Blue Flags in 2012.
- Language schools make a significant contribution to Thanet's economy; in 2011 £11,433,000 was spent on accommodation alone, an increase of 6% from 2009. This accounts for a third of all overnight trip expenditure from overseas visitors.<sup>10</sup>
- Tourism jobs are traditionally found within Accommodation and food services; Arts, entertainment and recreation; and Retail sectors<sup>11</sup>.
- Total employment across the tourism related industries in 2011 was 4,069 employees, this includes both full and part time employment.

### Promoting new tourism facilities

The current Local Plan 2006 supports new tourism facilities including:

- Development that would extend or upgrade the range of tourist facilities, increase the attraction of tourists to the area or extend the season (Policy T1)
- Proposals for self-catering accommodation including static and touring caravans (except at or near the coast)
- Identifying particular sites suitable for tourism uses, including the Former Hoverport Site at Pegwell Bay and The Lido site in Margate
- Language schools, subject to certain criteria
- Amusement Arcades<sup>12</sup> in Margate and Ramsgate only. Amusement Centres<sup>13</sup> are in principle considered appropriate within defined town centres

### Protection of Existing Facilities

The current Local Plan 2006 protects the following tourism facilities:

- The beaches are protected according to their role as either major holiday beaches, intermediate beaches or undeveloped beaches. Policies identify what development would be acceptable on each according to their character and protects them accordingly
- Dreamland is protected for its tourism use
- Self-catering accommodation where it is considered the loss of the facility would seriously affect the maintenance of a reasonable choice of tourist accommodation in Thanet.

### **Considering how we can support the visitor economy**

Along with the key facts and information above, the following are factors to take into account and to help you consider how we can support the tourism industry.

<sup>10</sup> The Economic Impact of Tourism on Kent and Medway 2011 by Visit Kent (published December 2012)

<sup>11</sup> Tourism within the following SIC (industrial classification) codes are hotels; camping sites etc; restaurants; bars; activities of travel agents etc; libraries, archives, museums etc; sporting activities; and other recreational activities.

<sup>12</sup> These offer a mix of amusements with prizes as well as entertainment-only machines ranging from pin-ball to video games. Arcades are often open to all age groups and offer a bright noisy holiday atmosphere. These kinds of amusements are often found on the seafront.

<sup>13</sup> This is usually limited to amusements with prizes, although ancillary retail and refreshment facilities may also be provided. These uses are based on the traditional amusement arcades but they exclusively use modern electronic machinery. Prize bingo is normally played on console machines. Centres tend to be far more discreet than arcades and are closed shop fronts suppressing noise within the property. Access is usually denied to clientele under a certain age. Operators tend to seek to locate these centres in traditional High Street locations.

The figures show that tourism is significant to Thanet and there is scope to increase the number of people that make overnight stays in the area, to provide further benefits to Thanet's economy. A good visitor economy can also provide benefits for the residents of Thanet in terms of leisure facilities, attractive public realm and quality of life which can also encourage businesses and families to move in to an area. It is therefore appropriate to encourage tourism related development and seek to revitalise the seaside towns.

### Promoting New Tourist Facilities

#### *How to promote general tourism facilities*

Although Thanet has a wealth of existing tourism facilities, in order to further enhance the visitor experience and encourage overnight stays, there is a need to promote new facilities and services.

National planning policy supports tourism uses within town centres. The provision of facilities in the town centres should be encouraged to support the town centres, as well as to provide clusters of facilities in accessible and sustainable locations. However it may also be beneficial to the visitor economy to allow tourism uses in other locations.

The current Local Plan 2006 contains a policy that allows new tourist facilities where i) they support the range of facilities in the area, ii) increase the attraction of the area, iii) extend the season. We need to ensure that new tourism facilities are appropriate for the area and will positively contribute the attractiveness of Thanet as a tourism destination. We are considering whether additional criteria should be introduced to ensure that tourism facilities are appropriate for Thanet. For example, whether it:

- reinforces the distinctiveness of the locality;
- is accessible in terms of both public transport and publicity;
- facilitates regeneration;
- complements existing attractions;
- displaces an existing facility.

Some tourism facilities require a rural location. As set out in the Council's Draft Economic Strategy it is therefore important to support these and ensure that they are accessible and sustainable. The re-use of existing buildings can be a beneficial and sustainable way of providing new tourism facilities in rural areas.

The identification of particular sites for tourism uses should also be considered. The current Local Plan 2006 identifies the Lido, Margate and the Hoverport, Pegwell as having potential for tourism development. We need to consider whether these sites, and any others should be specifically identified to help encourage tourism development.

#### *Accommodation*

Existing hotel provision in Thanet currently caters more for the budget market. Thanet has a number of touring and static caravan sites which provide self-catering accommodation suitable for families.

Tourist accommodation is important in increasing tourist spend by providing the facilities for people to make overnight stays. Facilities must be attractive to tourists in order to capitalise on the trend for shorter breaks in the UK and demand for better overall quality and service. There is increased demand for boutique and designer hotels fuelled by more sophisticated tastes.

It is important to consider how to encourage hotel development in Thanet and ensure that this is located in the right place. Hotels are identified by national policy as town centres uses

and are supported within our towns. It might also be appropriate to allow hotel accommodation outside of town centres, by either allocating sites or generally supporting such development elsewhere in Thanet.

It is an option to continue with current policy for self-catering accommodation, which supports touring and static caravan accommodation apart from at the coast. However, there is currently a lack of alternative family accommodation near the coast. It therefore may be appropriate to consider allowing touring caravans near the coast, in particular locations.

Consideration also needs to be given to the overall level of support to be given to new and expanded caravan parks in Thanet. Caravan parks can provide good value family accommodation and support the tourism economy; however there are also environmental impacts which need to be taken into account, such as traffic and landscape.

### *Language Schools*

Language schools are a major contributor to the economy so it is appropriate that the Local Plan supports their development. However, there is also a need to consider where concentrations of such uses might impact upon the character of an area. These issues need to be balanced against the potential benefit to the economy and therefore a supportive policy subject to criteria could be a solution, following the principles of the existing policy.

### *Amusement Uses*

The main issues to consider when planning for amusement uses are their impact upon the character and appearance of the area, as well as potential noise and disturbance. All of the considerations are dependent upon the areas in which the amusement uses are located. Current Local Plan 2006 policy supports amusement arcades in certain seafront areas of Margate and Ramsgate only. Amusement centres are considered appropriate within all of the town centres. We will need to consider whether this policy is still appropriate when considering new applications for amusement uses. Without a policy it may be difficult to refuse amusement uses in inappropriate locations. Any policy restriction would need to be justified.

### Protection of Existing Facilities

The visitor economy could also be supported by protecting existing tourist facilities and resisting their loss to certain changes of use. However, this approach could result in tourist facilities that remain vacant and become derelict if they are no longer in use. A policy that requires evidence that a tourist use is no longer viable could be effective, or we could identify specific sites that are considered particularly important to Thanet's visitor economy, that should be protected.

### *Beaches*

We also need to decide how best to protect our natural assets that are of benefit to the tourist economy such as the character of the beaches. In order to take full advantage of the beaches, they require sufficient facilities and services, such as parking and amenities, to enhance their attractiveness. This can also help support the management and maintenance of the beaches.

Certain beaches may be suitable for development of beach concessions and chalets and others may not. Zoning areas where such uses would be approved is being considered. We are working with the Council's Tourism Team to ensure that future policy supports and enables proposals within the Destination Management Plan. The current policies on major holiday beaches, intermediate beaches and undeveloped beaches in the Local Plan 2006 may still be appropriate for all of the beaches in Thanet.



## **Issue 7 - How can we support communications infrastructure and home working?**

### **Introduction**

#### Why do we need to address this issue?

National policy requires Local Plans to support the expansion of electronic communications networks, including telecommunications and high speed broadband. It also requires us to facilitate flexible working practices such as the integration of residential and commercial uses within the same unit (live/work)

#### What evidence we have on this issue

The Economic and Employment Assessment 2012 looks at home working along with the Employment Topic Paper.

### **Key Facts and Information**

- The proportion of people that are home working is relatively high in Thanet.
- Home based working is a growing trend and 63% of home based businesses are in the service sectors<sup>14</sup>
- Advanced, high quality communications infrastructure is essential for sustainable economic growth.

### **Considering how can we support communications infrastructure and home working**

Along with the key facts and information above, the following are factors to take into account and to help you consider how we can support communications infrastructure and home working.

Home-working is a sustainable method of working and can be encouraged as a way to strengthen the economy.

The Economic and Employment Assessment 2012 highlighted that home working is significant in Thanet. It is not clear from the evidence whether these are small local businesses starting up from home or employees of companies potentially outside the District. In either case this is considered beneficial to the wider economy as it likely to bring money into the District.

As the service sector represents a significant proportion of Thanet's economy it is reasonable to assume that live/work is a growth opportunity for Thanet's economy and should be supported.

Some small scale home-working may not require planning permission. However, where home-working does require planning permission considerations should be had to the impacts upon the neighbourhood, including for example traffic, noise and disturbance. In

---

<sup>14</sup> Understanding Kent's Home Based Business Sector.

The service sector is the sector of the economy that provides services rather than goods, and includes attention, advice, access, experience and discussion. For example transport, sale of goods, entertainment, hotels and banking.

order to support such proposals but to ensure that any potential impact is acceptable, an option is to include a positive policy supporting such uses subject to criteria.

Flexible office space (workhubs) with professional equipment and meeting space that can be hired and used in an ad hoc manner by home based workers can also support home working. Business advice may also be important. It is considered that these facilities can be accommodated on identified Business Parks or in the town centres.

#### Communication Infrastructure

As well as supporting home based working, communications infrastructure is essential to a successfully functioning economy.

The development of high speed broadband technology and other communications networks also plays a vital role in enhancing the provision of local community facilities and services.

In order to support this, an option is to ensure all new development or particular developments are appropriately supported by high speed broadband and other communications technology. However, this may not always be feasible and/or viable.

## 4.2 Housing

### What is included in this section

This section covers the topic area of Housing and considers the following issues:

8. How many homes do we need to provide?
9. Where should our new homes be provided?
10. What types of new homes do we need to provide?

### Strategic Priority and Objectives

It is a proposed strategic priority of the Local Plan to **provide homes that are accessible to, and suited to the needs and aspirations of, a settled and balanced community.**

In achieving this we consider the following draft objectives to be appropriate:

- Plan for sufficient new homes to meet local community need so that, irrespective of income or tenure, people have access to good quality and secure accommodation.
- Meet the housing needs and demands of a balanced and mixed community and to support economic growth.
- Safeguard family homes and the character and amenity of residential areas.
- Increase the supply of affordable homes.

Other proposed strategic priorities are relevant to housing issues including in particular regeneration of the coastal town centres, and protecting and enhancing Thanet's environment.

Many of the other draft objectives are also significant in relation to housing issues including for example those relating to retaining and attracting skilled people, the role and function of Westwood, retaining the separate identities of our towns and villages and minimising the need to travel especially by car.

## **Issue 8 - How many homes do we need to provide?**

### **Introduction**

#### Why do we need to address this issue?

We need to provide sufficient homes in Thanet in order to accommodate a growing population and to help create sustainable communities.

The South East Plan, a regional plan approved by Government in 2009, required us to plan for at least 7,500 extra homes in Thanet over the 20 year period to 2026. Government has since abolished that Plan and local councils are responsible for deciding how many homes are appropriate for their area. We now need to decide how many additional homes we will need to provide for over the Local Plan period to the year 2031.

National planning policy expects our Local Plan to fully meet objectively assessed need for market and affordable housing in the housing market area, taking account of household and population projections, need for all types of housing and housing demand.

#### What evidence we have on this issue

We have carried out an assessment of the Housing Market (Strategic Housing Market Assessment - SHMA) alongside other authorities in East Kent. This has been supplemented by demographic and economic modelling to determine likely future households and housing requirements. We are updating our assessment of sites that may be available and suitable as future housing land (Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment - SHLAA). A Housing Topic Paper has also been prepared setting out the considerations in detail and containing additional supporting information.

### **Key Facts and Information**

The following key facts are important when considering how many homes we need to provide.

- Thanet's housing market area is essentially self-contained.
- Thanet has traditionally seen out-migration of the younger age groups, and in-migration of the older age groups, with people looking to retire in the District.
- Over the past 10 years we have built 5268 new homes (including conversions of existing properties).
- Over the 5 year period to 2012 we brought about 500 empty properties back into use as homes.
- National forecasts suggest Thanet's population will grow by 11,500 between 2011 and 2021 (Source ONS interim 2011 sub national population projections).
- Thanet has an ageing population and reducing labour supply.
- New homes will need to be provided in order to meet the needs of Thanet's existing residents, as well as those moving in to the District.
- Due to the ageing population and changes to the existing population structure, we will need to attract working people to Thanet.
- There is a high level of need for affordable homes.
- At present more people commute out of Thanet for work than into it, and this is expected to continue in the future.

- Population forecasts indicate there will be increase in single person households in the future.

We have developed five scenarios as a starting point for considering the number of homes that should be provided. These are based upon potential changes in future population and households taking into account changes to the existing population, assumptions about economic growth and the number of people coming in to Thanet. It is important to note that these five scenario-based forecasts do not give us the answer but provide a starting point to assist the debate.

**Table 6 - Dwelling Forecast Scenarios**

<b>Scenario</b>	<b>Explanation</b>	<b>Extra homes needed 2011-2031 (annual average required)</b>
<b>1. Zero Migration</b>	Theoretical illustration of how Thanet's population would change if in and out migration were assumed to be equal. This is useful in order to understand how the existing population is expected to change.	<b>3,714 (186)</b>
<b>2. Economic Lower Growth</b>	Based on predicted employment growth of, 1229, 3082 and 5071 jobs respectively. The economic scenarios assume that any shortfall in the resident workforce will be met by people coming to live in Thanet. However, such incomers will include some non-economically active migrants which may include elderly people but also for example children of economically active migrants.	<b>7,600 (380)</b>
<b>3. Economic Baseline</b>		<b>9,639 (482)</b>
<b>4. Economic Higher Growth</b>		<b>11,791 (590)</b>
<b>5. Trend Migration</b>	Assumes past migration levels continue at the same rate as over the past five years.	<b>11,648 (582)</b>

The forecasting model assumes the following:

- Unemployment rate decreasing steadily from current levels to 3% by 2031.
- A commuting rate of 1.10, where more people are commuting out of Thanet to work than in.
- An allowance for empty property with a steady reduction from a dwelling vacancy rate of 5.65% to 5% by 2031.

### **Considering how many homes we need to provide**

Along with the key facts and information above, the following are factors to take into account and to help you consider how many homes we need to provide.

#### Who do we need to provide homes for?

We need to provide sufficient homes to meet the needs of local people. We also need to provide for people moving into Thanet. Past patterns show that people migrate to the District, and this is likely to continue in the future, particularly older people looking to retire.

In-migration is also important to help secure mixed communities and to make sure there is a sufficient workforce to support economic growth.

The level of housing provision needs to be consistent with the overall vision of the Local Plan. Priority and aspiration should therefore be attached to factors such as economic growth and developing more balanced communities across Thanet.

We do not consider providing housing at a level that will only meet the needs of the existing population (as illustrated in the zero migration forecast) is a realistic option as it would likely conflict with the requirements of national planning policy.

### Homes to support economic growth

The economic scenario forecasts assume that any shortfall in the resident workforce will be met through in-migration. Such in-comers will also include some migrants who are not working, including elderly people and also children of migrants. Competition to attract working in-comers is likely to be strong across East Kent.

Housing numbers associated with the economic lower growth scenario are similar to those in the South East Plan which represented a likely minimum level to be provided for. Under this scenario Thanet's labour supply would decrease.

Housing numbers associated with the migration trend and economic higher growth scenarios are similar to the actual level of dwelling completions experienced in Thanet over the last 5 years. This level of delivery has not resulted in improved local economic or employment growth and a significant element of it has been in flats.

The need for economic and employment growth remains a priority for Thanet, and availability of sufficient quality housing is important to achieve it. If higher job growth levels are achieved then continuation of recent dwelling completion rates may be appropriate. However, if employment growth does not meet this level, providing for this number of new homes may risk an increase in the number of economically dependent migrants to Thanet. This is a significant consideration in light of the implications of the Welfare Reform Act for benefit rules which may cause in-migration by benefit dependent households to areas with a supply of cheap rented property. It is also possible of course that some of these homes could be occupied by people working outside Thanet.

The economic forecasts that have been considered in this paper do not make any allowance for an increase in employment that may arise from the Airport. If there is significant job growth at the airport there may be a need to provide additional housing alongside it.

### What are the different effects of the five scenarios?

Table 6 illustrates how much housing might be required alongside the five scenarios which are based on differing assumptions about population and job growth.

The population, age structure (including age structure of in-comers), make up of household types, and size of labour supply vary between the five scenarios, and are important considerations in assessing the impact of the scenarios and level of housing that might be appropriate.

All scenarios indicate:

- a decrease in the number of families with dependent children, and of larger households with or without children.
- an increase in the number of people beyond retirement age

- an increase in the number of childless couples and lone parents, and, (more substantially) an increase in one person households.

Thanet's resident workforce would decrease under the Zero Migration and Economic Lower Growth scenarios.

The Zero Migration scenario would result in loss of young and working age people.

The Migration Trend and Economic Higher Growth scenarios would result in the highest level of increase in young people and working age people.

### Affordable homes

The need for affordable housing in Thanet and its neighbouring areas is very high. The households in need of affordable housing are included in the forecasts above.

One way of meeting the need is to require residential planning applications to include an element of affordable housing. A study of market viability suggests that delivery of housing schemes may be compromised if we were to require an element of more than 30% affordable housing.

In theory the higher the overall amount of housing we plan for the higher the number of affordable homes that may be delivered as part of it. However, the level of need for affordable homes is so substantial that aiming to meet it all would have very significant implications for the amount of overall housing land that would need to be identified to accommodate it.

### Finding land for the new homes

National planning policy expects us to meet objectively assessed needs for new homes unless this would be significantly outweighed by other policies within it. It applies great weight to the most important wildlife sites (which in Thanet's case are essentially located at and around the coast). However, building on countryside, would not in itself be a constraint on the number of new homes that should be built.

Nonetheless locally important considerations, such as protecting the separate identities of the Thanet towns, need to be factored in when considering future housing land options for the District. We are updating an assessment of land that is available for housing (SHLAA), which looks at a pool of sites in Thanet for their housing potential. This includes taking account of environmental factors that may be affected if they were developed. Work to date suggests that the urban area containing the coastal towns and some undeveloped sites (as defined in the Local Plan 2006) may have capacity to accommodate in the region of 5000 additional homes by 2031.

Empty property brought back into use can make a valuable contribution to housing requirements. Where the empty property was in non residential use it represents a true addition to the overall housing stock.

The scenario forecasts referred to earlier assume a modest reduction in the percentage of vacant dwellings from 5.65% to 5% over the period 2011-2031. Forecast dwelling requirements would be correspondingly reduced if a higher reduction in empty dwellings is achieved and vice versa. The removal of Council tax reductions on empty property and other measures that might be introduced to penalise long empty property could serve to increase the number of empty properties brought back into use.

## Market Demand and Delivery

An independent economic viability study of housing development in Thanet notes the difficulty of assessing the overall dwelling capacity the market can deliver year on year. However, it indicates that in general housing development will be viable even after a level of contribution has been made towards affordable housing and other supporting infrastructure.

Net dwelling delivery over the last 5 years has averaged 600 units per year, and has been as high as 889 in a single year. Through this consultation and other exercises we are gathering further information about the number of new homes the market may be capable of delivering.

### What infrastructure and services will be needed to support the new homes?

We are working with the agencies and bodies responsible for delivering and regulating infrastructure such as transport, utilities and community facilities. This work will help identify the infrastructure that would need to be provided alongside different levels of future housing.



## **Issue 9 - Where should our new homes be provided?**

### **Introduction**

#### Why do we need to address this issue?

We need to identify the best locations for new homes in Thanet.

National planning policy requires us to identify a supply of sites for new homes (where possible as far ahead as 15 years). It expects us to meet objectively assessed needs for new homes unless this would be significantly outweighed by other policies within the National Planning Policy Framework.

It applies great weight to the most important wildlife sites (which in Thanet's case are essentially located at and around the coast). However, building on countryside, would not in itself be a constraint on the number of new homes that should be built.

Nonetheless locally important considerations, such as protecting the separate identities of the Thanet towns, need to be factored in when considering future housing land options for the District.

#### What evidence we have on this issue

We are updating an assessment of a large number of sites for suitability and viability for future housing development (Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment - SHLAA). This process includes consideration of environmental criteria. Once the number of new homes to be provided for is established the Council will need to use the SHLAA information to identify the most suitable sites to allocate. This consultation will assist us in deciding the right strategy to do so.

### **Key Facts and Information**

The following key facts are important when considering where our new homes should be provided.

- In recent years about 95% of the new homes in Thanet have been provided on land that was previously developed. Much of this was in the urban area and included re use of buildings including conversion to flats.
- In looking at housing needs to 2031 our SHLAA currently under review. Work to date suggests that the urban area containing the coastal towns and some undeveloped land (as defined in the Local Plan 2006) may have capacity to accommodate in the region of 5000 additional homes by 2031. However this indicative figure will very much depend on the type and density of homes provided.
- Meeting future housing requirements to 2031 will almost certainly mean some greenfield land in the existing countryside will be needed.

National planning policy identifies various factors affecting how we should assess the best locations for new homes. These include:

- Recognising the character and beauty of the countryside and undeveloped coast.

- Focusing development in sustainable locations to make fullest use of public transport , walking and cycling.
- Minimising flood risk.
- Conserving and enhancing the natural environment.
- Making effective use of previously developed land (sometimes called “brownfield land”) as opposed to land not previously developed (sometimes called “greenfield land”).
- Availability of supporting infrastructure such as transport, recreational space and other community facilities.

### Considering where our new homes should be provided

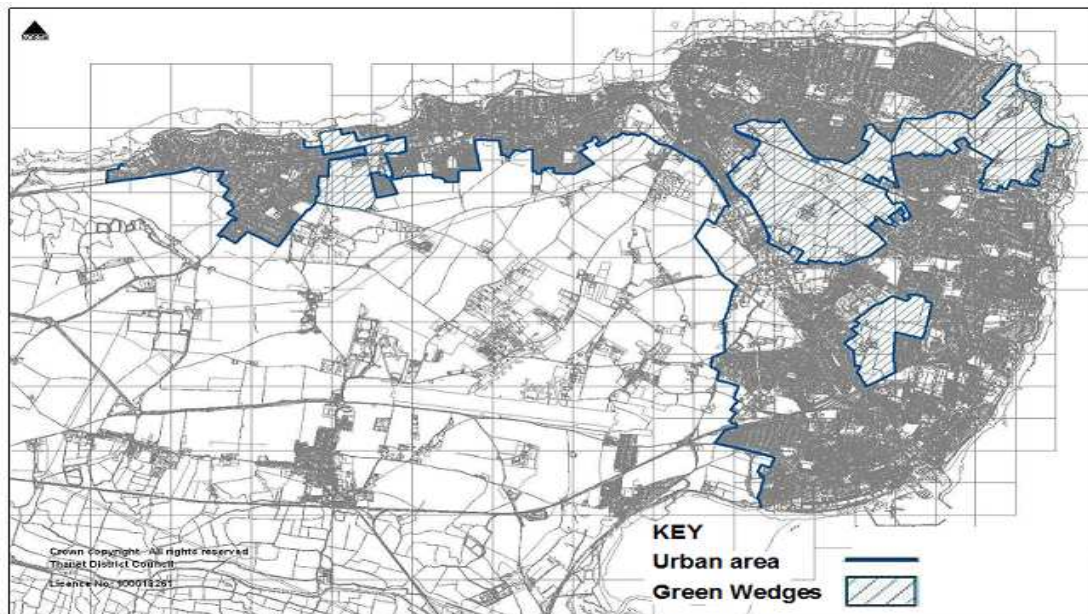
Along with the key facts and information above, the following are factors to take into account and to help you consider where our new homes should be provided.

#### Thanet's characteristics

In considering how to locate housing development in the most sustainable locations we need to take account of Thanet's individual location, development pattern and other circumstances. Locally important considerations, such as protecting the separate identities of the Thanet towns, need to be factored in when considering future housing land options for the District.

Thanet is a relatively small district surrounded on three sides by the coast. Map 1 shows the location of the urban area containing the three main coastal towns. Outside this area is generally open countryside which includes high quality farmland and contains the seven rural settlements.

#### Map 1 - Urban Area and Green Wedges



Crown Copyright. All rights reserved. Thanet District Council. Licence No. 100018261

### Green Wedges

Thanet's Green Wedges (shown hatched on Map 1) serve an important function by maintaining the physical separation between, and identity of, the Thanet's coastal towns. Within an otherwise continuous urban coastal belt these Wedges have consistently been subject to strong protection from development that would undermine this function. However, as they adjoin the existing built up areas of the towns their locations are nonetheless sustainable in many other respects. We will need to take a clear and balanced approach in considering their importance alongside the need for sustainable locations for new homes. Future policy options for the Green Wedge are included elsewhere in this consultation, in the Environment and Quality of Life section.

### Habitat

Thanet has wildlife designations of international and national significance which are essentially located around the coast.

### Flood risk

Flood risk areas in Thanet are largely confined to the low lying areas of open countryside outside the urban areas and for the most part outside the rural settlements.

### Historic heritage

Thanet has a rich and varied historic heritage including archaeological remains. A large number of conservation areas and listed buildings are focused within the towns and rural settlements.

### Countryside and coast

The landscape character and sensitivity of Thanet's countryside and coast is varied. It includes the remoteness, wildness and open skies of Pegwell Bay, the vast, flat, open landscape of the former Wantsum Channel, the Wantsum North Shore which provides the unique setting of the former channel-side villages, and the urban coast, characterised by the presence of traditional seaside architecture, active harbour areas and beaches and some extensive sweeping views.

### Access to services

The majority of Thanet's existing homes are located in the urban belt containing the coastal towns of Margate, Ramsgate and Broadstairs. This urban area contains a number of centres and other facilities including employment, schools, doctor's surgeries and the hospital which are highly accessible by public transport. This is illustrated by an indicative contour on Map 2<sup>15</sup>. Housing located in that area is generally less reliant on private cars to access a range of facilities. The rural settlements are less well served and more reliant on use of cars.

### Air quality

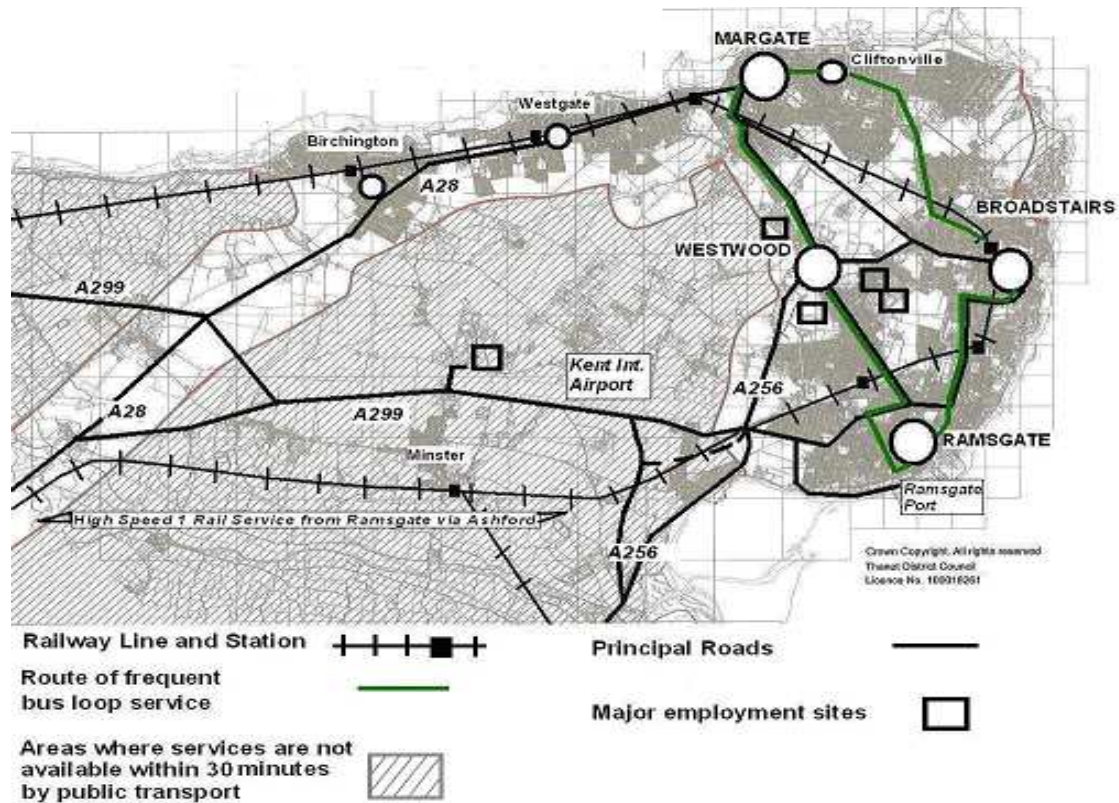
The urban area of the Thanet Towns together with Cliffsend is designated as an air quality management area. An action plan has been prepared with the objective of improving air quality generally (through reduced transport emissions) and in consequence achieving

---

<sup>15</sup> It is important to note that changes in public transport service routes and relocation of facilities could change the contour. However, it is included for indicative purposes.

specific reductions in such emissions at St Lawrence in Ramsgate and The Square, Birchington. In focusing on increasing use of sustainable means of transport, the action plan notes the importance of locating development in a way that reduces emissions overall and of reducing the direct impact of new development, for example by contributing to measures to help implement the action plan.

## Map 2 – Accessibility Considerations



Crown Copyright. All rights reserved. Thanet District Council. Licence No. 100018261

### Existing built up areas and provision of greenfield housing land

There has been concern among Thanet's communities that many residential developments, conversions and redevelopments (often consisting of flats or small houses) are cramming too many dwelling units and residents into the existing built-up areas, and eroding their character, individuality and attractiveness. Any criteria introduced to prevent such erosion, must recognise that a corresponding increase of greenfield land provision would be needed. Therefore we need to decide the right balance between the levels of previously developed and greenfield land to be identified for future homes. We also need to assess the right grouping and location of the greenfield housing land.

### Mixed uses and empty property

In assessing land requirements both for homes and employment it is possible that some housing could be delivered as part of schemes based on mixed use. The potential contribution that can be made from empty property is mentioned earlier in this paper.

Supporting infrastructure

We are preparing an infrastructure delivery plan which will provide information on the infrastructure available and required to accommodate future housing site options. In general locations in and adjoining the built up areas are most likely to be able to benefit from existing infrastructure, although they may be required to secure any necessary improvements to their capacity.

## **Issue 10 - What types of new homes do we need to provide?**

### **Introduction**

#### Why do we need to address this issue?

As well as providing for the right number of new homes, we need to ensure they will be of the required type, size and cost.

National planning policy expects our Local Plan to meet need for market and affordable housing in the housing market area, taking account of household and population projections, need for all types of housing and housing demand, deliver a wide choice of high quality homes, widen opportunities for home ownership and create sustainable, inclusive and mixed communities. This includes: -

- Planning for a mix of housing based on current and future demographic trends, market trends and the needs of different groups in the community (for example families with children, older people, people with disabilities, service families and people wishing to build their own homes).
- Identifying the size, type, tenure and range of housing that is required in particular locations, reflecting local demand.
- Taking specific account of local need for affordable housing in rural areas.

Our Corporate Plan seeks to achieve the right type of new homes to create safe sustainable communities, and attract more employees and residents including working age adults, young families and elderly people.

The main objective of our Housing Strategy is to deliver quality and affordable homes required to achieve sustainable communities and support regeneration and economic development, make better use of the existing stock across all tenures, and enable vulnerable people to live independently.

#### What evidence we have on this issue

An assessment of housing need in Thanet and our neighbouring districts was published in 2009. This Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) considers the mix of housing and the range of tenures the local population is likely to need. It was carried out before government announced that housing numbers to be provided for would be decided by the councils themselves. In light of this and because we now need to plan up to 2031 we are reviewing the validity and robustness of the SHMA's conclusions. A Housing Topic Paper which consider the issues of housing mix, and a separate paper relating to Houses in Multiple Occupation and Student Accommodation have been prepared.

### **Key Facts and Information**

The following headline messages from the SHMA are important when considering what type of homes we need to provide:

1. Critical challenges are the impact of an ageing population, the loss of younger age groups and the effect on working age population. This argues for an improved

housing “offer” for incoming households as well as meeting the needs of an ageing population.

2. Factors including more single older people, in-migration by smaller households, fewer married couples and other social changes indicate that single person households will increase in number. However, there is a greater supply of smaller units than family homes.
3. Regeneration and economic strategies need to be supported by provision of appropriate and attractive housing products for higher earners to ensure young local families can stay.
4. To support growth, housing development will need to prioritise a mix of homes to support a young and expanded workforce including affordable and market homes at different price levels
5. Future policy should prioritise a rebalancing of the stock to incentivise provision of family homes and control the expansion of flattening of larger homes, but also recognise there is solid demand for smaller homes from important sectors of the community such as young single people who need to be retained in the area, students and increasing numbers of older single people.
6. Housing policy has a strong role to play in rural communities for example by supporting balanced communities and village services.

### **Considering what types of new homes we need to provide**

National planning policy expects us to plan for sustainable, inclusive, mixed, balanced and healthy communities including thriving rural communities. Clearly Thanet’s communities are affected by the type, size and affordability of the housing stock in their particular neighbourhoods. For example some areas have higher or lower proportions of flatted/detached homes and of market/affordable housing than other areas. A key question is how far we should be looking to change the existing balance.

The findings and conclusions of the Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) together with updated information we have obtained are factors to take into account and to help you consider what type of homes we need to provide. There are summarised below.

Additional information we have already gathered to inform the review of the SHMA is also included below. Responses to this paper will also help inform the review.

#### The challenges

A critical challenge for East Kent is the forecast increase of older (especially very elderly) people and loss of younger age groups. It is essential to improve the housing offer to incoming younger households and meeting the needs of an ageing population.

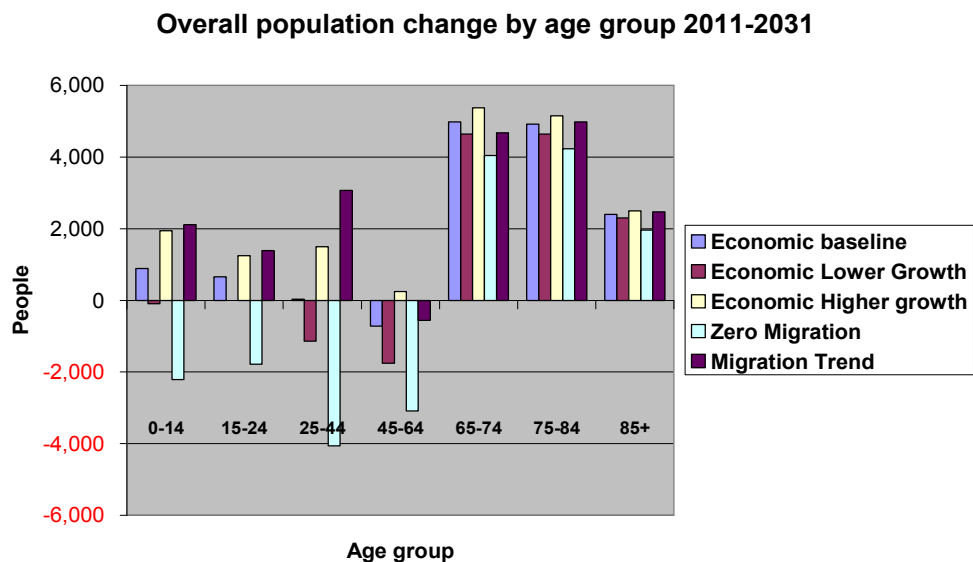
While single person households are expected to grow in number there is already a relatively greater supply of smaller homes than of family homes.

Reflecting economic aspirations we should aim to : -

- prioritise a mix of affordable & market homes.
- re-balance the stock to incentivise provision of family homes.
- support retention of young families to supply the future labour force.

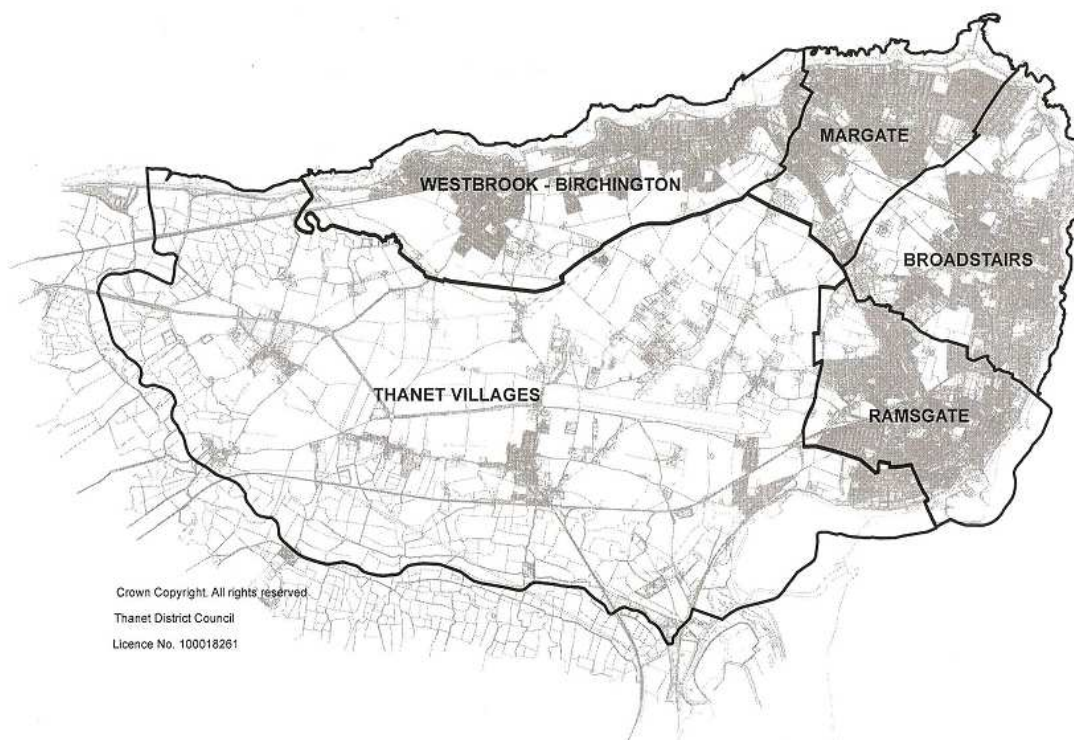
Updated information indicates these findings remain essentially correct. Updated household type forecasts continue to show an increase in small households (including one person, lone parent and childless couple households) and a decrease in larger households (2 or more adults and children). However, they do indicate some increase in younger age groups may be achieved in scenarios above nil migration and above economic lower growth.

**Chart 1 - Forecasts of Population Change by Age Group 2011-2031**



Local housing markets

**Map 3 - Local Housing Market Areas Identified in the SHMA**





Crown Copyright. All rights reserved. Thanet District Council. Licence No. 100018261

The SHMA identifies individual housing market areas defined by household demand, preferences and linkages between where people live and work. As shown on map 3, Thanet's local housing market areas are all contained within and do not overlap the district boundary. The SHMA outlines the characteristics and issues facing these local areas. For instance it recommends protecting larger family homes from subdivision or redevelopment to provide smaller homes as a means of safeguarding the housing offer and values; with a particular need for such protection in Westbrook, Westgate, Margate and Ramsgate.

### Affordable homes

Affordable housing means housing provided to eligible households whose needs are not met by the market. The SHMA considers need both for social rented housing (including affordable rent) and intermediate housing (which is homes for sale and rent provided at a cost above social rent but below market levels e.g. shared ownership). The Housing Topic paper sets out a definition of types of affordable housing contained in national planning policy.

For Thanet, the SHMA estimates that to accommodate backlog and newly arising need over a 5 year period we would require over 1500 additional affordable homes to be delivered in the district each year. (For other districts in the sub region the picture is similar). Current policy in Thanet Local Plan 2006 expects planning applications for residential development of 15 or more homes to include an element of 30% affordable homes. National planning policy says that where need for affordable homes is identified; our policies should expect this to be met on site unless alternative provision is justified.

Alongside the very substantial need for more affordable homes, we need to ensure the level of affordable housing we require does not make residential schemes unviable. The SHMA recommends:

- Subject to economic viability assessment residential sites of 15 or more dwellings should include an affordable element of 30% and in the local housing market areas of Broadstairs and the Thanet Villages, 35%.
- An affordable housing split of 70% social rented and 30% intermediate.

The SHMA recognises issues facing rural communities and the importance of enabling younger and lower paid residents or incomers to live in these communities. It suggests that subject to local economic viability studies the 15 dwelling threshold be reduced in the rural market areas as far as viable and in Thanet's case an affordable element of 35% which may also help to support a vibrant village community.

To help address most acute need the SHMA recommends we prioritise development of larger affordable homes. It indicates that to ensure a minimum of 50% of need is met for each dwelling type the make up of additional affordable homes should reflect the split shown in table 7 below. In addition it recommends we consider policy initiatives to "disincentivise" creation of additional smaller units where there is no identified need, and encourage larger units, for example preventing conversion of family homes.

We are currently reviewing our evidence on need for affordable housing. It is anticipated that this will confirm that the level of need remains substantial. An economic viability study of development in Thanet (2012) indicates that a headline district-wide target of 30% affordable housing in new residential schemes would be appropriate without impacting on

scheme viability, and schemes of less than 15 dwellings could also provide or contribute towards affordable housing.

**Table 7 - Guideline split for prioritising need for affordable homes in Thanet**

	Thanet
1 bed flats	27%
2 bed flats	13%
2 bed houses	15%
3 bed houses	34%
4+ bed houses	11%

### Market homes

Although difficult to forecast, the SHMA sets out guideline proportions for the size and type of market homes and at which sections of the market by value they should be targeted. This is illustrated in tables 8 and 9. An aspirational survey which informed this split indicates that priority for market housing should be given to developing larger roomed houses with 3 or 4 bedrooms that are semi-detached in style. It also notes that because existing properties are preferred to new build, consideration should be given to “de-converting” flatted properties where opportunities arise.

**Table 8 - Guideline proportions for market homes in Thanet**

Singles	1 bed flat	20%
Couples no children/singles/needing support	2 bed flat	10%
Couples with children	2 bed house	25%
Couples with children	3 bed house	35%
Couples with children	4+ bed house	10%

**Table 9 - Guideline proportions of market homes by value for East Kent area**

	Entry level	Mid market	Upper market
1 bed flats	40%	35%	25%
2 bed flats	35%	45%	20%
2 bed houses	35%	45%	20%
3 bed houses	20%	45%	35%
4+ bed houses	10%	50%	40%

### Type of homes

The SHMA notes that, compared with Dover, Canterbury, Shepway and Swale Districts, Thanet (at 22% in 2001) had the highest proportion of flats, and that policy should rebalance the stock to incentivise provision of family homes and control the number of conversions of larger homes to flats.

In some cases proposals to provide further flats in Thanet have raised concerns about town cramming in neighbourhoods, loss of garden space, erosion of the stock of family houses, concentrations of poor quality small flats resulting in densely populated, polarised and transient communities and importation of benefit dependent households. Thanet has a substantial number of large properties physically capable of accommodating flats.

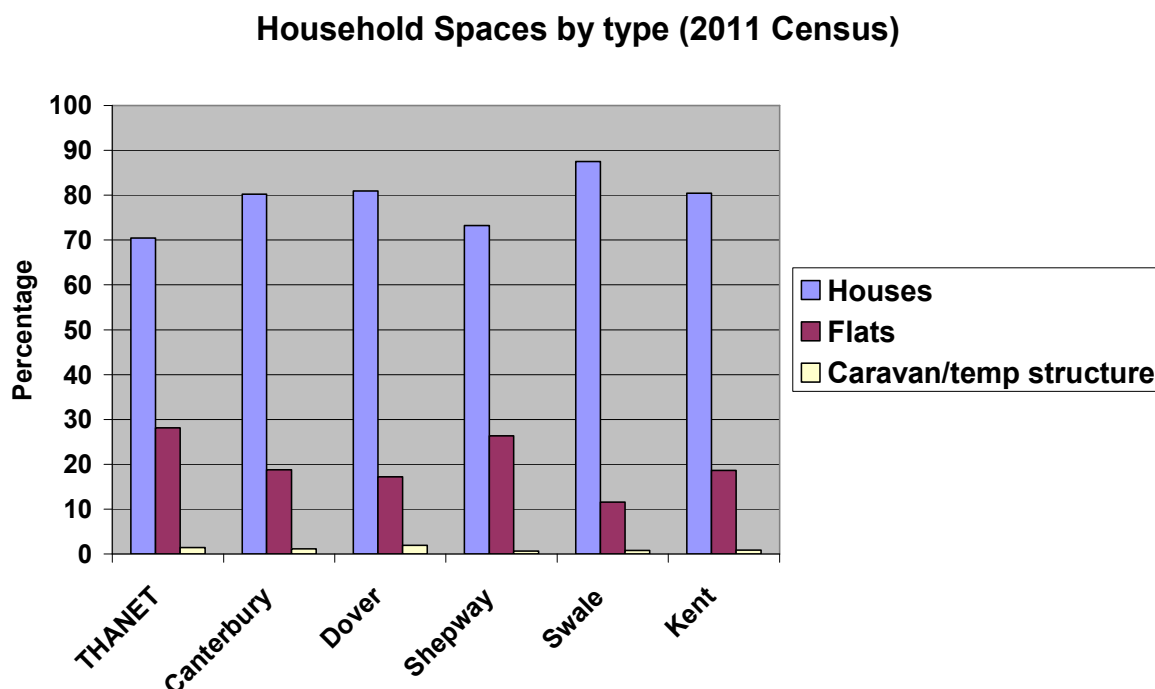
Where accommodation is to a good standard, flats can help meet the needs of mixed communities. Such accommodation can also serve both to reduce the call on greenfield housing land and possibly provide beneficial uses of historic and other buildings too large for modern use as family houses. We will also be preparing a Quality Development supplementary planning document, which will set out guidance to enable proposals for new homes to be based on decent, attractive and sustainable standards.

Over the period 2004 to 2008, flats accounted for a significant proportion of property transactions in Thanet, and in recent years the proportion of new homes that were flats has been as high as 80%. However, property transactions show a general decline in the proportion of flat sales since the 2004 – 2008 peak. House sales have shown a more steady trend, with a perceptible increase in the proportion of semi-detached and detached property sales since 2008.

In 2010 we adopted a development plan document restricting further one bedroom flats and bed sits in Cliftonville West Renewal Area as there was compelling evidence that increasing the stock of such accommodation was a factor fuelling transience and multiple deprivation. Monitoring has not revealed any evidence that this restriction has increased applications to provide such accommodation elsewhere in Thanet.

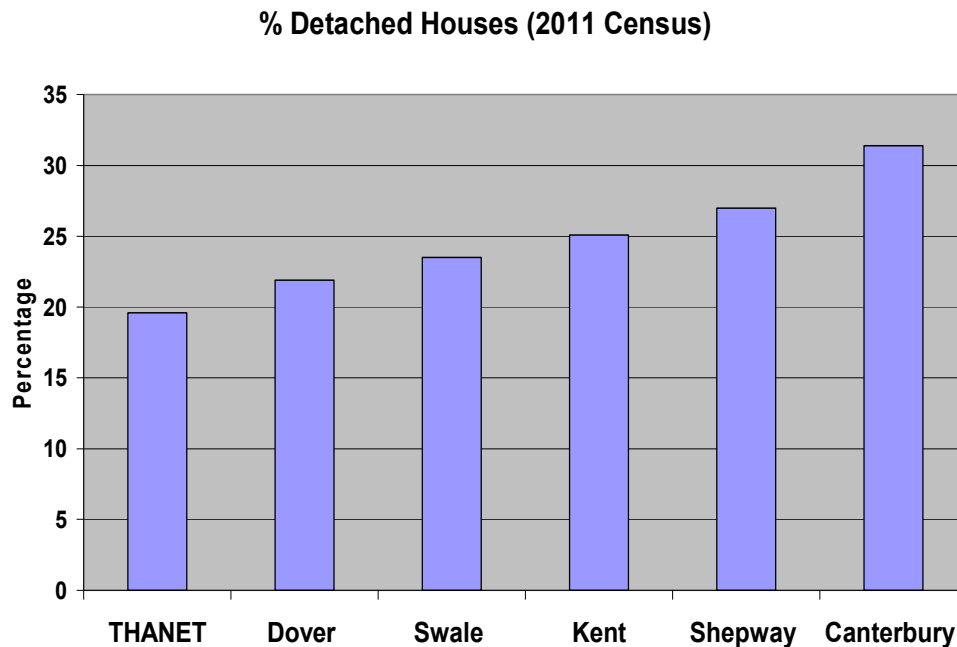
At 2011 Thanet still had a higher proportion of flats than the districts shown in Chart 2 (28% compared with 22% in 2001). Conversely as shown in Chart 3 Thanet also has the lowest proportion of detached houses.

**Chart 2 - Dwellings by type – flats/houses**



*Adapted from data from the Office for National Statistics licensed under the Open Government Licence v.1.0. Source 2011 Census Table KS401EW*

**Chart 3 – Percentage of Detached Houses**



*Adapted from data from the Office for National Statistics licensed under the Open Government Licence v.1.0. Source 2011 Census Table KS401EW*

**- Houses in multiple occupation (HMO's)**

We use this term to describe houses which are occupied by unrelated individuals sharing basic amenities. Where a good standard of accommodation is provided, well managed HMO's can provide a valuable source of affordable accommodation for people on low incomes including those starting off in the economy as young professionals. While noting the projected increase in small households the SHMA encourages continued enforcement of high standards for HMO's.

Existing HMO's are often of low quality and when poorly managed can result in neighbourhood disturbance, fear of crime, and a transient, unsettled community. In light of such problems in Cliftonville West Renewal Area the development plan document referred to earlier also restricts additional HMO's in that particular area.

We have established a local direction meaning that planning permission is required for HMO's anywhere in Thanet. Our current policy for considering HMO applications focuses on their likely effect on the character and amenity of the local area including factors such as noise, disturbance, car parking and refuse.

An option would be to carry forward the existing policy under which the impact of proposals for HMO's is judged against their individual circumstances. Alternative options could include:

## Local Plan Issues and Options Consultation Document

- Identifying additional areas (beyond Cliftonville West Renewal Area) where a restrictive approach to new HMO's is to be applied.
- Identifying a maximum percentage of HMO's that would be acceptable in general or in specific parts of Thanet.
- Restricting HMO proposals that would result in the loss of particular types of residential accommodation (for example houses suited to modern family living requirements).

Such alternative options would need to be justified by supporting evidence.

### Rural housing

The SHMA recognises the importance of enabling younger and lower paid residents or incomers to live in rural communities, and makes recommendations to improve the prospects of negotiating affordable homes as part of new housing developments in rural settlements.

The option also exists to consider exceptionally allocating sites for affordable housing that would not normally be released for housing (for example just outside villages' built up confines). Rural parish surveys have been carried out to ascertain the level of local housing need that exists. This will help us decide what policies may be needed.

### Housing requirements of specific groups

#### *Families*

The SHMA notes a predicted decline in family households over the period to 2026. In support of economic regeneration and mixed communities it recommends measures to encourage family incomers, and support younger households and families already in the sub region, including:

- More emphasis on provision of medium and larger homes
- Encouraging affordable housing in rural areas.
- Promoting "place-making" to create living environments attractive to families

#### *Older people.*

Forecast growth in the older population is a major factor that will increase single person and childless households. There is a growing preference to independent living and remaining at home into later life implying a greater need for care services and increased demand for specialist accommodation for older people. Providing attractive and suitable housing could encourage downsizing from under occupied accommodation to help meet wider need and demand.

The SHMA recommends that on developments of 15 or more units 100% of affordable housing units be developed to "Lifetime" standards and at least 20% of market units be developed to these standards. (Lifetime standards refers to ordinary homes incorporating design features that add to the comfort and convenience of their occupants and supports their changing needs at different stages of life, for example the needs of some wheelchair users).

#### *Young people*

The SHMA notes a predicted reduction in the number of people in the 16-24 year old age group. It also notes that newly forming households are on lower incomes, that young people have difficulty accessing owner occupied accommodation and are often ineligible for affordable housing. Thus options are often restricted to private renting or remaining in the family home. The SHMA notes that there may be a widened role for Intermediate housing, including shared ownership.

#### *People with long-term illness and disabilities*

In 2001 a lower proportion of permanently sick/disabled households were owner occupiers and more likely to live in social rented accommodation. The SHMA notes that 58% of households with a disability would like to live in a bungalow and that in relation to mobility related problems, the recommendations above regarding Lifetime Homes would be beneficial. It also notes a continuing need for housing support for people with mental health problems. Recommendations include considering a proportion of bungalows in new developments in conjunction with Lifetime Homes standards, and acknowledging the continuing need for adaptations to existing property.

The 2011 population census indicates that the proportion of Thanet's residents with long term health problems or disability limiting day to day activity was 23.4%. The comparable figure for the South East was 15.7%. It also suggests that the number of people in communal establishments including care and nursing homes in Thanet has declined over the 10 year period to 2011.

We are working with the County Council to update our understanding of the type and level of needs of residents requiring social care, including people with physical disability and mental health problems.

#### *Gypsies and travellers*

The SHMA refers to a separate assessment of needs for gypsies and travellers published in 2007 which suggested a requirement in Thanet for 4 pitches up to 2012 and 1 additional pitch from then to 2017.

With neighbouring district councils we are obtaining an updated assessment. Unless this demonstrates specific need requiring land allocation, the Local Plan may just set out criteria to judge any planning application that might come forward. Such criteria might include that such uses and location should not impact unreasonably on surrounding uses, and adequate access to facilities like schools, jobs and healthcare.

#### *Students*

The SHMA notes that students are a group with particular housing requirements often met through private renting in the form of shared accommodation such as houses in multiple occupation (HMO's). It notes that HMO's can help meet the needs of various groups requiring affordable housing, but often have problems (associated with the condition of the accommodation and management standards).

We are working with Christ Church University to improve our understanding of future need for accommodation associated with students attending the Broadstairs campus and to identify any issues that the Local Plan may need to address to accommodate sufficient and suitable accommodation.

## 4.3 Environment and Quality of Life

### What is included in this section

This section covers the topic area of the Environment and Quality of Life and considers the following issues:

11. How can we maintain a physical separation between Thanet's towns and villages?
12. How do we ensure that new development respects Thanet's important and valued views and landscapes?
13. How can we protect, maintain and enhance Thanet's green infrastructure to better support wildlife and human health?
14. How can we adapt to, and mitigate against, the effects of climate change?
15. Which policies do we need to maintain a safe and healthy environment?
16. How can we provide high quality homes, developments and neighbourhoods?
17. How can we protect and enhance Thanet's heritage assets and their settings?
18. How should we plan for community facilities?

### Strategic Priority and Objectives

It is a proposed strategic priority of the Local Plan to

- **Safeguard local distinctiveness and promote awareness, responsible enjoyment, protection and enhancement of Thanet's environment, including the coast, rich seaside heritage, historic environment, diverse townscapes and landscape, biodiversity and water environment**

In achieving this we consider the following draft objectives to be appropriate:

- Retain the separation between, physical identity and character of, Thanet's towns and villages.
- Safeguard and enhance the open and historic characteristics of Thanet's countryside and landscapes.
- Protect, maintain and enhance the District's biodiversity and natural environment, including open and recreational space to create a coherent network of green infrastructure that can better support wildlife and human health
- Safeguard and enhance the geological and scenic value of the coast and countryside and facilitate its responsible enjoyment as a recreational and educational resource.
- Mitigate and adapt to the forecast impacts of climate change (including the water environment, air quality, biodiversity and flooding)
- 
- Use natural resources more efficiently, increase energy efficiency, the use of renewable and low carbon energy sources, to reduce the District's carbon footprint.
- Promote development patterns and behaviour that will minimise the need to travel or use private cars to access services and amenities.

- Facilitate provision of direct walking and cycling routes to reduce potential congestion, noise and pollution.
- Facilitate improvements within areas characterised by poor quality housing, empty property and poor physical environment.
- Ensure that all new development is built to the highest attainable quality and sustainability standards and enhances its local environment.
- Reduce opportunities for crime and the fear of crime
- Preserve and enhance the district's exceptional built historic environment and ancient monuments and their settings.
- Facilitate the provision and evolution of accessible, modern and good quality schools and higher and further education and training facilities to meet the expectations of employers and a confident, inclusive and skilled community.
- Ensure Thanet's community have access to good quality social and health services
- Broaden and improve the range of active leisure facilities to encourage greater participation within the local community.



## **Issue 11 - How do we maintain a physical separation of open countryside between Thanet's towns and villages?**

### **Introduction**

#### Why do we need to address this issue?

Thanet's open countryside is particularly vulnerable to development pressures because of the small size of the district and its relationship with the urban areas, the openness and flatness of the rural landscape and the proximity of the towns.

Local Plan policies have historically been used to prevent urban sprawl, maintain the separation of the Thanet towns and prevent their coalescence, thus preserving their unique identities.

National planning policy states that local plans should take account of the different roles and character of different areas, promoting the vitality of our main urban areas and recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside. It includes a criteria based policy stating the only circumstances where isolated homes in the countryside would be considered acceptable.

#### What evidence we have on this issue

More detailed evidence surrounding these issues can be found in the Natural Environment Topic Paper.

### **Key Facts and Information**

The following key facts are important when considering green wedges and the countryside

#### Thanet's Countryside

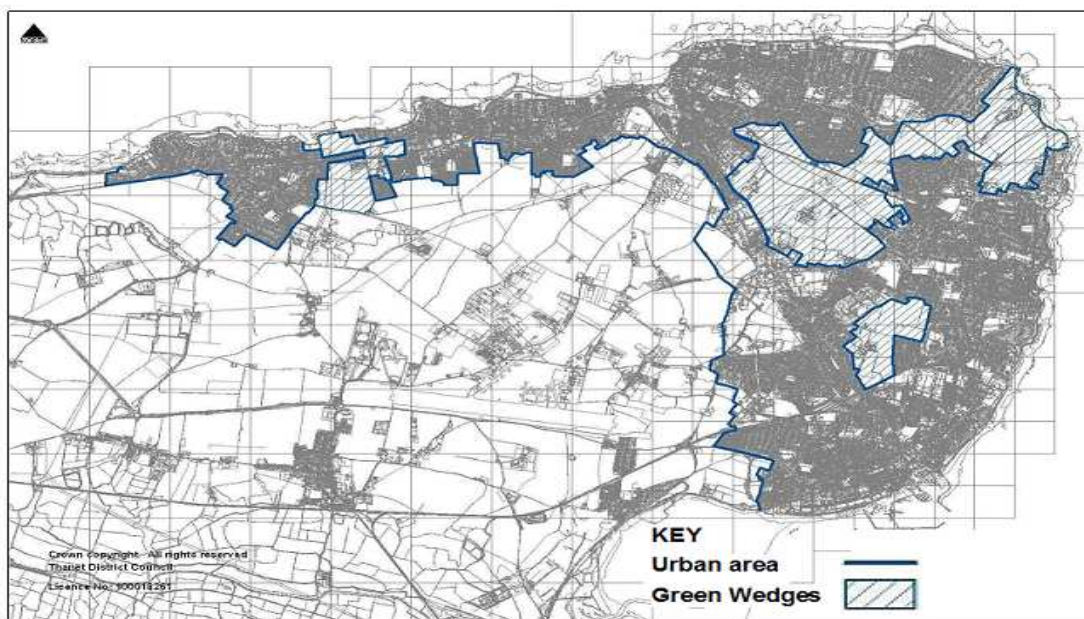
- Thanet's countryside is important in providing areas of openness in between the densely developed urban areas and provides important landscape views that contribute to the district's character and sense of place.
- The countryside includes three Green Wedges which provide a visual relief between the Thanet towns, maintain a physical separation between the towns and retains each towns unique character and identity. The Green Wedges have been historically protected from development.
- Much of Thanet's countryside is best and most versatile agricultural land and is therefore important for farming and the wildlife it supports
- The countryside has historically been protected from inappropriate development by county and local policies. County policy protected the countryside for its own sake, and later local plan policies protected the countryside from sporadic development and urban sprawl.
- The 2006 Thanet Local Plan identified urban and village confines to define the areas of countryside to be protected.
- The Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment suggests that to meet housing requirements, some undeveloped land in countryside will be required. The principles for the location of housing are dealt with in the Housing section of this consultation. It

is necessary to consider what level of protection should be given to areas that are not allocated for development.

### Green Wedges

The principal settlements of Thanet are separated by areas of open countryside which are known as the Green Wedges. Thanet has three Green Wedges that differ in size and character. The largest is the one that separates Margate and Broadstairs. Substantial areas of this Green Wedge consist of high quality agricultural land in large open fields without fences or hedgerows. Other parts have isolated belts of woodland. The other two Green Wedges which separate Birchington and Westgate, and Broadstairs and Ramsgate are considerably smaller but perform a very significant function and, due to their limited extent are also potentially more vulnerable to development pressures.

### **Map 1 - Urban Area and Green Wedges**



Crown Copyright. All rights reserved. Thanet District Council. Licence No. 100018261

There is very limited built development within the Green Wedges. The areas have level or gently undulating landform and generally sparse vegetation. These factors allow many extensive and uninterrupted views across open countryside. The public perception of space, openness and separation is largely gained from roads and footpaths that run through or alongside the Green Wedges in undeveloped frontages. It is important as it adds to the quality of life and well being perceived by people in the community

The principal functions of and policy aims for Thanet's Green Wedges are:

- Protect areas of open countryside between the towns from the extension of isolated groups of houses or other development.
- Ensure physical separation and avoid coalescence of the towns thus retaining their individual character and distinctiveness.
- Conserve and protect the essentially rural and unspoilt character, and distinctive landscape qualities of the countryside that separates the urban areas, for the enjoyment and amenity of those living in, and visiting, Thanet.
- Prohibit all but essential development and other development which does not detract from the character and appearance of the area.

The Green Wedge policy has been consistently and strongly supported at appeals. Inspectors' comments in appeal decisions, and the Inspector's Report to the Thanet Local Plan Inquiry, highlight the significance of the open countryside between the Thanet Towns, in providing visual relief in a highly urbanised area.

**Considering how we will maintain a physical separation of open countryside between the Thanet towns and prevent urban sprawl**

Along with the key facts and information above, the following are factors to take into account and to help you consider this issue.

It is considered that the aims of planning policies protecting the Green Wedges are still relevant and applicable. Allowing sporadic development within the Green Wedges would set a precedent and could result in urban sprawl and the merging of the Thanet towns. Some of the views across the Green Wedges are important in terms of landscape character, and providing a sense of openness.

In order to meet the objectives, we consider that the green wedges should continue to be protected by planning policy. However, there is potential for the land to be used more beneficially. Furthermore, it is considered that the Green Wedges form an important part of Thanet's green infrastructure network.

The Green Wedges are, in parts, relatively unattractive and not always accessible to the public. There is an opportunity to enhance the Green Wedges by creating and enhancing wildlife habitats, for example to encourage farmland birds, and to make the areas more accessible, potentially for recreation use. This may require changing farming activities.

Thanet's provision of accessible and natural open spaces does not meet national standards and, due to the coastal nature of the district being surrounded by sea on three of its boundaries, there is limited opportunity to create new open spaces, particularly for recreational use, within the district.

## **Issue 12 - How do we ensure that new development respects Thanet's important and valued views and landscapes?**

### **Introduction**

#### Why do we need to address this issue?

Thanet has historically been recognised for its distinctive wide, simple and unrestricted views and dramatic chalk cliffs along parts of its coastline. The landscapes contribute to Thanet's sense of place and island characteristics, as well as economic benefits in making the district an attractive place that people want to come to.

National planning policy states that one way the planning system should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment is by protecting and enhancing valued landscapes.

#### What evidence we have on this issue

Previous landscape assessments have been carried out for Thanet. These include the following:

- Preliminary Report of the Isle of Thanet Landscape Assessment Survey, Thanet District Council Planning Department February 1993.
- Kent Historic Landscape Characterisation – Croft, Munby & Ridley May 2001.
- The Landscape Assessment of Kent – October 2004, prepared for Kent County Council by Jacobs Baktie.

A review of Thanet's landscape character areas has also been carried out to inform the new local plan. The findings from this assessment, and summaries of the previous assessments can be found in the Natural Environment Topic Paper.

The following section draws out the key facts, information and relevant considerations from the above evidence in order to help inform your thinking

### **Key Facts and Information**

The following key facts are important when considering Thanet's landscapes:

- Thanet's landscapes reflect the District's historical evolution.
- The landscape area is defined by the former limits of the island that was cut off from the mainland by the Wantsum Channel until it silted up around 1000 years ago.
- The Council has sought to protect these important landscapes in previous local plans.

The Thanet Local Plan 2006 identifies the following as important Landscape Character Areas:

- Pegwell Bay – large open skies, sweep of chalk cliffs, open and relatively unspoilt landscape.
- Former Wantsum Channel – former sea channel, vast flat open landscape, important visual evidence of the physical evolution of the Wantsum Channel.
- Former Wantsum North Shore – visual evidence of the growth of human settlement, agriculture and commerce, long views of the former Wantsum Channel and Pegwell Bay.

## Local Plan Issues and Options Consultation Document

- The Central Chalk Plateau – generally flat or gently undulating landscape with extensive unenclosed fields.
- Quex Park – formal and extensive wooded parkland and amenity landscape.
- Urban Coast – long sweeping views of the coast, traditional seaside architecture.

National policy states that we should be protecting and enhancing valued landscapes. A number of valued landscape character areas have been identified in Thanet, and it is therefore considered that these should be protected and enhanced through policy.

## **Issue 13 - How do we protect, maintain and enhance Thanet's green infrastructure to better support wildlife and human health?**

### **Introduction**

#### Why do we need to address this issue?

Thanet boasts a wealth of natural features including internationally and nationally designated sites and associated species, a magnificent coastline, chalk cliffs, geological features and areas of open countryside with distinctive landscapes and views. It is important that these are maintained and enhanced, and could be better linked to provide a comprehensive green infrastructure network.

National planning policy states that local plans should plan positively for the creation, protection, enhancement and management of networks of biodiversity and green infrastructure. It states that local ecological networks should be identified and these should include the hierarchy of international, national and locally designated sites of importance for biodiversity, wildlife corridors, stepping stones that connect them, and areas identified by local partnerships for habitat restoration or creation.

National planning policy also states that international, national and locally designated nature conservation sites should be protected, with appropriate weight given to the importance of their designation.

#### What evidence we have on this issue

The Council carried out an Open Space Audit (2006). A Natural Environment Topic Paper has been prepared which includes evidence to inform the issues of Green Infrastructure.

The Kent Habitats Survey provides ecological information on habitat type and potential importance for nature conservation. A new survey was completed at the end of 2012 – this is the third survey to be carried out. A report is being prepared which will include information on the changes that have happened since the previous survey was carried out in 2003 such as:

- Habitats that were not present in 2003
- Semi improved grassland which was under-recorded in previous surveys
- New areas with potential to be designated as Local Wildlife Sites

The following section draws out the key facts, information and relevant considerations from the above evidence in order to help inform your thinking

### **Key Facts and Information**

The following key facts are important when considering how we protect, maintain and enhance Thanet's green infrastructure to better support wildlife and human health.

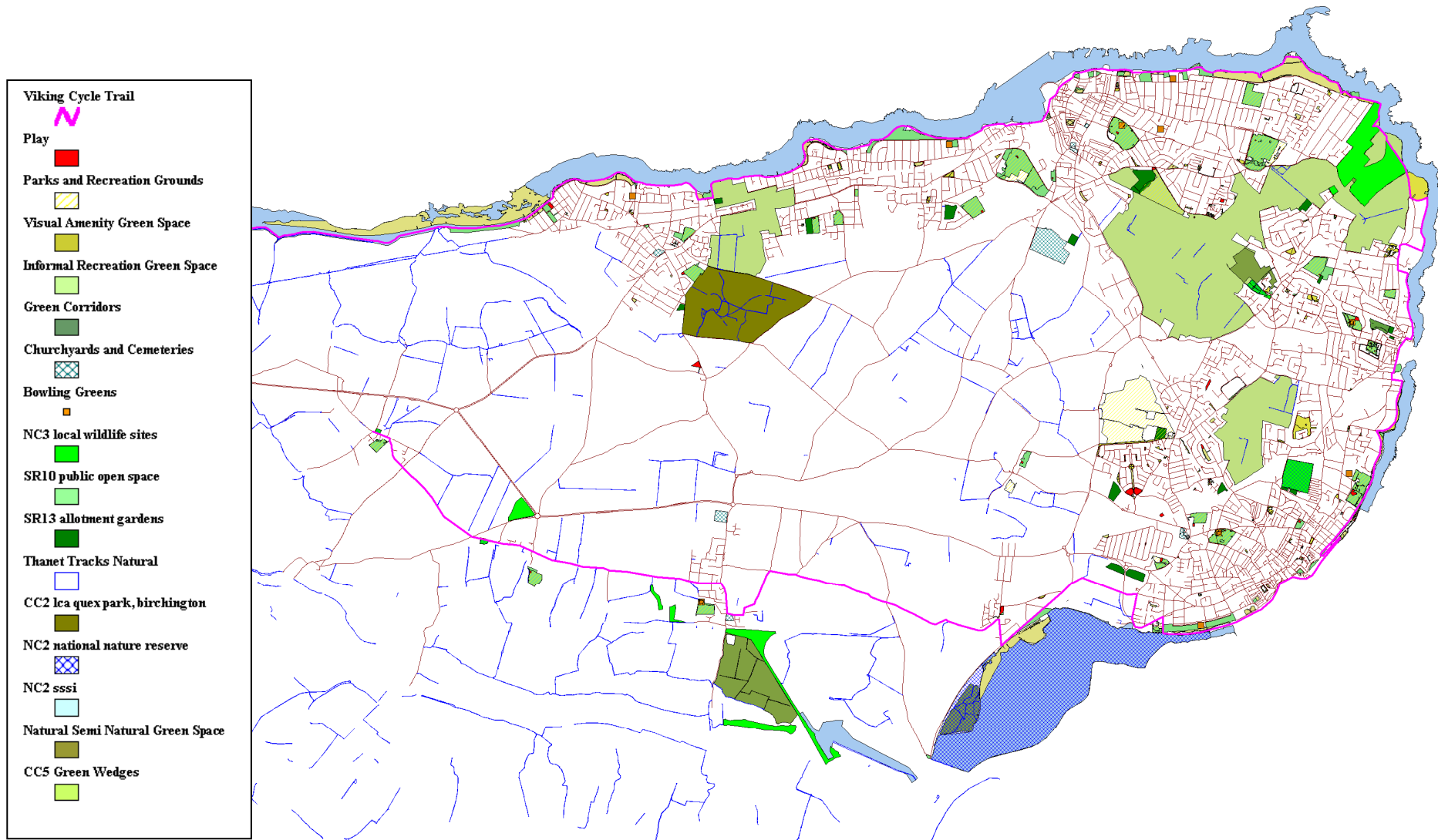
Natural England defines Green Infrastructure as:

*'..... a strategically planned and delivered network comprising the broadest range of high quality green spaces and other environmental features. It should be designed and managed as a multifunctional resource capable of delivering those ecological services and quality of life benefits required by the communities it serves and needed to underpin sustainability. Its*

## Local Plan Issues and Options Consultation Document

*design and management should also respect and enhance the character and distinctiveness of an area with regard to habitats and landscape types.'*

## Map 4 – Thanet's existing Green Infrastructure Network



Reproduced from the Ordnance Survey map with the permission of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office (C) Crown Copyright 2011

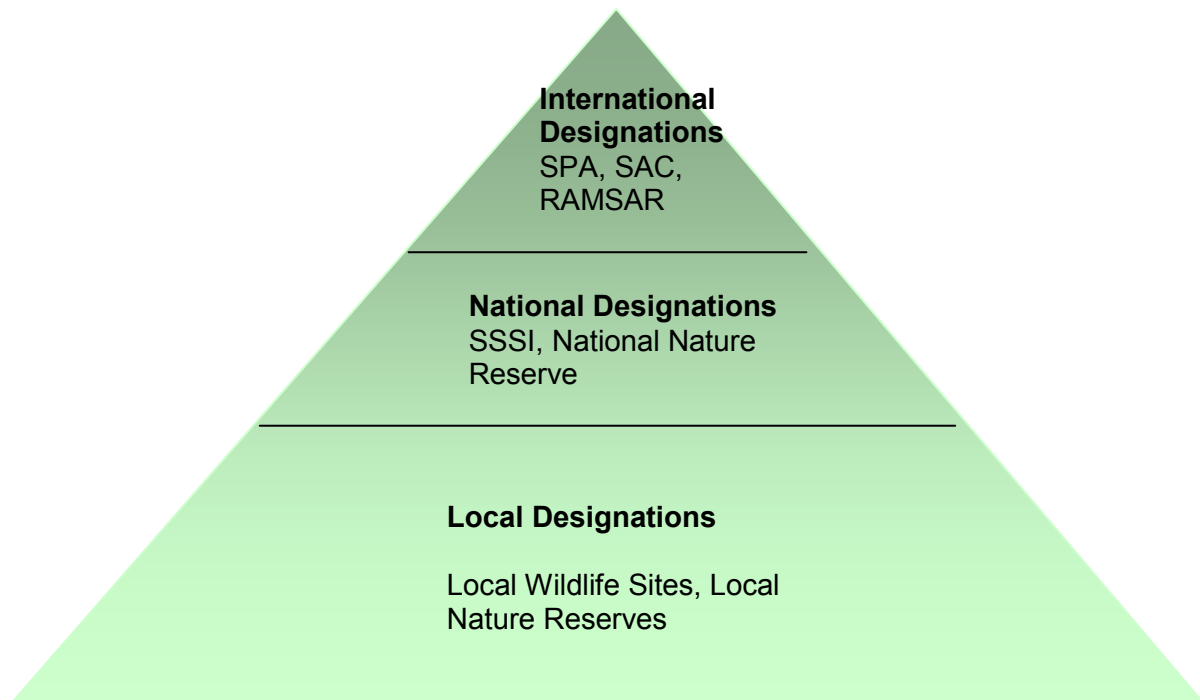


Thanet's existing Green Infrastructure is shown on Map 4.

A working group of the East Kent Councils has identified three categories of Green Infrastructure – Biodiversity, Linear Features and Public Amenity Space (Civic Amenity).

### **Biodiversity Features**

Thanet contains a rich variety of habitats. Designated sites of international, national and local value and extensive areas of wetland and farmland habitat harbour both protected and priority species. The diagram below shows the hierarchy of these designations from international, national to local importance.



The internationally designated sites (Special Protection Area, Special Area of conservation and RAMSAR) are defined under European laws and comprise a network of sites across Europe designated for their important habitat and/or birds. Most of the Thanet coastline is designated and is important for its intertidal chalk, caves, species (such as blue mussel beds and piddocks), dunes and mudflats, and certain migratory and breeding bird species.

The nationally designated sites (Sites of Special Scientific Interest and National Nature Reserve), also cover the coastline, and have similar features to the international sites, including over 30 nationally rare species of terrestrial and marine plants, 19 nationally rare and 149 nationally scarce invertebrate species and roost sites for migrating and wintering birds.

There are two Local Nature Reserves located at Monkton and Pegwell Bay, and eight Local Wildlife Sites. These sites host locally important habitats.

There are also four Roadside Nature Reserves which have been identified for their habitats and connections to areas of rich biodiversity and include important features such as calcareous grassland, lizard orchids and diverse populations of butterflies and dragon flies.

Thanet has three Regionally Important Geological Sites (RIGS) that are important for historical, scientific research or educational reasons. These are located at Monkton Nature Reserve, Pegwell Bay and St Peters Quarry.

There will be policies in the Local Plan to give protection to all of the designated sites listed above.

Biodiversity Opportunity Areas (BOAs) have been identified to facilitate the delivery of landscape scale habitat recreation and restoration, and to connect designated sites and priority or Biodiversity Action Plan habitats. Thanet has two BOAs:

- Thanet Cliffs and Shore – covers the majority of the internationally and nationally designated coastal habitats, extending throughout Thanet as far as Whitstable
- Lower Stour Wetlands – follows the old Wantsum Channel incorporating the reclaimed marshes of Wade, Monkton and Minster. It continues around the coast to the Sandwich mudflats and sand dunes.

## **Linear Features**

Thanet's Open Space Audit identifies linear features as

'Sites that provide venues for walking, cycling and horse riding amongst others uses. Often they can provide a key "green" link and offer travel routes for both local residents and local wildlife migration'

Thanet's Linear features include:

### Walking Routes

The Saxon Shore Way is a 160 mile route from Gravesend to Hastings. Part of the Saxon Shore Way runs through Thanet (Margate, Broadstairs and Ramsgate)

The Turner & Dickens Walk is a 4 mile route between Margate (Turner Contemporary) and Broadstairs (Dickens House Museum)

### Cycling Routes

The Viking Coastal Trail is a 27 mile route around the Thanet Coast line from St Nicholas at Wade to Reculver Towers. The route is National Cycle Route 15.

## **Public Amenity Space (Civic Amenity)**

This includes open spaces such as parks, informal recreation, green space, natural and semi natural green space, amenity green space, outdoor sports facilities, play facilities for children and young people, allotments and churches and cemeteries.

The Open Space Audit found that Thanet currently has an under provision of accessible natural spaces compared to national standards.

## **Considering how to protect, maintain and enhance the Thanet's green infrastructure to better support wildlife and human health**

Along with the key facts and information above, the following are factors to take into account and to help you consider this issue:

### Impact of development on Internationally protected sites

One of Thanet's main attractions for leisure and recreation is its beaches and seafronts which are widely used by both residents and visitors. However there is a potential conflict between the use of these areas and the internationally protected sites, particularly with regard to bird and recreational disturbance. One of the main potential disturbances is from dogs. Growth and development will inevitably bring more people to the district, which will likely attract even more visitors to the seafronts and the protected sites, so the protection of these sites, and potential alternative areas for recreational use which are not coast specific, are essential considerations.

We are working with the other East Kent Authorities and other stakeholders to gain a better understanding of this issue and how we can help to mitigate against it, where necessary.

#### *Providing alternative space for dog walkers*

Design in new developments can accommodate dog walkers, this can help reduce conflicts and provide alternative green space for new residents. This could include:

- Designing green spaces that attract dog owners away from sensitive sites.
- Accommodate circular walks in the design of new developments.

### Accessible Open Space

The Open Space Audit found that there is an insufficient amount of publicly accessible open space in the district. It would be desirable to create new areas of open space, both to contribute to the provision in the district, and also to relieve recreational pressures on the protected sites by providing alternative recreational areas. However the urban areas are already densely developed and there is little opportunity to create new open space.

### Opportunity for new Green Infrastructure (GI) through development

As well as the three main types of GI mentioned above, there is scope for GI to be integrated into new developments, for example by creating back gardens, planting and landscaping, hedgerows and sustainable drainage systems. The provision of new public amenity space in developments is a current policy requirement that could be continued. This type of GI helps to create linkages and ecosystem networks.

### Local Green Spaces

The NPPF allows communities to identify land as Local Green Space through the local plan process. Local Green Space must be:

- In reasonably close proximity to the community it serves.
- Demonstrably special to a local community and hold particular significance (for example, historic significance, recreational value, tranquillity or richness in wildlife).
- Local in character and not an extensive tract of land.

### Other important species

The open countryside within the Thanet District is known to support a number of important species of farmland birds. As farmland birds have declined over the last few decades it is important to ensure that remaining populations are protected and allowed to increase. The green wedges also provide a dispersal route for migratory bird species which are present on the coast, especially during the winter season. Changing farming practices within the green wedges would increase populations of farmland and migratory birds by enabling more ecologically diverse habitat to be created.

## **Issue 14 - How can we adapt to, and mitigate against, the effects of climate change?**

### **Introduction**

#### Why do we need to address this issue?

A significant amount of new legislation and policy has been put in place that affects the role of planning at a local level:

- The Climate Change Act 2008 introduces a statutory target of reducing carbon emissions by 80% below 1990 levels by 2050 and an interim target of 34% by 2020.
- The EU directive on renewable energy, under which the UK is committed to sourcing 15% of its energy from renewable sources by 2020.
- The Energy Act 2008 introduces feed-in tariff powers.

Adapting to, and mitigating against the effects of, climate change have become a Government priority and are issues that can be addressed to some degree through planning policy and development management.

National planning policy states that adapting to, and mitigating against the effect of, climate change is a core planning principle. This can be achieved by planning for new development in locations and ways which reduce greenhouse gas emissions, actively support energy efficiency improvements to existing buildings and set any building sustainability standards in line with the Government's zero carbon buildings policy.

National planning policy lists expectations to improve energy efficiency in new development in terms of decentralised energy and sustainable design, and ways of increasing the use and supply of renewable and low carbon energy. It stresses the importance of addressing longer term factors such as flood risk, coastal change, water supply and changes to biodiversity and landscape.

The Council has been implementing South East Plan policies (now revoked) to address the effects of climate change and the need to reduce the consumption of resources

The Climate Local Kent Commitment is being adopted by districts and organisations across Kent to support targets to work towards achieving this.

#### What evidence we have on this issue

The following documents provide evidence on this issue:

- Renewable energy for Kent 2012 (KCC)
- Climate Local Kent Commitment
- Kent Local Climate Impacts Profile
- Cliftonville – Design for future climate
- Stour Catchment Abstraction Management Strategy
- River Basin Management Plan
- Water Resource Management Plan
- Thanet Strategic Flood Risk Assessment
- Surface Water Management Plan
- Shoreline Management Plan

These are summarised in four topic papers relevant to Climate Change:

- Climate Change Topic Paper – includes evidence to support adaptation and mitigation methods that might be appropriate for Thanet.
- Water Cycle Topic Paper – includes flooding, coastal erosion, the supply and demand for water and water quality.
- Quality Development & Heritage Topic Paper – includes a section about Sustainable Design and Construction.
- Natural Environment Topic Paper – includes Green Infrastructure, Green Wedges, and Landscape Character Areas.

## **Key Facts and Information**

The following key facts are important when considering how we can adapt to, and mitigate against the effects of climate change.

Climate change is a change in weather patterns, caused by the increased levels of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere produced by the use of fossil fuels.

The effects of climate change are already being seen in Kent, and include:

- more erratic weather conditions including an increase in the number of ‘hot weather’ events, storms and also freezing temperature events;
- increase in sea levels and wave crest;
- increase in coastal water temperature;
- length of growing season has extended by 1 month since 1990; and
- increases in flooding and droughts.

In order to address this, we need to ensure that new development can contribute to:

- Adapting to Climate Change by minimising vulnerability and providing resilience to the impacts of climate change
- Mitigating against Climate Change by reducing our emissions

The Climate Local Kent Commitment sets aims which include:

- 34% reduction in emissions by 2020 (2.6% reduction per year)
- Retrofitting to existing homes
- Reduce water consumption from 160 to 140 litres per person per day by 2016
- Increase renewable energy deployment in Kent by 10% by 2020

## **Considering how we can adapt to, and mitigate against the effects of climate change**

Along with the key facts and information above, the following are factors to take into account and to help you consider how we can adapt to, and mitigate against the effects of climate change.

### Solar Parks

In the last three years, the council has granted planning permission for 12 solar parks. These are mainly located in fields, or parts of fields, are temporary (most have a 25 year lifespan), and the land can revert to its original use when the panels are removed. The location of a solar farm will usually be near to a connection to the national grid due to cost implications for connection, and will require the erection of a fence surrounding the site which is required by law. The Council has considered the principle of development in the

countryside, visual impact and landscaping in all of the applications that have been granted permission.

### Retrofitting to existing development

There are a number of measures which can be applied to existing buildings to counteract the effects of climate change, such as

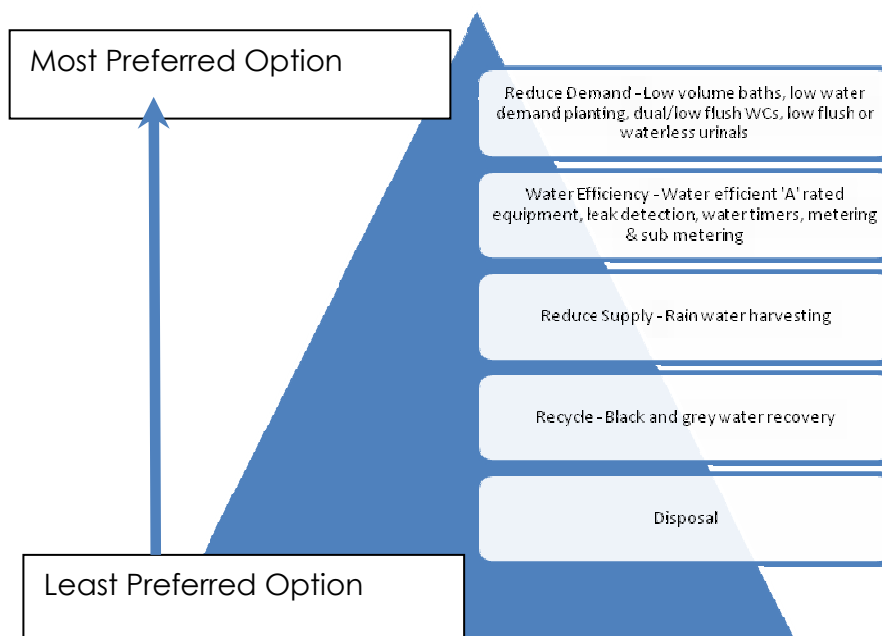
- Draughtproofing
- Insulation
- efficient lighting
- solar glass
- re-use of chimneys
- shade trees
- covered verandahs
- green walls
- vertical trellisage
- light coloured solar reflective surfaces

### Water Efficiency

Water efficiency becomes increasingly important in a changing climate with rainfall that will become more variable and erratic in any given year. The south east is already an area of 'serious water stress', so the prudent use of water resources is of particular importance both now and in the future. In the south east, around 150 litres of water per person is consumed every day.

In order to reduce water consumption, the management of water in proposed development should follow the most effective ways of conserving water, shown in Diagram 1.

**Diagram 1 – Ways of Conserving Water**



*Source: Cliftonville – Design for future climate*

This can be achieved both in retro fitting existing buildings, and in new developments by measures such as:

- tap flow regulators
- low volume capacity baths
- reduced flow, aerated showers
- low volume, dual flush wcs
- water efficient appliances
- rainwater harvesting tanks

### Coastal Change

As sea water meets cliffs and shores, it causes sediment or rocks to be broken down and washed out to sea. This can cause coastal erosion where the shoreline retreats, or accretion if sediment builds up elsewhere over time. This process is likely to happen quicker during storms and high winds. Consideration needs to be given to whether policy is required to either, identifying land which is unsuitable for development, or requiring consideration of such issues on a site by site basis.

### Flooding

Thanet's main areas at risk of flooding are the former Wantsum Channel area and Margate Old Town area. The NPPF states that inappropriate development in areas at risk of flooding should be avoided by directing development away from areas at highest risk, but without increasing the risk of flooding elsewhere. It explains the approach that should be taken for development in flood risk areas in the main NPPF document and also in an accompanying Technical Paper.

### Surface Water Flooding

Localised surface water flooding can be addressed by using Sustainable Drainage Systems (SUDS). Surface water runoff in built up areas tends to flow rapidly into the sewer system, which places a burden on the sewerage network and increases flood risk downstream as piped systems have limited capacity. SUDS can slow the rate at which water disperses, thus reducing the risk of flooding.

Types of SUDS which can be used include:

- Green roofs -Multi-layered systems comprising of vegetation cover or landscaping above a drainage layer
- Rainwater Harvesting - Re-use water and reduce the rates of surface run-off
- Rain Gardens - Captures and soaks up water that runs off roofs ,driveways and other hard surfaced areas. Acts as a filter so clean water then slowly soaks into the ground. Planted with trees and shrubs suitable for moist conditions
- Permeable Paving - Allows surface water to infiltrate through the paving into the soil beneath. Water can be temporarily stored in the paving before it is infiltrated or released into a drainage system
- Infiltration/filtration trenches -A shallow, excavated channel to create an underground reservoir – filtration trenches include a perforated pipe so water filtrates into the surrounding soil and is then transferred to a disposal unit

Infiltration methods are unlikely to be appropriate in some parts of Thanet due to the quality of the groundwater. Groundwater from the chalk rock beneath the Isle of Thanet is used to supply water for drinking water, agriculture, horticulture and industry. It also feeds the springs that emerge along the coast and near the marshes. Thanet's groundwater is extremely vulnerable to contamination as substances (natural substances and man-made chemicals) are able to pass rapidly through the thin soils and the natural fissures (cracks) in the Chalk rock to the groundwater below the ground surface.

### Sustainable design and construction in new development

The Council's Corporate Plan aims to increase the proportion of developments which are based on sustainable energy and energy efficient buildings.

The Code for Sustainable Homes is the national standard for the sustainable design and construction of new homes. The Code aims to reduce our carbon emissions and create homes that are more sustainable. There are 6 code levels which new developments can aim to achieve and relate to the minimum percentage reduction in emissions – Level 1 is a 10% reduction and Level 6 would be a zero carbon home

The Code for Sustainable Homes levels are set out in Table 10 below.

**Table 10 – Code for Sustainable Homes**

Level	% energy efficiency higher than Part L1A of the Building Regulations	Daily water usage (litres)per person
1	10	120
2	18	120
3	25	105
4	44	105
5	100	80
6	Zero carbon	80

Source: *www.gov.uk*

The requirements to provide these could have an impact on the viability of development in Thanet. The Council commissioned an Economic Viability Assessment of development to inform its review of the SHLAA. Part of this assessment included an assessment of the impact upon viability of providing homes to sustainable and lifetime standards and to support mixed communities.

Table 11 summarises the findings, based on a recommended provision of affordable housing at 30%:

**Table 11 – Viability of Code for Sustainable Homes Levels in Thanet**

Code Level	Viable
3	Yes
3 + water requirement at level 5	Yes
4	Yes
4 + water requirement at level 5	Affordable housing provisions would need to be reduced from 30% to 20% for development to be viable
5	Affordable housing provisions would need to be reduced from 30% to 10% for development to be viable

Source: *Economic Viability Assessment of development in Thanet (2012)*

The evidence indicates that for viability reasons, it may be unrealistic to request new developments to be built at the highest code levels in order to improve quality, as this would likely inhibit development. This viability evidence was based upon a set of assumptions, which may need to be reviewed alongside the development of proposed policies.



The design of a building or development can help adapt to climate change by increasing solar gain and reducing winter heat loss

There are measures that can be taken in the design of new development that will help reduce energy consumption and provide resilience to increased temperatures, such as:

- the use of landform
- layout
- provision of adequate space for recycling and composting
- building orientation
- tree planting
- landscaping

Landscaping can be particularly beneficial as it can provide stepping stones, wildlife corridors or new habitats, and contribute to Thanet's Green Infrastructure network. In terms of adapting to climate change, building integrated vegetation (i.e. planting on building walls and roofs) can help to reduce solar gain as vegetation has a much higher reflective capacity than masonry, as well as providing a cooling effect through evaporation of water and water from plants back into the atmosphere. Planting can also help mitigate against poor air quality by presenting a large surface area for filtering air. A large tree can deliver the same cooling capacity as five large air conditioning units running for 20 hours a day during hot weather. New planting can help provide more comfortable, cooler spaces via summer shading.

### District Heating

District heating schemes supply heat from a central source directly to homes and businesses through a network of pipes carrying hot water. This means that individual homes and business do not need to generate their own heat on site.

Large energy users, or 'anchor loads' are an essential part of a district heating network to provide a base heat demand that will allow a system to run efficiently. Anchor loads could be large energy users such as industry, schools, hospitals or leisure centres with heated swimming pools. Map 5 shows a heat map for Thanet showing potential areas suitable for District Heating (Renewable Energy for Kent).

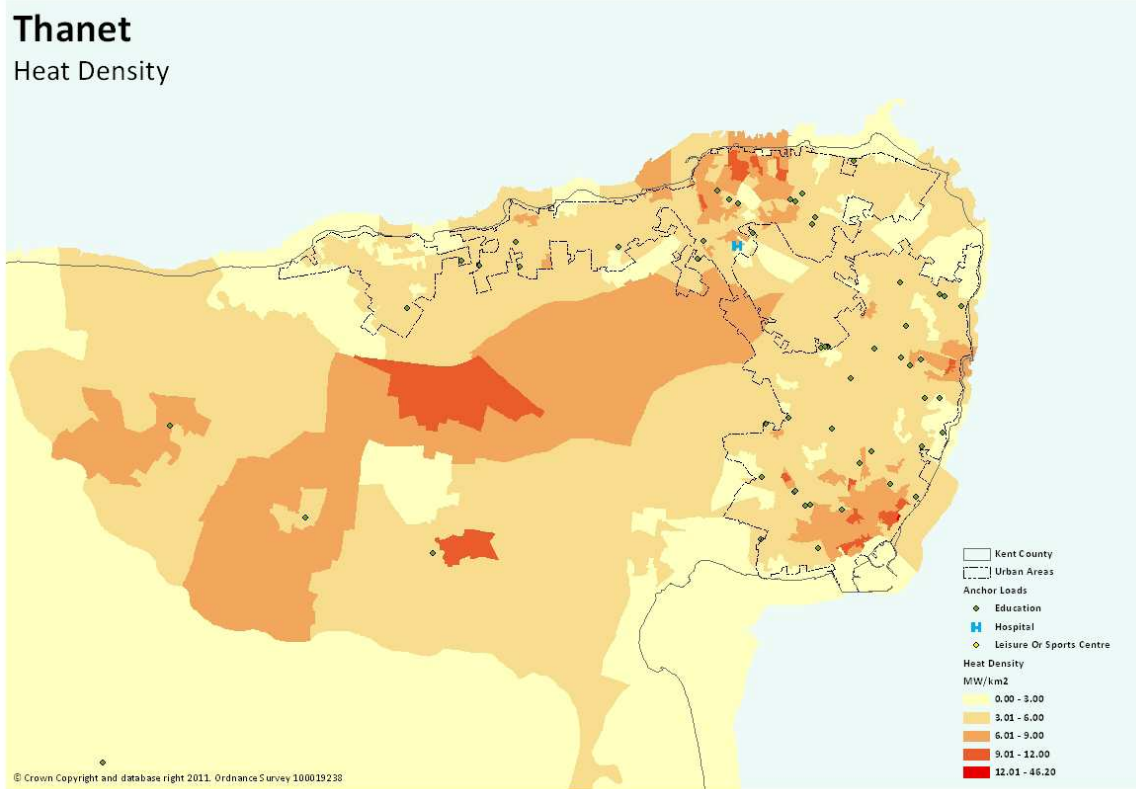
District heating is most suitable where there is a high density of built development, and especially where there is a mix of building types (The larger high heat density area shown outside the urban boundary is the airport). This diversity of energy demand helps to keep combined heat and power (CHP) or boiler plant running in a more steady state for longer, which is more efficient.

Evidence shows that district heating networks may come forward at a variety of scales.

### Wind Energy

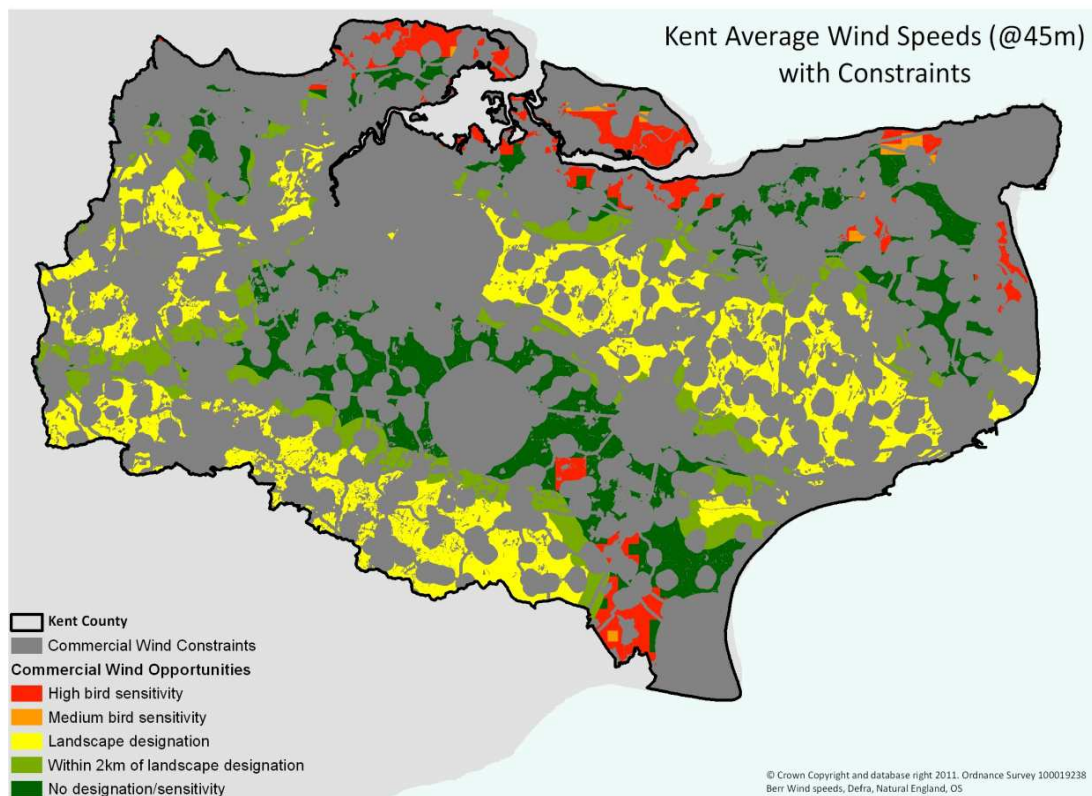
Map 6 below shows where there are opportunities and constraints for potential large scale wind developments (Kent Renewable Energy Report). The areas that have no commercial wind opportunities, due to the wind speeds, have been greyed out on the map. Other constraints include roads, railways, airports, built up areas, local nature designations and bridleways and footpaths.

**Map 5 - Heat Map for Thanet**



Source: Renewable Energy for Kent. Aecom 2012.

**Map 6 - Average Wind Speeds for Kent**

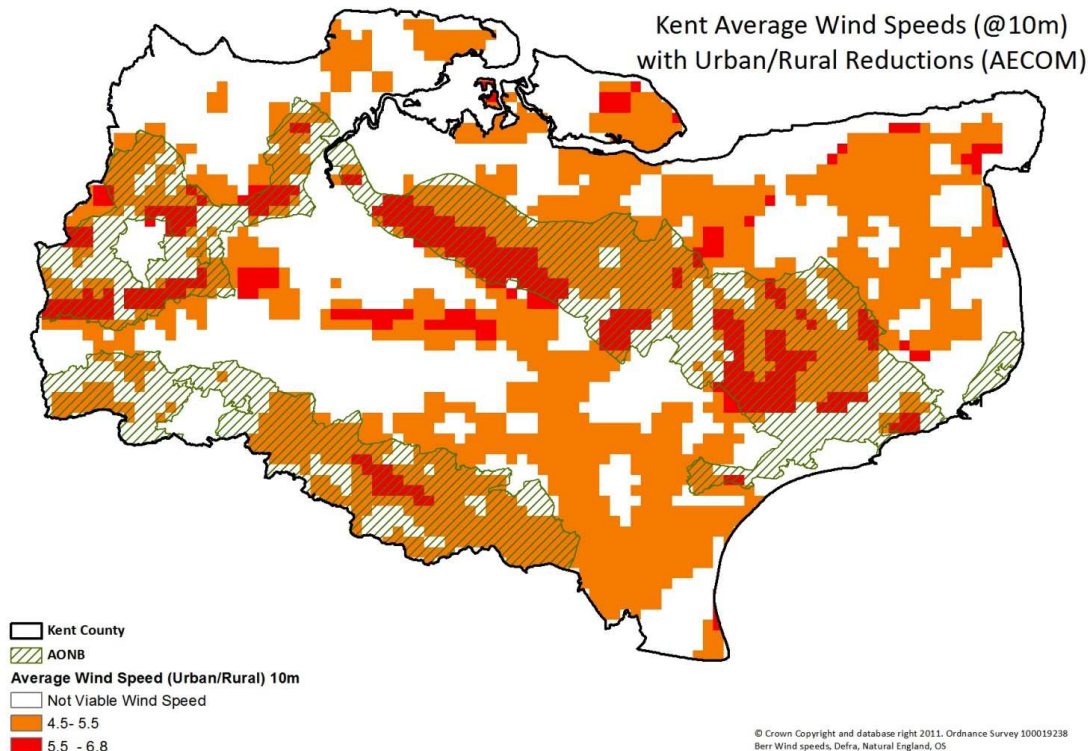


Source: *Renewable Energy for Kent. Aecom 2012.*

Map 6 shows Thanet as being greyed out, therefore constrained and with few suitable areas for large scale wind development.

Map 7 below shows the potential for medium and small scale wind development. The map shows that much of the district does not achieve sufficient wind speed for medium and small scale wind. However there are some areas where sufficient wind speeds may be achievable.

### Map 7 - Potential for Medium and Small Scale wind development



Source: *Renewable Energy for Kent. Aecom 2012.*

Medium and small scale turbines are less efficient and, proportionally to energy output, are more expensive. However they have fewer barriers for deployment and can help raise awareness of the importance of low carbon energy. Local assessment will need to examine the realistic potential for small scale wind in more detail, as it is suggested that small turbines should only really be promoted where wind speeds are good and the site is not obstructed by trees and other buildings. Consideration may also need to be given to the proximity of any proposed turbines to the airport as they can affect the airports surveillance radar and instrument landing systems.

### Promoting alternatives to the private car

The most significant change likely to generate demand for travel will result from new housing development. The proportion of households with access to a car in Thanet remains lower than in any other district in the county. KCC's Carbon Footprint Report (2009) identifies Thanet as having the lowest per capita road transport carbon emissions, almost half the national figure. This could also be due to Thanet's peripheral location as 40% of carbon emissions come from freight vehicles. Due to the location of the District, it does not have significant levels of through-traffic.

Despite Thanet's comparatively low emissions from transport, there are still areas which exceed national standards as the volume of traffic passing through those areas has polluted the air quality to a level which fails to meet the government's air quality standards, and could have a detrimental impact on our quality of life. Air quality is dealt with more specifically elsewhere in this consultation.

It is necessary, therefore, to consider the location of development in areas accessible to a range of services on foot and by public transport, preventing urban sprawl and improving local high streets and town centres. These issues are discussed further in the Housing and Transport sections.

Other measures to consider include providing safe and attractive cycling and walking opportunities, including showers and changing facilities in employment related development, and locating cycle parks close to town centres/entrances

### Richborough

In March 2012 the cooling towers at the Richborough Power Station site were demolished. The site is included in Kent County Council's Waste Local Plan for waste to energy development. There have also been a number of renewable energy developments in recent years at and around the site.

## **Issue 15 - Which policies do we need to maintain a safe and healthy environment?**

### **Introduction**

#### Why do we need to address this issue?

There are various issues that may need to be addressed by planning policy in order to protect the environment, including:

- Pollution,
- contaminated land,
- unstable and derelict land,
- air quality,
- noise,
- light pollution, and
- groundwater quality.

National planning policy requires new development to be appropriate for its location in order to prevent unacceptable risks from pollution and land instability. It highlights the importance of considering the acceptable use of land for any proposed development, rather than the control of processes or emissions as these are subject to approval under pollution control regimes. Planning decisions should ensure that any new development in Air Quality Management Areas is consistent with the Air Quality Action Plan, and that planning policies and decisions limit the impact of light pollution from artificial light on local amenity, dark landscapes and nature conservation.

#### What evidence we have on this issue

- Air Quality Action Plan
- The Council has prepared a Quality Environment Topic Paper

### **Key Facts and Information**

The following key facts are important when considering which policies we need to maintain a safe and healthy environment:

- There is pollution control legislation to control potentially polluting development. However the risk of pollution is a material consideration in determining planning applications.
- There are sites in Thanet that have been used for the deposit of refuse or waste so may generate harmful gases.
- There are some areas in Thanet where ground stability may be an issue, including areas such as the marshes, land overlying the caves at Ramsgate and Margate, and at Dane Valley Road, Margate.
- Some sites in Thanet are known to be contaminated.
- Thanet generally has very good air quality; however there are areas at The Square in Birchington and High Street St Lawrence, Ramsgate where air quality is poor due to pollution from road transport. An urban wide Air Quality Management Area has been declared to enable effective management of air quality.

- There are currently planning policies to control noise generated by development, including aircraft noise.
- Light pollution is currently controlled using the Institute of Lighting Engineers guidance.
- Thanet's groundwater is of poor quality and is vulnerable to contamination due to Thanet's thin soils and cracks in the chalk rock, which means pollution would soak through quickly to the groundwater. However the groundwater is used to supply water for drinking water, agriculture, horticulture and industry and also feeds the springs that emerge along the coast near the marshes, so it is important that there is no further contamination to the groundwater.
- The Thanet Local Plan 2006 included policies addressing all of the above issues.

### **Considering which policies we need to maintain a safe and healthy environment**

Along with the key facts and information above, the following are factors to take into account and to help you consider which policies we need to maintain a safe and healthy environment

#### Potentially Polluting Development

Although pollution is controlled under separate legislation, it is still considered necessary to weigh up the effects of development that might cause the release of pollutants to water, land or air, or from noise, dust, vibration, light or heat, when deciding whether or not to grant planning permission.

#### Landfill Sites

There are sites in Thanet that have been used for landfill, or that are close to landfill sites. Sites that have been used for the deposit of refuse or waste may generate explosive or otherwise harmful gasses. Thanet has approximately 26 such sites which are all listed in the National Landfill Atlas (Environment Agency).

A former landfill site will be unlikely to be actively gassing after 40-50 years of its closure. The Council is required to consult the Environment Agency, as Waste Regulation Authority, before granting consent for development within 250m of land which is, or has within 30 years of the relevant application, been used for the deposit of refuse or waste.

#### Unstable Land

For development on unstable land, it may be necessary for the developer to carry out specialist investigations and assessments to determine the stability of the site proposed for development and identify any remedial measures that will be needed to deal with instability.

#### Contaminated Land

For development on contaminated land, a site investigation and assessment may be needed to establish the levels of contamination present and identify any remedial measures to clean the site to make it suitable for its proposed end use.

This is an issue that could be included in planning policy.

#### Local Air Quality Monitoring

The Council has an Air Quality Action Plan to address the Urban Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) that was declared in 2011 where air quality fails to meet required standards.

The Action Plan considers a broad approach to strategic planning, transport planning, sustainability and climate change.

Planning is an effective tool to improve air quality. It can be used to locate development to reduce emissions overall, and reduce the direct impacts of new development, through policy requirements.

An AQMA makes consideration of the air quality impacts of a proposed development important. However, there is still a need to regard air quality as a material factor in determining planning applications in any location. This is particularly important where the proposed development is not physically within the AQMA, but could have adverse impacts on air quality within it, or where air quality in that given area is close to exceeding guideline objectives itself.

### General Noise Control, Aircraft Noise, Aircraft Noise and Residential Development

The Government's Noise Policy Statement for England stated priority is to:

*'Avoid significant adverse impacts on health and quality of life from environmental, neighbour and neighbourhood noise within the context of Government policy on sustainable development'.*

The second aim is to mitigate and minimise adverse impacts, and the third is to contribute to the improvement of health and quality of life through effective management control of noise.

Policies could be included in the local plan to reflect these aims in terms of general noise, and also aircraft noise.

### Light Pollution

Different forms of light pollution are identified as:

- Light Spillage – artificial illumination that results in the spillage of light that is likely to cause irritation, annoyance or distress to others
- Light Trespass – the spilling of light beyond the boundary of the property on which the light source is located
- Light Glare – the uncomfortable brightness of a light source when viewed against a dark background
- Sky Glow – the brightening of the night sky above our towns and cities

Due to Thanet's open landscapes and vast skies, poor outdoor lighting could have a substantial adverse effect on the character of the area well beyond the site on which the lighting is located.

### Groundwater Protection Zones

Hazards to Thanet's groundwater include petrol stations, gas works, drainage from roads, drainage from the airport, leakage from sewers, pesticide storage, septic tanks, sheep dips, and farm buildings.

Uses that can cause pollution to the groundwater include dry cleaners, mechanics, scrap metal, photo processing, and some sustainable drainage systems.

In Thanet there are considerable risks to the groundwater from both urban and rural activities. This risks are intensified by the compact nature of the District.

## **Issue 16 - How can we provide high quality homes, developments and neighbourhoods?**

### **Introduction**

#### Why do we need to address this issue?

Good design can help improve and enhance areas by ensuring high quality developments, and can help reduce the opportunities for crime and the fear of crime.

National planning policy places a high importance on good design stating that pursuing sustainable development involves seeking positive improvements in the quality of the built, natural and historic environment, as well as in people's quality of life. Planning should seek to secure high quality design and a good standard of amenity for all existing and future occupants of land and buildings. Permission should be refused for development of poor design that fails to take the opportunity to improve the character and quality of an area.

#### What evidence we have on this issue

The Council has prepared a Quality Development Topic Paper which provides more detail and evidence relating to the issues of general design principles, heritage assets, Areas of High Townscape Value, housing density, development on garden land and sustainable design and construction (although the consultation questions for this are dealt with in the Climate Change section)

### **Key Facts and Information**

The following key facts are important when considering how we can use design policies to help create homes and communities that people will be attracted to and want to live in

Thanet's towns, villages, coast and countryside enjoy a diverse and rich built heritage which contributes significantly to the District's unique sense of place and identity. There are 21 conservation areas and approximately 2500 listed buildings – the highest concentration in the South East. There are also Areas of High Townscape Value which have valuable characteristics. However there are some areas in the district where the townscape quality is not quite so good, with developments of mediocre and poor quality, and areas of neglect. The historic town centres contain a high concentration of listed buildings. The urban areas have been developed to a high density, with high numbers of flats – largely due to the availability of large properties formerly used as hotels which lend themselves to conversion to flats, and the subdivision of larger family homes. Some of the urban areas boast a rich architectural heritage including attractive Victorian Terraces and Regency Squares and large and attractive and art deco properties along the coasts. Some suburbs and the rural villages are characterised by lower density development, with large, well-spaced properties and a number of tree lined streets.

#### General Design Principles

Planning policy has been used to ensure appropriate design in developments since the adoption of the 1998 Isle of Thanet Local Plan. The 2006 Thanet Local Plan design policy (D1) has been saved, is still being successfully used and has been supported by planning inspectors at appeal.



### Areas of High Townscape Value

Areas of High Townscape Value (AHTVs) were first identified in the Isle of Thanet Local Plan 1998, and were also included in the Thanet Local Plan 2006. The AHTVs are considered to possess certain characteristics meriting special recognition, mainly the separation between buildings, the open form of development and the contribution made by landscaping.

Thanet Local Plan policy D7 identifies 11 AHTVs and only allows development that is complimentary to the special character of those areas.

The existing areas are:

Callis Court Road, Broadstairs

Holly Lane, Northdown

Canterbury Road, Westgate

Palm Bay Avenue, Cliftonville

North Foreland, Broadstairs

Royal Esplanade, Broadstairs

Royal Esplanade/Prince Edward's Promenade, Ramsgate

South Cliff Parade and Western Esplanade, Broadstairs

Kingsgate Avenue, Broadstairs

Park Avenue, Broadstairs

Sea Road, Westgate

Area including Shakespeare Road, Constable Road, Wilkie Road, Nasmyth Road, Colman's Stairs Road and Spencer Road, Birchington

Cliff Road and The Parade (part), Birchington

This policy has been successfully used and supported by planning inspectors at appeals.

### **Considering how we provide high quality homes, developments and neighbourhoods**

Along with the key facts and information above, the following are factors to take into account and to help you consider how we can use design policies to help create homes and communities that people will be attracted to and want to live in

### Green Infrastructure/Landscaping

Green Infrastructure can be created through landscaping and through design – there is potential for the creation of wildlife corridors and stepping stones in new developments. Landscaping can soften the impact of new buildings, lend a sense of maturity to new development and help to establish a sense of place. It also has a crucial role in terms of wildlife habitat creation and improving biodiversity, particularly in urban areas. However it should be an integral part of the design of a development, rather than consisting of 'offcuts' of leftover land or as a way of camouflaging poor design.

### Safe places and communities

There are opportunities to facilitate meetings between members of the community who might not otherwise come into contact with each other, including through mixed-use developments, strong neighbourhood centres and active street frontages which bring together those who work, live and play in the vicinity. Safe and accessible developments with clear and legible

pedestrian routes and high quality open space will also help achieve this by encouraging the active and continual use of public areas.

Thanet suffers higher crime rates than the average for Kent. Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 places a duty on councils to do all they reasonably can to reduce crime and disorder locally and improve people's quality of life as a result.

Design can help achieve a safer environment including the following ways:

- Well defined routes, spaces and entrances
- Ensuring different uses do not conflict
- Ensuring publicly accessible spaces are over-looked
- Places that promote a sense of ownership
- Physical protection (i.e. security features)
- Places where human activity creates a sense of safety
- Future management and maintenance

### Advertisements

Advertisements need planning permission, and it is important that they are controlled through planning policy as they can form an integral part of the streetscene providing gaiety and colour, or they can be alien, intrusive and discordant. It is also important to make sure that they are not a danger to the public or highways. It is particularly important to consider their impact when they are located in conservation areas, since there are a significant number of commercial premises in conservation areas in Thanet's historic town centres.

### Density

Density is a measure of the number of dwellings which can be accommodated on a site or in an area. Housing density can affect the streetscene in a number of ways including:

- The space between buildings
- Amenity and private access
- Parking
- Provision/retention of trees and shrubs
- Surface water run off

The 2006 Thanet Local Plan requires special justification for developments of less than 30 dwellings per hectare, and for less than 50 units per hectare for developments in town and district centres and other locations with good public transport accessibility.

To give an idea of the context of housing densities, Table 12 below shows the densities achieved by different types of housing form:

**Table 12 – Densities of different forms of Housing**

<b>Dwelling type</b>	<b>Dwellings per hectare</b>
Detached houses	10
Semi-detached houses on street	16
Semi-detached houses on cul-de-sac	31
Terraced houses – medium frontage	53
Terraced houses – wide frontage	44
Flats – 4 storey perimeter blocks	155
Flats – 4 storey cluster blocks	67
Mixed houses and flats	140

Source: Llewelyn-Davies, 2000, cited in <http://cibworld.xs4all.nl/dl/publications/Pub281/14Chapter-10.pdf>

Higher density developments could have positive or negative impacts:

Positive:

- Conserves land by reducing the loss of open countryside/Greenfield land.
- Where located in a built-up urban area they will be well served by public transport, with many journeys achievable by foot or bicycle, thus reducing the need for car travel.
- Cost of providing infrastructure for utilities such as water, gas, electricity and waste disposal reduces.
- Creates vitality and diversity.

Negative:

- Large numbers of flatted developments could lead to a transient community (as has happened in Cliftonville).
- Large numbers of flatted development result in small, poor quality developments, properties owned by absent landlords so poorly maintained.
- Lack of open spaces/landscaping.
- If located in more rural areas there is potential for traffic congestion due to reliance on private car.

Thanet has some areas which are already densely developed. Some areas such as Cliftonville have seen significant numbers of conversions of large buildings (often previously used as hotels) into flatted accommodation which has, in some areas, had a detrimental impact due to small, poor quality developments, absent landlords, and a transient population. It could be argued that setting a lower density in such areas could reduce the proliferation of flats. However, due to the nature of some sites available for development in these areas, it may not be possible to develop anything other than at a high density.

Other areas of the district, such as AHTVs, benefit from lower density developments due to the character and appearance of the area – it could be considered appropriate to limit the density of new developments in these areas.

### Development on Garden Land

In June 2010, national planning policy was changed removing private residential gardens from the definition of previously developed land. This gave the Council more flexibility to be able to refuse the inappropriate development of garden land which could result in ‘town cramming’, and protect the character of residential neighbourhoods.

In Thanet, applications have been refused for development on garden land due to the impact development would have on the character and appearance of the streetscene. Some parts of the district enjoy a high quality environment, with spacious surroundings, and a development within a garden could have a detrimental effect. Residential gardens also form part of Thanet’s green infrastructure – the district is deficient in areas of open space (discussed in more detail in the Natural Environment paper) so development of garden sites may not be appropriate, and may be unnecessary, if there is still a supply of housing sites available. There could also be instances where a development within a garden could be beneficial to the streetscene, where the property would be a frontage development.

### Other Design Issues

We consider the following issues are also important and have included them in previous design policies :

- Residential Amenity Value

- Character and appearance of surrounding area
- Compatibility with and impact on neighbouring buildings
- Pedestrian/Cyclist/vehicle movement
- Provision for disabled access
- Integration of public art
- Provision for clothes drying facilities and refuse disposal/dustbin storage
- Incorporation of sustainable drainage systems

#### Areas of High Townscape Value

There may be other areas in Thanet worthy of Area of High Townscape Value designation, or the areas that are currently designated may no longer be appropriate. There may also be areas of special character that should be enhanced by planning policy.

## **Issue 17 - How can we protect and enhance Thanet's heritage assets and their settings?**

### **Introduction**

#### Why do we need to address this issue?

A key issue for the new Local Plan will be to ensure that all new development respects and understands the heritage of the District, balancing the need for growth against the need to protect and enhance the historic environment

Government policy states that local plans should set out 'a positive strategy for the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment'. It places more emphasis on putting heritage assets to viable uses, the wider benefits that can be achieved by the conservation of the historic environment and the desirability of new development in making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness. It also includes criteria which would need to be fulfilled for a proposed development which would lead to substantial harm or loss of a heritage asset.

#### What evidence we have on this issue

A Heritage Strategy is being prepared for Thanet. It is proposed that it will be aligned with the Local Plan and we have started to develop an evidence base to support this strategy and the Local Plan.

The evidence includes assessing the significance of heritage assets in the area, including their settings, and the contribution they make to their environment. It also involves assessing the potential of finding new sites of archaeological or historic interest.

Evidence relating to the historic environment in Thanet can currently be found in the Kent Historic Environment Record, as well as Conservation Areas Appraisals and Management Plan.

### **Key Facts and Information**

The following key facts are important when considering how we protect and enhance heritage assets and their settings.

- Thanet has 21 conservation areas which vary considerably in age, size, character and style.
- There are approximately 2,500 statutory listed buildings in Thanet – the highest concentration in the South East.
- Thanet has a number of highly significant Grade I or II\* listed buildings, including St Augustine's and Sir Moses Montefiore Synagogue, Ramsgate, Scenic Railway, Margate.
- Thanet has 12 Scheduled Ancient monuments, including Monastic Grange and pre-conquest Nunnery at Minster Abbey.
- Thanet is also rich in archaeological remains. The remains of all periods from Neolithic to Modern are recorded within the area and consist of both burial and settlement archaeology.

- There are also Areas of High Townscape Value which have valuable characteristics.

Thanet is a pre-dominantly coastal district which is interspersed with rural settlements. Margate, Ramsgate and Broadstairs are the principal settlements in Thanet District, and each is famous for its seaside setting and attractive historic town centres.

Thanet can trace its origins to pre-historic activity with the remains of all periods from the Neolithic to Modern recorded within the area, and consist of both burial and settlement archaeology. It is this rich heritage and the close proximity to the sea that gives the district its special character and distinctiveness. This is emphasised by the large number of highly graded designated heritage assets, often connected to the strong relationship with the sea either in the form of commerce, health or leisure.

Thanet can be described as a district with a diverse and vibrant character. The character of the district coastal areas owes much to the juxtaposition of grand seafront developments and the smaller scale domestic ‘vernacular’ buildings associated with working harbours and holiday resorts. The character of the rural areas owes much to the strong links with early Christianity and the ensuing development of medieval parishes centred on the church.

Some of the key distinctive qualities of Thanet’s historic environment include:

- The richness of 18<sup>th</sup>, 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century development linked to the sea (including grand residential terraces, harbours, leisure and health facilities as well as defence.)
- The strong associations with internationally recognised people including AW Pugin, Sir Moses Montefiore and George Sanger and their significant legacies within the built environment.
- The presence of significant historic technical innovation (including the Scenic Railway, Clifton baths, Albion Gardens)
- The wealth of public and private historic open spaces (including many planned squares, parks, cemeteries, chines, cliff top promenades, coastal topography and significant views)
- The Victorian/Edwardian suburbs and post-war housing developments (including Westgate on Sea)

### **Considering how we protect and enhance Thanet’s heritage assets and their settings**

Along with the key facts and information above, the following are factors to take into account and to help you consider how we protect and enhance heritage assets and their settings

National Policy requires Local Plans to include a positive strategy for the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment. Given the importance of the District’s heritage and its wider social, economic and environmental benefits and the role that the historic environment can play in regeneration, this is considered essential for the District.

Based upon our current understanding of the historic environment in Thanet, we consider the following issues to be integral to developing a positive strategy for the conservation and enhancement of the historic environment.

- The continued preservation and enhancement of existing, and, where appropriate, designation of new Conservation Areas. This would need to be supported by the on-going production and review of Conservation Area Appraisals. Consideration will also

need to be given to the principle of Article 4 directions in Conservation Areas to restrict permitted development rights.

- The continued protection and enhancement of listed buildings, historic parks and gardens and scheduled monuments, buildings of local interest and other heritage assets.
- The identification and, where appropriate, protection of the District's archaeological heritage.
- Addressing Heritage at Risk (including those assets on the Heritage at Risk Register) in a positive and proactive manner.
- Listed buildings are designated by English Heritage under certain criteria; however there are other important historic buildings in Thanet which are not listed, so currently not protected by any specific policy. These buildings could form a 'local list' which would be designated by the Council, and subsequently afforded protection through planning policy.
- Ensuring that information about heritage assets produced as part of plan making and development proposals are made publicly accessible in order to improve our understanding of the historic environment.

### Policy options

National policy sets out in detail the way in which applications affecting heritage assets and non-designated heritage assets should be determined. It is therefore not considered necessary to repeat national policy; however it may be necessary to develop policies relating to the following issues:

- To support the function of a 'local list' it would be necessary to include a policy within the Local Plan setting out the criteria that will be considered for applications.
- There is an increasing number of planning applications
- for solar panels, and other renewable energy installations, to both public buildings and private dwellings. It is likely that applications will be received for listed buildings, and buildings in conservation areas. It may therefore be necessary to develop a criteria based policy
- There are a number of historically significant sites in the District. It may be necessary to develop site specific policies where particular requirements for the development of this site are required in order to protect and enhance the historic value of the site.

## **Issue 18 - How should we plan for community facilities?**

### **Introduction**

#### Why do we need to address this issue?

Social, cultural and community facilities are an integral part of developing inclusive and cohesive communities.

One of the core principles in the NPPF is to take account of and support local strategies to support health, social and cultural wellbeing for all, and deliver sufficient community and cultural facilities to meet local needs.

National planning policy also states that planning policies and decisions should plan positively for the provision and use of shared space, community facilities and other local services, and to guard against the unnecessary loss of such facilities.

It states that existing open space, sports and recreational buildings and land, including playing fields should not be built on unless the land is surplus to requirements, or the development will result in better provision of open space or sports and recreational provision.

Public rights of way and access should be protected and enhanced, and opportunities should be sought to provide better facilities for users.

#### What evidence we have on this issue

We are working with infrastructure providers to understand what facilities are required to support new development, and to inform the Infrastructure Delivery Plan.

### **Key Facts and Information**

The following key facts are important when considering how we can make sure there is sufficient provision of shared facilities for our communities.

The need for new community facilities, and more detail about how we can provide them, will be addressed once the number and location of homes that will be built in the district has been decided.

The Thanet Local Plan 2006 includes policy CF1 which is a criteria based policy granting the development of new community facilities or the re-use of existing community facilities for alternative community uses. It also resists the change of use or re-use of a community facility for a non-community use. Policy CF2 requires development contributions where a new development results in the need to provide new or upgraded community facilities. Policy CF3 permits the development of new educational and training facilities.

The Planning Obligations and Developer Contributions SPD, adopted in 2010 and subject to public consultation, sets out when the provision of new community facilities will be required in new developments (for developments of 10 or more dwellings), including

- Leisure & Recreation – including play space, sports facilities, open space, youth facilities
- Education – including Primary, Secondary, Adult Education



- Adult Social Services

This SPD will be re-written in conjunction with the Community Infrastructure Levy.

### **Considering how we plan for community facilities**

Along with the key facts and information above, the following are factors to take into account and to help you consider how we plan for community facilities.

Facilities such as local shops, meeting places, sports venues, cultural buildings, public houses and places of worship can help enhance the sustainability of communities and residential environments.

In addition to requiring new developments to be provided with the necessary community facilities, there are other ways we can make sure there is a sufficient provision of these facilities:

- Protecting existing facilities.
- Allowing new facilities to be developed.

The Council currently uses saved local plan policy CF1 for assessing planning applications relating to community facilities.

The policy has been used in decisions to grant planning permission for new or additional community facilities. Examples include:

- Extensions to accommodate additional dental or doctors surgeries
- Change of use of building to a church
- Erection of children's play equipment
- Erection of building to contain swimming pool and changing facilities
- Erection of building comprising health care centre and pharmacy
- Erection of Parish Hall

The policy requires the re-use of a community facility for other uses to be justified by demonstrating that there is no longer sufficient community use for the facility. There have been instances where planning permission has been granted and a community facility has been lost. The policy has also been used to ensure that replacement community facilities are provided in the area.

There have been instances where buildings previously used for community facilities have been demolished, so the redevelopment of the site has not been considered for a replacement community use as that facility no longer exists. If community facilities are lost, they are often difficult to replace. We need to ensure that any policy is specific and strong enough to protect existing community facilities, and can ensure the replacement of alternative community facilities where there is a local need.

## 4.4 Transport

### What is included in this section

This section covers the topic area of transport and considers the following issue:

19. How can we enable an efficient and effective transport system?

### Strategic Priority and Objectives

It is a proposed strategic priority of the Local Plan to **provide an efficient and effective transport system, delivering the transport infrastructure required to support existing communities and new development.**

In achieving this we consider the following draft objectives to be appropriate:

- Promote development patterns and behaviour that will minimise the need to travel or use private cars to access services and amenities.
- Facilitate the enhanced integration of the High Speed 1 network with wider public transport and highways networks by supporting infrastructure that would maximise its benefits.
- Promote an efficient public transport system alongside expansion of larger scale transport infrastructure.
- Facilitate provision of direct walking and cycling routes to reduce potential congestion, noise and pollution.
- Deliver required improvements to the road network in order to reduce congestion and pollution, and to accommodate new development.
- Facilitate the provision of infrastructure required to support new development and communities, including water, energy, telecommunications, utilities, waste, health, social care, education, flood risk and coastal change management.

## **Issue 19 - How can we enable an efficient and effective transport system?**

### **Introduction**

#### Why do we need to address this issue?

An efficient and effective transport system will be important in achieving the strategic priorities proposed for the Local Plan. For example our communities need affordable and convenient access to the employment, training, shops and community facilities which they may require from day to day. Reducing the need to travel, especially by private cars, can help cut down emissions which affect air quality and contribute to climate change.

National planning policy expects us to promote sustainable development. This includes managing patterns of growth to make fullest possible use of public transport, walking and cycling and focusing significant development in locations which can be made sustainable. Specifically it emphasises the need to balance the system in favour of sustainable means of travel that will provide people with choice.

Kent County Council's transport delivery plan "Growth Without Gridlock" proposes a programme of strategic transport solutions to accompany planned growth in the County. Highlighted projects include potential for rail line speed improvements between Ramsgate and Ashford and a Thanet Parkway station in the vicinity of Manston Airport.

The East Kent Sustainable Community Strategy envisages a high quality integrated transport network with reduced congestion and pollution, offering a wide choice of accessible transport to all sections of the community. This includes effective connection of the wider public transport network with the high speed 1 rail service offering reduced journey times to London and the South East for all.

Our Corporate Plan emphasises the importance of transport for residents, business and visitors, and the need to address issues such as traffic flow, congestion, illegal nuisance parking and road safety. It focuses on the need to encourage sustainable travel by supporting improvements to public transport, increasing cycling, and walking routes and to review the parking strategy.

#### What evidence we have on this issue

To help us consider the most sustainable options for locating future development, how we can promote greater use of sustainable means of transport and how to tackle existing transport challenges we are preparing a Transport Strategy. Preparation of this Strategy will involve detailed assessment of transport issues, including dealing with significant congestion and delays in the transport network.

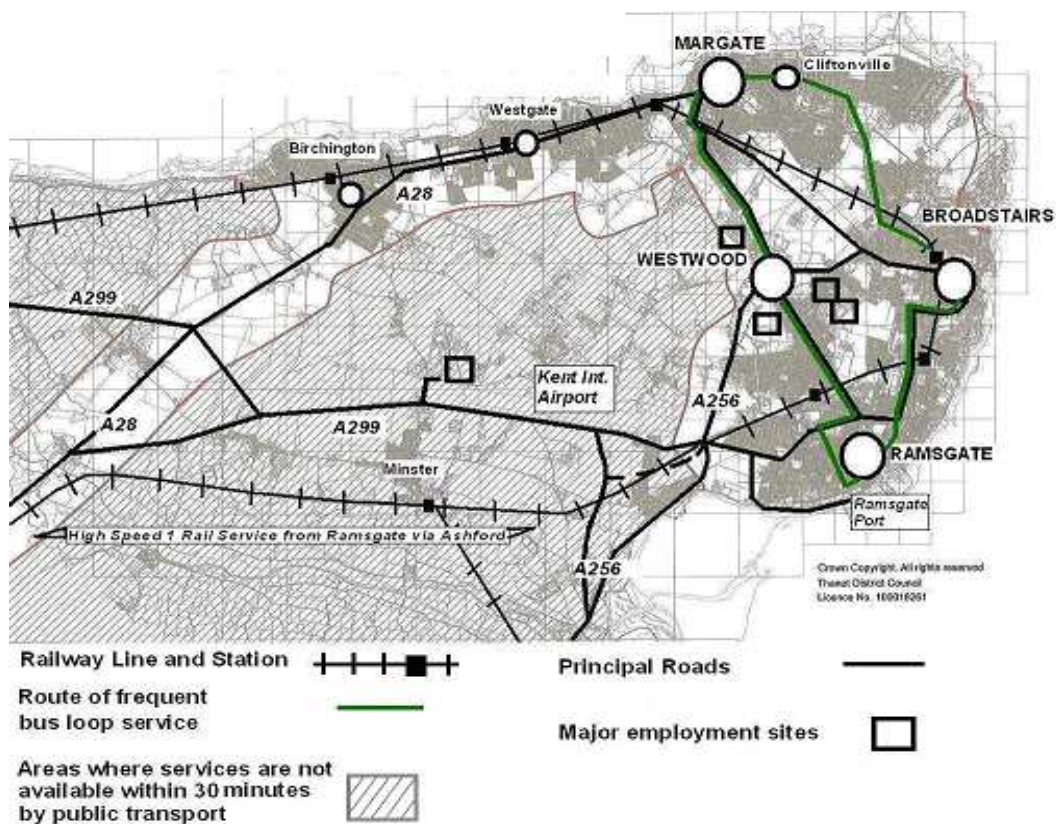
### **Key Facts and Information**

The following key facts are important when considering how we can deliver an efficient and effective transport system.

- National planning policy recognises that different policies and measures will be required in recognition of different opportunities in different communities.

- Thanet has a highly individual pattern of development and associated transport links. The multi-centred urban area containing the coastal towns and Westwood is generally well served by a range of facilities that can be conveniently reached by public transport, facilitated in particular by the presence of the Thanet loop bus service. The rural villages however, are less well served and therefore more dependent on car based travel to access many such services.
- Thanet is served by seven railway stations. The domestic rail connection to the High Speed 1 rail link network has improved travel times between Thanet and London, helping to reverse previous perceptions of the district as peripheral by potential investors and by people who might wish to live in and commute from Thanet for work.
- Following opening of Westwood Cross in 2005, the Westwood area has developed as a destination in its own right. However, it occupies a key junction on the principal local road network, so we need a formal strategy to avoid future traffic congestion and enable safe and convenient travel to and within the area.
- Ramsgate Port and Manston Airport are significant pieces of transport infrastructure supporting an international gateway function for Thanet. Their connectivity with London and the Sandwich Corridor has been boosted by recent completion of the East Kent Access road improvement scheme.

**Map 8 - Key Transport Links**



Crown Copyright. All rights reserved. Thanet District Council. Licence No. 100018261

- The urban area of the Thanet Towns together with Cliffsend is designated as an air quality management area. A draft action plan aims, through various measures, to improve air quality generally (through reduced transport emissions) and in consequence achieve specific reductions in such emissions at St Lawrence in Ramsgate and The Square, Birchington. In focusing on increasing use of sustainable means of transport, the action plan notes the importance of locating development in a way that reduces emissions overall and of reducing the direct impact of new development, for example by contributing to measures to help implement the action plan.
- New and improved transport services and infrastructure require coordination by various agencies and may require funding by new development. The Transport Strategy referred to earlier will identify the major infrastructure required and guide delivery of future transport improvements.

**Considering how we can deliver an efficient and effective transport system.**

Along with the key facts and information above, the following are factors to take into account and to help you consider how we can deliver an efficient and effective transport system.

At the present time we believe the following specific transport issues in particular will need to be addressed in considering options for the Local Plan.

- Reducing the need to travel (especially by car) to access the facilities we need day to day.
- Encouraging more people to walk, cycle or use public transport.
- Making better use of the High Speed 1 rail link and integrating it with wider public transport and highways networks.
- Identifying solutions for dealing with significant congestion and delays in the transport network.
- Improving through-traffic flows at Westwood and facilitating convenient and safe movement within the area.
- The level and location of public car parking needed in the town centres.
- Deficiencies in the transport system to deal with existing problems or accommodate future growth.

## Annex 1 Glossary of Terms

**Affordable housing:** Social rented, affordable rented and intermediate housing, provided to eligible households whose needs are not met by the market.

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.

**Air Quality Management Areas:** Areas designated by local authorities because they are not likely to achieve national air quality objectives by the relevant deadlines.

**Article 4 direction:** A direction which withdraws automatic planning permission granted by the General Permitted Development Order.

**Best and most versatile agricultural land:** Land in grades 1, 2 and 3a of the Agricultural Land Classification.

**Birds and Habitats Directives:** European Directives to conserve natural habitats and wild fauna and flora.

**Climate change adaptation:** Adjustments to natural or human systems in response to actual or expected climatic factors or their effects, including from changes in rainfall and rising temperatures, which moderate harm or exploit beneficial opportunities.

**Climate change mitigation:** Action to reduce the impact of human activity on the climate system, primarily through reducing greenhouse gas emissions

**Coastal Change Management Area:** An area identified in Local Plans as likely to be affected by coastal change (physical change to the shoreline through erosion, coastal landslip, permanent inundation or coastal accretion).

**Community Infrastructure Levy:** A levy allowing local authorities to raise funds from owners or developers of land undertaking new building projects in their area.

**Community Right to Build Order:** An Order made by the local planning authority (under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990) that grants planning permission for a site-specific development proposal or classes of development.

**Core Strategy:** The Council produced a consultation document for a Core Strategy in 2009. The Core Strategy was a high level document containing strategic policies. The Council is now producing a local plan which will include strategic level policies, site allocations and development management policies.

**Decentralised energy:** Local renewable energy and local low-carbon energy usually but not always on a relatively small scale encompassing a diverse range of technologies.

**Designated heritage asset:** A World Heritage Site, Scheduled Monument, Listed Building, Protected Wreck Site, Registered Park and Garden, Registered Battlefield or Conservation Area designated under the relevant legislation.

**Development Management:** Development Management is the process by which planning applications are determined.

**Development Plan:** This includes adopted Local Plans and neighbourhood plans and is defined in Section 38 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

**DPD:** Development Plan Document. These are policy documents on a specific topic that make up part of the Development Plan. The Cliftonville Development Plan Document was adopted by the Council in February 2010.

**Economic development:** Development, including those within the B Use Classes, public and community uses and main town centre uses (but excluding housing development).

**Ecological networks:** These link sites of biodiversity importance.

**Ecosystem services:** The benefits people obtain from ecosystems such as, food, water, flood and disease control and recreation.

**Edge of centre:** For retail purposes, a location that is well connected and up to 300 metres of the primary shopping area. For all other main town centre uses, a location within 300 metres of a town centre boundary. For office development, this includes locations outside the town centre but within 500 metres of a public transport interchange. In determining whether a site falls within the definition of edge of centre, account should be taken of local circumstances.

**EEA:** Economic and Employment Assessment.

**ELR:** Employment Land Review.

**European site:** This includes candidate Special Areas of Conservation, Sites of Community Importance, Special Areas of Conservation and Special Protection Areas, and is defined in regulation 8 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010.

**Geodiversity:** The range of rocks, minerals, fossils, soils and landforms.

**Green infrastructure:** A network of multi-functional green space, urban and rural, which is capable of delivering a wide range of environmental and quality of life benefits for local communities.

**GTAA:** Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment. An assessment of the future need for accommodation for the gypsy and traveller community.

**Heritage asset:** A building, monument, site, place, area or landscape identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions, because of its heritage interest. Heritage asset includes designated heritage assets and assets identified by the local planning authority (including local listing).

**Historic environment:** All aspects of the environment resulting from the interaction between people and places through time, including all surviving physical remains of past human activity, whether visible, buried or submerged, and landscaped and planted or managed flora.

**HMOs:** Houses in Multiple Occupation: Housing which is occupied by 3 or more unrelated individuals sharing basic amenities.

**HRA:** Habitats Regulations Assessment. The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 transposes EU Directive 92/43/EEC on the conservation of natural habitats of wild flora and fauna into UK national law. The Regulations provide for the designation and protection of 'European sites', the protection of 'European protected species', and the adaptation of planning and other controls for the protection of European Sites. Assessments for significant effects on habitats must be carried out and mitigation measure identified.

**International, national and locally designated sites of importance for biodiversity:** All international sites (Special Areas of Conservation, Special Protection Areas, and Ramsar sites), national sites (Sites of Special Scientific Interest) and locally designated sites including Local Wildlife Sites.

**Local Enterprise Partnership:** A body, designated by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, established for the purpose of creating or improving the conditions for economic growth in an area.

**Local Plan:** The plan for the future development of the local area, drawn up by the local planning authorities in consultation with the community. In law this is described as the development plan documents adopted under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

**Localism Act:** The Localism Act was introduced in 2011. Its aim was to devolve powers from central government into the hands of individuals, communities and councils.

**Main town centre uses:** Retail development (including warehouse clubs and factory outlet centres); leisure, entertainment facilities the more intensive sport and recreation uses (including cinemas, restaurants, drive-through restaurants, bars and pubs, night-clubs, casinos, health and fitness centres, indoor bowling centres, and bingo halls); offices; and arts, culture and tourism development (including theatres, museums, galleries and concert halls, hotels and conference facilities).

**National Planning Policy Framework. National planning policy (NPPF):** This is the Government's statement of planning policy with which all Local Plan's must be in conformity. Where a local plan is silent on an issue planning decisions will be made in accordance with national policy. This document came into force in March 2012 and replaces the planning policy statements and planning policy guidance notes (PPS' and PPGs).

**Neighbourhood plans:** A plan prepared by a Parish Council or Neighbourhood Forum for a particular neighbourhood area (made under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004).



**Older people:** People over retirement age, including the active, newly-retired through to the very frail elderly, whose housing needs can encompass accessible, adaptable general needs housing for those looking to downsize from family housing and the full range of retirement and specialised housing for those with support or care needs.

**Open space:** All open space of public value, including not just land, but also areas of water (such as rivers, canals, lakes and reservoirs) which offer important opportunities for sport and recreation and can act as a visual amenity.

**Out of centre:** A location which is not in or on the edge of a centre but not necessarily outside the urban area.

**Out of town:** A location out of centre that is outside the existing urban area.

**People with disabilities:** People have a disability if they have a physical or mental impairment, and that impairment has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities. These persons include, but are not limited to, people with ambulatory difficulties, blindness, learning difficulties, autism and mental health needs.

**Plan Period:** The plan period we are working on is 2011-2031.

**Planning condition:** A condition imposed on a grant of planning permission (in accordance with the Town and Country Planning Act 1990) or a condition included in a Local Development Order or Neighbourhood Development Order.

**Planning obligation:** A legally enforceable obligation entered into under section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 to mitigate the impacts of a development proposal.

**Playing field:** The whole of a site which encompasses at least one playing pitch as defined in the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2010.

**Pollution:** Anything that affects the quality of land, air, water or soils, which might lead to an adverse impact on human health, the natural environment or general amenity. Pollution can arise from a range of emissions, including smoke, fumes, gases, dust, steam, odour, noise and light.

**Previously developed land:** Land which is or was occupied by a permanent structure, including the curtilage of the developed land (although it should not be assumed that the whole of the curtilage should be developed) and any associated fixed surface infrastructure. This excludes: land that is or has been occupied by agricultural or forestry buildings; land that has been developed for minerals extraction or waste disposal by landfill purposes where provision for restoration has been made through development control procedures; land in built-up areas such as private residential gardens, parks, recreation grounds and allotments; and land that was previously-developed but where the remains of the permanent structure or fixed surface structure have blended into the landscape in the process of time.

**Primary shopping area:** Defined area where retail development is concentrated (generally comprising the primary and those secondary frontages which are adjoining and closely related to the primary shopping frontage).

**Primary and secondary frontages:** Primary frontages are likely to include a high proportion of retail uses which may include food, drinks, clothing and household goods. Secondary

frontages provide greater opportunities for a diversity of uses such as restaurants, cinemas and businesses.

**Priority habitats and species:** Species and Habitats of Principle Importance included in the England Biodiversity List published by the Secretary of State under section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006.

**PSZ:** Public Safety Zone. The Civil Aviation Authority is responsible for these zones. The policy objective is the restriction of development near civil airports and no increase in the number of people living, working or congregating in these zones.

**Ramsar sites:** Wetlands of international importance, designated under the 1971 Ramsar Convention.

**Regional Spatial Strategy:** The Regional Spatial Strategy for the South East is the South East Plan adopted in 2009. This was produced by the South East England Regional Assembly which later became the South East England Regional Planning Body. This organisation and the South East Plan have been revoked under the Localism Act 2011.

**Renewable and low carbon energy:** Includes energy for heating and cooling as well as generating electricity. Renewable energy covers those energy flows that occur naturally and repeatedly in the environment – from the wind, the fall of water, the movement of the oceans, from the sun and also from biomass and deep geothermal heat. Low carbon technologies are those that can help reduce emissions (compared to conventional use of fossil fuels).

**Rural exception sites:** Small sites used for affordable housing in perpetuity where sites would not normally be used for housing. Rural exception sites seek to address the needs of the local community by accommodating households who are either current residents or have an existing family or employment connection. Small numbers of market homes may be allowed at the local authority's discretion, for example where essential to enable the delivery of affordable units without grant funding.

**Saved policies:** Policies from the Thanet Local Plan 2006 that are still in place and form part of the Development Plan for Thanet, currently used for determining planning applications.

**SCI:** Statement of Community Involvement.

**Shoreline Management Plans:** A plan providing a large-scale assessment of the risk to people and to the developed, historic and natural environment associated with coastal processes.

**SHLAA:** Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment providing information to assess and allocate the best sites for new homes.

**SHMA:** Strategic Housing Market Assessment.

**Site of Special Scientific Interest:** Sites designated by Natural England under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981.

**Special Areas of Conservation:** Areas given special protection under the European Union's Habitats Directive, which is transposed into UK law by the Habitats and Conservation of Species Regulations 2010.

**Special Protection Areas:** Areas which have been identified as being of international importance for the breeding, feeding, wintering or the migration of rare and vulnerable species of birds found within European Union countries. They are European designated sites, classified under the Birds Directive.

**Stepping stones:** Pockets of habitat that, while not necessarily connected, facilitate the movement of species across otherwise inhospitable landscapes.

**Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and Sustainability Appraisal (SA):** A procedure (set out in the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004) which requires the formal environmental assessment of certain plans and programmes which are likely to have significant environmental effects. The SA broadens this out to assess the economic, social and environmental effects.

**Supplementary planning documents:** Documents which add further detail to the policies in the Local Plan. They can be used to provide further guidance for development on specific sites, or on particular issues, such as design. Supplementary planning documents are capable of being a material consideration in planning decisions but are not part of the development plan.

**Sustainable transport modes:** Any efficient, safe and accessible means of transport with overall low impact on the environment, including walking and cycling, low and ultra low emission vehicles, car sharing and public transport.

**Town centre:** Area defined on the local authority's proposal map, including the primary shopping area and areas predominantly occupied by main town centre uses within or adjacent to the primary shopping area. References to town centres or centres apply to city centres, town centres, district centres and local centres but exclude small parades of shops of purely neighbourhood significance.

**Transport assessment:** A comprehensive and systematic process that sets out transport issues relating to a proposed development. It identifies what measures will be required to improve accessibility and safety for all modes of travel, particularly for alternatives to the car such as walking, cycling and public transport and what measures will need to be taken to deal with the anticipated transport impacts of the development.

**Transport statement:** A simplified version of a transport assessment where it is agreed the transport issues arising out of development proposals are limited and a full transport assessment is not required.

**Travel plan:** A long-term management strategy for an organisation or site that seeks to deliver sustainable transport objectives through action and is articulated in a document that is regularly reviewed.

**Wildlife corridor:** Areas of habitat connecting wildlife populations.

**Windfall sites:** Sites which have not been specifically identified as available in the Local Plan process. They normally comprise previously-developed sites that have unexpectedly become available.

## Annex 2 Background and Evidence Documents

<b>Baseline Evidence</b>
Thanet Economic and Employment Assessment December 2012 (Experian)
Employment Land Review 2010
Town Centre Retail, Leisure, Tourism and Cultural Assessment 2012 (Nathaniel Litchfield and Partners)
Strategic Housing Market Assessment for East Kent Sub Region June 2009
Economic and demographic forecasts for Thanet District Council, Feb 2013 (Business Intelligence, Research and Evaluation, Kent County Council)
Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment 2010
East Kent Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment Report 2007-12
Housing Information Audits
Economic Viability Assessment of development in Thanet District June 2012
Village audits
Landscape Character Assessments and Updates, 1993, 2001, 2004 and 2012
Open Space Audit (2006)
Kent Habitats Surveys 2003 and 2012
Renewable Energy for Kent April 2012 – Part II: Underpinning the Vision (Aecom)
A Local Climate Impacts Profile for Kent – A summary of impacts from past severe weather events 1996-2010 (KCC)
Climate Local Kent Commitment
Cliftonville – Design for Future Climate II
Stour Catchment Abstraction Management Strategy (May 2003)
River Basin Management Plan – South East River Basin district (December 2009)
Water Resource Management Plan
Thanet Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) (2009)
Surface Water Management Plan (November 2012)
Shoreline Management Plan – Isle of Grain to South Foreland (2008)

## Local Plan Issues and Options Consultation Document

Thanet Air Quality Action Plan 2013
Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report
Sustainability Appraisal Interim Assessment
<b>Topic Papers</b>
Employment Topic Paper
Housing Topic Paper
Houses in Multiple Occupation and Student Accommodation
Settlement Pattern and Hierarchy
Climate Change Topic Paper
Water Cycle Topic Paper
Quality Development and Heritage Topic Paper
Natural Environment Topic Paper
Quality Environment Topic Paper
<b>Baseline Evidence/Topic Papers (in preparation)</b>
Employment Land Review Update
Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment Update
Review of Strategic Housing Market Assessment Update
Transport Strategy
Infrastructure Delivery Plan
EK Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment Report (update)