

**CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S PLAY STRATEGY  
2007 - 2010**

**1. INTRODUCTION**

**1.1 Purpose**

This document sets out the Draft Children and Young People's Play Strategy for Thanet. Its purpose is to establish a strategic framework and direction for the next three years for all matters relating to play for children and young people. It sits within the wider context of matters relating to children and young nationally and regionally. It is intended to be responsive at a local level to the key policies at a county level.

This document is intended to achieve the following:

- To acknowledge the importance of play for children and young people both for themselves and for communities in general;
- To ensure that children play is recognised and embedded in the work of all agencies and is embedded within key strategic plans and initiatives of all relevant agencies;
- To identify the work of all agencies involved in providing play opportunities for children and young people to assist in developing a co-ordinated approach, identifying gaps in provision and reducing duplication;
- To make effective use of funding, including but not limited to that available through the Children's Play initiative;
- To ensure that sustainability is built into children's play provision in the longer term;
- To improve children's access to safe places to play and socialise;
- To provide more and better local and inclusive play opportunities where they are most needed, evidence by the results of audits and community engagement;
- To improve public open spaces as an environment for play;
- To use the strategy to develop a portfolio of children's play projects to support a funding application to the Big Lottery Fund under the Children's Play Initiative;

The strategy has been developed and agreed by the Thanet Children's Play Partnership and has been informed by discussion with a range of key partners and a range of consultation involving the general community, children and young people. The organisations invited to the Thanet Play Partnership are detailed in Appendix A. Consultation approaches, findings and outcomes can be found in section 5.

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### 1.2 The Approach

In order to develop this Children and Young People's Play Strategy a range of organisations and agencies involved in providing for children and young people were invited to join the Thanet Play Partnership. The Partnership comprised representatives from the public, voluntary and community sectors and a not-for-profit organisation. Members were invited to represent their organisation, share and contribute their expertise and agree the scope, vision and priorities for action. Terms of reference for the Partnership were agreed.

Thanet District Council through the Portfolio Holders facilitated the Play Partnership for Housing and Community and Commercial Services and the Senior Leisure Officer.

### 1.3 Scope

The Strategy has encompassed four stages of development:

1. An audit of the opportunities for Children and Young People's play that are provided within the Thanet District Council area providing a benchmark standard of provision in terms of quality, quantity and accessibility, and the identification of gaps thereby ensuring that new initiatives and projects delivered as a result of this strategy fill a strategic need.
2. A review of consultation involving key partners, the wider community and children and young people to ensure that the views are reflected in this strategy and in subsequent action plans;
3. The production of Key Policy Statement, with a supporting Action Plan, including a set out outcomes and outputs with defined timescales for delivery, against which the delivery of the Play Strategy can be reviewed, monitored and evaluated.
4. The establishment of the Thanet Play Partnership with representatives from the public, private and community / voluntary sectors who will direct and steer the development and delivery of the Play Strategy over its lifetime.

The Strategy recognises the role of the public, private and voluntary / community sectors in providing play opportunities for children and young people. However its focus is in ensuring a cohesive approach to free, accessible opportunities for children and young people to engage in play.

It is recognised that play can take place almost anywhere. This strategy focuses on the provision of designated play areas, play

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provision and open spaces for use by children and young people within the 0 – 18 age group. This Children and Young People's Play Strategy applies to all children and young people under the age of 18. References made to either 'children', 'young people' or to 'children and young people' should be taken to include this full age range.

Children and young people's play opportunities within this scope must conform to the '3 free's', namely they must be free of charge, children and young people must be free to come and go and the activities must be freely chosen by the children and young people.

Formal sports provision, whether targeted towards children and young people or not, is considered to be outside the scope of this strategy; it is dealt with in the developing Thanet Sport and Active Recreation Strategy.

In developing the Children and Young People's Play Strategy the Partnership is mindful of the limited resources (people and revenue and capital funding) that are currently available to Thanet District Council and its partners, a situation that is unlikely to improve in the near future.

### 1.4 What is Play?

Different people have different definitions of play. For young children play can involve cognitive, imaginative, creative, emotional and social aspects which all contribute to a child's learning and development. Play is the means by which children express their impulse to explore, experiment and understand. Children of all ages play. Some children however may need support to play and their needs must be taken into account. Part of the Action Plan specifically addresses this key issue. Older children and young people are not likely to describe what they do as play. For them they need space, time and freedom to do what they want. This may involve positive activities, challenge and / or the enjoyment of reaction provision where this is appropriate. For all age's groups however play is what children and young people do when they follow their own ideas, in their own way and for their own reasons.

The Children's Play Council states that the following definition of play is widely accepted within the playwork sector: "Play is freely chosen, personally directed, intrinsically motivated behaviour that actively engages the child... Play can be fun or serious. Through play children explore social, material and imaginary worlds and their relationship with them, elaborating all the while a flexible range of responses to the challenges they encounter. By playing, children learn and develop as individuals and as members of the community" (*From Best Play – what play provision should do for children NPFA / PLAYLINK / Children's Play Council (2001)*).

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The Thanet Play Partnership therefore supports this definition. The Partnership also concluded that its understanding of Children's Play was of activity that was freely chosen, freely directed, free to access and most of all fun.

Play provision can also mean different things to different people. For the purpose of the Children and Young People's Play strategy play provision is considered to be a space, facilities or equipment or a set of activities intended to give children and young people the opportunity to engage in play, as defined above.

Play provision may include play areas or playgrounds, usually unstaffed. Other provision may be staffed by adults offering guidance and supervision including adventure playgrounds, holiday play schemes, parent and toddler groups and mobile play projects or play buses, some of which may be open access. Other provision includes stake parks, BMX tracks, basketball courts, multi-use games areas (MUGAS) and teen or youth shelters. Formal childcare may offer opportunities for play, however this is considered to be beyond the scope of this strategy. School facilities also include space for play, although not all are freely accessible to children and young people outside of school hours.

Play is different from organised sports, groups, clubs and classes, which are clearly defined by external rules and definitions, and usually controlled by adults.

### 1.5 Types of Play

There are many types of play and these may include the following:

- *Exploratory Play* which can be handling, throwing, banging or mouthing objectives eg stacking bricks;
- *Fantasy Play* is play that rearranges the world from the child's perspective in a way that is unlikely to occur eg to pretend at being a racing driver or a pop star;
- *Imaginative Play* where conventional rules do not apply eg imagining you are an object, eg a tree or a ship
- *Locomotor Play* where movement is applied eg chase, tag, hide and seek etc
- *Mastery Play* which uses the physical ingredients of our natural environment eg digging holes, altering the course of streams, building dams, constructing shelters, building fires etc
- *Object Play* uses an infinite and interesting sequence of hand-eye manipulations and movements which could be examining and use of any object eg cup, cloth, paintbrush etc
- *Role Play* explores ways of being for example brushing with a broom, using a telephone or driving a car.

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Play is therefore not simply about playgrounds at the local park or open space. It can and does take place anywhere.

### 1.6 **Our Vision for Play in Thanet**

To provide a range of quality, inclusive and accessible play opportunities for every child and young person in Thanet which are available throughout the year and which are informed by the views of children and young people.

To deliver our vision the Thanet Play Partnership will work in partnership with all relevant agencies and communities to ensure play opportunities provided are realistic, deliverable and sustainable.

### 1.7 **Mission Statement**

Every child and young person has a right to engage in play and to have access to appropriate play provision. The play needs of children and young people will be identified through consultation with children, young people and their communities and agencies, met by working in partnership with public agencies, voluntary and private organisations and local communities and at all times directly contributing to the 5 outcomes of the Children Act (2004).

## 2 **MAKING A CASE FOR PLAY**

### 2.1 **Value and Significance of play for children and young people**

Numerous benefits derive from the act of play, some of which may include:

- Play is enjoyable;
- Play promotes children and young people's development, learning, creativity, independence, self esteem, knowledge and understanding;
- Play keeps children and young people healthy and active, and active children become active adults;
- Play fosters social inclusion and helps children and young people understand the people and places in their lives and also to learn about their environment and develop their sense of community involvement;
- Play is therapeutic and helps children and young people to deal with difficult and/ or painful circumstances such as emotional stress or medical treatment;
- Play gives children and young people the chance to let off steam and have fun;
- Play offers the chance for children and young people to test their boundaries;

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- Play also helps to reduce their involvement of children and young people in antisocial behaviour and also plays a part in community cohesion.

Children and young people's opportunities for play are becoming increasingly limited by factors outside of their control:

<b>Restrictions children and young people face</b>	<b>What we intend to do</b>
Restrictions over their freedom to choose how and when they play, especially in their opportunities to play without adult supervision;	Increase the range of options for play, ensure safe play opportunities, provide supervised play opportunities;
Restrictions by a lack of access to good quality, safe play opportunities;	Increase the number of play spaces. Work towards Thanet's PPPG17 play standard, providing quality, accessible play spaces;
A lack of suitable play environments for children and young people with disabilities;	See Action Plan Children and Young People sub-group to engage with children and young people with disabilities to develop further plans and priorities.
Society's perceptions of the risks and levels of safety attached to children's play;	Communications sub-group to develop a series of information publications for parents eg Children and Young People Factsheets;
The dominance of the car in residential roads making them potentially unsafe;	Localised provision;
Lack of tolerance for children and young people playing or 'hanging around';	Communications sub-group to address. Localised provision, increased opportunities for engagement in play activities to reduce 'hanging around'. Provision of dedicated 'hanging around' spaces;
Pressures on young people having to study to meet academic targets;	Increased flexible opportunities. Children and young people sub group ensures responsive to need;
Lack of free opportunities;	Increased free opportunities;

### 2.2 Contribution Play makes to wider agendas

Play is a fundamental part of childhood. It is so closely related to all aspects of a child's development that it cannot be viewed in isolation. It is inextricably linked to, and underpins, many key agendas and delivers on several different levels.

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**Health and Wellbeing:** Play is crucial to health and development throughout childhood, contributing to social, physical, intellectual, cultural, emotional and psychological development. The physical activity involved in energetic children's play provides children and young people with a significant amount of their regular exercise. School aged children and young people get as much exercise in free play as they do from more structured activities.

Good play opportunities promotes good social, mental and emotional health, giving children and young people the opportunity to try out and experience as range of emotions eg excitement, fear, in a 'safe' way. It allows them to learn and develop emotionally by promoting resilience and fostering self-esteem.

Halting the rising childhood obesity levels (from 9.6% in 1995 to 13.7% in 2003) has been at the forefront of Government activity since 2004, with the introduction of a PSA target for reducing childhood obesity levels in children between the ages of 5 – 10. Whilst school sport and children's nutrition is seen as the major factors to tackle increasing generally physical activity levels through play also has a part to play.

The recommended levels of physical activity for children and young people are 60 minutes per day of at least moderate – intense physical activity. There is increased evidence to suggest that increased opportunity for free play is the most effective way for ensuring this for children and young people and that a range of increasing health problems are associated with the decline in play opportunities.

The Government White Paper Choosing Health (2004) noted that 'many children appear to have less time being physically active because of the increase in car use and heightened concern about the potential risks of unsupervised play outdoors.'

There is also evidence to suggest that there is a rise in mental illness amongst children and young people, with the Mental Health Foundation suggesting that at any one time 20% of children are experiencing psychological problems. Their report, Bright futures, states that opportunities for risk-taking in unsupervised play helps children build self-confidence and resilience, key protective factors for mental health.

**Education (Informal Learning) and Intellectual Development:** Through play children learn numeracy, literacy and motor skills through non-formal means.

**Safer Communities / Crime Reduction:** Improve diversionary youth activity to prevent crime.

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**Liveability (Cleaner, Safer, Greener):** improved quality of play spaces.

**Every Child Matters and Children's Trusts:** play is intrinsic to and delivers against the 5 key outcomes: Being Healthy, Staying Safe, Enjoying and Achieving, Making a positive contribution and Achieving economic well-being.

**Community Regeneration and Engagement:** through consultation with communities, including children and young people.

**Social Inclusion:** parental responsibilities, playing together.

**Child Poverty:** contribution to a child's quality of life, personal and social development and learning experiences.

**Lifelong Learning:** training for play workers / volunteers, parental roles and responsibilities, education by health visitors and midwives, accreditation and qualifications.

**Cultural Strategies, including Sports and Arts Strategies:** close links to sports activities and opportunities and creative activities and opportunities.

### 3. CONTEXT – SETTING THE SCENE

#### 3.1 Play in national, regional and local contexts

The role of play and its importance to individuals, families and communities is reflected within a number of national, regional and local policies.

#### **United Nations (UN) Convention on the Rights of the Child (Article 31)**

The Thanet Play Strategy reflects the UN Convention for the Rights of the Child, Article 31, which states that:

- Parties recognise the right of the child to rest and leisure, to engage in play and recreational activities appropriate to the age of the child and to participate freely in cultural life and arts;
- Parties shall respect and promote the right of the child to participate fully in cultural and artistic life and shall encourage the provision of appropriate and equal opportunities for artistic, recreation and leisure activities.

It is also accepted that Articles 2,3,12,13 and 15 are also relevant.

#### **The National Context for Play**

In 2002 the Department for Culture Media and Sport (DCMS) commissioned a research programme into Children's Play by the

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Children's Play Council. The report highlighted a lack of strategic direction and a long-term decline in investment for the provision of children's play. The report also identified the adverse consequences of this approach in terms of the physical, emotional and social health of children and young people. The key recommendations arising from the report was that there should be a National Children's Plays Strategy for England to guide and support local authorities, voluntary organisations, community groups and other local agencies in providing a comprehensive range of free, inclusive spaces and opportunities for children's play.

### **Getting Serious About Play**

In 2004 the report of the National Play Review, "Getting Serious About Play" (DCMS, 2004), chaired by Frank Dobson MP recommended that a targeted strategic lottery programme for play provision should seek to create thousands of free, inclusive play spaces based on needs and wishes of local children and young people. It recommended that the investment should be long-term, sustainable and strategic, with local authorities being given the responsibility for co-ordinating places with local partners. In January 2005 the government accepted this review and its recommendation and announced that a cross-department strategic agenda for play would be established. In March 2005 the Big Lottery Fund announced a £155 million fund to be based on the Dobson recommendation with particular emphasis on strategic development.

### **Enjoy and Achieve**

The Minister for Children stated that play will receive a greater attention within the Every Child Matters inspection framework, as a key aspect of the 'Enjoy and achieve' outcomes of the change for children's programme.

### **Choosing Health Physical Activity Action Plan (Department of Health DH)**

More access to active, outdoor play opportunities has also been identified as a key to combating childhood obesity making the play agenda a serious issue for all Council's Children's Services, Local Strategic Partnerships and Children and Young People's Partnerships.

### **Cross-departmental national strategy**

The Children's Play Council and the Children's Play Policy Forum recommend a cross-departmental national strategy for play that engages with the Every Child Matters (see below), Choosing Health and Cleaner, Safer, Greener agendas and with other initiatives within the area of community regeneration in order to establish a cohesive programme of long-term investment.

### **Every Child Matters (2004)**

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Every Child Matters outlines 5 key outcomes for Children and Young People: Being healthy, staying safe, enjoying and achieving, making a positive contribution and enjoying economic well being. In the context of play these outcomes are defined as:

**Being Healthy:** The opportunity for active play, whether playing freely outdoors, using play equipment or playing ball games etc can help children and young people become more active, thus helping to reduce the incidence of childhood obesity and health problems in later life. Such play can also develop essential skills such as teamwork and co-ordination and help in interacting with other Children and Young People, developing self esteem, making friends and peer support. Skills developed through play also help to underpin subsequent participation in sport and other games.

**Staying Safe:** Play is fundamental element in Children and Young People learning to appreciate, assess and take calculated risks, essential to the development of confidence and abilities in childhood. Children and Young People can become more self-reliant through play and can be better placed to look after themselves and others and learn to make judgements about safe places to place as those that pose a greater degree of risk.

**Enjoying and Achieving:** Learning through play contributes to problem solving, language and literacy skills. Play provides opportunities to test boundaries with peers and parents. Children and Young People develop self esteem and positive outlooks on life through the enjoyment of play. Children and Young People should be allowed to play and enjoy themselves for its own sake.

**Making a Positive Contribution:** Play empowers Children and Young People and enables them to learn social skills that help them to participate in decision making in other settings.

**Achieving Economic Well Being:** Not directly linked to Children and Young People themselves but the increasing demand for qualified, trained play workers provides employment opportunities for many adults.

### **Youth Matters and the Next Steps (2005/06)**

A Government Green Paper which led to a wide ranging consultation that had over 19,000 responses from children and young people and over 5,000 responses from groups led to a follow up document 'Youth Matters the Next steps', published in March 2006 and set out a vision to transform the lives of every young person through a radical reshaping of provision.

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The main theme and proposals centres around the engagement of young people in shaping local services. One of the key outcomes was the introduction of the Youth Opportunity Fund (YOF) and the Youth Capital Fund (YCF). For Kent this has meant of funding allocation over the 2006 – 2009 period, of £1.2m for the Youth Capital Fund and £1.4 million for Youth Opportunity Fund.

### 3.2 Regional Context for Children's Play

Currently there is no lobbying or co-ordinating agency that can offer support on funding and advocacy at regional levels with the responsibility for Children's Play, as there is for sport (Sport England South East Region). Play is not considered in this context as a standalone discipline nor does it feature within any of the key regional documents (SEEDA Business Plan), Regional Economic Strategy etc). The Lottery-funded Play England initiative has regional representation and with a 5 year funding proposed to promote best practice and development in Play across England, it is likely that this gap will soon be filled.

### 3.3 County Context for Children's Play

#### Vision for Kent 2006

The Kent County Council Vision for Kent has the following key themes:

- Economic Success
- Learning for everyone
- Improved health, care and well being
- Environmental excellence
- Stronger and safer communities
- Enjoying life

The Children and Young People's Play Strategy contributes towards this vision for Kent by identifying opportunities for young people to learn new skills, improve their health and enjoy life.

#### Kent Children and Young People's Plan 2006 – 2009

'Positive About Our Future' outlines the following vision for children and young people of Kent: In Kent's successful communities, achievement exceeds aspiration, diversity is valued and every child and family is supported. Children and young people are positive about their future and are at the heart of joined up service planning. They are:

- Nurtured and encouraged at home;
- Inspired and motivated at school;
- Safe and secure in the community;
- Living healthy and fulfilled lives;

Specifically the following priorities are of relevance to the Children and Young People' Play Strategy:

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**Staying Safe – Priority 9** – Ensuring that children and young people are safe and feel safe in the communities where they live, go to school, play, work and travel.

**Key Actions:** (46) – to be developed locally to reflect priorities of Crime and Disorder Partnership Strategies and District Councils, likely to include safe and accessible play, recreation, transport, road safety and implementation of Kent's anti-bullying strategy.

### **Enjoying and Achieving – Issues identified**

Top 3 priority for 2005 Children's conference.

Identified:

- more after school clubs and general clubs such as football, music and social clubs;
- more teachers and more school play equipment
- more safe opportunities to play.

### **Making a positive contribution – Issues identified**

Many children and young people would welcome more social and sports activities, both in and out of school – usually identified as skateboarding and BMX.

### **Priority 15 (LAA7)**

Improve participation and engagement by all children and young people and their families in youth, cultural and community activity.

#### **Key Actions –**

**(74)** Develop Youth Matters including the development and implementation of District Youth Strategies and ensure effective engagement of young people in design and delivery of 'youth offers' and distribution of youth opportunities and capital fund.

**(75)** Develop and implement District Play Strategies to provide opportunities for all ages to participate in safe recreational activities, out of school clubs and holiday play schemes.

### **Kent Local Area Agreement**

Within the 4 themes and 18 outcomes of the Kent Local Area Agreement (Children and Young People, safer and Stronger Communities, Healthier Communities and Older People and Economic Development) the Children and Young People's Play Strategy will contribute towards the following outcomes:

- Improve participation and engagement by all children and young people in youth, cultural and community activities;
- To promote and improve the health of Kent's residents and improve health inequalities by addressing variations in health across the county.

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### 3.4 Local Context for Children's Play

In order to ensure the viability and long-term sustainability of the Play Strategy the links to key local strategies are critical. If the Strategy does not reflect the priorities and help to deliver against actions outlined in the Thanet Community Strategy or the Corporate Plan (produced by Thanet District Council) then it will be impossible to achieve.

#### Thanet's Community Strategy

Thanet's Community Strategy is produced by the Local Strategic Partnership, formed in 2003. The Thanet Community Strategy, produced in 2004, has an overall vision as follows:

- A prosperous, secure and welcoming community.
- A safe, attractive place to live and work.
- Realising Thanet's potential.

The Community Strategy is based on 6 themes: The Economy, Lifelong Learning, A Safer Community, The Environment and Housing, An Inclusive Community and Health and Lifestyle.

A number of actions are relevant to the Children and Young People's Play Strategy as follows:

**A Safer Community –** Criminal Damage – Support youth diversionary activities (short term target)

Assaults in Public Places – Support youth diversionary activities (short term target) and Creation of additional youth facilities in Thanet (medium term target)

**Health and Lifestyle -** Children and Young People– Support the work of the Youth and Community Services to engage with hard to reach people (short term target)

Sport and Leisure – Decrease childhood obesity (long term target)

The Thanet Community Strategy is being reviewed with effect from 2008. The Action Plan of this Strategy provides the mechanism to ensure that this Play Strategy will become embedded in the revised Community Strategy.

#### Thanet District Council Corporate Plan

The Corporate Plan (2003 – 2007) sets out the Council's vision for Thanet along with its plans and priorities for delivering local services.

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The Children and Young People's Play Strategy has synergy with the Corporate Plan in the following:

- Increase active recreation within the population by 5%;
- Identify suitable coastal facilities for use by the voluntary / commercial sectors which will improve the leisure offering;
- Implement the outcomes of the findings of the best value review of Leisure and Cultural Services with specific reference to the provision of services and activities for young people to improve service provision;

### **Thanet's Community Safety Partnership Strategy (2005 – 2008)**

The four themes of the Thanet Community Safety Partnership are reducing crime, feeling safe and being safe, tackling anti-social behaviour and addressing substance misuse. The Partnership itself has been reviewed. An Engaging Youth Group with a link to the Thanet Youth Council will ensure that youth work is targeted at the right areas to avoid duplication. These themes have been translated into a number of specific actions. This Children and Young People's Play Strategy strongly supports the achievement of a number of these actions as follows:

- Production of a Youth Strategy and Youth Policy for Thanet, by linking with all agencies including Youth Action Groups and Thanet Children's and Young People's Consortia;
- Protecting the safety of young people;
- Developing outreach services to work with hard to reach groups;
- Encouraging and promoting positive images of young people;
- Ensuring that there is a diversity of activities accessible for all young people;
- Developing mechanisms for information sharing concerning youth issues.

### **3.5 Profile of the Thanet area**

Thanet is located on the north-east coast of Kent and covers an area of approximately 103 square kilometres. It is made up of a number of small towns with Margate, Ramsgate and Broadstairs being the major towns. It also has a large rural hinterland encompassing a number of villages..

#### **Demographics**

Its population is estimated to be 127,900 (Office of National Statistics, 2004), with the largest proportion of residents being between the ages of 55 – 59, with a higher number of people over the age of 65 than the national average. Black and minority ethnic communities make up less than 5% of the population.

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Its population of children and young people, in common with the trend nationally, is falling.

Thanet has a population of children and young people from the ages of 0 – 18 of 30,276.

### **Deprivation**

The area faces considerable socio-economic disadvantages. Average earnings are below the national and regional averages with Thanet having the lowest gross weekly pay of all the district council areas of Kent. Employment rates of 69% are below the national average of 75% and are lower than the south east and county averages. GCSE results are poor with 46% of schools in the area achieving 5+ A\* - C grades compared with a regional result of 55% in 2004.

The under achievement of educational results is coupled with relatively high levels of deprivation. Thanet has high levels of deprivation compared with all local councils as approximately 24% of the population live in the most deprived areas in the country. Overall the district ranks at 85 out of the 354 council areas nationally for deprivation (ODPM indices of deprivation 2004). These levels of deprivation also impact on the general health of residents with fewer than the national average reporting them in good health during the 2001 Census.

These statistics are reflected in severe pockets of deprivation as evidenced by the Indices of Multiple Deprivation (2004).

Taking levels of deprivation and the density of children and young people together it is apparent that deprivation and higher densities of children are concentrated in a number of wards, namely Central Harbour, Cliftonville West, Dane Valley, Eastcliff, Garlinge, Margate Central, Nethercourt, Newington, Northwood, Sir Moses Montefiore and Westgate-on-Sea. This defines where the priorities for children's play should be placed. This strategy seeks to recognise these areas of concern and address them through targeted work via the Strategy Action Plan and the portfolio of projects to be developed.

## **4 Current Provision for Play**

### **4.1 Local Authority Provision**

Thanet District Council has a discretionary responsibility as a local authority to provide and develop play opportunities for children and young people across the district. Currently play is referred to directly and indirectly within the Corporate Plan and the Community Strategy. Current direct service provision covers fixed play sites and facilities for young people. Indirectly, through grant contributions and partnership

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working it also provides summer play schemes. The Council is also involved in open space development and improvement.

The Council has no staff with a specific remit for children and young people's play. Responsibility is shared amongst a number of service areas, as follows:

**Commercial Services:** maintenance funding and safety checks of 33 fixed play area sites (shared with Thanet Leisureforce, the Council's operator), refurbishment of existing and provision of new play sites and youth facilities through partnership working and open spaces improvement and development. It is also the employing authority for an externally funded post targeting young engagement and young offenders via sports participation.

**Housing and Community Services:** provision of play areas for children and young people on Council owned housing estates, hosting of the Community Safety Partnership including the Engaging Youth Forum and Community Wardens;

**Development Services:** provision of new open spaces and recreation areas in new development, securing s106 contributions from developers for appropriate play and open space development;

**Environmental Services:** responsibilities for public health and enforcement eg dog fouling.

### **PPG17 Play Areas Audit**

Catchment mapping for fixed play sites has been undertaken as part of the Council's PPG17 study. The PPG 17 assessment considered provision for children and young people according to the following categories:

*Children's Play:* 3 categories:

- Local equipped areas for Play (LEAP),
- Neighbourhood Equipped areas for Play (NEAP) and
- 'unclassified' (where sites do not fit into either classification)

*Young People:* 3 categories:

- wheeled play facilities (skateboarding and BMX),
- ball courts, multi-use games areas (MUGA's) and
- teen shelters

The audit identified that there are 35 play areas within the district, 33 of which are owned by district / parish councils, 1 owned by the Ministry of Defence and 1 by a private developer. The findings suggested deficiencies in terms of both the quantity and quality of play area

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provision across the district, as well as a requirement of additional provision for specific activities.

The PPG17 study also considered other types of provision eg parks, recreation grounds and formal sports facilities which are also of relevance to this strategy as they also provide areas where children and young people frequently play.

### **4.2 Play Provision by Partners**

A large number of partnership agencies and groups from the public, private and voluntary / community sectors are involved in providing play opportunities across the district. Provision ranges from out of school clubs, playschemes, soft play, youth clubs, uniformed organisations, parent and toddler groups etc.

The Engaging Youth Partnership is currently undertaking work in connection with identifying a range of opportunities for children and young people throughout Thanet.

### **4.3 Analysis of provision relative to needs and population**

**PPG 17 Findings** - based on the defined catchment areas of 0.87km the map attached as Appendix B (Map 7c) clearly identify that there are a number of built up areas within Thanet which have no local play provision of their own. These areas will be prioritised within the Action Plan and the portfolio of projects to be developed..

### **4.4 Management arrangements**

The play areas considered by the PPG17 audit are almost without exception provided by Thanet District Council or the Parish Councils. Responsibilities for inspection fall to both Thanet District Council and Thanet Leisureforce. Maintenance funding is managed by Thanet District Council but carried out by Thanet Leisureforce.

## **5 REVIEW OF COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT and CONSULTATION**

### **5.1 Approach to Consultation**

Consultation forms a key part of any strategy and is fundamental to ensuring it is relevant to meet the needs of the community and to driving it forward. Done well, it provides evidence of need and also identifies what is already being done well, as well as areas for improvement and gaps in provision. Consultation can also raise the profile of the project or strategy and ensure that it features on the agendas of all relevant partners. Good community engagement is also crucial to the development of a successful strategy, to ensure the

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strategy itself and the resulting action plan meets the needs of all stakeholders and users and potential users and to ensure that all partners have a 'buy in'.

In terms of identifying consultees for the Play and Young Peoples' Strategy, the potential audience was split into two groups, each with their own set of needs, issues and idea.

Firstly there are the **Play Users**. These are defined as those who will be using the facilities / activities provided by the delivery of the Play and Young Peoples' Strategy. Essentially this the children and young people themselves, maybe their parents / guardians, within the Thanet area. Their input is vital, not least because the success or otherwise of this strategy is likely to be based on the views of children and young people of the facilities / opportunities provided and also in direct measurement of the number of children and young people using the facilities/ opportunities arising from the implementation of this strategy.

Secondly there are the **Play Providers**. In the Thanet area there are a wide range of partners delivering [play provision across the area. All of these partners need to be engaged in the development and delivery of the strategy. Many of these partners experience significant barriers in providing for play, which ultimately impacts on the quality, quantity and accessibility of play provision. They also have ideas for projects or initiatives which have come directly from their own consultation with users but which may require support in seeing them come to fruition. Many such partners are represented on the Thanet Play Partnership.

A variety of approaches were used as the basis for community engagement. Owing to the prevalence of community consultation already being undertaken by Thanet District Council and its partners in which the needs of specific areas, children and young people featured prominently, this was used as the basis for informing this strategy, supplemented as necessary where gaps were identified.

### 5.2 **Specific Consultation Undertaken and Findings and Conclusions**

#### 5.2.1 **Planning Policy Guidance 17 (PPG 17) Open Spaces Assessment**

A PPG17 assessment of open space and sport and recreation provision (including Children and Young People's play areas was undertaken in 2005-06, in accordance with the guidance. The audit considered quality, quantity and accessibility issues. A range of consultation methods to ascertain the views of the local community, key interest groups and wider stakeholders were used. These included:

- Postal surveys to 100 schools (with a 100% response rate after follow up)
- 30 stakeholder interviews;

## **Thanet Children and Young People's Play Strategy**

- All Parish Councils
- 500 door to door surveys (randomly selected)
- 145 sports clubs (100% response rate, after follow up);

### **5.2.2 Cliftonville West Renewal Area Consultation**

As part of major consultation for the above views were sought in relation to what was needed for the area. A large scale consultation event at Margate's Winter Gardens took place, with wide scale involvement of the local community, voluntary organisations and other interested parties.

### **5.2.3 Kent Children's Fund Consultation – Milmead Surestart Centre**

Consultation was undertaken by the Kent Children's Fund with the Thanet Youth (MMK) project targeting children and young people age 5 – 13 from the Milmead area on Cliftonville. A co-ordinator from KCF was supported by a participation worker from Participate by Right. 20 children and young people were consulted.

### **5.2.4 Participate by Right! (Kent Children's Fund Network) – Be Active Event**

Participate by Right! is a participation project led by Kent Children's Fund Network, which was asked by Thanet Consortium to lead on a consultation exercise with children and young people in Thanet. The 'Be Active' event brought together 98 disadvantaged and vulnerable children and young people between the ages of 5 - 13 from across Thanet in an event over two days. The aim of the event was to consult with the children and young people on the six priorities as identified by the Adult Thanet Consortium. The priorities were explored through workshops and captured the needs, views and experiences of the children and young people.

### **5.2.5 Thanet Coast Project**

As part of the Thanet Youth Council Citizenship Conference consultation was undertaken with children and young people in relation to what they currently do and what they would like to do using Thanet's natural assets of the coastal areas.

## **5.3 Findings and Conclusions**

### **5.3.1 PPG 17 Findings**

Attached as Appendices B, C and D are the graphical findings for the above Study. Map 7a identifies the location of formal play area and youth facilities, Map 7b identifies the location of formal play areas and youth facilities by quality and Map 7c identifies the accessibility of those facilities based on a travel distance of 0.78km. This travel distance has been arrived at based on the findings of the consultation undertaken to support the PPG17 study.

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The maps provide a clear indication of the distribution of the facilities throughout Thanet. The lack of quality facilities is also apparent. Specifically there are a number of locations that are not well served by accessible, local play provision, most notably within the wards of Westbrook, Cliftonville West, Cliftonville East, Viking, St Peter's, Salmestone, Central Harbour and Sir Moses Montefiore. This also closely correlates, although not exclusively, with wards with high density populations of children and young people and multiple deprivation.

### 5.3.2 **Cliftonville West Renewal Area Consultation**

There was overwhelming support for the need for more activities and facilities for children and young people. These included:

- Safe and secure play areas for 0 – 19 year olds
- Adventure Play area;
- Mini nature reserves;
- Places for teenagers, including alcohol-free bars and supervised well-lit places for teenagers to gather, without the threat of being moved on by the Police eg teenage shelters, seating areas;
- Free skate parks/ climbing wall;
- Football pitch;
- Winter ice skating rink;
- Indoor and recreational facility;
- 5-a-side football;
- Free facilities for teenagers;
- Music workshops.

The lack of facilities is noted elsewhere as well as the significant deprivation experienced in this area.

### 5.3.3 **Kent Children's Fund Consultation – Milmead Surestart Centre**

The suggestions from these children and young people ranged from: Parks - ... a place at parks like a wall – a graffiti wall with huts nearby, a Skatepark, tall climbing frame, a merry go round.

Art / Drama / Music – more places to go and play music, more art because I like drawing, more places to draw instead of at home, more MC fly shows.

Seaside – more play equipment: swings, slides and trampolines, more bins, play travel buses, more play things, less rubbish, no glass obstacles. Slides, more play things, more beach balls for when people come and play, no litter;

Youth clubs: more youth clubs because there aren't many;

### 5.3.4 **Participate by Right**

## Thanet Children and Young People's Play Strategy

The findings of relevance to this children and young people's play strategy included the following:

**Community Safety:** more parks and places to play, more clubs for children of different ages eg sport, summer clubs, art, after school, more safe places to meet people and make friends, better swimming pools.

**Play:** children and young people identified that they enjoy:  
Outdoor activities – active / sport eg football and cricket  
Creative activities – arts / crafts / making things  
Music and drama – singing / dancing / playing instruments  
Trampolines  
Being with friends and family, at home or in local parks particularly Ellington Park, Ramsgate  
School clubs – during and after school.

The children and young people were very clear about the things, which they felt are stopping them from accessing play opportunities:

- Distance from home
- Lack of confidence to try new things
- Access to sports with trained coaches
- Not enough sport for children of all ages
- Not knowing about things going on in their local area
- Money – not being able to pay for more expensive activities
- Safety – not able to do certain activities as perceived to be dangerous by parents
- Not able to access clubs they enjoy doing in school or out of school ie football and cricket

**Emotional wellbeing:** children and young people identified what things made them happy and unhappy in school, after school and in the holidays.

In terms of after school the responses included sport, spending time with family and friends and playing out, particularly parks and bikes. Bullying featured as an issue to and from school, particularly on school buses. During holiday periods things making children and young people happy included being with friends, summer clubs sports, going to the park. Things that made children and young people unhappy during the holidays included being bored with nothing to do and no places to play.

The children and young people were very clear that in order for them to feel happier there needed to be an increase in the number of clubs and sports available. They identified a wide and varied range of sports and clubs they would like the opportunity to take part in. The clubs

## Thanet Children and Young People's Play Strategy

included arts and craft, cookery, singing, dancing and games. The children and young people cited that they were currently unable to access clubs and sports which are available due to a lack of money or access to transport. They also identified that local parks needed to be improved and made safer for children and young people to play in.

When children and young people were asked which they felt was the most important workshop to them both age groups sited safety, happy and play as the most important workshops.

The clear themes that have emerged from this consultation of relevance to the Children and Young People's Play Strategy are:

**Clubs:** more of them with a bigger variety, easily accessible and sports with coaches;

**Bullying:** the need to address it in and out of school;

**Being listened to:** adults not listening to children and young people in and out of school;

**Local Parks:** improvements, more activities and safer;

**Safer streets:** gangs, lighting;

**Services available to children and young people in Thanet:** raising awareness, information points in schools and a booklet, which is child friendly;

**Development of a Thanet Children's Council:** children and young people can continue to have their voices heard about the issues and decisions, which affect them.

### 5.3.5 Thanet Coast Project

A range of activities including nature, art, sport, in the sea, food, attractions and other suggestions were made by the children and young people.

Nature: wild life, rock pooling, fishing, learning about animals, learning to rescue wildlife and people;

Art – sane paintings, sand castle competitions, sand sculpting;

Sports – horse riding, football;

In the sea – swimming, high dive board from prom, surfing, ringos;

Food: BBQ's;

Other: sunbathing, fun, donkeys, parties, being with friends, going for walks, getting fresh air, dram contests, dance, quizzes.

### Conclusions

There are some key trends emerging from the consultation. These relate to play provision in its broadest sense, but there are also wider social issues that appear regularly, which appear to impact negatively on the usage and popularity of what is already provided. More things to do, more promotion of what is already available, better quality

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environments in which to play are all features that arise again and again.

In order to begin shaping the future provision for play opportunities it is necessary to establish mechanisms and initiatives which may help overcome the barriers to provision and also to help develop ideas and opportunities which have been identified through the consultation process. Clearly this needs to be led by the feedback received and by interpreting their responses to inform the action plan. It is also important to recognise that the Play providers themselves are also conduits for feedback gathered through their informal networks, informed by demand and need as identified by the communities they represent.

### 5.4 **Balancing Risk: Safe Play**

Consultation has demonstrated that children and young people are placing a high priority on safe places to play. This not only means ensuring that equipped and other play areas are safe and maintained to high standards but more specifically that they are socially safe and free from fear of attack, bullying and intimidation.

Frequently children and young people who play and use public spaces are perceived as a threat by the general public. The Action Plan identifies the means to address the issue of tolerance so that children and young people are able to experience acceptable risk and overcome challenges, within an atmosphere of support and acceptance. Play provision that does not cater for this need could fail, with the result that children and young children seeks thrills and excitement elsewhere, potentially with harmful consequences. A degree of managed risk in play provision is therefore essential.

Health and Safety Law requires providers to assess and manage risk and adopt strategies to minimise accidents and prevent injuries. This has led to play areas that offer little challenge or enjoyment in un-stimulating environments. Not only is this a poor use of resources but often the facilities are underused by children and young people and become a focus for vandalism and abuse. It should be accepted that accidents cannot be entirely avoided and it can be argued that falls and scrapes in childhood are all part of growing up, of learning about boundaries and how to manage risk. Indeed the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) supports this view: *"We recognise the benefits to children's development of play, which necessarily involves some risk and this shouldn't be sacrificed in the pursuit of the unachievable goal of absolute safety."*

Fundamental to the development of Thanet's Play Strategy is the need to ensure that policies and risk management procedures provide the

## Thanet Children and Young People's Play Strategy

right balance between children and young people's needs and wishes and providers concerns about having a robust defence against negligence claims.

### **6 PLAY POLICY STATEMENTS**

#### **6.1 Key policy statements**

Informed by audits and consultation with children and young people and all agencies involved in providing opportunities for children and young people and linking into the strategies and key priorities of all agencies the following Play Policy Statements have been developed and agreed. These set out the key objectives of the Strategy and will underpin the action plans arising from the Strategy.

The Play Policy Statements are as follows:

##### **A Partnership Approach to Play**

To ensure that the Children and Young People's Play Strategy is linked to wider national, regional and local strategies and is an effective tool for delivering sustainable, high quality play opportunities across Thanet by all organisations involved in the delivery of play opportunities for children and young people.

##### **New and Improved Play Opportunities**

To provide a range of new and improved sustainable play opportunities, for children and young people across the whole of the Thanet area, underpinned by the involvement of children and young people in their development.

##### **Involving Children and Young People**

To ensure that children and young people are regularly consulted on their play needs and involved in decisions affecting sustainable play provision for children and young people.

##### **Providing Opportunities for Safe Play**

To provide sustainable, safe opportunities for children and young people to play, balancing risk and the need for challenge and the requirement to protect children and young people.

##### **Promoting Play**

To raise the profile of Children's Play, encourage greater awareness of the importance of Play for children and young people, their families and the community and improve the promotion of play opportunities across Thanet.

##### **Accessibility and Inclusivity**

## **Thanet Children and Young People's Play Strategy**

Ensure equality of access of play opportunities so that all children and young people have the opportunity to access play provision, which is accessible and inclusive.

### **Training and Support**

To provide training and support to all those involved in the provision of opportunities for children and young people with the aim of improving the quality of provision of play opportunities for children and young people across Thanet.

### **Monitoring and Evaluation**

To ensure that all play opportunities are adequately and appropriately evaluated in order to constantly improve the quality of Play provision across Thanet.

## **6.2 Links with wider strategic documents**

All of the above statements are in accord with the wider strategic documents covered in earlier sections of this strategy.

## **7 LOCAL STANDARDS**

### **7.1 Explanation of standards proposed - Quantity**

The PPG17 Open Spaces assessment of play areas across the district for equipped play areas, ball play, wheeled play and teenage shelters identifies that Thanet currently has 0.035ha of provision per 1,000 population (based on 4,40ha of overall provision). This is well below the national recommended standards of 0.8ha per 1,000 population.

If the current standard of provision were to be based on the 0 -16 population (25,526) the current standard of provision would be 0.17ha / 1,000 population (0 -1 6). However the consultation process identified that there is a requirement for additional play areas for young people, particularly for teenagers and a wheeled play area for quad bikes and off road bikes for young people. The existing play areas also require fencing. This means that there is an identified deficiency in play provision. To take account of these findings, and the consultation carried out, the District Council has set an aspirational local standard of provision for the 0 – 16 age group at 0.3ha / 1,000 population (0 – 16 years).

There is therefore a deficiency in provision (as at 2006) of 0.13ha / 1,000 children of 0 – 16. This strategy will seek to reduce this deficiency over the 3-year period.

### **7.2 Quality Standards**

In terms of quality standards the PPG17 audit identified that the average quality of play areas across the district is 26.12% which equates to a 'below average' rating.

## Thanet Children and Young People's Play Strategy

This finding can be addressed through fencing of a number of the play areas, which will lead to an increase in quality perception.

The standard to aim for is a 'Good' rating. A 'Good' site is one which provides an appropriate infrastructure to facilitate usage eg signage, seating and bins, and is clean, safe and welcoming. In relation to this typology provides the appropriate play facilities, play value and environment for the age group to which it is targeted. This will also be addressed as part of the Action Plan of the 3-year strategy.

### 7.3 Accessibility Standards

The consultation undertaken suggests that most users walk to access local provision. Given the role and purpose of play areas there is a need for facility provision close to home. The National Playing Fields Association (NPFA) set a number of standards for provision for catchment areas for different categories of play area. These have historically been used in Thanet to inform planning policies. Standards of provision have been based on consultation results, with a comparison shown against the NPFA standards. Based on the consultation results, the average walking distance equates to 0.87km. This standard will be used in the Action Plan of this 3-year strategy.

## 8 ACTION PLAN

Informed by the audit undertaken, consultation with key delivery agencies and community engagement and organised according to the Play Policy Statements above, the Action Plan outlines how the Strategy will be delivered in practice. It should be noted that the Strategy assumes that the level of resources of all partners is at the current levels (with the exception of the BLF funding for projects). Therefore the Strategy can be considered as practical and achievable.

This is a working document and timescales and responsibilities have been provisionally identified, although may be subject to change. Where deadlines are known these have been completed. It is anticipated that this Action Plan will be reviewed on an annual basis and an Action Plan for the following financial year agreed.

As part of the consultation process all partners have been asked for their comments and for any other ideas or actions, which have not been included.

The final Strategy and Action Plan will be endorsed by Thanet District Council and the LSP.

## Thanet Children and Young People's Play Strategy

### 8.1 Action Plan 2007- 2010

<b>PP1 – A PARTNERSHIP APPROACH TO PLAY TO MAXIMISE RESOURCES</b>					
<b>Objective</b>	<b>Outcome</b>	<b>Output</b>	<b>Timescale</b>	<b>How</b>	<b>Who</b>
<b>To ensure that the Children and Young People's Play Strategy is linked to wider national, regional and local strategies and is an effective tool for delivering high quality play opportunities across Thanet by all organisations involved in the delivery of play opportunities for children and young people.</b>	Approve the Play Strategy	Strategic approach to play provision linked to national and regional objectives	March 2007	Agreed by the TPP. Submitted to TDC ECMT for approval	TDC
			July 2007	Approved by TDC Cabinet. TPP	TDC
	Agree Action Plan annually	Annually prioritised actions for improved play provision, informed by community consultation	March 2007 and annually thereafter	Agreed by the TPP. Approved by TDC Cabinet.	TPP TDC
	Submit BLF Project Portfolio for £341K play funding	External investment to assist in delivery of action plan	March 2007	Agreed by the TPP. Submitted by TDC (CT)	TPP TDC

## Thanet Children and Young People's Play Strategy

PP1 – A PARTNERSHIP APPROACH TO PLAY TO MAXIMISE RESOURCES					
Objective	Outcome	Output	Timescale	How	Who
	Seek / secure funding for delivery of play strategy (new and existing)	Improved play provision delivered by all partners across Thanet	On-going	Resources sub-group of TPP to be established. TDC to provide advice and support and act as 'banker' as required	TPP  TDC
	Deliver Play Strategy, with annual review of achievements	Improved play provision delivered by all partners across Thanet	2007 - 2010	Targets and responsibilities allocated and agreed by TPP. Quarterly monitoring of progress by TPP.	TPP  TPP

**Thanet Children and Young People's Play Strategy**

<b>PP1 – A PARTNERSHIP APPROACH TO PLAY TO MAXIMISE RESOURCES</b>					
<b>Objective</b>	<b>Outcome</b>	<b>Output</b>	<b>Timescale</b>	<b>How</b>	<b>Who</b>
	Play Partnership linked with LSP	Play Strategy embedded within Community Strategy	September 2007	TDC to provide link with LSP / Community Strategy to ensure consistency within Strategies	TDC (Portfolio Holders/ Head of Commercial Services / Head of Robert Rose)
	Identify and secure match funding sources to deliver play opportunities	Increased funding for children's play provision.	On-going	Resources sub-group of TPP to be established. TDC to provide advice and support and act as 'banker' as required	TPP  TDC (Resources)

**Thanet Children and Young People's Play Strategy**

<b>PP1 – A PARTNERSHIP APPROACH TO PLAY TO MAXIMISE RESOURCES</b>					
<b>Objective</b>	<b>Outcome</b>	<b>Output</b>	<b>Timescale</b>	<b>How</b>	<b>Who</b>
	Promote cross-sector partnership working to achieve aims of Children and Young People's Play Strategy	Improved play provision across Thanet. Added value to all play projects.	On-going	Key organisations represented on TPP  Communications sub-group to be formed with remit to develop marketing plan to raise awareness of Play Strategy	TPP  TPP

## Thanet Children and Young People's Play Strategy

<b>PP2 – NEW AND IMPROVED PLAY OPPORTUNITIES</b>					
<b>Objective</b>	<b>Outcome</b>	<b>Output</b>	<b>Timescale</b>	<b>How</b>	<b>Who</b>
<b>To provide a range of new and improved play opportunities, for children and young people across the whole of the Thanet area, underpinned by the involvement of children and young people in their development.</b>	Deliver Annual Action Plan for play following BLF funding	Improved play facilities for children and young people across Thanet	March 2007 and annually thereafter	Establish Consultation sub-group of TPP.  Annual consultation programme established to inform annual priorities	TPP  TPP (Children and Young People Sub-Group)
	Deliver site improvements as outlined in PPG17study	Improved play facilities (quality / accessibility) in accordance with approved local standards of provision	March 2008 and annually thereafter	Site rationalisation and re-distribution of funding  Additional funding bids from TDC / Housing  S106 agreements to be pursued	TDC Parish Council (as appropriate)  TDC  TDC (Planning)

## Thanet Children and Young People's Play Strategy

<b>PP2 – NEW AND IMPROVED PLAY OPPORTUNITIES</b>					
<b>Objective</b>	<b>Outcome</b>	<b>Output</b>	<b>Timescale</b>	<b>How</b>	<b>Who</b>
	Annual audit of play opportunities across all sectors and identification of gaps	Creation and maintenance of play activities database. Identification of gaps.	March 2008 and annually thereafter	Development of web-based opportunities for children and young people  Update of PPG17 / GIS to identify deficiencies	TPP / Engaging Youth Forum / KCC Y & C  TDC (Planning)
	Development and delivery of enhanced opportunities for play in priority areas	Improved play opportunities in identified areas	March 2008 and annually thereafter	Projects identified as part of portfolio of projects for GLF funding, informed by further consultation with Children and Young People	TPP  TPP (Children and Young People Sub-Group)
	Development and delivery of active play / creative play sessions	Increased range and choice of play activities across Thanet	March 2008 and annually thereafter	Projects identified as part of portfolio of projects for GLF funding, informed by further consultation with Children and Young People	TPP / TDC / KCC / Engaging Youth

**Thanet Children and Young People's Play Strategy**

<b>PP2 – NEW AND IMPROVED PLAY OPPORTUNITIES</b>					
<b>Objective</b>	<b>Outcome</b>	<b>Output</b>	<b>Timescale</b>	<b>How</b>	<b>Who</b>
	Development and delivery of play opportunities in schools / extended schools	Improved play opportunities utilising school sites	March 2008 and annually thereafter	KCC to lead on discussions in appropriate schools	TPP KCC

## Thanet Children and Young People's Play Strategy

PP3 – INVOLVING CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE					
Objective	Outcome	Output	Timescale	How	Who
<b>To ensure that children and young people are regularly consulted on their play needs and involved in decisions affecting play provision for children and young people.</b>	Develop and deliver on-going programme of consultation into needs and wants of children and young people and barriers to participation	Results to inform appropriate play provision	September 2007 and annually thereafter	Establishment of sub-group of TPP (Consultation) to lead on consultation	TPP (Children and Young People Sub-Group  Engaging Youth Group  KCC
	Establish feedback mechanisms eg through TPP, Thanet Youth Forum, School Councils and Cluster Groups etc	Increased involvement from all partners.	September 2007 and six monthly thereafter	Establishment of sub-group of TPP (Consultation) to lead on consultation	TPP/ TDC/ KCC
	Develop mechanism for involving children and young people in decisions with regard to new and enhanced play opportunities	Increase in use of play areas. Reduction in ABS / vandalism.	September 2007 and six monthly thereafter	Establishment of sub-group of TPP (Consultation) to lead on consultation	TPP (Children and Young People Sub-Group  Engaging Youth Group  KCC

## Thanet Children and Young People's Play Strategy

PP4 – PROVIDING SAFE OPPORTUNITIES FOR PLAY					
Objective	Outcome	Output	Timescale	How	Who
<b>To provide safe opportunities for children and young people to play, balancing risk and the need for challenge</b>	Devise minimum standards for provision (PPG17)	Improved quality of play provision	March 2007	PPG17 study undertaken	TDC (Planning)
	Link Play Strategy to Community Safety Strategy	Reduction in ABS / vandalism on play sites	When Community Safety Strategy revised)	TDC to provide input into process	TDC
	Develop and deliver training programmes for play providers eg CRB	Improved awareness of requirements and improved quality of service offered in line with relevant legislation	March 2008 and annually thereafter	Communications sub-group to identify current providers and gaps in provision.  Promotion of opportunities available via web sites	TPP (Communications Sub-Group)

## Thanet Children and Young People's Play Strategy

PP4 – PROVIDING SAFE OPPORTUNITIES FOR PLAY					
Objective	Outcome	Output	Timescale	How	Who
	Involvement of Community Wardens / community groups in play areas	Reduction in ABS / vandalism. Increase in use of play areas	March 2008 and annually thereafter	Discussions with residents associations / community groups/ wardens  Outreach workers to make links	TPP (Communications sub-group)
	On-going consultation with play users and non-users	Increase in use of play areas.	September 2007 and annually thereafter	Establish Consultation sub-group of TPP.  Annual consultation programme established to inform annual priorities	TPP  TPP (Children and Young People Sub-Group)

## Thanet Children and Young People's Play Strategy

PP5 – PROMOTING PLAY					
Objective	Outcome	Output	Timescale	How	Who
<b>To raise the profile of Children's Play, encourage greater awareness of the importance of Play for children and young people, their families and the community and improve the promotion of play opportunities across Thanet.</b>	Develop marketing plan and communications strategy	Improved awareness of play provision and increased profile for play and recognition of contribution play makes to wider agendas	June 2007 for sub-group  March 2008 for Communications / Marketing Plan	Communications sub-group to be formed with remit to develop marketing plan to raise awareness of Play Strategy	TPP (Communications Sub-Group)
	Development of play web pages, linked to partners websites	Improved awareness of play provision by all partners	March 2008 for Communications / Marketing Plan	Communications sub-group to be formed with remit to develop marketing plan	TPP (Communications Sub-Group)
	Marketing aimed at specific target groups	Increase in target groups participating in play opportunities	March 2008	Communications sub-group to be formed with remit to develop marketing plan	TPP (Communications Sub-Group)

**Thanet Children and Young People's Play Strategy**

<b>PP5 – PROMOTING PLAY</b>					
<b>Objective</b>	<b>Outcome</b>	<b>Output</b>	<b>Timescale</b>	<b>How</b>	<b>Who</b>
	Link TPP with LSP	Improved awareness of play provision and increased profile for play and recognition of contribution play makes to wider agendas	September 2007	TDC to provide link with LSP / Community Strategy to ensure consistency within Strategies	TDC (Portfolio Holders/ Mark Seed)

## Thanet Children and Young People's Play Strategy

<b>PP6 – ACCESSIBILITY AND INCLUSIVITY</b>					
<b>Objective</b>	<b>Outcome</b>	<b>Output</b>	<b>Timescale</b>	<b>How</b>	<b>Who</b>
Ensure equality of access of play opportunities so that all children and young people have the opportunity to access play provision, which is accessible and inclusive.	Assess sites and venues for DDA compliance and inclusive play opportunities and develop action plans for addressing issues identified	All sites and venues accessible and inclusive for all users	March 2008 and annually thereafter	Via ROSPA assessment of all sites  Specialist input from Jigsaw 4 U / TADSAD	TDC (ROSPA)  Jigsaw 4 U  TADSAD
	Identify mechanisms to reach hard to reach groups	Increase in participation by hard to reach groups	September 2007	Identifying appropriate channels of communication with relevant organisations representing hard to reach groups. Development of appropriate consultation programmes, utilising key partners within TPP as others as necessary	TPP (Children and Young People Sub-Group)

## Thanet Children and Young People's Play Strategy

<b>PP6 – ACCESSIBILITY AND INCLUSIVITY</b>					
<b>Objective</b>	<b>Outcome</b>	<b>Output</b>	<b>Timescale</b>	<b>How</b>	<b>Who</b>
	Needs assessment and specific consultation with hard to reach and marginalised groups	Results to inform appropriate play provision	March 2008	Identifying appropriate channels of communication with relevant organisations representing hard to reach groups. Development of appropriate consultation programmes, utilising key partners within TPP as others as necessary	TPP (Children and Young People Sub-Group)
	Identify common barriers to free play eg transport, accessibility, through consultation and audit	Barriers identified and means to address identified and overcome	March 2008	Annual participation and engagement programme established to inform annual priorities	TPP (Children and Young People Sub-Group)

## Thanet Children and Young People's Play Strategy

<b>PP7 – TRAINING AND SUPPORT</b>					
<b>Objective</b>	<b>Outcome</b>	<b>Output</b>	<b>Timescale</b>	<b>How</b>	<b>Who</b>
To provide training and support to all those involved in the provision of opportunities for children and young people with the aim of improving the quality of provision of play opportunities for children and young people across Thanet.	Carry out needs analysis for training / support required	Training provision and support needs meeting needs of all stakeholders	September 2008	Consultation event with Play Providers to establish needs (link to annual advice fair)	TPP (Resources Sub-Group)
	Improved links with training providers	Maximise available resources and opportunities	March 2008	Resources sub-group to identify training providers. Invitation extended to join TPP	TPP (Resources Sub-Group)
	Develop resource packs for funding and other support for community groups	Increase in external funding applications and increase in number of community groups involved in play provision	March 2008	Development of web-based information service with links to main funding bodies websites.  Raised awareness of support function of TDC / KCC	TPP (Resources Sub-Group)  TPP (Communications sub-group)

## Thanet Children and Young People's Play Strategy

<b>PP7 – TRAINING AND SUPPORT</b>					
<b>Objective</b>	<b>Outcome</b>	<b>Output</b>	<b>Timescale</b>	<b>How</b>	<b>Who</b>
	Identification of other support which can be offered by TPP eg CRB checks	Improved and safer provision of play opportunities through increased awareness of child protection and other health and safety issues	September 2007	Audit of skills of TPP partners and others to be undertaken and collated	TPP TDC / KCC / TLF TPP (Resources Sub-Group)
	Annual funding / advice fair	Increased awareness of external funding opportunities and added value to projects	July 2008	Annual event to be organised used as means of celebration of achievements, consultation and feedback and offering advice and support	TPP (Resources / Communications Sub Groups)

## Thanet Children and Young People's Play Strategy

<b>PP8 – MONITORING AND EVALUATION</b>					
<b>Objective</b>	<b>Outcome</b>	<b>Output</b>	<b>Timescale</b>	<b>How</b>	<b>Who</b>
To ensure that all play opportunities are adequately and appropriately evaluated in order to constantly improve the quality of Play provision across Thanet.	Agree performance management indicators	Improved play provision across Thanet	March 2007	TPP discussion.  Baseline data to be established during 2007	TPP  TPP / TDC / KCC
	Monitoring of levels of play provision against standards sets in PPG17 and Play Strategy	Benchmark against standards set. Improved play provision across Thanet	March 2008 an annually thereafter	Baseline data to be established during 2007  Annual audit	TDC  TPP / Engaging Youth Forum / KCC Y & C
	Regular monitoring and evaluation of progress against action plan	Improved play provision across Thanet	Quarterly	Reports considered by quarterly meeting of TPP	TPP (Monitoring and Review sub-group)
	Annual participation and engagement review event	Improved feedback on progress and target setting with children and young people	June 2007 and annually thereafter	Establishment of Consultation sub-group of TPP to lead on consultation	TPP (Children and Young People Sub Group)

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	Establish feedback mechanisms eg through TPP, Thanet Youth Forum, School Councils and Cluster Groups etc	Increased involvement from all partners.	September 2007 and six monthly thereafter	Establishment of Consultation sub-group of TPP to lead on consultation and feedback mechanisms	TPP (Children and Young People Sub-Group  Engaging Youth Group  KCC

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### 8.2 Criteria for identifying priorities for development

8.2.1 Key criteria for projects to be supported by the Thanet Play Partnership were discussed and prioritised which will underpin decisions to be made on the projects to be allocated funding under the Children's Play Initiative or under any other external funding opportunity presented. The top 6 (in priority order) were as follows:

- Improving opportunities for play and informal recreation;
- Involving children and young people in project development;
- Projects promoting health and physical activity;
- Projects engaging in partnerships with all sectors;
- Projects promoting enjoyment for children and young people and
- Projects promoting equal opportunities and social inclusion.

8.2.2 The Partnership also recognises the need, underpinning all of the above, for projects to be sustainable in the longer term.

8.2.3 Plans put forward for inclusion in the Big Lottery Bid take account of the findings of the PPG17 study undertaken in 2005/6, socio-economic data obtained, findings from the consultation undertaken, indicators of need as evidence from feedback from partner organisations.

8.2.4 There was overwhelming support from within the Thanet Play Partnership that a number of the projects should be developed by children and young people themselves, and that the funding should be fluid to allow this to happen.

8.2.5 Criteria for evaluation of projects put forward by children and young people will be drawn up but children and young people will be involved in choosing the projects themselves.

## 9 EVALUATION PLAN

### 9.1 Evaluation

In order to ensure that the Play Strategy and accompanying Action Plan is being effectively delivered and remains appropriate in changing and challenging times a structure of monitoring, evaluation and review a must be established, together with an Accountable Body.

The Thanet Play Partnership is central to the delivery of the Play Strategy and will be responsible for ensuring that the aims and objectives of the Strategy and the targets included within the Action Plan are delivered. Thanet District Council will be the Accountable Body in terms of managing and accounting for any external funding obtained by the Thanet Play Partnership.

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### 9.2 Evaluation Methodology

The Thanet Children and Young People's Play Strategy will be adopted by Thanet District Council and embedded within its Corporate Plan and annual delivery plans and will be reviewed in accordance with the Council's review mechanisms.

The Strategy will also be adopted by the Local Strategic Partnership and embedded within the Community Strategy and annual delivery plan and will be reviewed in accordance with the LSP's review mechanisms.

Both the above actions will ensure the strategic fit of the strategy into the wider area strategies.

The Play Partnership will meet quarterly, in accordance with its Terms of Reference, to discuss key issues and monitor progress.

The Thanet Play Partnership will establish sub-groups (as detailed in the Action Plan) who will be responsible for delivering parts of the strategy. These sub-groups will determine their own meeting frequencies but will report to the Thanet Play Partnership on a quarterly basis outlining progress against targets.

An annual participation and engagement process with children and young people, their communities and play providers will seek to promote and celebrate the delivery of the strategy, key achievements and create opportunities for feedback, informing the Action Plan for the following year.

### 9.3 Outcomes

The outcomes as identified within the Action Plan will form part of the monitoring schedule as outlined above.

### 9.4 Performance Indicators

Indicative performance indicators are required to assess and measure the relative success of the strategy. They give a benchmark against which to measure and evaluate progress and monitor improvements to play opportunities as delivered by the Plan Strategy.

The following performance indicators are suggested:

PI	Detail	Data collection Method
PI 1	<b>Access to a variety of play facilities and spaces</b> % of children and young people having access to at least 3 types of play space or facility, at least 1 being a dedicated play space	Open space and play strategy audits (review of PPG17)  GIS mapping

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	and all within easy walking / cycling distance.	
PI 2	<p><b>Quality of activity-based Play facilities and spaces</b></p> <p>The proportion of play facilities and play spaces meeting the quality criteria for excellent / good ratings</p>	<p>Open space and play strategy audits (review of PPG17)</p> <p>Local evaluation – outreach sessions</p> <p>Standards measured against quality criteria used for PPG17 study</p>
PI 3a	<p><b>Satisfaction</b></p> <p>% children and young people who think the range and quality of play facilities and spaces they are able to access in their local neighbourhood is good or very good</p> <p>% of adults who think the range and quality of play facilities and spaces they are able to access in their local neighbourhood is good or very good</p>	<p>Engaging Youth Forum School surveys</p> <p>Citizens Panel</p>
PI 6	<p><b>Maintenance of fixed play sites</b></p> <p>% of play sites undergoing weekly maintenance and safety checks</p>	<p>TLF / TDC record sheets</p>

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### APPENDIX A

#### Membership of the Thanet Play Partnership

Name	Organisation	Remarks
Amber Christou	TDC Housing and Community Services	Replaced by Ashley Stacey
Amber Taroni	Fegans	
Andrew Local	Minster Parish Councillor	
Anne Davies	Jigsaw 4 U	
Ashley Stacey	TDC,	
Audrey Twyman	Clerk to Manston Parish Council	
Ben Rose	Youth Worker, Turn the Tide Youth Project	
Bill Butler	KC Youth and Community (Thanet and Dover)	
Brian White	Birchington Parish Councillor	
Bronwyn Wood	Lymington Road Park Project	
Chris Tull	TDC Commercial Services and TADSAD Representative	Also required to liaise with TDC Parks and Planning sections
Cllr Ingrid Spencer	TDC Portfolio Holder for Housing and Commercial Services, Champion for Play and Youth issues	
Cllr Liz Green	Ward Councillor and Shadow Leisure Portfolio Holder	
Cllr Roger Latchford	TDC Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Commercial Services	
Frances Rehal	Sure Start	
Gilly Brown	Clerk to Monkton Parish Council	
Ivan O'Reilly	The Children's Society	
Janice Duggan	Thanet Community Housing Association	
Julie Francis	Clerk to St Nicholas at Wade and Sarre Parish Council	
Kath Kavanagh	From Small to Big	
Kyla Lamb	Clerk to Manston Parish Council	
Maureen Thoroughgood	Valley / Northdown Residents Association	
Mike Andrea	Pipeline	
Mike Pepper	Birchington Parish Councillor	
Nicole Wells	Lymington Road Park Project	
Nigel Cruttenden	Thanet Community Safety Partnership	

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Name	Organisation	Remarks
Peter Hooker	Thanet Leisureforce	
Phil Pittock	KCC, Extended Schools Development Manager, Thanet	
Ray Smicle	Dane Park Green Flag Project	
Residents Associations		11 in total – separate meeting to be arranged
Roy Dexter	Broadstairs and St Peter's Town Council	Margaret White deputising
Roy Wade	Cliffsend and Acol Parish Councils	
Sally Potter	Connexions	
Suzanne Dowse	TDC Corporate Projects Officer	
Vaughan Hawthorne-Nelson	Kent Children's Fund	

**NOTE:**

11 Residents Associations consulted separately

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### **APPENDIX B – PPG17 Maps**

(Please note that these maps are not included with this version)

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### APPENDIX C – Audit of facilities and opportunities for children and young people on ward basis

<b>Super Output Area (SOA)</b>	<b>Population 0 -17 years of age</b>	<b>No of Play Areas</b>	<b>Skate /BMX Facilities</b>	<b>Grassed pitches</b>	<b>Multi-Purpose Court</b>	<b>Youth Clubs</b>	<b>Holiday Play Schemes</b>	<b>Other</b>
<b>Beacon Road</b>	1,263	1 St Peter's;						
<b>Birchington North</b>	499	1 Minnis Road						
<b>Birchington South</b>	1,105	2 Birchington Rec Ground; Crispe Park						
<b>Bradstowe</b>	747	1 Memorial Rec Ground;						
<b>Central Harbour</b>	1,822	2 Ellington Park; Warre Rec Ground	1 Warre Rec Ground					1 Adventure Trail
<b>Cliffsend and Pegwell</b>	885	1 Courtstairs; Cliffsend			1 Basketball post 1 Sports Wall			
<b>Cliffonville East</b>	1,046	1 Northdown Park						

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<b>Cliftonville West</b>	1,622	0						
<b>Dane Valley</b>	2,553	3 Dane Park; Dane Valley Swinford Gardens; Laleham Road;			1 Ball games area			2 Adventure Trail
<b>Eastcliff</b>	1,746	2 Boundary Road; Camden Square						
<b>Garlinge</b>	1,349	2 Garlinge Rec Ground;  Hartsdown Park,	1 Garlinge Rec Ground Teen Facilities					
<b>Kingsgate</b>	380	0						
<b>Margate Central</b>	1,187	0						
<b>Nethercourt</b>	954	1 Nethercourt Park						
<b>Newington</b>	1,640	1			1			

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		Princess Margaret Avenue			Basketball post			
<b>Northwood</b>	1,705	2 Jackey Bakers Rec Ground; Coleman Crescent	BMX area		1 Basketball post			
<b>St Peters</b>	1,481	1 Vincent Close						
<b>Salmestone</b>	1,640	1 Tivoli Park						
<b>Sir Moses Montefiore</b>	1,388	1 King George VI Park;						
<b>Thanet Villages</b>	1,280	5 The Street, Monkton; Spratling Street, Manston; St Nicholas Parish Council;	1 Minster Rec Ground		1 Basketball Post, Monkton  1 Basketball Post, St Nicholas			

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		Minster Rec Ground; Crispe Road Acol;			1 Basketball Post, Acol Adventure Trail, Acol 5 a side goals, Acol			
<b>Viking</b>	1,532	1 Pierremont Park;						
<b>Westbrook</b>	1,006							
<b>Westgate-on-Sea</b>	1,446	1 Lymington Road	1 Lymington Road					

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