

# Draft Corporate Plan 2024-2028



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## Foreword from the Council Leader

As leader of Thanet District Council, I am proud to be able to present our new Corporate Plan for 2024-28, a period in which we mark the 50th anniversary of the council's establishment through local government reorganisation in 1974.

With a new cohort of councillors elected in May 2023 and a majority administration now providing a level of political certainty in the medium term, it is an appropriate point at which to refresh our aims and ambitions for the district.

Some themes, however, remain constant. Residents have consistently told the council that they want the district to be cleaner and safer, for us to operate efficiently and listen more to them. Greater prosperity for our communities is a universal aspiration.

Other goals, like protecting the environment and addressing the crisis in affordable housing, have moved up the agenda in recent years, nationally and locally, as the problems have become more acute.

The part played in delivering hyperlocal services by town and parish councils is expanding and the district council recognises the opportunities this provides. It also helps to reinforce the distinct identities of our communities, which we recognise is important.

This plan is a guide for council members, officers and residents. We will continue to develop policies and actions to address the priorities identified within it and reflected in the 2023 election outcomes. It will enable us to assess our progress towards achieving them.

However, the plan belongs to the whole council, not just the current administration. And it will only succeed if it reflects the priorities of the entire Thanet community, which is why we have put in place a public consultation exercise to share it before adoption.

I believe that Thanet has a bright future and that the district council can play a leading role in delivering it. This plan is an essential tool to help us shape that.

## Background: Corporate Plan purpose

The Corporate Plan sets out the direction of travel for the council over the next four years by identifying the overarching priorities for the future of Thanet.

The plan is essential to help the council work towards achieving its longer-term vision for the district, ensuring resources across the council are focused on what matters most.

Having a clearly defined Corporate Plan provides a focus for the council to plan its work.

As well as setting out the higher level aspirations for the district, it should also outline how the council intends to deliver these priorities.

The new Corporate Plan will be used as the basis for the creation of Service Plans. These are the council's internal operational plans which will set out how the four year Corporate Plan will be delivered by each council service area.

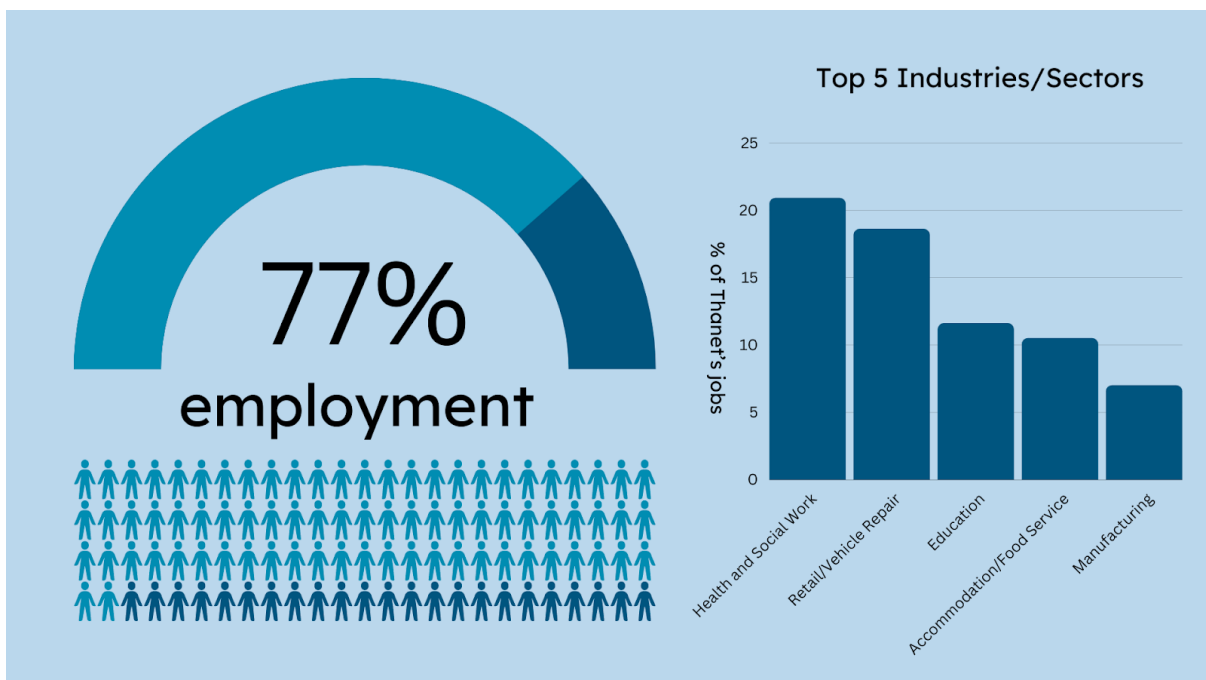
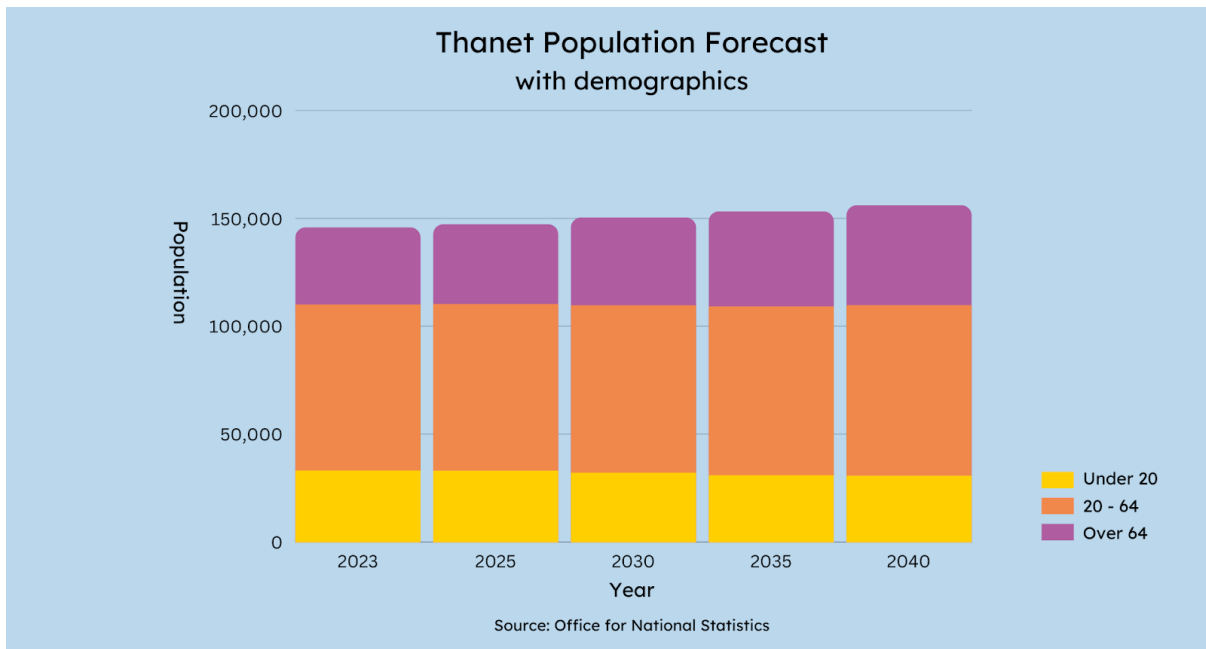
Annual staff appraisals will then be set based on the Service Plans and wider Corporate Plan to ensure that all members of staff are clear of the important role they provide in helping the council to achieve its aims.

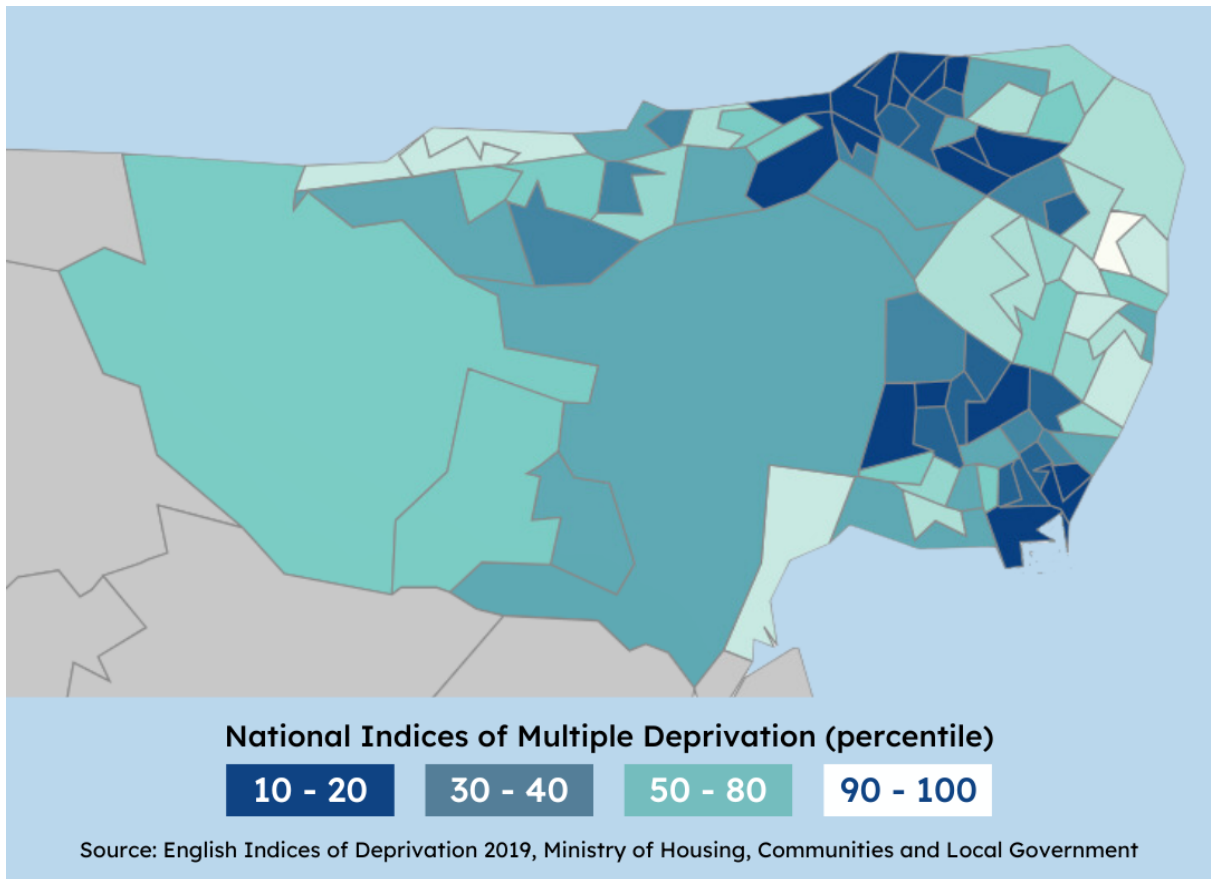
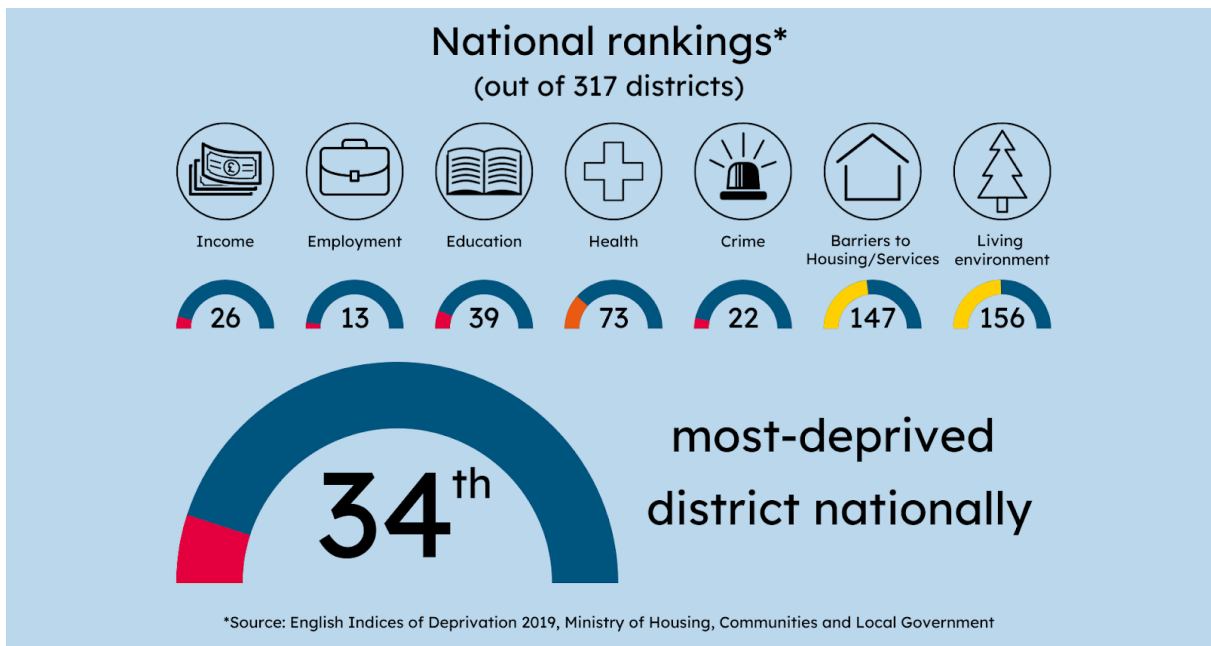
The Corporate Plan is a way of ensuring that the community and our stakeholders are aware of the key work the council is delivering and through regular reporting of our performance, can have an oversight of the progress that we're making.

# Where we are today: Key demographics and resident feedback

In order to create priorities which reflect what is most needed for the district, it's important that we understand the current makeup of the district and the challenges and opportunities we face.

This section intends to provide a high level overview of some of the key distinct demographics and feedback on residents' priorities which have been captured within our Annual Residents' Survey.





More detailed demographic data can be found on the nomis official census and labour market statistics website.

The Corporate Plan should consider the views of the local community. Our residents provide consistent feedback when it comes to their priorities for the council.

Each year as part of the annual residents' survey, clean streets, feeling safe and thriving towns are the areas residents most consistently prioritise.

Responses to the previous four Annual Residents' Surveys:

### Three most important things in making Thanet a good place to live

Rank	2022	2021	2020	2019
1	Feeling safe: 51%	Feeling safe: 43%	Feeling safe: 41%	Feeling safe: 52%
2	Clean streets: 39%	Thriving towns: 40%	Quality of beaches: 37%	Clean streets: 39%
3	Thriving towns: 37%	Quality of beaches: 38%	Thriving towns 36%	Thriving towns 37%

### Three things which most need improving

Rank	2022	2021	2020	2019
1	Clean streets: 54%	Clean streets: 50%	Clean streets: 53%	Clean streets: 55%
2	Thriving towns: 40%	Thriving towns: 34%	Thriving towns: 43%	Thriving towns: 41%
3	Feeling safe: 32%	Affordable decent housing: 32%	Feeling safe: 26%	Feeling safe: 38%

### The three words which best describe how you would like Thanet District Council to be in the future

Rank	2022	2021	2020	2019
1	Efficient: 40%	Efficient: 40%	Efficient: 39%	Efficient: 42%
2	Trusted: 35%	Trusted: 31%	Trusted: 30% Responsive: 30%	Transparent: 29%
3	Listening: 28% Responsive: 28%	Transparent: 27% Responsive: 27%	Transparent: 27%	Trusted: 28% Responsive: 28%

Being efficient is consistently the top thing expected from us as a council and listening to the concerns of local residents is consistently the area where there is least confidence. Our new corporate priorities will seek to focus on these areas.

The responses to our most recent Annual Residents' Surveys can be found on our website.

## Our ten year vision statement

Thanet: A vibrant coastal resort where communities, businesses and residents thrive, supported by a listening and efficient council. Prosperity is increasing for all, protecting the environment is a common goal and there is pride in our beautiful place.

## Our corporate priorities

The following corporate priorities set out the things that the council will focus on over the next four years to get us closer to achieving our vision for Thanet.

**Priority one:** To keep our district safe and clean

**Priority two:** To deliver the housing we need

**Priority three:** To protect our environment

**Priority four:** To create a thriving place

**Priority five:** To work efficiently for you

These five priorities are of equal importance and are not ranked in order of priority.

### **Priority one: To keep our district safe and clean**

Having safe and clean neighbourhoods remains a priority for our residents. We will continue to focus on the services we provide which help to create a clean and welcoming environment in the district. We will be clear about what we will deliver and will call upon the community to support our endeavours through feedback, as well as education and enforcement when this is needed. We will work within communities and with local groups and organisations, including the police, to improve the perception and reality of public safety.

We will do this by:

- Delivering an efficient street cleansing service which adapts to the local environment and uses modern vehicles, equipment and technology.
- Increasing the rate of recycling across the district by making it easier to recycle, via residential collections and public bins.
- Tackling anti-social behaviour, graffiti and fly tipping through education, enforcement and timely clearance.
- Developing closer working relationships between the council, partner agencies and the community, building trust and shared responsibility for public safety. Through the Community Safety Partnership we will develop a multi-faceted approach to crime prevention.

Examples of the projects we will deliver to achieve this:

- A programme of replacing and upgrading waste bins across the district.



- Extending our Recycling Pilot at Trove Court and Kennedy House in Ramsgate to other areas in the district.
- Introducing improved arrangements and new opportunities for residents to recycle their waste both domestically and in public spaces to improve the overall rate of recycling across the district.
- Improving our street cleaning service through investment in mechanical sweepers, working rota improvements and an increase in the number of street cleansing operatives to enhance the focus on residential neighbourhoods
- Employing additional staff to enable an increased focus on the removal of graffiti.
- Review our bulky waste service to make it more accessible to all residents.

### **Priority two: To deliver the housing we need**

We will deliver high quality housing and prioritise the creation of additional council homes that are both accessible and affordable for local people. We will build our reach and reputation as a social landlord, and provide new homes in sustainable locations with services to support residents. We will expand in-house temporary accommodation to stop out-of-area homelessness placements and do all we can to prevent homelessness and reduce rough sleeping.

We will do this by:

- Providing high quality council homes that are safe, well maintained and energy efficient.
- Delivering at least 400 new council homes by 2027.
- Increasing the supply of local temporary and emergency housing.
- Supporting homeowners, landlords and private sector tenants to improve the quality and energy efficiency of homes in the private sector.
- Providing a responsive housing and homelessness service that supports vulnerable people and families to find the home they need.

Examples of the projects we will deliver to achieve this:

- Building new council homes on land we own or acquire, for example at Highfield Road, Ramsgate and at the site of the former Dane Valley Arms in Margate.
- Working with local house builders to ensure we deliver our ambitious 400 homes target over 4 years.
- Developing new council owned temporary accommodation in the district, following the successful completion of Foy House in Margate, providing at least 3 additional projects.
- Supporting 150 single people, who are rough sleeping in the district, into suitable accommodation, through our award winning RISE service, over 4 years.
- Completing a review of the council's Housing Assistance Policy and arrangements for the Household Support Fund to offer more flexible grants, loans and other financial support to households on low incomes to help with their housing and utility costs and with essential repairs and adaptations. We will invest at least £3m each year in Housing Assistance.
- Introducing new selective licensing designations in Margate and Ramsgate, providing additional protection to households living in the private rented sector.

### **Priority three: To protect our environment**

We will deliver on our commitment to reach net zero by 2030, including retrofitting council-owned buildings to save energy, introducing more vehicle charging points, electric-only council vehicles and promoting active travel. We will do more to make tackling climate change an achievable goal for all and will lead by example. Increasing opportunities for biodiversity will be a priority wherever possible and we will maintain our parks and spaces to a standard for all to enjoy.

We will do this by:

- Investing in the decarbonisation of the council's housing stock.
- Reducing the carbon emissions from the council's buildings and operations.
- Delivering housing developments which incorporate Net Zero initiatives.
- Using our local planning powers to plan for a greener future,
- Supporting local residents and businesses to be more environmentally friendly through regular awareness campaigns and signposting to grant schemes.

Examples of the projects we will deliver to achieve this:

- Completing the refurbishment of five council owned Tower Blocks, upgrading their energy efficiency, fire safety and appearance.
- Focusing on improving home insulation and reducing fuel use for our tenants and leaseholders.
- Providing energy advice and grant funding to help homeowners and private sector tenants to improve the energy efficiency of their home and reduce their fuel costs.
- Improving the biodiversity of our district through the use of our planning powers.
- Delivering a programme of replacing council vehicles with zero emissions vehicles.
- Improving the energy efficiency and reducing the carbon footprint of the council's offices and commercial buildings.
- Delivering new council rented homes that are Energy Performance Certificate rating 'B' or better.

### **Priority four: To create a thriving place**

We will strengthen the local economy and do what we can to enable the whole community to take more pride in living here. We will continue to deliver our multi-million pound regeneration schemes (Future High Street Fund, Levelling Up Fund, and Town Deal) including reviving the Port of Ramsgate. We will build closer links with local businesses, actively supporting Thanet's important tourism and cultural sectors. We will ensure our estate is managed effectively and work hard to improve the appearance of our towns, villages, residential neighbourhoods and coastline.

We will do this by:

- Delivering an ambitious programme of regeneration projects across the district focused on improving public realm and significant heritage buildings, creating employment and opportunity and supporting a vibrant local economy.
- Developing an Economic Growth Strategy for Thanet with a focus on supporting the growth of specific sectors and a thriving district.
- Utilising the UK Shared Prosperity Fund programme to support our Community, Voluntary and Social Enterprise Sector and building their capacity.
- Planning for a greener, more prosperous and equitable future that meets the needs of residents and businesses.
- Continuing to work with our partners to address the health inequalities in the district.

Examples of the projects we will deliver to achieve this:

- Upgrading the infrastructure at the Port of Ramsgate and securing a new operating partner to run the port, creating new job opportunities and a sustainable port for the future.
- Securing the reopening of the Margate Winter Gardens and Theatre Royal.
- Refurbishing the Clock House at Ramsgate Harbour, protecting this important historical building for the benefit of the community and the local economy.
- Creating 56 new jobs through the delivery of the council's regeneration programmes by 2028, with a further 200 jobs secured for the future through these programmes.
- Refurbishing and reopening public toilets across the district.
- Completing the review of our Local Plan for Thanet setting out a strategy for the delivery of the homes, jobs and infrastructure that the community of Thanet needs.

### **Priority five: To work efficiently for you**

We will be an efficient and effective council with a focus on continuous improvement. Being open, transparent and responsive will be our default and we will strengthen our partnerships with town and parish councils. We will be clear about how our services are performing and provide more opportunities for you to help shape the way we work. We will continue to transform and improve the way we deliver services online, streamlining the way our services are accessed. We will ensure that our digital ambition is inclusive.

We will do this by:

- Developing and implementing a refreshed organisation business plan and values.
- Refreshing our corporate performance indicators and increasing transparency around performance management so that residents can more easily track progress.
- Creating and publishing corporate standards to improve engaging with the council.
- Continuing to safeguard council taxpayers money and spend it wisely, by having robust, resilient and sustainable financial management.

Examples of the projects we will deliver to achieve this:

- Consulting with residents about the council's priorities and spending plans each year.
- Regularly publishing financial and non-financial performance information, showing what the council is doing well and what needs to be improved.
- Reviewing Councillor representation across the district, in partnership with the Local Government Boundary Commission for England.
- Working with our customers to create and publish clear service standards for the council.
- Creating a new Margate Town Council and improving the arrangements for working with town and parish councils.

## Measuring success

Regular reporting of progress against our priorities will be crucial.

The council will refresh its corporate performance indicators to reflect the new priorities.

Corporate performance data will be published on the council's website and will be reported formally to the Overview and Scrutiny Panel and to Cabinet on a six monthly basis.

There will be a more detailed mid-term review undertaken after two years to monitor progress with the whole plan.

New Service Plans will be created. These are the operational plans which will set out how the four year Corporate Plan will be delivered by each council service area.

Annual staff appraisals will then be set based on the Service Plans and wider Corporate Plan to ensure that all members of staff are clear of the important role they provide in helping the council to achieve its aims.