

# MARGATE NRA EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Thanet District Council have recognised that the area of central Margate and west Cliftonville is one of the most deprived areas within the south east of England with some of the worst housing conditions. They have sought to address this issue by commissioning pps plc to carry out a neighbourhood renewal assessment (NRA) within the area with a view to declaring a renewal area. A neighbourhood renewal assessment is an in depth look at the area by gathering information about the housing, environmental and socio-economic conditions and relating it to the strategic and local objectives through surveys and consultation with residents. A core group of officers and a steering group composed of members and stakeholders from within the area oversaw the process. The aim for the study was: "To facilitate an increase in confidence levels of both residents and businesses in and about the area, improve its long term future as a place to live, recognising the social, physical and economic aspirations of those who live, work and visit the area" Was supplemented by a number of objectives which, when working with partners, include objectives to increase the number of persons owning their own homes, reduce the number of non-self contained households and contribute to improved health and education of the residents. All residents were sent a questionnaire asking for their opinions, a newsletter was sent explaining the process and a number of focus groups were held. The information collected from this process together with the results of the business survey and interviews with organisations active within the area was assessed alongside the house condition and environmental surveys. The main findings show that central Margate and west Cliftonville contain the most deprived super output areas in southeast England with high rates of both unfit and non-decent homes. The information from the house condition survey was analysed in terms of 4 separate areas within the NRA area based on smaller communities that identified themselves during the assessment. 60% of homes within the area are flats most of which are conversions. The general external condition of the buildings is poor with high numbers requiring roof and window repairs. The general façade is of run down buildings with poor external decoration. A high number of vacant and derelict buildings contribute to a poor environment and vandalism particularly in the west Cliftonville area.

The cost of repairs and renovation within the area are unable to be met by the resident's own resources and additional finance will need to be made available to regenerate the area.

Surestart Margate and the Thanet Community Development Trust already have active projects working within the area to empower the community, enable increased confidence and improve education and health. A number of strategy options were generated to help achieve the NRA objectives and to dovetail with existing strategies. Four options were developed:

Option 1: Minimal intervention

Option 2: Renewal area declaration for the whole NRA area with limited action

Option 3: Renewal area declaration for west Cliftonville to a Decent Homes standard

Option 4: Renewal area declaration for the whole area but on a phased basis.  
Allowing additional resources to be concentrated in one area at a time.

The options include themes to increase the attractiveness of the area and reduce the number of empty properties thereby encouraging private investment in the area. The condition of homes is improved by reducing levels of unfitness, improving the means of escape in case of fire and increased security measures. The interventions involve the giving of loans or grants to homeowners including landlords where appropriate. Also the giving of self-financing assistance to help with the target actions including improvement of HMOs.

The options were appraised to assess the most appropriate option in economic and socio-environmental terms, and, that which best meets the objectives

The preferred strategy was found to be option 4 to declare a renewal area for West Cliftonville followed by declaration for Grotto Hill and Poet's Corner areas in year 3 and Old Town in year 5. This strategy allows resources to be spread over a wider area as they become available and gives the Council and its partners some flexibility in the exact timing of actions. The costs to the Council and its partners have been estimated on the basis of a sum for pump priming the process with private investment being drawn in as the renewal area is promoted.

The report recommends that the Council initiate the process of declaring a renewal area for west Cliftonville by consulting with the community and partner organisations on the findings of this report. Resources are allocated for pump priming the process of declaring a renewal area and additional resources are sought from partners and Government offices. Following this a detailed timescale and strategy can be drawn up.