



Report of the Kent Child Protection Committee Inquiry into the general concerns expressed by officers and politicians in the Thanet Area regarding Child and Public Protection Issues



Research undertaken during August-December 2004

June 2005



Kent Child Protection Committee

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**Kent Child Protection Committee
Thanet Board of Inquiry**

As Chair of the Kent Child Protection Committee I am very pleased to present the final report of the Board of Inquiry established to investigate Child and Public Protection Issues in Thanet.

The Inquiry team have done an excellent job to bring together evidence that, for perhaps the first time, clearly establishes the links between the general economic and social conditions prevalent in the District, the impact of a transient and extremely volatile population, and the critical effects of rash practices by other local authorities in placing vulnerable people away from their homes and communities.

The report portrays a community at a "tipping point" where this explosive mixture will have potentially serious consequences for those people who are placed there and the local communities, unless fundamental measures are taken now. In particular the placement policies of other local authorities must be changed to stop the ever further aggravation of already severe social problems.

The recommendations of the Inquiry provide a call to action for all of us able to influence the future of Thanet. Taken together they form a comprehensive response to the findings within the report. Failure to implement them will yet again fail a community that is struggling to sustain itself in the face of serious and increasing pressures from outside.

On behalf of the Committee I would also like to thank all those who gave evidence to the Board and especially to the team involved in compiling the report, for their hard work and perseverance over the last six months. The best appreciation of their efforts would be for us to use the report to begin the process of improvement in Thanet that is so obviously needed.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Peter Gilroy'.

Peter Gilroy
Chair Kent Child Protection Committee
(1991 – April 2005)

Kent Child Protection Committee (KCPC) Membership

Kent County Council Social Services Directorate
Kent County Council Education & Libraries Directorate
Kent Police
Crown Prosecution Service
East Kent Health
West Kent Health
Adult Mental Health Services
Child & Adolescent Mental Health Services
Kent Probation Service
NSPCC (Kent)
CAFCASS
Domestic Violence Forum
Chairperson of East Kent Child Protection Co-ordinating Committee
Chairperson of West Kent Child Protection Co-ordinating Committee
Chairperson of Mid Kent Child Protection Co-ordinating Committee
County Asylum Seekers and Refugees Unit
Youth Justice Service
District Councils
Commission for Social Care Inspection
Connexions
Prison Service

In addition to the representatives of member agencies, the following officers will be non-executive members of the Committee:

KCPC Committee Co-ordinator
KCPC Inter-agency Training Manager
Independent Chair of Case Review Group
KCPC Secretary



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Executive Summary

1. Originally commissioned by Kent Child Protection Committee in August 2004, this report seeks to facilitate an assessment of key risks and concerns with regard to the residents of Thanet. In commissioning the Board of Inquiry, KCPC clearly identifies its responsibility to act as an advocate for children. In its conclusion, KCPC takes the view that there will be serious consequences in failing to take action with regard to the Findings and Recommendations. A lack of action now can only compound future social exclusion.
2. Looking first at the economy, the core population and then the population in transition, the report summarises a number of major findings. These features are in many respects well known, particularly to the agencies involved in the Thanet District, and of course are the frame of reference for much of the work of Thanet District Council.
3. Turning then to levels of vulnerability, the report focuses broadly on the wide-ranging presentations of both adults and children. Unsurprisingly perhaps, the impact of placements by Other Local Authorities (OLAs) is a theme that runs throughout an exploration of such vulnerabilities. More specifically, the report subsequently covers in some detail the issues around Looked After Children and those of the features of significant crime. The issues implicit in these fields had both been raised throughout the summer of 2004.
4. In the final chapter, the report looks to service development and regeneration. This section makes clear the evidence of integrated and multi-agency partnerships that are in place throughout Thanet. None the less, it also raises questions with regard to the impact of the high level of need, the significant features of vulnerability and dependence, and the compounding effect of a population in transition.
5. In conclusion then, this report makes 23 Recommendations.

These recommendations seek to:

- Build on the plans for economic regeneration, with a particular focus on educational achievement.
- Bring a stronger, more structured framework to the management of placements by OLAs, and perhaps more importantly, to enable all Local Authorities to continue to develop their skills and strategies in meeting the needs of their communities.
- Identify potential opportunities for effective resource planning (financial, key staff recruitment etc).
- Build on strategies that maximise the effectiveness of service commissioning and development across the South East of England but particularly with London Boroughs, with strong reference to outcomes.

Preface

1. For the past six months, I have been privileged to chair the Thanet Board of Inquiry. Commissioned by Peter Gilroy, Chair of the Kent Child Protection Committee in August 2004, the Inquiry had as its remit those public risks that related to vulnerable children and adults. Whilst Thanet-wide in exploration, the Board of Inquiry did have particular regard to the Ward of Cliftonville West.
2. The Board itself was constituted from the main agencies involved in Thanet. Evidence to the Inquiry was wide ranging, including not only the statutory sector, but also a number of interested and active parties across Thanet. Thus, the evidence on which this report is based has been derived from four major sources. Firstly, from existing data already available, such as the Census Data. Secondly, data garnered by members of the Inquiry from agency sources. Thirdly, evidence presented verbally to the Inquiry, and finally, submissions requested and received in writing.
3. Undoubtedly, Thanet is an area of great deprivation. Much of the statistical data evidences this. Moreover, within the Isle of Thanet itself, there are wards of extreme deprivation, and Cliftonville West is one such as this. The Board of Inquiry report summarises key evidence, and makes a number of recommendations with regard to future planning. Unsurprisingly to those who know Thanet at all, there are a number of recommendations that focus on those vulnerable individuals who continue to be placed here by Other Local Authorities (OLAs).
4. The impact of a highly vulnerable population, with up to 1 in 3 being in a state of flux, should not be underestimated. The report makes this clear. None the less, Thanet is also the landscape loved by Turner; a community in which a number of local organisations are working to achieve better outcomes; a District in which there has been an extraordinarily effective multi-agency effort to improve the life chances of the residents.
5. This Board of Inquiry makes clear the need for strong and sustained actions, which recognise the vulnerabilities of many residents, requiring greater commitment from OLAs, and maintaining a clear focus on economic regeneration. It is only in this concerted effort that we will see a reduction in the level of public risk, and continue the shift towards better outcomes for the people of Thanet.

Bill Anderson
Chair
Thanet Board of Inquiry

Background

A meeting was convened on 25th June 2004 by Superintendent Penny Martin of Thanet Police, following approaches made to Thanet District Council by District Councillors and constituents in the Cliftonville East and Cliftonville West wards. This included local hoteliers and business owners who were concerned about the effect of the behaviour of young people and families on their business and the poor reputation the area was developing.

In the absence of routing the issues through existing multi-agency statutory forums, Peter Gilroy, the Chair of Kent Child Protection Committee (KCPC) commissioned this inquiry to provide an informed piece of work to KCPC.

Terms of reference

1. To present a factual appraisal of the issues and concerns being expressed by politicians, residents and professionals.
2. To examine the implications which would include:
 - The levels of public risk to vulnerable children
 - The levels of public risk to vulnerable adults
 - The policies of placing authorities and levels of private sector provision for children and adults and the impact this is having on both quality of life and risk to both users and members of the general public
 - To examine housing policy and planning arrangements to see whether further recommendations need to be made to prevent inappropriate development within the Thanet area
 - Making recommendations dealing with all of the foregoing on a multi-agency basis to the KCPC.

History of Thanet

1. The Isle of Thanet, comprising the three historic seaside towns of Broadstairs, Margate and Ramsgate, together with Westgate, Birchington and the rural villages of Minster, Monkton, Acol, Sarre and St Nicholas-at-Wade is situated on the north-eastern Kent Coast. It covers some 40 square miles and supports a population of around 126,000. The number of people per hectare stands at 12.3, compared to the national average of 3.4. Thanet is the most densely populated of the four districts in East Kent.
2. Thanet is bounded by the English Channel to the north east, the District of Canterbury to the west and the District of Dover to the south. Road transport links to Thanet have improved in recent years and plans for the final phase of East Kent Access will see improvements and dualling of the remaining sections of the A253/(A299) and A256. Rail links to the Thanet towns are well connected, although the quality and frequency of services is poor. Kent International Airport at Manston is now delivering both freight and passenger services.



3. There are 23 wards within the District. Within the towns it is not generally easy to identify coherent communities of common interest e.g. based around major centres of employment. This has resulted in a tendency to develop early community activity around key buildings or voluntary interest groups rather than neighbourhoods with the consequences that those most socially excluded often fail to benefit from the regeneration initiatives. The Single Regeneration Budget 5 (SRB) programme targeted five wards formerly known as Ethelbert, Newington, Central Eastcliff, Northdown Park and Pier. The two wards of Cliftonville East and Cliftonville West were not

History of Thanet

generally part of this programme (other than part of the former Ethelbert ward now falls within the newly constituted ward of Cliftonville West).

4. Currently the employment structure of Thanet is characterised by small companies employing fewer than 25 people. The Thanet Regeneration Board has since 1996 co-ordinated the following programmes to address the severe economic decline:
 - Thanet Objective 2
 - Interreg
 - Other European programmes
 - SRB
 - Schemes supported by the Millennium Commission
 - Other National Lotteries distribution bodies
 - Other local regional and national bodies

5. Given the popularity of the area at the end of the 19th Century, Thanet is characterised by large Victorian properties. To some extent, these have framed current economic and employment activity. Some of the large Victorian buildings have been neglected whilst others have been developed for other types of residential provision, particularly residential care homes. The residential care sector has been a significant 'industry' in Thanet and has attracted significant numbers of people to be placed into residential care from outside Thanet.

6. The regeneration spend in Thanet since 1994 is £31m. In addition there have been other Government initiatives such as SureStart and Children's Fund. The development of Turner Contemporary in Margate is progressing and this will help in the regeneration of the town centre as it will become one of the cultural centres for the South East. The cost of this provision alone will be in the region of £25m.

7. Much work continues in diversifying the local economy by expanding the manufacturing and service sectors. This strategy has seen over 1000 high quality jobs created on Thanet's business parks. In 2005 the new Westwood Cross shopping centre will open, creating jobs and providing a range of department stores and national chains, such as Debenhams, Marks & Spencer and Next, that the individual town centres cannot support. This will add to the quality of life in Thanet providing greater retail choice and reducing the need to travel further afield but may also have an effect on those town centres. However, as part of the strengthening of the local economy the East Kent Area Investment Framework prioritise the regeneration of town centres.

CHAPTER ONE: THE ECONOMY

In its research report of July 2004 ⁽¹⁾ the DfES determines that:

“...seaside resorts are generally characterised by a sense of detachment, the suspension of reality, and a considerable amount of movement in and out of the labour market...”

Employment

- 1.1 The economy of Thanet is characterised by low employment rates, low levels of productivity and earnings, and a poorly developed industrial and business structure overly reliant upon the public sector. Comparisons between Thanet and other Districts, both nationally and within Kent, are telling.
- 1.2 The employment rate for Thanet in 2002-03 was 65.7% This is the lowest in Kent and compares to a rate of 82.2% in Ashford. Nationally Thanet ranks 374th out of 408 District Council Areas. ⁽²⁾
- 1.3 Thanet has the lowest percentage of male employees working full time in the county (81.1%) and the highest percentage of male employees working part time (18.9%). In Gravesham the comparable figures are 96.6% and 3.4%. ⁽²⁾
- 1.4 At 3.6% the percentage of working age unemployed in Thanet (April 2004) is the highest in Kent, more than twice the South East figure and 50% higher than the national figure. ⁽²⁾
- 1.5 At 14% the percentage of long-term unemployed people in Thanet (as a proportion of the total District unemployment figure) is marginally exceeded only by Shepway (14.5%), which is the highest in Kent. ⁽²⁾
- 1.6 Other Studies have put the unemployment rate in Thanet even higher – the latest Crime and Disorder Audit report ⁽³⁾ notes that whilst the average level of unemployment for Kent is 2.5%, across Thanet there is a recorded level of 5% - twice the County average. Furthermore, 6 wards in Thanet report a higher than 5% rate of unemployment and in Cliftonville West, this level rises to 14.5% - a rate almost **6 times greater** than that across Kent.

Income and Earnings:

- 1.7 Average gross weekly earnings in Thanet stand at 80% of the national figure, the lowest of the Kent districts and 32% less than in Dartford. ⁽²⁾

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- 1.8 Average total income in Thanet (2001-02) totals 80.3% of the national rate placing the district 340th of the 408 national areas. Again this is the lowest in Kent and compares markedly to Sevenoaks at 180.9%. (2)
- 1.9 Economic productivity in Thanet is also significantly lower than elsewhere in Kent, the region and nationally. Measures of the value of the output generated by workers place Thanet at 73.4% of the national figure. This compares to 103.5% in Dartford, the best Kent value, and 112.4% for the South East. On this measure of economic productivity Thanet ranks 335th of the 408 national Districts. (2)
- 1.10 Employment in Thanet is heavily dependent on the public sector. Apart from Canterbury, which has several university facilities (34.1%), Thanet has the largest percentage of employment within the public services (33.1%) of all the Kent Districts. The figure in Thanet is rising whilst that in Canterbury is falling. (2)
- 1.11 Taken together these figures are characteristic of an area dependent upon lowly paid, often part-time work, which relies heavily on jobs in services supplied by the public sector.

Business and Enterprise

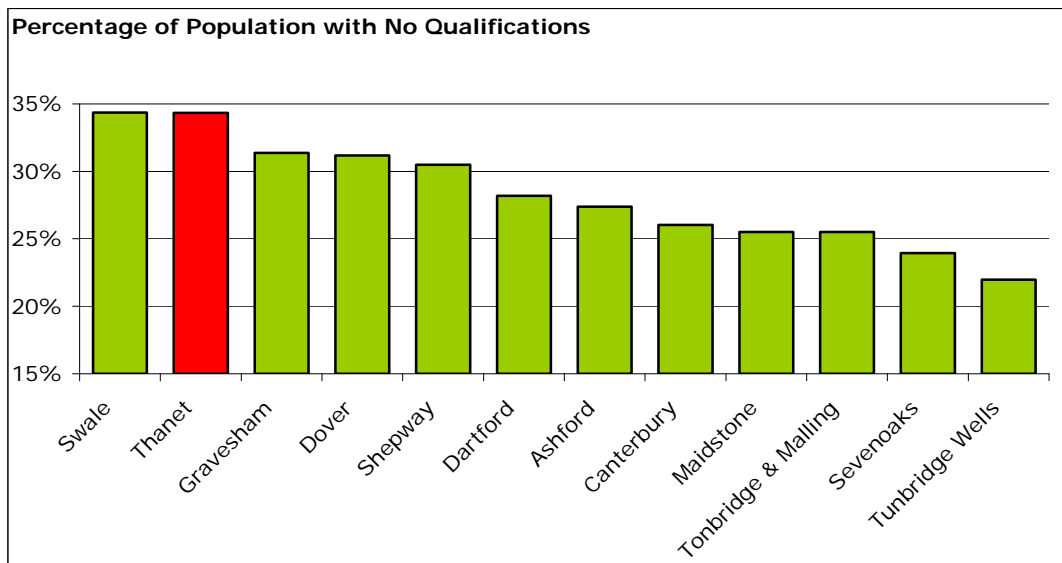
- 1.12 Between 1994 and 2003 the number of VAT registered businesses in Thanet actually fell by -1.7%. Of Kent Districts only Shepway also registered a fall (-0.4%), whilst all other Kent areas increased by up to 18.5% (in Dartford). (2)
- 1.13 At a rate of 23 Thanet has the lowest number of businesses per 1000 population in Kent, whilst Tunbridge Wells delivers a figure of 58.2. In the South East the figure is 42.9, and in Great Britain 36.7. (2)
- 1.14 The importance of knowledge and information in sustaining economic development is increasingly being recognised. How economies are adapting to the needs of increased scientific, technological and creative skills is seen as a key indicator of commercial health.
- 1.15 The percentage of businesses in Thanet that operate in the “Knowledge Driven” sectors is also the lowest in Kent at 20%, whilst Sevenoaks has achieved a rate of 36%. (2002) Only Swale (by 0.1%) has a lesser percentage of people in employment in the “Knowledge Driven” sector of the economy than Thanet, which registers 14.9%. The South East rate is 27.5% and the national rate is 23.6%. (2)
- 1.16 Thanet has the lowest level of commuting in the County with 75% of its workforce working within the district (Dartford has 45.1%). Of those that do commute 17%, the highest number in Kent, travel to neighbouring districts. Travel further afield shows the lowest figure in Kent, 8.2%.

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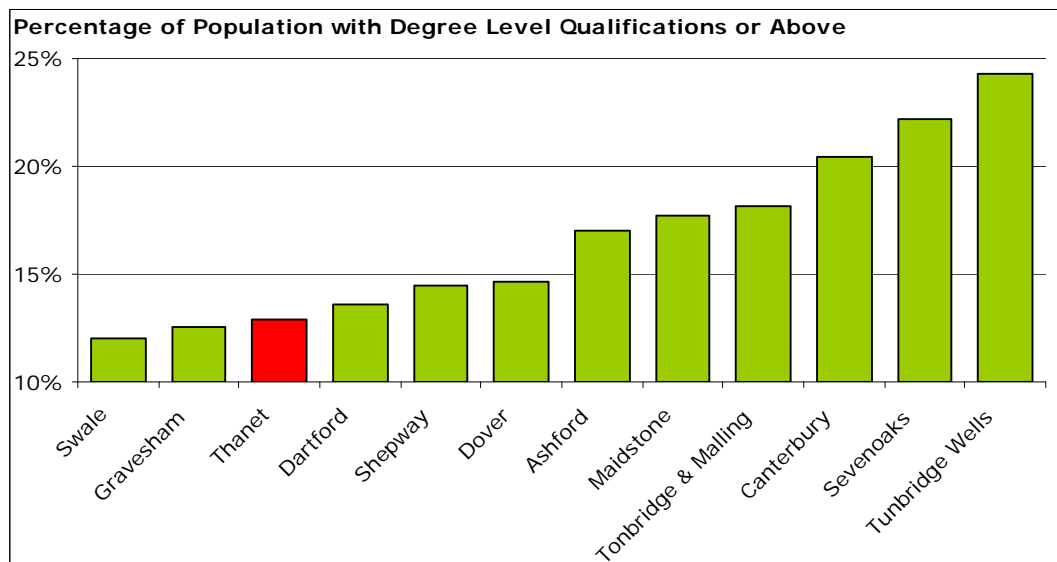
Whilst this may reflect public transport issues the result is that the economy of Thanet is very self-contained and relatively less income is 'imported' into Thanet than other districts in Kent.

- 1.17 The distribution of skills and qualifications in the Thanet population is complex.

Thanet has the highest level of the 16-60 year old population with poor literacy and numeracy skills in the county at 27% and 26.5% respectively. This is also above the regional and national average. (2) The percentage of the population holding no qualifications is also very high.



- 1.18 But the number of people in Thanet with degrees is relatively high when compared to the other Districts. Returning a proportion of approximately 13%, both Gravesham and Swale fall below this level. Although a more robust study would need to be undertaken in order to understand this fully, it is likely that the impact of Pzifers as a major employer in the area contributes at least in part to this achievement.



Beyond the working age population, it is clear that Thanet’s population includes a highly significant group of older people – those defined as 65 years or older.

- 1.19 According to information contained within the 2001 Census report, then the population cohort of older people in Thanet is higher than both the Kent levels and the national averages. This is identified in the table below, using Oxfordshire as a comparator. Oxford falls within the South East region for the purpose of Census data, and is helpful for comparisons that use the whole County of Kent.

Geographical locations	Total Population (2001 Census)	Total number older persons (2001 Census)	% of total
Thanet	126,712	27,568	21.72% (= above national average)
Kent	1,329,653	228,050	17.15% (= above national average)
Oxford	605,492	87,900	14.5% (= below national average)

- 1.20 This all points to a situation where in Thanet a relatively small working population supports a larger than average child and older person population. It works mainly within its own borders but appears to be a fractured economy with some people well qualified and working in high value jobs, possibly forming a cohort of commuters working outside the District, and a larger underclass of very poorly qualified and often part time workers.

Residential Care Economy

- 1.21 A particular facet of the Thanet economy is the residential care sector for both older people and children. Looking more specifically at the residential provision for older people, linking it to the economy of Thanet, then February 2004 ⁽⁴⁾ identified some 1298 beds in residential care across Thanet.
- 1.22 Of these total beds, then the Local Authority determined it needed 646 (49.7%) of them. The Local Authority therefore requires just less than half of the available beds. The remainder are consumed by other local authorities or by self funding individuals. This again impacts on the development of the local economy in a number of ways, including the requirements of other services – a classic example being the health service.

Previously Self-Funding Residents

- 1.23 Residents of care homes are not liable to pay fees unless they have assets in excess of £20,000. Many people enter residential and nursing care with capital or savings above this threshold (often because they

own their own house) but over time their assets are eroded. When they are no longer able to fund their residential or nursing care their fees become the responsibility of the Local Authority. These people may be Kent residents or have moved to Kent. They may have chosen a home that charges a fee beyond that which the Local Authority would normally pay. Because they have not been known to the local authority previously it is very difficult to estimate the demand that will be placed on the local authority and this makes effective financial and service planning much harder.

- 1.24 Whilst it is difficult to establish absolutely the number of people in this situation, indicative figures are available. For new placements made between 1st January and 30th September 2004 ⁽⁵⁾, 11% of new social services placements were of people who had previously funded their own care. This is more than double the 5% of such placements in Ashford. The consequence of this type of placement is that not only do they have a specific and direct impact on funding resources, they also impact on performance levels. Placements of people who have previously funded their own care are counted as new admissions to residential/nursing care within the local authority Performance Monitoring regime. Increases in such placements make unaccounted for demands on care services, which are outside of social care agencies ability to plan effectively.
- 1.25 The Report will turn in subsequent chapters to the impact of this number of older people in terms of the health economy, unpaid carers, and employment of staff in personal services. However, it is clear that this population cohort does contribute to a particular 'skew' in the make up of the residents of Thanet, the services that develop, and the particular needs of individuals within the community.

Children's Residential Care

- 1.26 Similar effects have been previously noted in the residential provision of care for Looked After Children. Thanet currently has 35 children's homes ⁽⁶⁾. All of these are provided by private companies, and seek to provide care for the most vulnerable of young people. Their impact is adjudged to be such that Thanet District Council and KCC have agreed a protocol which does not support the approval of any more such provision ⁽⁷⁾. Furthermore, the Architectural Liaison Officer for Thanet Police has opposed several applications for the development of children's homes ⁽⁸⁾. In particular, the Police make reference to Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 which details duties with regard to strategic and operational police planning. Whilst companies have continued to challenge this protocol with the Planning Inspectorate, no appeals for planning permission have yet been successful. Given the significance of the whole cohort of Looked After Children, the report will of course go on to consider their needs and impact more fully. None the less, it is important to understand here the consequence of residential care as a feature of the local economy.

- 1.27 Thus, even from this brief overview, there is a picture emerging of an area of high unemployment, with a workforce of perhaps insufficient educational achievement. The population is somewhat skewed by a greater proportion of older people, and the impact of the residential sector – both as a provider and as an employer – is noteworthy.

Findings

1. Economic shifts and the nature of industry in Thanet have resulted in it having the highest levels of socio-economic deprivation in Kent and the most limited life chances for its residents. The collapse of the area's traditional industry and tourism has resulted in low wage levels, limited transferable skills, low property prices and a surfeit of Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs). Perversely, although property prices are low, the affordability gap between earnings and house prices means that the affordability gap in Thanet is greater than elsewhere in Kent (source JRF 2003 affordability study).
2. The mix of population in Thanet shows an above average number of children and an above average number of people over 65. As a percentage of its overall population, Thanet has the lowest proportion of its population of working age of any Kent district.
3. The public sector, particularly the Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother hospital (QEQM), Thanet District Council and Kent County Council are the key employers in Thanet, although developments at Westwood Cross, EuroKent Business Park and Manston are bringing larger private sector employees into the area.
4. The present social and economic structure of Thanet has lent itself to the development of a formal care industry, ranging from elderly care homes, hostels for vulnerable adults, private children's homes and a multitude of independent foster carers. It has also become a destination of choice for a transient population, ranging from the homeless to those attracted by the "seaside" lifestyle.
5. The development of accommodation and institutions to cater for these trends has brought short term economic benefits to the area but at both the cost of the longer term regeneration of Thanet, and the ultimate life chances of the transient population within Thanet.

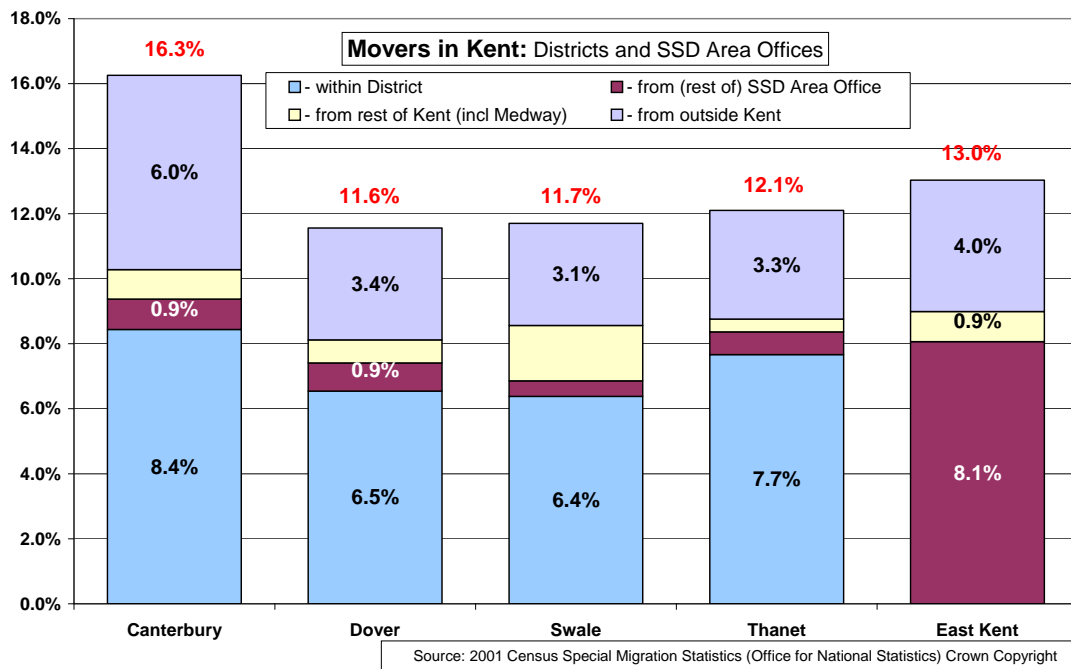
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1. *Living on the Edge: Sexual behaviour and young parenthood in rural and seaside areas*
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2. *Kent Economic Report*
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3. *Crime and Disorder Audit 2004 Draft Report*
Thanet Community Safety Partnership
4. *The Area Business and Performance Management Unit*
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5. *Farm Report November 2004*
6. *Evidence provided for Board of Inquiry, Commission for Social Care Inspection*
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7. *Kent County Council and Thanet District Council Protocol to restrict number of children's residential homes in Thanet*
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8. *Evidence provided for Board of Inquiry by Kent Police*
Iain MacKenzie, Crime Reduction Inspector
9. *DETR Index of Deprivation 2004*
10. *2001 Census – Special workplace statistics*
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CHAPTER TWO: THE STABLE OR CORE POPULATION OF THANET

A Mobile Population:

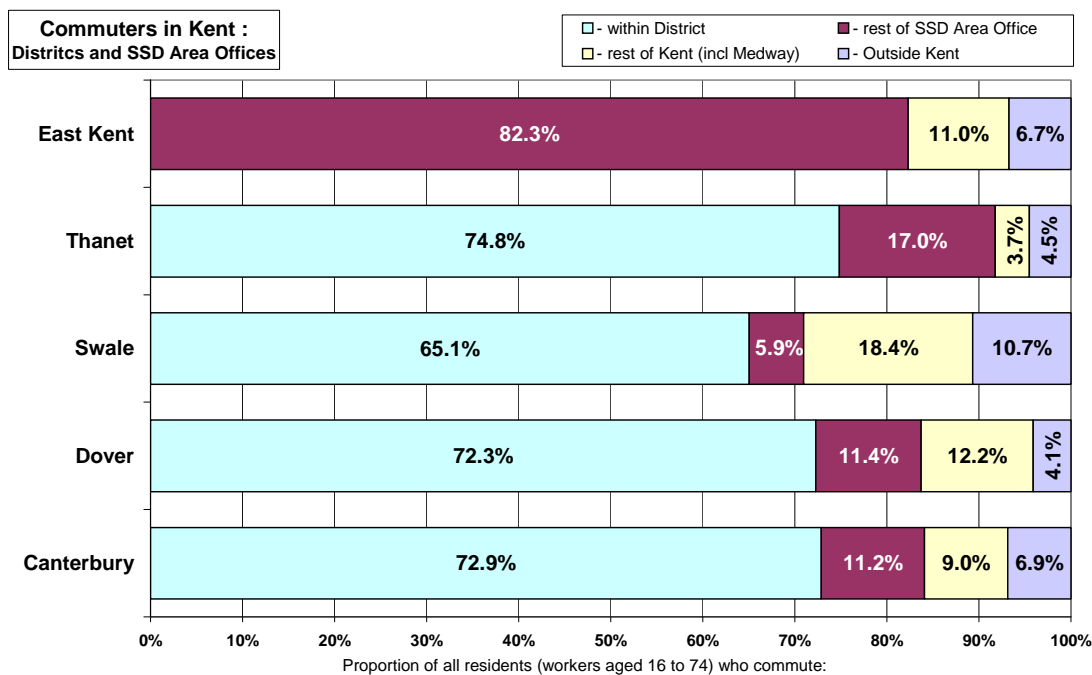
2.1 Typical of many coastal areas, Thanet's 126,700 population is mobile. Around 15,300 Thanet residents moved homes in the year before the 2001 Census⁽¹⁾. This represents some 12.1% of the District population, making Thanet residents one of the more mobile populations in Kent. However, Thanet's movers are most likely to move ***within*** the District: at 7.7% of all Thanet residents, it represents nearly two-thirds of all types of moves in the District. The transient nature of Thanet's population is discussed in more detail in the next chapter: "the churn".



Self-Contained Workforce:

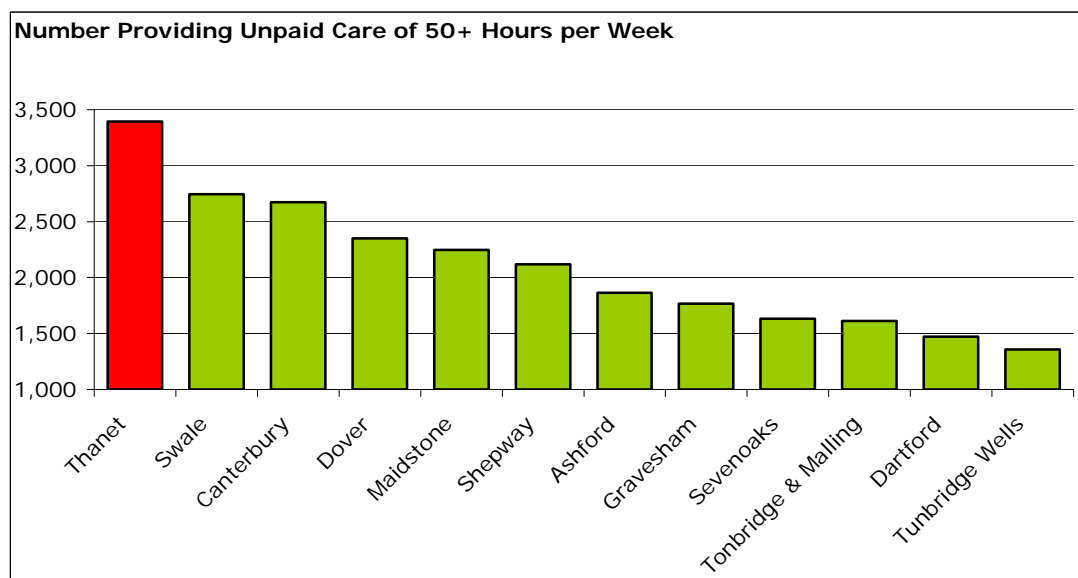
2.2 Thanet's self-contained house-moving activity is reflected at the high rate of localised commuting within the District. The chart below depicts Census data⁽²⁾, which shows that 3 out of every 4 Thanet Residents (75%) work within the District. This is high when compared to districts like Dartford and Sevenoaks where less than half (45%) of its residents work within the District. Thanet's localised commuting is further reflected by a further 17% working in the East Kent area, making a total of 92% of Thanet residents whose daily routine only revolves within East Kent. These are strong indicators that Thanet is fairly isolated, being at the tip of the geographic "peninsular" affect.

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Unpaid Caring:

2.3 According to the 2001 Census⁽³⁾, almost 3% of the population are providing 50 hours or more each week in unpaid care. This is significantly more than the returns of any other District, the detail of which is demonstrated in the table below.



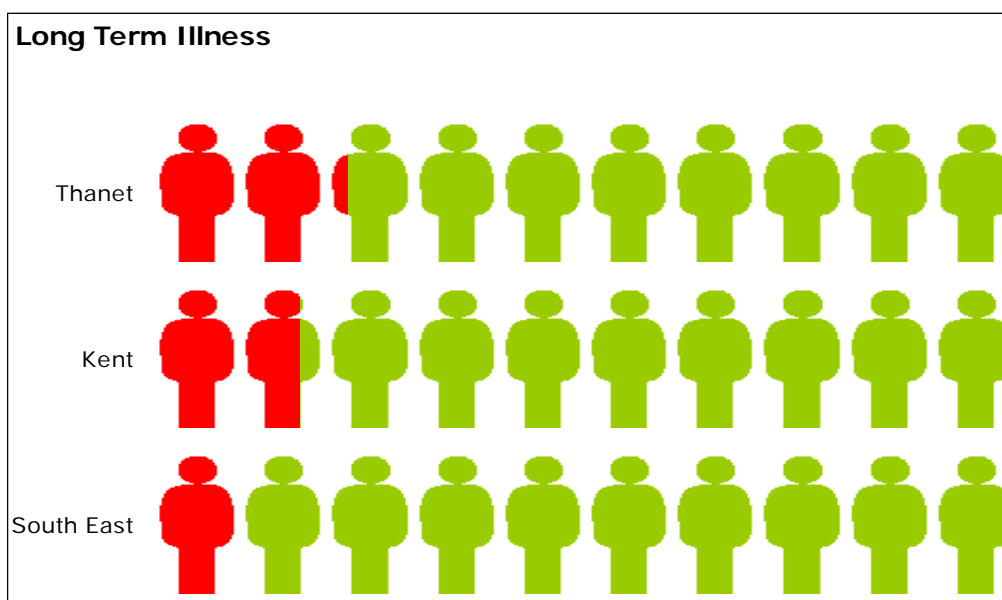
2.4 Massive care commitments for an unwell relative have featured recently in the press, when an 82 year old man with Alzheimer's was left in the Accident and Emergency department at Romford. In the Carers UK study published in December 2004⁽⁴⁾, carers who care for frail relatives are twice as likely to fall ill as the general population. In

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particular, carers themselves believe this reflects the lack of time or opportunity to consult doctors about their own symptoms, as well as chronic emotional strain compounded by a lack of sleep. This obviously puts additional pressure on the health and social care services should their health subsequently deteriorate, or become more serious as a consequence to the lack of earlier intervention.

Limiting Long Term Illness and Health Inequality:

- 2.5 Twenty-three percent of Thanet's population has some form of limiting long term illness⁽⁵⁾. This is nearly 1 in 4 people. This is the highest self-reported cohort of all districts in Kent and contrasts with 10.6% across the South East Region. Thus Thanet has more than double the rate of limiting long term illness when compared to the broad population of the South East of England.



As part of research undertaken by Sheffield Hallam University⁽⁶⁾, the extent and impact of serious illness is further underlined:

"...What is particularly striking, however, is the importance of Incapacity Benefit, especially amongst men....it is worth noting that among men the number claiming Incapacity Benefit is more than twice the number claiming Jobseeker's Allowance, the main benefit for the claimant unemployed, and greater than the number claiming Income Support..."

- 2.6 The Local Futures Group⁽⁷⁾ compared this 23% serious and long term ill figure with the 19% in Canterbury - in this short distance of less than 20 miles, this represents a 21% increase on the cohort resident in Canterbury. Similarly, the length of life expectancy in Thanet is significantly lower. The 2004 report by the Local Futures Group shows this as being 77 years – some 2 ½ years less than the average across Kent.

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- 2.7 Mitchell et al⁽⁸⁾ argue that premature death rates are a strong indicator of poor health. They note that the people of North Thanet are 6% more likely to die prematurely than the “National Average Person”. More strikingly, they are 43% more likely to die prematurely than the community of Tonbridge & Malling.

Further, Mitchell et al also found that the socio-economic profile of a district is increasingly significant in determining health levels.

“A very significant finding is that it is possible to account for nearly all the geographical extent and change in premature mortality by understanding how age, gender, social class and employment characteristics of Britain’s population have changed and particularly how their distribution across the country has changed. An area’s age/gender structure is becoming less important, while the socio-economic status of its population becomes more important in explaining the deaths which occur there overtime.”

- 2.8 Not surprisingly, closely correlated to this level of need are those employed in personal services. Again, the 2001 Census⁽⁹⁾ identifies that 11% are employed in this field, which is perhaps to be expected given the high level of residential care provision across the District. However, such employment is generally of low pay, and staff turnover can be high.

In Need of Support:

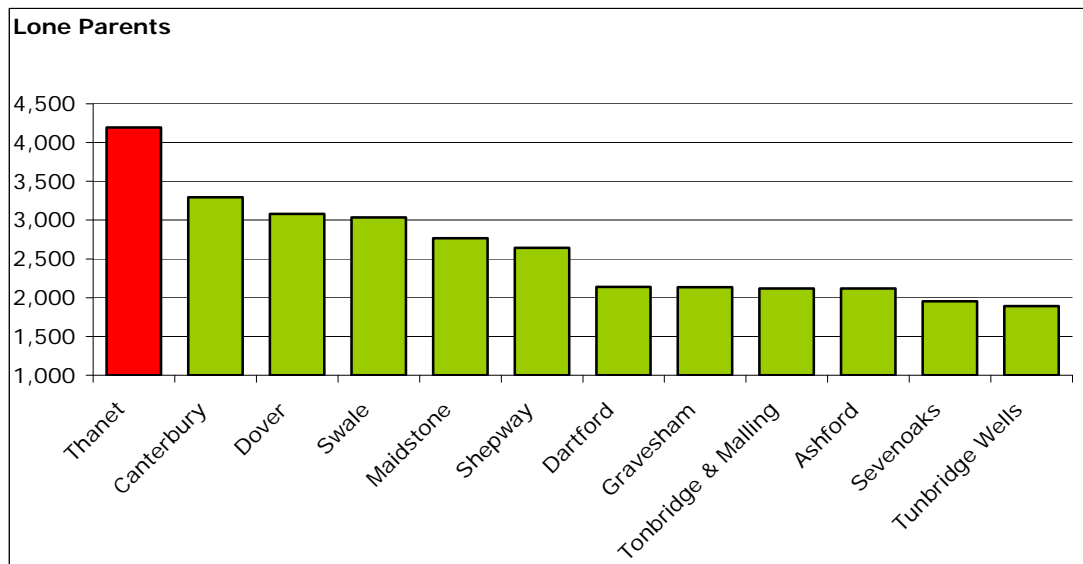
- 2.9 Similarly, a brief overview of the level of benefit payments illustrates further the high level of dependency. In the financial year ‘99/’00, the benefit payment per head in Thanet is high: at approximately £1,500⁽¹⁰⁾. A striking figure in its own right, however, its significance is more striking when we learn the average benefit per head for the County was only £878, little more than half of the Thanet figure. The KCC Supporting Independence Programme has the aim to increase employment, reduce dependency, and thereby the potential to achieve greater fulfilment.
- 2.10 In the August 2004 Select Committee report⁽¹¹⁾, which looked specifically at the Regeneration of East Kent Coastal Towns, 6 key issues were identified. For the purposes of this report, two in particular stand out:
- The need to have a diverse economy
 - The need to increase attainment and skills, as education and skills underpin future regeneration.
- 2.11 Earlier we looked at the importance of the social care sector to the Thanet economy. Also, this report has noted the high level of Thanet’s population with no formal qualifications.

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2.12 The Regeneration Report (August 2004) notes that a continued reduction in benefits claimants is influenced by many factors, but in particular, by:

- Levels of wages (many are only benefit equivalent)
- Transport
- Childcare commitments

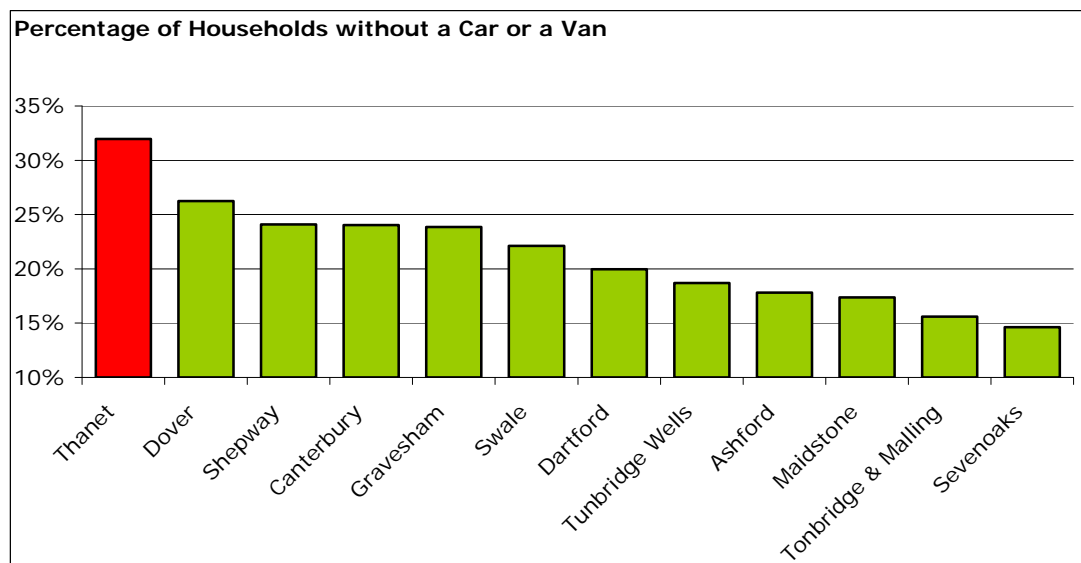
2.13 The latter two issues have additional weight for lone parents. According to the 2001 Census, 13% of households are made up of separated and divorced people across Thanet. Throughout the South East, this was second only to Hastings, and is approximately 62% higher than the lowest returning areas, such as Oxford (8%). Unsurprisingly therefore, Thanet returned the highest overall number of lone parents with dependent children.



Access Issues:

2.14 In broadly similar terms, Thanet had the greatest proportion of households without their own transport (2001 Census). Whilst this indicator does not explain all relevant factors such as availability of public transport, it presents yet another indicator of levels of isolation across Thanet.

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- 2.15 Nearly 1 in 3 households do not have access to a car or a van. In Sevenoaks, it is less than 3 in 20 households. The limitations of such levels of inaccessibility are wide ranging – from employment to children’s activities – and all impact heavily not only on employment and regeneration, but on children’s development and the capacity of preventative services to deliver.
- 2.16 As such, we therefore need to understand the characteristic of the core Thanet population when developing and evaluating services and interventions. However, this group is only one part of the overall Thanet population, and this report moves on to consider the impact of another major cohort – the population in transition.

Findings

1. Thanet has historically developed a specific island identity that has resulted in it being seen as a desirable destination by those outside to visit and access services. Once resident in Thanet however, people are more inward looking, are less likely to access external services, or integrate newcomers. This factor does however help to create a very strong sense of local identity and pockets of very strong community loyalty.
2. The core population of Thanet is relatively stable with very little permanent migration. The limited internal immigration of either high skills or education undermines economic regeneration.
3. Travel to work patterns show that there is less movement out of Thanet to work elsewhere in Kent than the average for Kent districts. This reinforces the sense of isolation from the neighbouring towns of Dover and Canterbury.

CHAPTER TWO: THE STABLE OR CORE POPULATION OF THANET

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CHAPTER THREE: THE TRANSIENT POPULATION “THE CHURN”

A Transient Population

- 3.1 The Department of Health’s Teenage Pregnancy Unit Report⁽¹⁾ finds that seaside resorts and their surrounding rural areas have highly transient populations. This report has already considered a stable, if perhaps isolated, core population. As such, it exists in stark contrast to a highly transient population, which forms a significant proportion of the Thanet residents at any one moment in time.
- 3.2 By way of an example, wards such as Cliftonville West show⁽²⁾ much higher rates of transience. The summary table below notes the detail of this:

Residents moved in year to Census	% of population (April 2001)
Residents moving into Cliftonville West	14.0%
Residents moving within Cliftonville West	8.5%
TOTAL MOVEMENT WITHIN WARD	22.5%

This represents over 1 in 5 residents being in a state of transition, contrasting with the Thanet average of 12.1% of the population who have moved in the year before the Census. Regardless of any levels of vulnerability, it is difficult to imagine a functioning community maximising its potential with such a high level of change at this micro level.

- 3.3 It is perhaps unsurprising therefore that a Primary School within this area⁽³⁾ had a 60% turnover in pupils. Whilst this figure relates to the time of greatest impact of an asylum seeking, transient population ('98/'99), it remains a striking figure. It is difficult to imagine how a teacher can enable children to maximise their potential when over half the children in the class change. It is equally important to be clear that this may pose limitations not only for the 40% that continue at the school, but also the school’s ability to educate their children.
- 3.4 As part of research for A Case Study of Thanet⁽⁴⁾, there was a survey of non-employed men and women of working age. The survey covered men aged 21-64 and women aged 21-59, who were not in full time or paid employment. The survey therefore covered not only the conventionally unemployed, but also the economically inactive in this age group. The under-21s were excluded to avoid the complication of extended stays in education.
- 3.5 Their findings showed that only 1 in 4 of this cohort had lived in Thanet all their life. Similarly, around 1 in 4 had lived in Thanet less than 5 years. When looking at those who had lived in Thanet for less than a year, there were noticeable differences between men and women (5% and 14% of their cohorts respectively). The report does not suggest an

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explanation for this, and indeed finds that this group is not very different in characteristics from other non-employed people in areas across the country. Rather, the issue is the number of jobless people found in seaside towns such as Thanet. Subsequently, they conclude that immigration has outstripped the supply of jobs.

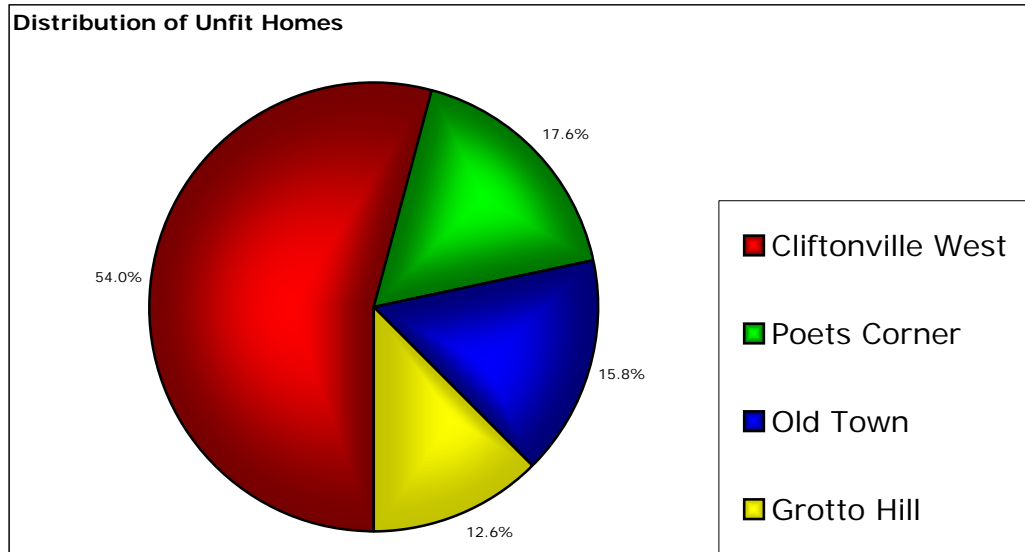
In exploring the reasons for moving to Thanet, some 1 in 7 cited housing issues:

- ❑ Able to get a house/flat here
- ❑ Placed here by another Local Authority
- ❑ Holiday home here
- ❑ Affordability of housing
- ❑ Homeless
- ❑ Wanted a bungalow / quiet area

Poor privately rented housing:

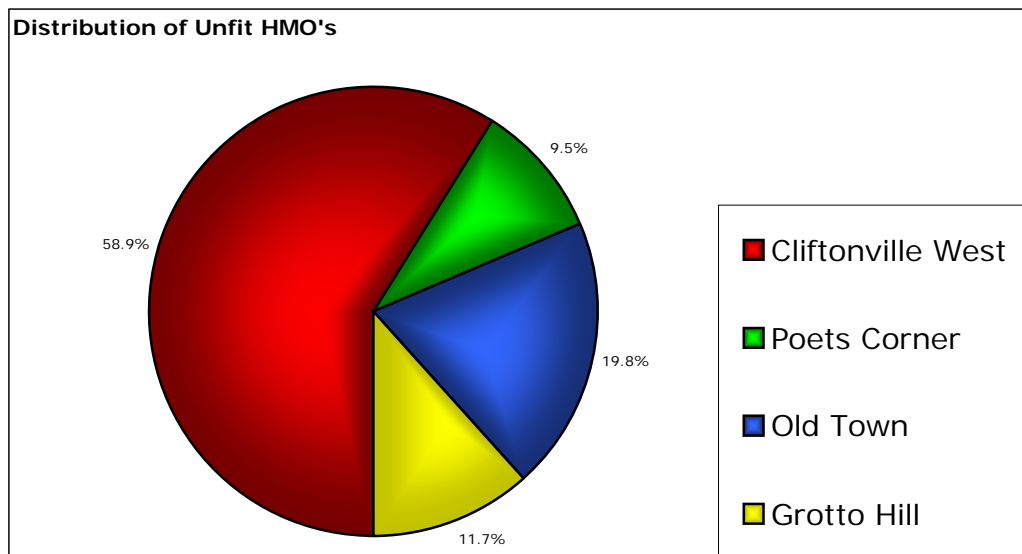
- 3.6 According to local research commissioned by Thanet District Council ⁽⁵⁾ approximately 72% of the housing stock in Thanet was held by owner-occupiers, which varies little from the 2001 Census, which showed owner-occupancy at almost 70%. This return showed Thanet to have the lowest owner-occupier residents of all Districts in Kent; conversely, Thanet had the highest number living with private landlords.
- 3.7 Across Thanet, the remaining housing of 28% is split between the privately (14.4%) rented and the social rented (13.6%) accommodations. Looking specifically at Cliftonville West, the number in privately rented accommodation is almost 38% - which is close to three times the local level.
- 3.8 Concerns about this level of private renting inform the Neighbourhood Renewal Assessment₍₆₎ which has as 2 of its objectives:
- To increase the number of people owning their own homes
 - To reduce the number of non-self contained homes.
- 3.9 This high figure is associated with a problem of unfit housing stock. This is detailed in the Neighbourhood Renewal Assessment, commissioned by Thanet District Council.

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Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs):

3.10 Cliftonville West dominates the poorest, indeed uninhabitable, housing stock in the study area with over half of the worst housing. The distribution of unfit housing in HMOs shows an even starker picture.



3.11 The ‘transient population’ is the most likely to live in HMOs. Coupled with the very high level of ‘unfit for habitation’ assessments, those people moving into and through this area are likely to be living in the worst conditions. Correlate this with the individual levels of vulnerability that such people often experience, and their disadvantage is amplified. The report will consider levels of vulnerability, but it is important that we understand its relationship to population movement – “The Churn”.

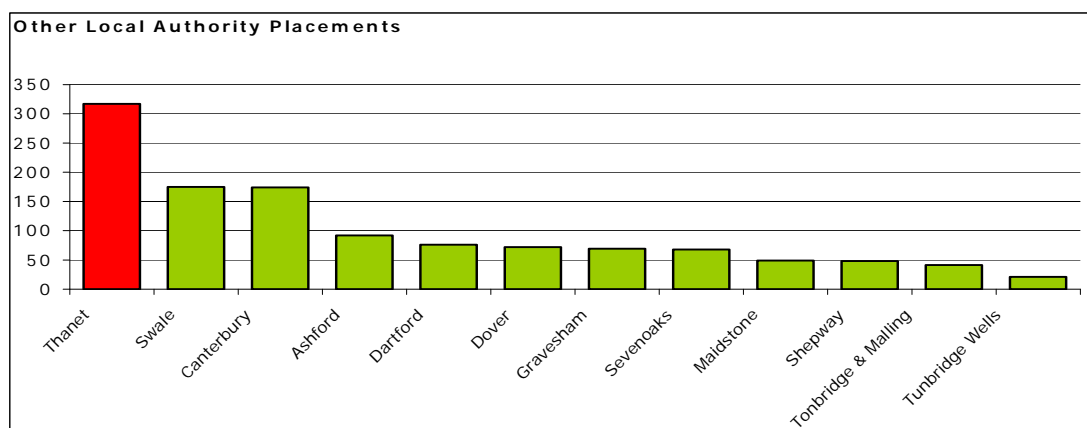
3.12 Recognition of the far reaching impact of poor housing has been emphasised in the Outcomes Framework₍₇₎ linking to the principle

CHAPTER THREE: THE TRANSIENT POPULATION “THE CHURN”

outcome of achieving economic well-being. The Government is proposing a target:

“.. % Social Housing and vulnerable households in the private sector in a decent condition...”

- 3.13 It is to be expected that with the measuring of levels of poor accommodation, there will be a requirement to quantify the numbers of vulnerable households. As yet, much of this data is unavailable.
- 3.14 It is extremely difficult to quantify the numbers of people placed in HMOs by Other Local Authorities (OLAs). Firstly, the OLAs have no responsibility to report such placements; and secondly, the Housing Benefit Office is unable to assess the number of claimants placed from other areas. None the less, anecdotal information is that such placements are made on a wide ranging basis, and indeed, the 1 in 3 population turnover identified in Cliftonville West supports this.
- 3.15 However, it is possible to look at a number of key groups, and try to identify a level of transition therein. Looking first at the group of Looked After Children, Kent County Council Performance Monitoring Section⁽⁸⁾ advise that as at 31st March 2003, there were 1206 Looked After Children across Kent that had been placed by OLAs. This effectively *doubled* the population of children looked after by Kent County Council, which was 1,351 at that time.
- 3.16 The chart below demonstrates the large proportion of this cohort that are placed in Thanet District alone:

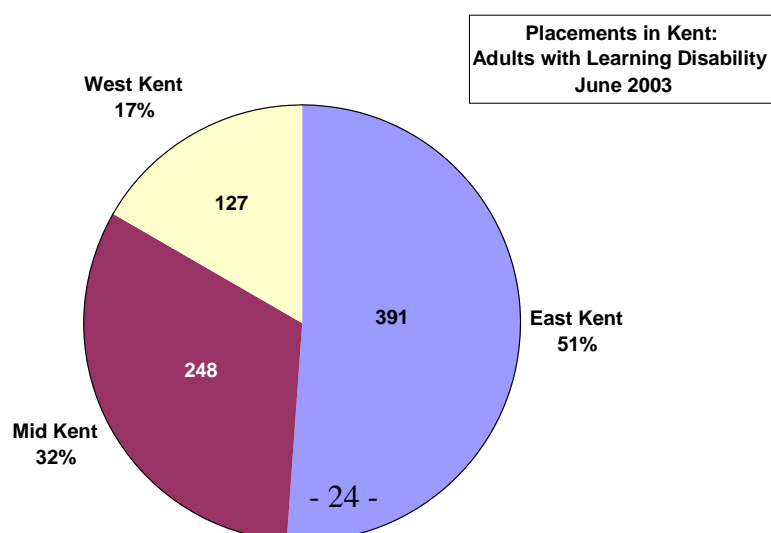


- 3.17 We shall of course consider the impact of Looked After Children later in the report. However, it is important now to look at this cohort with regard to population movement.

According to Janzon and Sinclair⁽⁹⁾ there were in September 2003 between 900 – 1000 children in the care of the London Boroughs who were placed in Kent. They report that 60% of the placements were expected to last 3 or more years. On this basis, there were no plans made for placement move.

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- 3.18 However, the evidence for this Inquiry provided by The Association of Child Care Services (TACCS) ⁽¹⁰⁾ says something quite different. TACCS represent approximately 80% of the residential childcare provision in Thanet, including some independent foster care. They advise that the **average stay in placement is 9 months**.
- 3.19 The discrepancy between 9 months and 3 or more years is remarkable. Any community interventions to support these displaced children and young people will be diluted if we are not clear whether these are quasi permanent placements or short term transitional placements. There is a need for greater clarity in understanding where such energies should be most effectively invested to achieve the best possible outcomes.
- 3.20 Looking next at a sub group of these Looked After Children, the Youth Offending Service⁽¹¹⁾ provides further detail of the impact of placement by OLAs. As at August 2004, the Thanet YOS team was working with children from 24 OLAs representing 16% of the 150 Local Authorities across the country. These young people, with highly complex levels of need requiring input from a number of services are likely to be further disadvantaged as part of a population in transition.
- 3.21 With regard to the adult population, it is much harder to have strong data on specific key groups in terms of transition. For the most part, information that is available is based on manual data collection or ‘specific survey’.
- 3.22 Kent Social Services⁽¹²⁾ undertook a specific piece of work in regard to Adults with Learning Difficulties in the late summer of 2003. In part, this was to establish the extent of placements by OLAs. The report found that approximately 1/3 of all learning disability placements in Kent were made by OLAs. Furthermore, that this was likely to be a significant underestimate, given the limited reporting by both the residential homes and a number of OLAs.
- 3.23 Although the information was not available on a district by district basis, the data was broken down across the three Areas of Kent. The report found that more than half of all Learning Disability Placements made by OLAs were made into East Kent (see chart below).



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- 3.24 Mindful of the previous findings with regard to residential care, and the impact of HMO availability, it is reasonable to assume that a significant proportion of those Adults with Learning Disability placed in East Kent are placed in Thanet.
- 3.25 As for adults with mental health issues, data from the PCTs show predicted admission rates⁽¹³⁾ reinforce findings on transition. Of the 9 PCTs, East Kent Coastal predicted the highest level of admissions – Mental Health, accounting for approximately 14% of the total. An admission to a psychiatric care unit will be avoided unless a person is seriously ill. However, in terms of a ‘churning population’, there are additional implications. Given the generally longer level of stay for mental health admissions (over physical admission), the question of ongoing tenancy arises. We have already established that those placed in perhaps the poorest housing conditions, with short term agreements, and probably as part of an HMO, are likely to be amongst the most vulnerable⁽¹⁴⁾. Consequently, they will be over represented in the transitional population, and for services to be effective, they will need to account for this level of movement.

Summary

- 3.26 It is clear that the level of population churn is a major factor within the communities of Thanet. The specific example of Cliftonville West demonstrates this at its most extreme. If 1 in 3 people are in a state of transition, then whilst they may consume a significant proportion of immediate services, it is unlikely that they will be in a position to maximise the value of the intervention. We need to continue to address this factor in our future planning, if we are to avoid a patchwork of services that do not account for both extremes of the population. In this way, we will be best placed to deliver good outcomes.

Findings

1. The transient nature of the most vulnerable sections of the Thanet population means that agencies have difficulty in developing appropriate services for them particularly since preventative services require time and stability to take effect.
2. This impact is compounded by a residual effect of the transient population, with, for example, high numbers of children becoming looked after to Kent social services as a result of this population movement. It is estimated that a third of the children becoming looked after in Thanet are children of the transient population.
3. These investments and the plethora of multi-agency initiatives have not however, and could not reasonably be expected to, significantly benefit or enhance the life chances of the transient population, who remain peripheral to the community in which they are placed.

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CHAPTER FOUR: THANET'S VULNERABLE POPULATION – ADULTS AND CHILDREN

Sustainable Development

- 4.1 In The State of the District ⁽¹⁾ the Local Futures Group argue that there are three main dimensions of sustainable development, these being:
- Economic Development
 - Social Profile
 - Environment

Thanet scores poorly with regard both to the economic development and social profile. With regard to the social profile, the most disappointing scores relate to prosperity and deprivation.

- 4.2 This 'scoreboard' becomes important when we begin to understand its relation to the most vulnerable amongst the population. In this section, the report seeks to look in more detail at those adults and children resident across Thanet who experience both the highest levels of vulnerability, and the associated levels of social exclusion.

Drug and Alcohol Misuse

- 4.3 In looking at the impact of drug and alcohol misuse, then notwithstanding the extensive work being undertaken by partner agencies, the compounding effects remain considerable. Thanet represents approximately 9.5% of Kent's total population (8% of Kent and Medway's population). However, according to information from the Strategic Health Authority ⁽²⁾, Thanet accounts for 17% of the total number of drug related admissions to hospital across Kent. Unsurprisingly, this is the highest single figure. In essence, this means that a little more than **1 in 6 people** across the whole of the County who are admitted to hospital for concerns relating to drug misuse come from the Isle of Thanet.

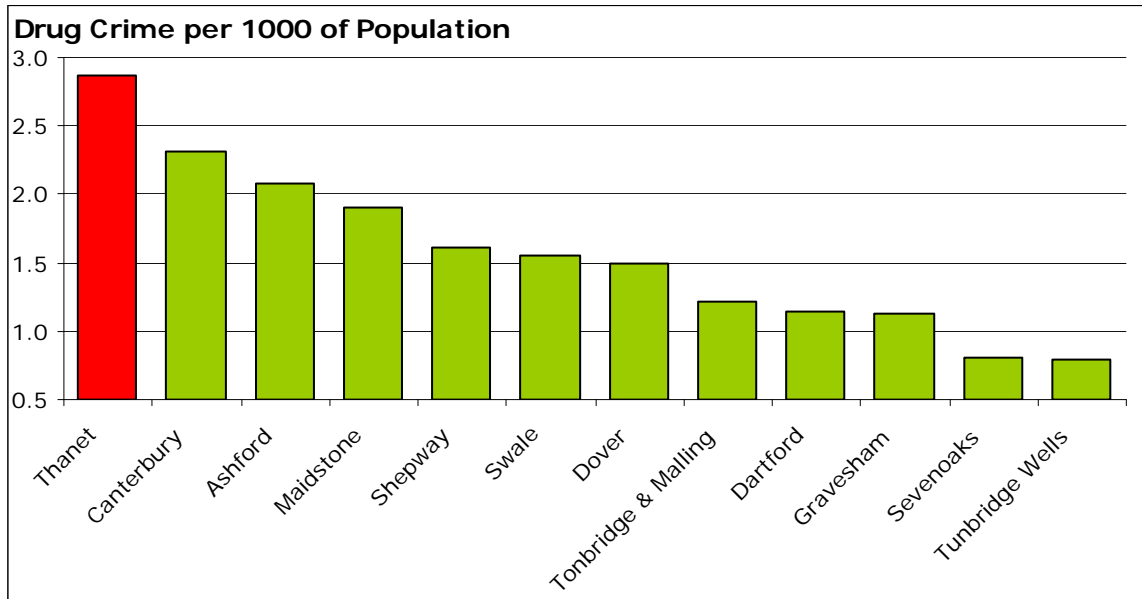
- 4.4 According to the Central Neighbourhood Renewal Unit – in 2001 ⁽³⁾,
"...areas affected by deprivation and decline have a host of factors which create, accelerate and maintain that decline; drugs are a discrete factor that in complex ways affect this process..."

Drugs and Crime

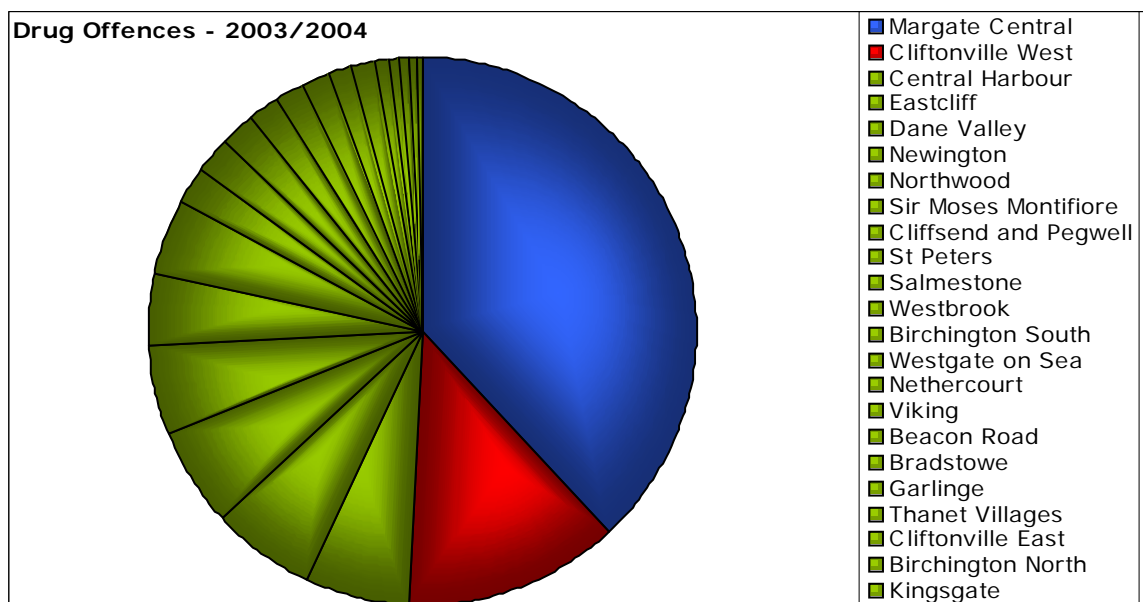
- 4.5 Similarly, some crime statistics are a useful indicator of the extent and impact of substance misuse in the area. For the year 2003 / 2004 ⁽⁴⁾, the recorded drug crime per 1000 population in Kent is 1.63. For Thanet, this figure is 2.87 – roughly 76% greater. Just to further demonstrate the degree of difference, Thanet's drug crime is **more**

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than 3½ times more extensive than in Tunbridge Wells. The graph below shows this information in more detail:



4.6 In looking more specifically at Thanet itself, then Margate Central consistently returns the greatest number of recorded drug offences. However, Cliftonville West is repeatedly second in this 'league table'.



4.7 This data demonstrates the significant role of substance misuse as an element of our vulnerable population. We shall turn later in the report to other details of crime, and have already looked at the impact of such factors as poor housing or population churn. Services need to be integrated as part of an overall strategic plan, delivered in ways that address wider issues.

Mental Health and Wellbeing

- 4.8 In turning next to Adult Mental Illness (AMI), during Jan-June 2004 ⁽⁵⁾ there were some 1861 adults across the 23 Wards of Thanet with diagnosed mental illness. The highest return for all wards was Cliftonville West, which recorded 244 people. This represents 13% of all adults with mental illness – in itself, a higher than proportionate level. However, it becomes starker when Cliftonville West is compared to the other wards.
- 4.9 The next most significant cluster of adults with mental illness is found in Dane Valley, which accounts for 8% of the total AMI population. The Thanet ward with the fewest is Kingsgate, returning only 0.5% of this population. Therefore, it is clear that the greatest proportion of adults with a mental illness live in the one ward of Cliftonville West.
- 4.10 Such a cluster of adults with a mental illness in one ward is likely to have a significant impact on the needs of the community. This reinforces the picture that is developing of the particular needs of Thanet as a District, but also highlights that specific pockets or local communities are characterised by even greater levels of vulnerabilities, compounded by practical factors such as the impact of prevalent Houses of Multiple Occupation (HMOs). In order to develop the most effective ways to deliver good outcomes, it is essential we continue to build our understanding of this 'spider map'. None of these factors exist in isolation – rather, there is an almost symbiotic element to their compounding influence, and we need to realise this in the broadest of terms.
- 4.11 With regard to the older populations, this report has already considered the fact that almost 22% of Thanet's population is over 65 years old. Regarding the levels of mental ill health for this cohort, then again Cliftonville West dominates with some 12% of the total population for Older Persons with Mental Health Needs (OPMHN). Westgate is the ward with the next highest prevalence levels at 8.5%. Thus, Cliftonville West has approximately **one third as many** older persons living with mental ill health as the next most significant ward.

Learning and Disability

- 4.12 In considering the impact of learning disability, we have already seen that placements by Other Local Authorities (OLAs) are a significant factor (*detail in Chapter 3 – The Transient Population*). According to information from the Business Planning and Performance Management Unit ⁽⁶⁾ Thanet hosts 26 Residential Homes for people with Learning Disability. In addition, there are a further 20 Supporting People Placements (which would have previously been small care homes).

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- 4.13 Of itself, this demonstrates a weighty proportion of such a vulnerable group resident in a limited area. However, this is further complicated when we consider the impact of other key services.
- 4.14 If an adult with learning disability is homeless and presents to an Accident and Emergency department for treatment, when they are ready to leave hospital, they in effect become 'Ordinary Resident' in that Area. Given the growing prominence of the Accident and Emergency services at the Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother hospital (QEQM), the Thanet Learning Disability Team ⁽⁷⁾ advise that this has become an increasing feature of their work. Although anecdotal, the team has sufficient information to report that in such cases, the individuals are placed from hospital into one particular 'hotel' in Cliftonville West.
- 4.15 Such incidents are not restricted to emergency or unexpected events, but are fairly routinely exemplified in work by the Learning Disability team. Even the 'planned' migrations to Thanet can result in heavy and unexpected demands on local resources. The following case study arose on 13th December 2004, and is used here to give an individual example of the impact of placement by OLAs.

Case Study:

Background: Another local authority proposed a move to Thanet for a couple with learning difficulties. The level of provision in the placing LA included:

- 3 sessions per week for personal care
- 5 hours per week domestic assistance
- 4 days per week with a cook going into the house
- 3 hours per week support worker
- Independent advocate to facilitate move

Referral and action: Subsequent to a referral being made by the OLA, advising of the move, the following actions were undertaken:

- Multi agency meeting convened by the OLA. Agreement for OLA to continue to fund care package for 3 months post move
- Visit to new accommodation in Thanet including presence of independent living scheme worker; Occupational therapy, LD Team
- Visit to local day centre for introductions

Day of move: Immediate crisis presentation, the extremes of which included:

No medication available for Mrs X and no food

Mrs X had no shoes and toe nails so long she was having difficulty walking

Current services: At the point of placement, the OLA subsequently advised that they would not fund the care package at all, as this couple were now defined ordinary resident in Thanet. At the time of writing, the current care package is as follows:

- 3 days per week personal care
- Daily visits by Independent Living Scheme
- 3 days per week at day centre
- Transport provision

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- 4.16 Yet again an already significantly vulnerable population is being continually increased, seriously compromising the ability of the host community to develop its capacity or meet the needs of its individuals.

Other Vulnerable Adults

- 4.17 Looking more broadly at adult care, then we have already established that Thanet has an older, sicker population, and that a large proportion of those employed are involved in their personal care. Adult protection is an area that all agencies have begun to understand in more depth, and of course implicit in any concern of adult protection is the concept of the vulnerable adult. During 2003, there were 125 enquiries into adult protection in Thanet ⁽⁸⁾. Whilst undoubtedly a body of expert knowledge builds up in one location, it is also clear that this can impact considerably on the resources available. Taking 260 Adult Protection Cases over a three year period (2001-2003), then the hours committed to each case by Care Management averages at **19.85 hours**. Of course, there will be variation on a case by case basis, but it is important to understand that each situation is likely to need **four working days** from just one part of one agency. Given that over half the placements made by OLAs are made into East Kent, the impact of this should not be underestimated.
- 4.18 Major expansion of residential services by the private sector continues to be proposed. In the past month the building and conversion of properties to house 56 new clients, each with serious disabilities and substantial needs for services, has been put forward by a single developer. All of these placements will be from other authorities and exorbitantly expensive.

Vulnerable Children and Young People

- 4.19 In considering levels of vulnerability amongst children and young people, there are a number of key findings that would benefit from further exploration. Looking first at the impact of teenage pregnancy, the understanding and concern around young parenthood is such that the Teenage Pregnancy Unit (TPU) was established in September 1999. This report will not seek to replicate the breadth of data already available elsewhere. However, it is important to understand the role and impact of this issue affecting the local vulnerable population.

In its report of July 2004 ⁽⁹⁾ the DfES finds that:

“...In seaside resorts, and their surrounding rural areas, a hedonistic ‘carnivalised’ leisure and entertainment environment, together with more transient populations, increase the likelihood of young people engaging in unprotected sex. Easy access to alcohol in both seaside and rural areas increased the likelihood of risky behaviour...”

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- 4.20 The TPU ⁽¹⁰⁾ identified that the rates of teenage pregnancy are very high in Thanet. The table below indicates the vast difference in these rates:

Geographical Area	Teenage Pregnancy rates	'League table position'
England	42.9 per 1,000	National Position
Hastings	60.7 per 1,000	1 st in South East
Thanet	59.8 per 1,000	2nd in South East
Waverley	17.8 per 1,000	Lowest in South East

- 4.21 So, in Thanet, almost 6% of all babies are born to teenage parents. In Waverley, it is less than 2%. Thus, a baby born to parents in Thanet is **3 times more likely** to have young parents. The reason this matters is because we know of the higher levels of vulnerability and poorer outcomes that correlate positively with this. The DfES ⁽¹¹⁾ point out that

“...Parenting became more difficult when decent housing, adequate income and childcare were hard to obtain; these difficulties were seen to result from negative attitudes towards young parents and poor service provision...”

- 4.22 Of course, the relevance to this inquiry is that we have already established that these factors are a feature of important parts in Thanet, and more specifically, of Cliftonville West in particular. In this light, the impact of young parenthood takes on greater significance.

- 4.23 Finally, it is essential to consider the impacts associated with vulnerable children who are looked after in Thanet. Whilst this report will go on to consider the broad field of children in public care, we have already established that the market for Private and Voluntary Care and for Independent Fostering Agencies is heavily reliant on the placement of children by OLAs ⁽¹²⁾. In the Regeneration of East Kent Coastal Towns, the select committee note that:

“...The impact however (of these placements) is that some of the most damaged or vulnerable children are placed in East Kent, some distance away from family and home community networks...”

- 4.24 Government guidance ⁽¹³⁾ states that if children have to be placed outside of their families they should be less than 20 miles away. It is important for children to make sense of their family connections, and to continue as part of their community where this is safe and appropriate to do so. Our child care legislation builds on this principle. In a very real sense, therefore, continuing to place children so far away compounds their own level of vulnerability.

Summary

- 4.25 There is a weight of evidence to show that the impact of a vulnerable population is significant across Thanet and is greater in some specific areas. Furthermore, that these levels of vulnerability are not only complex but complicated by the interwoven, tangible features of a local infrastructure. Poor housing, the impact of the coast, and the positive growth of local hospital services all have a part to play. Our challenge is to understand the complicated nature of this relationship, and to continue to account for it in our planning delivery.
- 4.26 The characteristics of Thanet that promote the placement of vulnerable people who in turn compound Thanet's problems, need to be addressed as well as the practice of Other Local Authorities.

Findings

- 1 There is significant transient migration of groups of vulnerable children and adults into Thanet. This influx tends to be focused around the most deprived areas of Thanet, most notably Cliftonville West.
- 2 There are significant cost benefits to the placing agencies, but the benefits to the local economy of the placement of vulnerable people are short term.
- 3 As well as the peripheral churn that militates against integration, the sheer saturation of vulnerable children and adults in wards such as Cliftonville West will heighten both the vulnerability and the alienation of those placed.
- 4 It is also the case that the most vulnerable within society, Looked After Children, people with a learning disability, mental health problems, drug and alcohol addiction are being placed within a 'ghetto' which is not only the most deprived but is also the most geographically constrained in size.
- 5 Effectively, vulnerable children and adults are being placed in the area of South East England in which they are least likely to be integrated, and are likely to have their life chances diminished rather than enhanced.
- 6 Placing agencies may assume that sending their poor and their vulnerable to the sunny green climes of Kent (but without any real knowledge of the environment of the placement itself) is beneficial. The inquiry was unable to find any evidence that the placement of vulnerable children and adults in Thanet provided any benefit to the recipients. Conversely, all the evidence suggests that these placements only exacerbate the vulnerability of those placed.

CHAPTER FOUR: THANET'S VULNERABLE POPULATIONS – ADULTS & CHILDREN

References:

1. *The State of the District – an economic, social and environmental audit of Thanet*
The Local Futures Group April 2004
2. *Strategic Health Authority 2003 / 2004*
3. *Tackling Drugs as part of Neighbourhood Renewal*
Central Neighbourhood Renewal Unit in Kent Drug and Alcohol Action Team: Thanet
Drug Audit 2004
4. *Kent Police Business Information Unit 2004*
5. *Returns on Adult Mental Illness – Public Health Information Team Manager, K&M Health*
Informatics Service 2004 (clients with Thanet postcode having had contact in the last 6
months or current inpatients)
6. *The Area Business and Performance Management Unit, Kent County Council*
7. *Internal Information: Learning Disability Team – Thanet East Kent Adult Services*
8. *Internal Information: Adult Protection Service - SSD*
9. *Living on the Edge; Sexual behaviour and young parenthood in rural and seaside areas.*
DfES Research Report July 2004
10. *Teenage Pregnancy Unit / ONS – Under 18 Conceptions for Tier 1 and 2 Local*
Authorities 1999-2001
11. *Living on the Edge; Sexual behaviour and young parenthood in rural and seaside areas.*
DfES Research Report July 2004
12. *Regeneration of East Kent Coastal Towns*
A review by a select committee appointed by the Strategic Planning Policy Overview
Committee Chairman: Mr C Capon August 2004
13. *Quality Protects Guidance*

CHAPTER FIVE: LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN

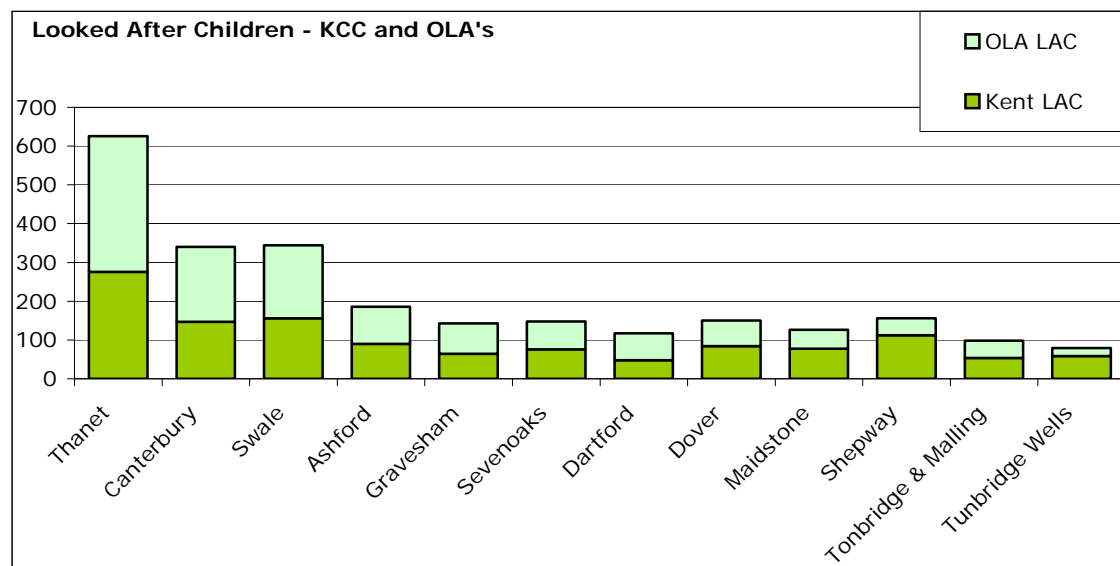
5.1 The long-term impact for children who grow up in public care is well documented, and it is not the purpose of this report to repeat these extensive findings. Rather, this section will explore the consequences of the huge numbers of Looked After Children placed in Thanet.

Placements

5.2 To establish the overall picture, it is helpful to understand the proportions of Looked After Children as part of the child population ⁽¹⁾. Beginning with the total numbers of children who are looked after across Kent – both in the care of KCC and those placed by Other Local Authorities (OLAs).

5.3 The most recent validated figures including OLA placements show that there were **2513 Looked After Children** placed in Kent. Just over half of these (50.5%) were placed into the County by OLAs. Of itself, this is a major finding – that authorities outside Kent placed more children here than Kent itself was looking after.

5.4 Beyond this however, it is important to understand the extremely varied pattern of distribution of these children across the 12 Districts of Kent. The information below demonstrates the numbers of Looked After Children to each District, and the children placed in that District by OLAs.



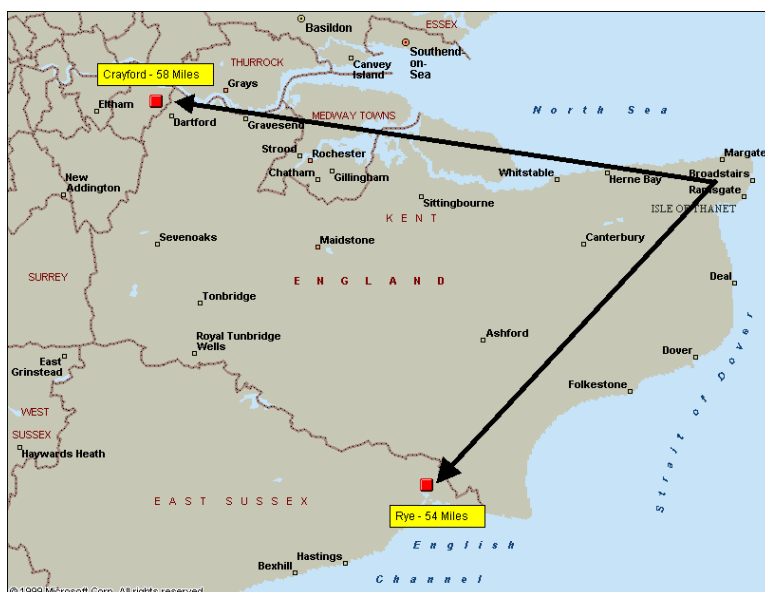
April 2003

Placements by Other Local Authorities

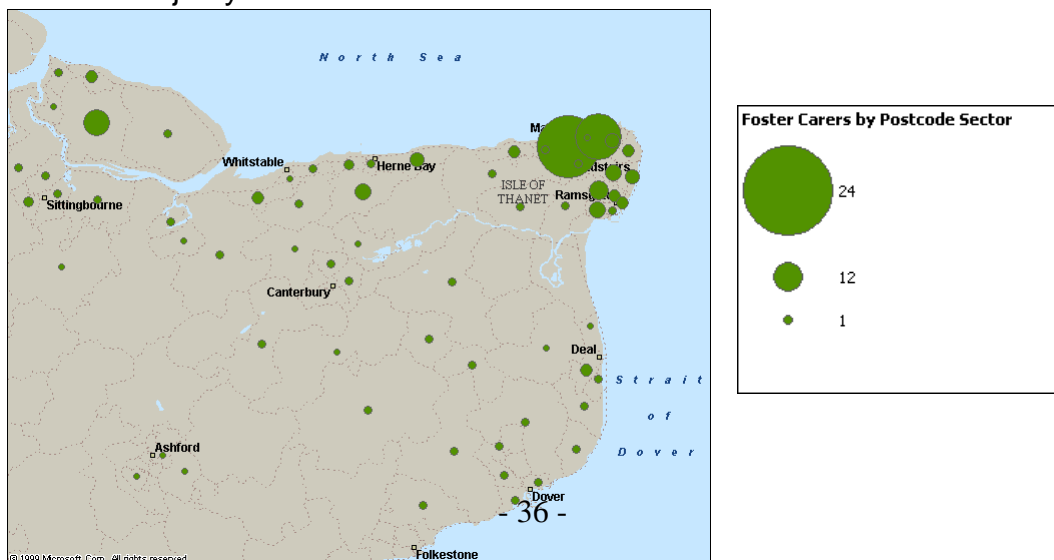
5.5 For Districts that geographically border other Local Authorities, such as Sussex or Bromley, it is obvious that some children who are placed 'outside' of their own Local Authority may still be placed within 20 miles of their home. However, for Thanet no such accommodation is

CHAPTER FIVE: LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN

possible. The nearest other Authority (excluding Medway) is still over 50 miles – way beyond 20 miles, therefore far exceeding good practice guidance.

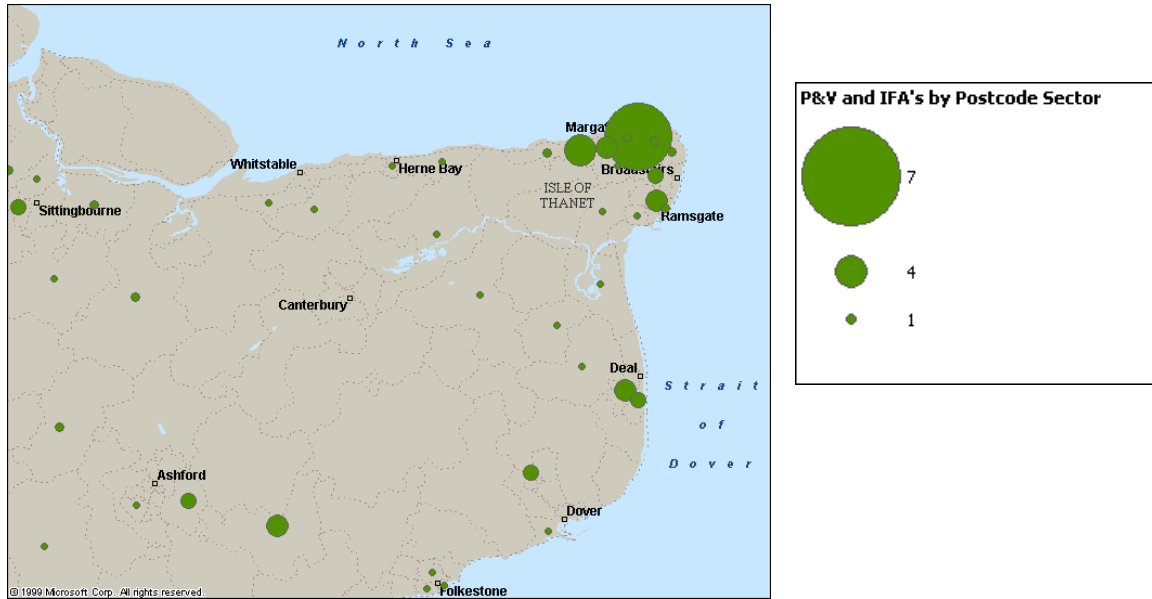


- 5.6 Furthermore, the overwhelming proportion of Looked After Children in Thanet are placed by OLAs. In April 2003, there were 626 Looked After Children in Thanet, of whom 276 were looked after by Thanet Children and Family teams. This represents only 44% of the total - significantly less than half. Indeed, across the 12 Districts in Kent half had more children placed by OLAs than they had placed themselves.
- 5.7 Finally, these numbers indicate that Thanet had very nearly **8 times more** Looked After Children than the Kent District with the least, Tunbridge Wells. This figure alone demonstrates the extreme numbers of placements made into the Thanet District.
- 5.8 Indeed, the following two maps show the overwhelming placement capacity in Thanet, and in Margate/Cliftonville in particular. The first map details the current East Kent KCC foster carers working to the East Kent Fostering team. The dominance in North Thanet is clear, although it is important to note that there are foster carers located in the majority of wards.



CHAPTER FIVE: LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN

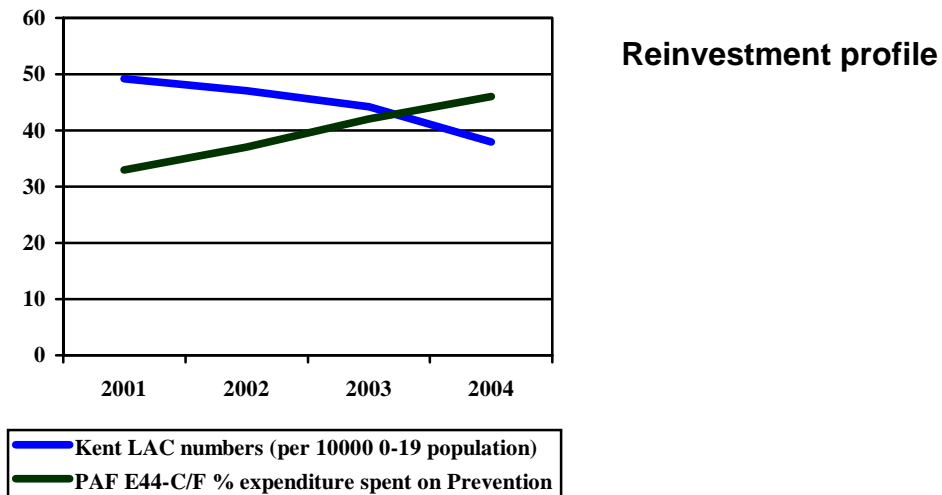
5.9 However, this cannot be said of the private sector. With an emphasis on coastal development, the huge impact on Cliftonville West in particular is unmistakable.



Practice in Kent

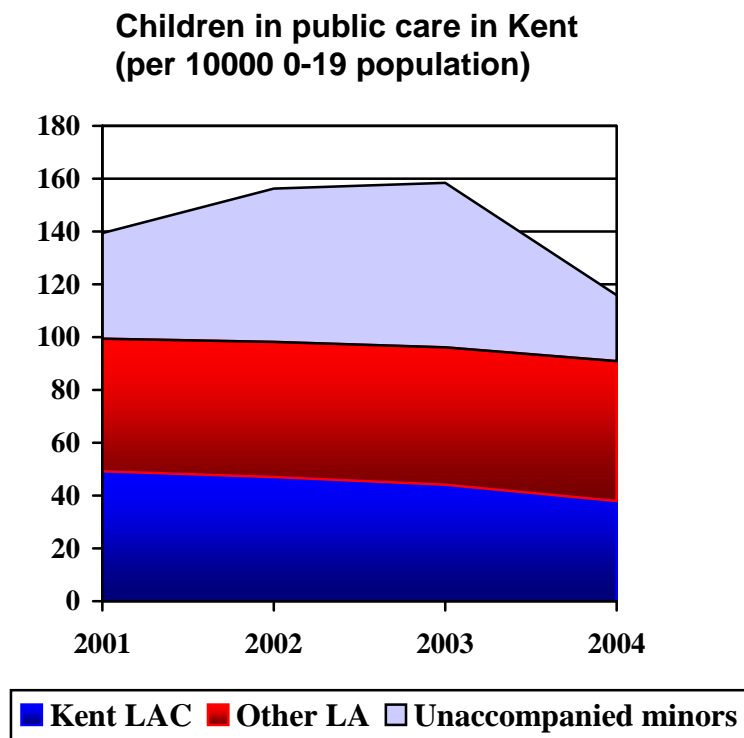
5.10 It is important to remember that there has been significant improvement in securing permanency for children across Kent. When Kent reported its Local Public Service Agreement (LPSA) returns at the end of March 2004, Thanet's own Looked After Children then stood at 237.

5.11 Indeed, there is clear evidence of a 20% reduction of Kent's Looked After population over the 3 years between 2001 and 2004 (2). Furthermore, there is a direct correlation between enabling our children and young people to grow up outside of public care, and an increase in the resources directed to Children in Need. The line graph below shows the progress across Kent, and the impact of refocusing resources towards Children in Need should not be underestimated.



5.12 However, there is less evidence that the placement of children by OLAs has reduced, and indeed the National Statistics ⁽³⁾ record that there continues to be an increase in the children who are looked after for 12 months or more. At a community level therefore, it is unlikely there is a reduction in the impact of such a number of Looked After Children.

5.13 Across the County as a whole, the reduction of Kent's Looked After population has in many respects been masked in the continued placement by OLAs. For Thanet, the consequences are such that the impact of significant numbers of Looked After Children in a state of transition mitigate directly against the impact of redirected resources. The table below demonstrates the Countywide cohort over the past three years ⁽⁴⁾.



Placement Density

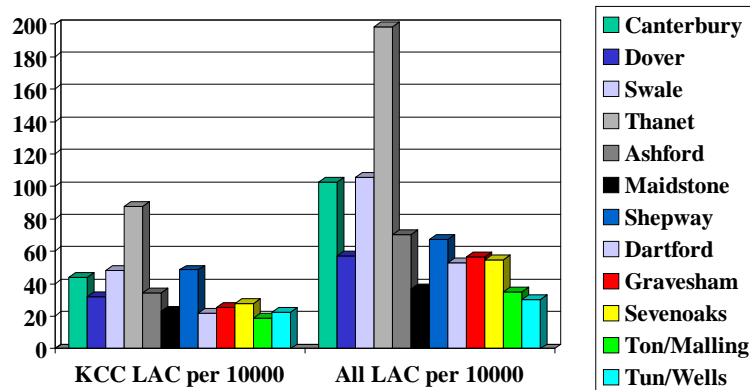
5.14 Moving beyond 'straight numbers', there is merit in exploring this Looked After population as a proportion of their peers. Taking a density in relation to 10,000 child population, then excluding Thanet's cohort, the average number of Looked After Children across Kent would be 60.9:10,000 (0-19 years). The ratio in Thanet is more than **3 times greater**, at 198.3 : 10,000 child population.

5.15 In general terms, this means that around 2% of the children in Thanet are Looked After Children; across Kent as a whole, you would only expect a little over half of one percent at 0.6%. Such a figure becomes starker when you consider the District with the lowest Looked After

Children population density. Tunbridge Wells has only 30.1 Looked After Children to every 10,000 children. Consequently, we can see that not only does Thanet have the densest population cohort of children in public care, but that it has a proportion some **6.5 times greater** than the District with the lowest proportion.

- 5.16 The table below shows the massively greater density of the Looked After Children population across Thanet – and indicates the scale of the issues they may generate.
- 5.17 It is clear that Thanet is home to an extraordinary number of Looked After Children and young people – both numerically and proportionately. It is important now to consider the capacity of the District to meet their needs.

Looked After Children Density



13

Residential Placements

- 5.18 According to information available at 31st December 2003, ⁽⁵⁾ almost 28% of children from OLAs placed in Thanet were in residential establishments. However, Janzon and Sinclair ⁽⁶⁾ found that only 13% of the placements made by authorities within the Greater London Association of Directors of Social Services (GLADSS) are not to a family placement. It is unlikely that the placements made by the London Boroughs differ extensively from the placements by alternative authorities, and there is no information currently available that would account for these different figures. However, even taking a mid-point of 20%, this means boldly that 1 in 5 of the OLA children looked after in Thanet are not placed in a family setting.



- 5.19 Considering only the children looked after by KCC Thanet Children & Family District, then at the 31st October 2004, only 4 children were placed in residential care. This equates to less than 2% (4 / 241 children) of their total Looked After Children population. In other words, OLAs are placed into non-family settings at a rate **10 times higher** than the Thanet Children and Family District.

OLA Placement Policy

- 5.20 In the Select Committee report 'Regeneration of East Kent Coastal Towns' (7), the placement of so many other children is considered to be of such concern that they make the following recommendation:

"...KCC and SSD need to lobby Government and Other Local Authorities to tackle issues of placements of Looked After Children in coastal towns, and promote preventative strategies and share practice with other authorities..."

- 5.21 As part of this Board of Inquiry we contacted 56 OLAs who were known to the Area Business and Performance Management Unit as placing Looked After Children in Thanet. Of these 56 OLAs less than half (only 20) responded, and of these, 2 OLAs felt they had insufficient time or information to assist the Board of Inquiry. Whilst accepting the short timescale of response time available, it is greatly concerning that proportionately so few OLAs were able to contribute to this Inquiry, assisting in our understanding of why so many vulnerable children should be placed in this District.

- 5.22 When looking at why children are placed into the services that they are, there is again some mixed information. The report by Janzon and Sinclair finds that less than 1/3 are so placed because of the needs of the child; rather, that the remaining proportion – **more than 2 in 3 children** – are placed because there are no other local placements.

- 5.23 Evidence given by a number of OLAs to this Inquiry gives further weight to the view that having placements available in Kent to some extent reduces the urgency to progress alternatives within the young person's community. Whilst most authorities note their strategic actions and plans to deliver options locally, they also record fairly strong statements such as (8):

"...I am not going to review my placement procedures again in the light of your letter...Unless the legislation changes I think that Kent needs to ensure that it can adequately fulfil the duties upon Kent County Council, particularly with regard to Education and Educational Support for these children, and to do so with some urgency..."

"...regrettably, Kent does have a large supply of (private and voluntary) resources. We would however suggest that this is partially as a result

CHAPTER FIVE: LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN

of Kent closing down its own internal residential facilities. We also believe that this has stimulated the private social care market within Kent itself. We are also aware that some of the providers are in the more economically deprived areas of Kent, again we appreciate the issues that this creates for local services, however there must be some benefit to Kent in other ways of having more residents in economically deprived areas such as Thanet economically active as a result of their care work...

- 5.24 The last response displays two very worrying misapprehensions. Kent places children and young people in residential care only when this is demonstrably the best way to meet their individual needs. In Thanet residential placements are overwhelmingly used by OLAs. Secondly the importance of the care sector in Thanet's economy is a reflection of its relative deprivation not a consequence of a robust local economy.
- 5.25 It is worth noting that not all OLAs responded in this way. A number are actively working to develop their services for Looked After Children, and raising awareness of the impact of placing children outside of their communities. Examples of this include a commitment to:
- ❑ Consulting with host districts (over and above the LA) before making a placement
 - ❑ Having specific regard to the social and economic well-being of host communities in making a placement decision
 - ❑ Placing a bar on new placements in Kent
- 5.26 It is of course extremely timely that this focus on young people who are placed so far from their families and communities is raised. Lord Filkin (Minister for Education and Skills) confirmed in an interview for the Radio 4 "Today" programme on 13th January 2005 (9) that figures indicated that too many children were placed a long distance from their own area. Furthermore, when commenting specifically on Local Authorities who continue to place away from home communities he advised that:
- "...basically it's a wake up call because a number of Local Authorities manage this and they manage it well. For those that don't I shall be writing to them bringing to the attention of Senior Members why it is that their Authority appears to have a situation where it looks to an outsider as if children are placed a long way away and then are in danger of being forgotten. This has got to change..."*
- 5.27 TACCS (10) gave evidence to the Inquiry that most placements into facilities they represented were planned. Of 80 placements made, only 4 children were actually placed on the day that the referral was made. Furthermore, they note a high degree of selection to ensure placement and child needs match, estimating that 90% of placements are refused by the agencies. Although not refuted by other evidence, there remains some element of contrast with the findings of Jenzon and Sinclair. They note that only 28% of placements were made because they best met the needs of the child.

5.28 Given that a significant number of OLA placements are made into residential provision, it is important to explore the potential impact both on the host community and for the young people themselves.

Crime and Disorder

5.29 According to the Crime and Disorder Audit (Draft) ⁽¹¹⁾ there are two major features that impact on police involvement and resources. The first of these relates to assaults within the care home, where the number of assaults committed by the small number of residents in children’s homes is disproportionately high. Not only does this consume important police resources, but it can also serve to criminalise behaviour at an early age for the young person concerned.

5.30 Recognising the importance of enabling care staff to work with these adolescents, the Youth Offending Service ⁽¹²⁾ gave evidence to the Inquiry of a pilot project with three main providers across Thanet. Based on a model of intervention developed in Hertfordshire, this project commenced in January 2005, to develop staff expertise in identifying alternative resolutions to anti social behaviour (also known as Restorative Justice).

5.31 Similarly, guidance and regulations governing the registration of children’s homes ⁽¹³⁾ contain specific requirements around reporting a child or young person missing. Care services based in Thanet and affiliated to TACCs operate an 11pm “curfew”, and if a young person is not home by 11pm, an official missing person report is made. This report is made regardless of any attempt by the care staff to determine the young person’s whereabouts. Police evidence to the Inquiry showed that this features highly in police activity:

Total no. of missing persons aged 0-16years	750
Total no. of missing persons reported from Cliftonville	120
Total no. of OLA placements reported missing	202

Jan – Sept 2004

5.32 This shows that **16%** of all missing children were from Cliftonville. Furthermore, **27%** of the missing persons were from OLAs. Nearly 3 in every 10 cases of a child reported missing, concern children placed by another authority.



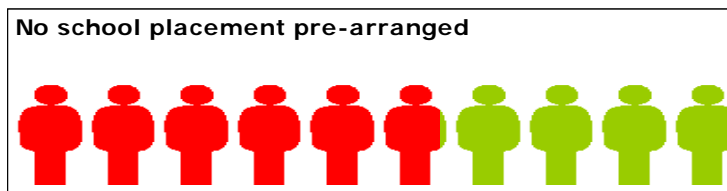
5.33 This is a major commitment on the part of the police. Perhaps more importantly, it raises questions about why so many of these young people would go missing. Anecdotal evidence to the Inquiry indicates that many of them try to make their way ‘back home’ – to their families

and communities. Indeed, the concern for these young people is such that the Connexions service has developed a post, located within the police area, to track missing persons.

- 5.34 Such a level of alienation from the community can be further seen in a graphic ‘pen picture’ given to the Inquiry Board by the Youth and Community Service ⁽¹⁴⁾. They described a group of children arriving at a local youth centre in a mini bus, escorted ‘en masse’ into the centre – usually with a member of staff who will stay with them to support the centre staff, given the large number of young people bussed in! It is almost impossible to see how this arrangement could support the careful and considered integration of adolescents into a community. This is compounded by the relatively short placement period, and the sense of fractured co-existence is reinforced.

Education

- 5.35 With regard to integration in mainstream education, there is again mixed data. The report has already considered the impact of ‘population churn’ and school population. However, TACCS advise that of 80 children, only 11 are placed in mainstream schooling – roughly 14%. In their evidence, the remaining 69 children are placed in the independent sector, most usually provided by their own agency, and regulated by Ofsted. It is worth noting that only units which provide education for a minimum of 5 children are required to register with Ofsted; for group numbers lower than that, no registration is required. The LEA will of course remain unaware of children who are not accessing state schooling. Moreover, the impact on outcomes for young people who access education outside of the regulated provision should not be underestimated.
- 5.36 Conversely, Janzon and Sinclair note problematic access to education. Their sample detailed that for 59%, a school place had not been arranged before they moved. This equates to very nearly 6 in 10 placements, and does contradict evidence that the placements were for the most part fully planned.



- 5.37 The report also finds problems of access to CAMHS, Counselling, and Psychology services. Perhaps unsurprisingly, these factors are also noted by East Kent Children and Family Districts as limiting features in their progress on some permanency plans for Looked After Children ⁽¹⁵⁾. Delivery of these services continues to place additional strain on key partner agencies, not only for the children of Thanet, but also for those who move through as part of their life in the care of OLAs.

CHAPTER FIVE: LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN

- 5.38 Finally, there is some merit in looking at the feature of children who become looked after where their parents have previously lived elsewhere. This report has already looked at the relatively high migration of vulnerable people into Thanet, and considered the impact of an ongoing population in transition. Findings mirror those showing only 1 in 4 of non-employed people had always lived in Thanet, only 27.5% of the children looked after by Thanet Children and Family services had parents who had previously lived in Thanet ⁽¹⁶⁾.
- 5.39 Notwithstanding the fact that this is a small sample base, the evidence continues to support the findings of a vulnerable population, many of whom have moved (or been placed) into Thanet, and more particularly into Cliftonville West. The impact is seen not only in the children who subsequently become looked after by Thanet Children and Family services, but in the many children who continue to be placed there by OLAs.
- 5.40 Thanet continues to hold a dense population cohort of looked after young people, the impact of which needs to be seen in the context of this broader Thanet Inquiry. Local key agencies have continued to work together, exploring local options, strategies and solutions to meet the needs to these young people. None the less, the placement level is such that a major shift is only likely to be achieved with the directed involvement not only at a County, but also a national level. In essence, without a shift in placement practice by a number of OLAs, local outcomes will be constrained by the extensive needs of this very vulnerable group of young people, as they continue to move through the District.

Findings

1. The majority of vulnerable children placed within Thanet live in what are effectively closed communities, alienated both from their originating community, and socially, economically, and emotionally peripheral to the host community.
2. The evidence to the Inquiry suggests that the majority of Looked After Children placed by OLAs in private children's homes in Thanet stay on average about 9 months. Moreover, within that time they tend to be isolated within the unit in that they do not access mainstream local education, youth services, therapy, or other social supports.
3. This lack of integration, combined with the social psychology of seaside towns means there are only the most tenuous constraints on the behaviour of OLA Looked After Children when they venture into the community. Once outside the restrictive parameters and often punitive sanctions of the children's home, their behaviour is unlikely to be socially cohesive. Management of the units is about safe constraint within the units, outside these constraints there is little guidance and behaviour is likely to be less controlled.
4. Adolescents distinctively require a strong sense of identity. OLA Looked After Children, alienated from all the benefits and the constraints of both home and host community, will increasingly form an identity around being looked after and the stance they take against any authority. Low skill levels and social dysfunction will further reinforce this process.
5. The difficulty in developing appropriate services is further compounded by the lack of social networks to support these programmes. These networks may not include the availability of social workers from the placing authority, both because of geographical distance and the prevalence of high vacancy rates and agency workers in placing authorities.
6. The density of placements means, for example, that Thanet, the most deprived district in Kent, has proportionally 7 times the number of Looked After Children as the most affluent areas of Kent. The density in Cliftonville West is significantly higher.
7. The impact of the transient population on local services is significant. While benefiting only minimally from these services they nevertheless place considerable strain on services in the form of e.g. police investigations into runaways, and the investigation of criminal offences.

CHAPTER FIVE: LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN

References:

1. *The Area Business and Performance Management Unit, Kent County Council*
2. *The Area Business and Performance Management Unit, Kent County Council*
3. *DfES: Outcome Indicators for Looked After Children : 12 months to 30 September 2003, England, 29th April 2004*

No. of children looked after at 30th September who had been looked after for at least 12 months

2001	43,400
2002	44,100
2003	44,900
4. *The Area Business and Performance Management Unit, Kent County Council*
5. *The Area Business and Performance Management Unit, Kent County Council*
6. *Audit of Children Looked After in Kent*
K Janzon and R Sinclair – September 2003
Commissioned report by GLADSS undertaken by National Children's Bureau and Care Equation Ltd.
7. *Regeneration of East Kent Coastal Towns*
A review by a select committee appointed by the Strategic Planning Policy Overview Committee – Mr C Capon Chair, August 2004
8. *Evidence to the Board of Inquiry from OLAs*
9. *Lord Filkin, Government Minister for Education and Skills*
Interview for Radio 4's "Today" programme, 13th January 2005
10. *The Association of Child Care Services*
Evidence to Thanet Inquiry
11. *Crime and Disorder Audit Draft report*
Thanet Community Safety Partnership
12. *Evidence to the Inquiry Board from the Youth Offending Service*
13. *Vol. 4 – The Children Act 1989, Guidance and Regulations*
14. *Evidence to the Inquiry Board from the Youth and Community Service*
Education and Libraries Directorate
15. *Internal Report, East Kent Children's Services*
October 2004
16. *Internal sample (September 2004)*

Sample of 40 most recently looked after children (Thanet)	Total in group	% of total
Both parents previously resident in Thanet	11	27.5%
One parent previously resident in Thanet	9	22.5%
Neither parent previously resident in Thanet	20	50%
TOTAL	40	100%

CHAPTER SIX: SIGNIFICANT CRIME FEATURES

6.1 Data relating to criminal activity should be considered carefully. They can be the most startling of figures, and can side track a reader with their impact.

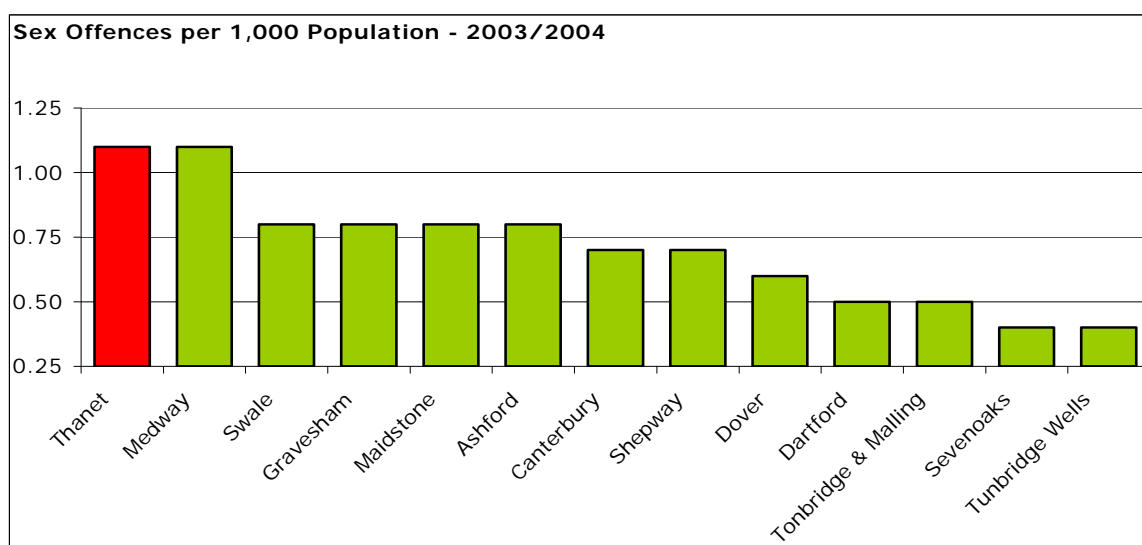
It is not the purpose of this report to provide a broad and in depth exploration of the existence and impact of criminal behaviour – such expert material is available elsewhere. However, there are a number of features that assist in our understanding of levels of public risk, and this report will concentrate on these.

Sex Offenders

6.2 Compared to the rest of Kent, Thanet has a relatively high number of known sex offenders resident in the District. Although overall numbers are very small, they include some people deemed to be at high risk of re-offending. This can only add to the social instability in Thanet and may indicate that the issue of resettling offenders in the area should be considered in greater depth.

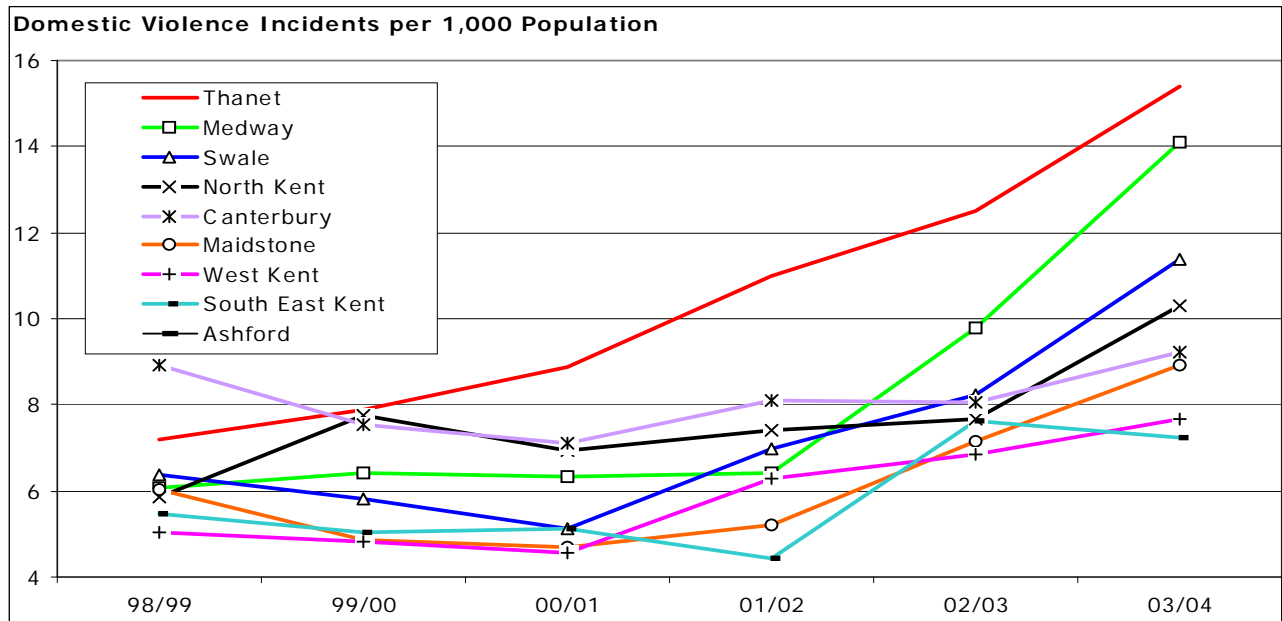
Sexual Offences

6.3 This report does not seek to differentiate between the different categories of sexual offence – that would be a larger and separate piece of work, which could be subsequently commissioned. Rather, this issue is identified here as part of the overall tapestry of significant crime. Thus, in looking more broadly at sex offences across the population, Thanet returns the highest ratio of such offences ⁽³⁾ across Kent and Medway. The graph below details these figures:



CHAPTER SIX: SIGNIFICANT CRIME FEATURES

6.4 Another useful indicator of violence against people is seen in the reporting of domestic violence. Whilst it is important to appreciate the impact of a highly visible and active Domestic Violence Forum, such as is found in Thanet, it remains of great significance that Thanet has the greatest density of reported domestic violence across Kent (4).



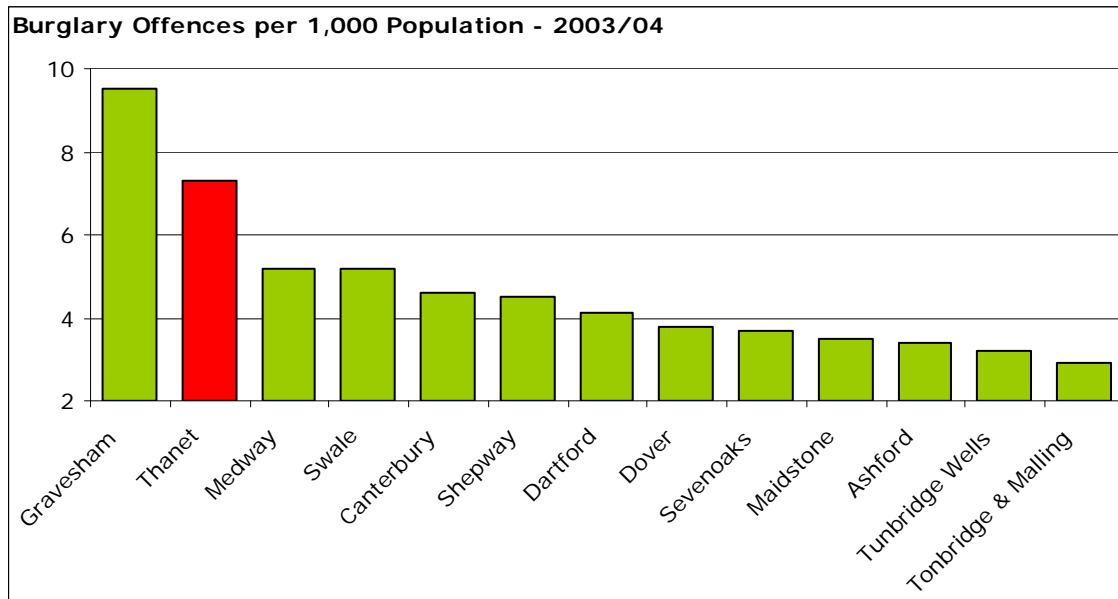
6.5 It is clear that the profile of domestic violence is being raised, and indeed the enacting of the Domestic Violence, Crime and Victims Act (2004) serves to underline commitment to this issue. The fact that all areas show increasing reporting levels of domestic violence lends weight to this progress. None the less, across the whole of Kent, Thanet is the area detailing the greatest density of this type of personal violence. Furthermore, in looking specifically at Thanet as a whole, the two areas reporting the highest levels of domestic violence (5) are Margate Central and Cliftonville West respectively.

Burglary

6.6 In considering significant features of crime, it is important to give regard to the impact of burglary. This is arguably of even greater significance in Thanet, where high levels of private renting, poor levels of accommodation, and the remit of Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) feature strongly in the housing stock.

CHAPTER SIX: SIGNIFICANT CRIME FEATURES

6.7 Burglary offences in Thanet are reported at a level of 7.3 per 1,000 population (7). The graph below gives the detail of this finding, and demonstrates that only Gravesham records a greater level of burglary.



6.8 The Crime and Disorder Audit (8) goes on to note that flats are the most likely of all accommodation to be burgled. Indeed, they account for 40% of all burglaries in the year '03/'04. Given the housing stock already noted in Cliftonville West, this is a significant feature of crime experience for those who are resident there. Moreover, given that we have established that Cliftonville West is characterised in large part by a population in transition, it follows that these vulnerable individuals are likely to be significantly affected by the impact of burglary.

Other Crime

6.9 It is this repeated sense of injury or damage to people that begins to define some of the criminal activity in Thanet. This is compounded by an understanding that for some property crimes, Thanet has a very different position in the 'league tables'. Thus for example, with regard to theft of a motor vehicle, the average return for Kent is 4.1 per 1,000 population. Thanet has a ratio of 3.5, and is ranked only 6 out of 13. (Kent and Medway Districts) (6). Referring to detail noted earlier in this report, (Chapter 2) then of course the lower ratio of vehicle ownership correlates directly with this finding. However, that does not detract from this picture of violence against people.

Youth Crime

- 6.10 Having considered some important features of crime in Thanet, it is crucial now to look specifically at this in relation to young people. Police data ⁽⁹⁾ identifies that young people (aged 10-17 years old) account for approximately 34% of all detected crime. It is important to remember therefore that adults are accountable for every 2 out of 3 detected crimes. Similarly, the use of Anti-Social Behaviour Orders (ASBOs) in Thanet reflects the prevalence of anti-social behaviour of adults. In the 17 months (1st September 2003 – 14th February 2005), 11 ASBO's have been made across Thanet. All but 2 of these were in respect of adults.
- 6.11 Furthermore, there has been significant evidence presented to the Inquiry that not only are young people involved in criminal activity, they are also the victims of crime. This is of even greater significance regarding crimes of violence.
- 6.12 According to information from the Youth Offending Service (YOS) ⁽¹⁰⁾ then the number of offences committed by young people in Thanet is **7.6 times greater** than those in the lowest returning District (Sevenoaks). This is a remarkable difference, and its impact should not be underestimated. However, this becomes really interesting when the number of young people involved is taken into account:

District	No. of offences committed by young people	No. of individual young people offending	No. of offences committed by each young person
Thanet	1450	610	2.4
Sevenoaks	190	40	4.75

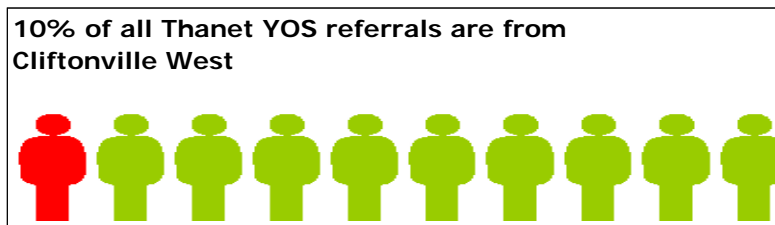
April 03 – March 04

Thus, individual young people in Thanet appear to be offending at only approximately half the rate of those in Sevenoaks. This is in stark contrast to an overall rate of offending that is 7.6 times greater.

- 6.13 There are at least two possible explanations for this finding. The first is that a much larger pool of young people in Thanet is involved in criminal activity for which they are convicted. Alternatively, the individual young person could be moving to the area, committing offences, then moving off, and being 'replaced' by other young people who subsequently move into the area and begin offending. If this hypothesis is correct, it reflects the level of 'churn' in this population cohort. Furthermore, interventions aimed at crime reduction would need to focus energy in such a way that accounted for individual young people moving in and moving on.

Youth Crime in Cliftonville West

- 6.14 Such an explanation is given further weight by the geographical distribution of the young people who offend. The number of referrals received by Thanet YOS for the year '03/04 was 888. Cliftonville West accounted for 98 of these – some 11% - and was the area with the most referrals. We have already established the predominance of Private and Voluntary Homes in this area, and considered the varying information regarding duration of stay by Looked After Children placed by Other Local Authorities (OLAs). This is outside the impact of 'emergency' housing or the impact of HMO use for vulnerable young people up to the age of 19 years.
- 6.15 Across Thanet, the 0-17 age population is 23% of the total ⁽¹¹⁾. Cliftonville West actually returns slightly less than this, at 22%. None the less, more than **1 in 10** of all Thanet referrals to YOS are from the one ward – Cliftonville West.



For ease of reference, the lowest ward (Birchington North) accounted for only 0.1% - Cliftonville West has returns **100 times greater** than this. Even in the light of a proportionally smaller 0-17 age population (13%), this represents a hugely significant difference.

- 6.16 There is a further connection to be drawn when looking at criminal damage ⁽¹²⁾ where the offender is a young person (10 – 17 years). Cliftonville West accounts for the greatest number of these crimes (42 out of 310) – a proportion of 13.5%. The Crime and Disorder Audit ⁽¹³⁾ notes that there is an increased reporting of criminal damage by members of the community, and that organisations have formally continued to report. Obviously, this includes the criminal damage reports by private children's homes that call the police to resolve matters with some young people. It is this that has in part informed the pilot project looking at Alternative Resolution (Restorative Justice) with YOS, Kent Police and three Private Care Agencies. As already noted, this approach includes training for care staff to explore alternative strategies outside of simply calling the police.
- 6.17 Younger people and adults also make up the largest proportion of the victims of crime. The YOS study found that of crimes committed only 8.5% of the victims were aged 60 years or more.

Crime and Alcohol

6.18 The Crime and Disorder Audit finds that the level of alcohol related crime is increasing. Furthermore, that this directly correlates with binge drinking on the part of young people. Whilst there are a number of successful strategies in place to address this – such as safe transport home from clubs – it remains a significant contributor to the experience of crime.

Summary

6.19 There is evidence to suggest that criminal activity in Thanet is characterised by violence towards people. Furthermore, that young people feature as key contributors – both as offenders and as victims. Indeed, the Crime and Disorder Audit notes that juveniles are responsible for 21% of detected crime.

6.20 Perhaps even more importantly, there is extensive evidence that the placement and management of young people placed into Thanet is an active ‘player’ in three main arenas. Thus, young people who are placed here for a short length of time, committing crime and moving on; the criminalisation of some of their behaviour by organisational reporting; and that these vulnerable children and adolescents may experience increased levels of personal violence. It will be essential that the development of effective interventions continue to take account of these features if they are to deliver best outcomes.

6.21 Such findings are consistent with the research that suggests that the single most significant factor in youth offending is the offender’s self image. The fragmented, alienated identity of Looked After Children displaced far from home combined with the limited life chances provided by the placement undoubtedly helps perpetuate any tendency towards criminal activity.

Findings

1. There is undoubtedly a significant correlation between the placement of vulnerable young people in Thanet and Cliftonville West and high crime rates. The pattern of crime seems, however, to be distinctive.
2. The profile of both offenders and victims in Thanet suggests that the greatest impact of high crime rates is in fact on the vulnerable transient population itself.

CHAPTER SIX: SIGNIFICANT CRIME FEATURES

References:

1. *Kent Police Information*
Detail provided for Board of Inquiry
2. *Office National Statistics 2001 Census*
3. *Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership*
2003 / 04
4. *Kent Police*
Information based on Populations (as at Sept 2004)
5. *Crime and Disorder Audit Draft Report*
Thanet Community Safety Partnership
6. *Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership*
2003 / 04
7. *Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership*
2003 / 04
8. *Crime and Disorder Audit Draft Report*
Thanet Community Safety Partnership
9. *Evidence provided for the Board of Inquiry by Kent Police April 2003 – March 2004*

<i>Total detected crime</i>	<i>3912</i>	<i>100%</i>
<i>Committed by 10-17yr olds</i>	<i>1334</i>	<i>34%</i>
<i>Committed by adults</i>	<i>2578</i>	<i>66%</i>

10. *Kent Youth Offending Service: Offenders and Offences by District*
3 consecutive fiscal years ('01 – '04)
11. *Office National Statistics 2001 Census*
12. *Kent Police 2003/04*
Criminal Damage where Offender known to be aged 10 – 17 years
13. *Crime and Disorder Audit Draft Report*
Thanet Community Safety Partnership

CHAPTER SEVEN: SERVICE DEVELOPMENT & REGENERATION

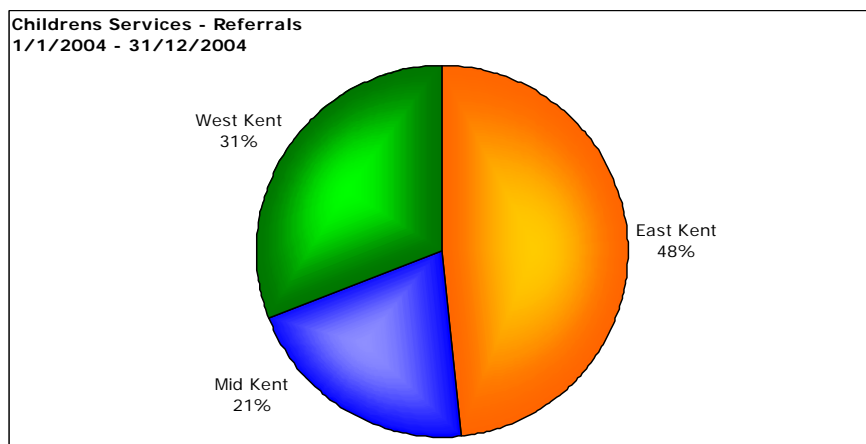
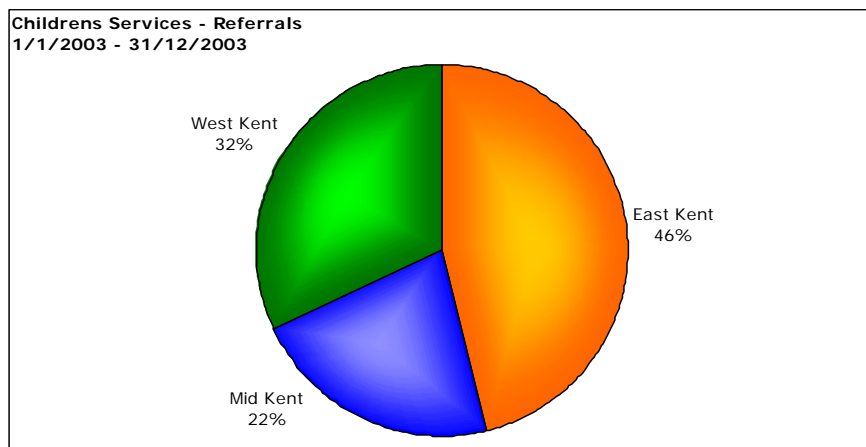
7.1 The evidence presented within this report identifies a tight geographical area with a complex pattern of needs. Although explored through a series of 'chapters', it is clear that none of these features exist in isolation. Rather, that they compound and mutually reinforce each other. The most effective responses will therefore have not only a clear multi-agency frame of reference, but will further be delivered as part of a clear, overarching strategy that brings together the varied approaches in a coherent whole.

Referrals to Social Services

7.2 Before giving an overview of the developments to date, it is important to remind ourselves of the potentially overwhelming level of vulnerability that is evident in Thanet. Using Children and Family Services data from 2003 and 2004 ⁽¹⁾, it is clear that Kent Social Services continue to receive a massive number of referrals.

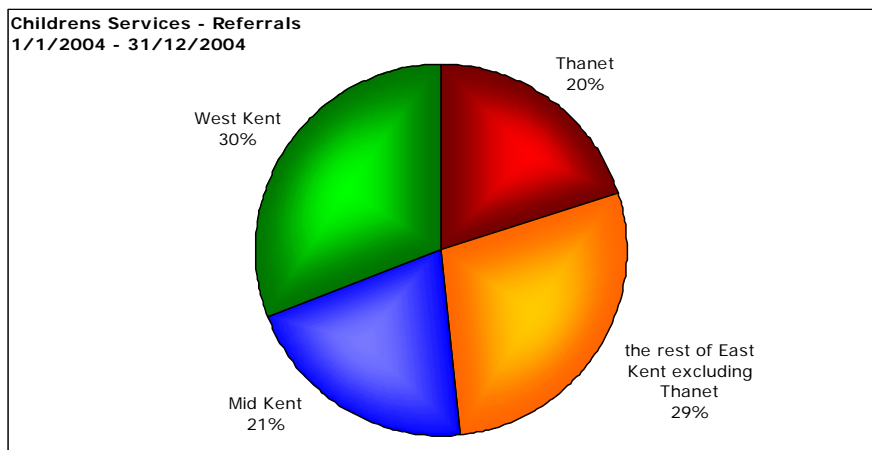
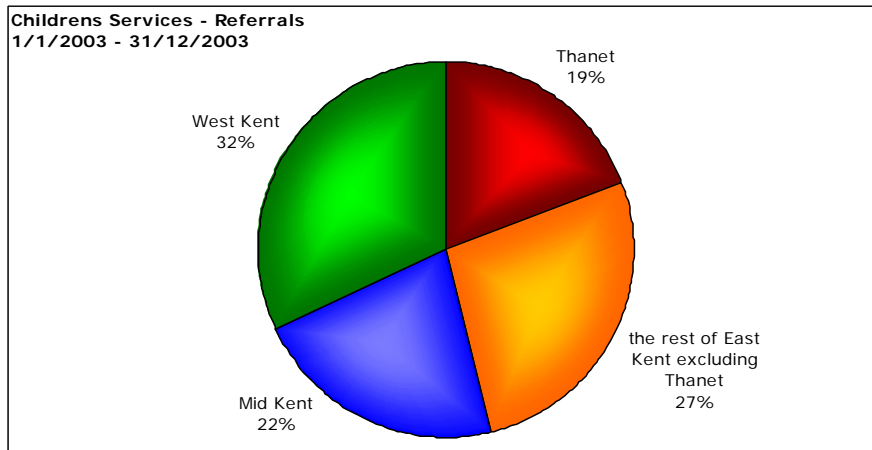
During 2003, Children and Family services received a total of 12,796 referrals across Kent. This rose in the subsequent year to 13,757. In both of these years, Thanet was by far the District with the highest referral rate.

7.3 East Kent as an Area accounts for just under half of the referrals received each year. This is clearly demonstrated in the diagram below:



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- 7.4 However, what is even more striking is that Thanet alone has an equivalent rate of referrals to that of the whole of Mid Kent.



- 7.5 Furthermore, and excluding Children with a Disability Service (CWDS), if you compare Thanet's referral levels to other Districts, the difference is astounding. Whilst working solely in "numbers of referrals", it is clear that over this two year period Thanet received a level of referrals **very nearly 4 times greater** than Tunbridge Wells. Even when comparing it to the Children and Family District that experiences the second highest referral rate – Shepway – Thanet's level is more than double.
- 7.6 By any account, this is a considerable rate of referral, and must reflect the level of vulnerability across the population. Evidence finds that this is compounded by the transient population, and yet we also find that this population is perhaps least well placed to make effective use of the services.

Education and School Exclusion

- 7.7 Remaining with Children's services and looking more specifically at exclusion from education, then Thanet has the greatest proportion of the permanently excluded children in Kent (2). In the school year September 2003 to August 2004, there were 411 permanent exclusions, and Thanet accounted for 60 of these. At 15%, this was a

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level **5 times greater** than the District with fewest permanent exclusions (Ashford, 3%).

- 7.8 In considering the education days lost to fixed term exclusions, there is some shift in the 'ratings' across the Districts of Kent. Swale accounted for the greatest proportion of lost days at 16%, Thanet having 11%. The District with the fewest days lost was Sevenoaks, who accounted for 4% of the overall figure.
- 7.9 However, there is something shocking about the number of school days lost through the formal, fixed exclusions. Assuming a school year of 38 weeks (5 days a week) then in the one school year, Thanet **lost 22.43 school years through fixed term exclusions** alone. It is important to remember that this does not count the number of Other Local Authority Looked After Children who are not accessing education provided by KCC.
- 7.10 Account also needs to be taken of pupil's absence from school. Colleagues from Education and Libraries advise of a direct correlation between deprivation and absence. It would be expected, therefore, that Thanet being ranked the most deprived District in Kent would have the most absences, and indeed this is the case. On average 1000 (3) children in primary and secondary schools in Thanet are absent each day. This equates to approximately 8% of the pupil population of roughly 12,000.

Service Developments

- 7.11 How then have the agencies and communities responded to this level of need?

The development of the Marlowe Academy, which opens in September 2005, along with the expansion of Ellington Girls School, remain central to the planning for strengthening educational outcomes and offering increased parental choice for secondary schooling. Furthermore, the community remit for the Marlowe Academy includes specific proposals for the building and facilities to remain open through the evening.

- 7.12 The Primary Intervention Programme has been well received by both agencies and communities. This multi-agency team has its base in schools, and is not only multi-agency in makeup but also in its objectives. This report will not rehearse the many workshops, reviews and evaluations that have been undertaken to date, but would note the current proposals (December 2004) to double the school base with whom the programme works.
- 7.13 There are major programmes that have been driven on a national basis –for example, there are two SureStart Programmes in Thanet. There are more local, practice driven partnerships, such as the Drug and Alcohol project for families with children on the Child Protection Register. There are specific, focused social work teams to address clearly identified needs, such as the Concurrency Team or the Looked

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After Children Team. There are projects that concentrate on 'outposting' social workers into community settings, such as in the GP practice, alongside the health visitor.

- 7.14 A summary list of service developments is included at the end of this chapter ⁽⁴⁾, and it is important to remember that this list only reflects those that have a main agency contributor – the extensive input of the community and voluntary sector is not included.

Development Strategy

- 7.15 Of course, all of these projects and programmes have full, supporting bid or evaluation documentation that this report does not seek to summarise. But it is important to recognise that a number of key issues are raised by their existence. Firstly, that much of the service development has consciously been focused on early intervention. Clearly, this fits with the Preventative Strategy, and in particular, reflects the drive outlined in Every Child Matters: Change for Children, now enshrined in the Children Act 2004.
- 7.16 Secondly, that there have been a number of creative and occasionally radical approaches to meeting the needs of the people of Thanet. Agencies have come together in a number of ways to pool expertise and resources.
- 7.17 Finally, that the Consortia has an important role to play in defining an overall strategy that brings together these many approaches. Consortia is the local, multi-agency planning forum, built on a district frame of reference, and takes forward the philosophy embodied in Every Child Matters, and consolidated in the Children Act 2004. The effectiveness of any one project will be maximised when it fits together as part of an overall strategy.
- 7.18 However, the vast level of need, the significant features of vulnerability and dependence, and the compounding effect of a people in transition serve to deliver a 'Thanet Extra' – that the needs of this community are perhaps 'over and above' what a routine set of structures can deliver. If we are to enable individuals to achieve good outcomes; if we are to take the aims of Every Child Matters to heart; then we need a broad and robust approach to service development in this part of Kent.

Findings

- 1 As evidenced by, for example, the recent Public Service Agreement, and the work of the Local Strategic Partnership, Drug and Alcohol Action Team, and the Community Safety Partnership, there is significant evidence of the integrated and focused multi-agency partnerships within Thanet.
- 2 There have been substantial investments through both local agencies and nationally (e.g. SureStart) to improve the life chances of Thanet residents. These investments have significantly improved the social and economic fabric and the opportunities for Thanet residents over the past few years.

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Regeneration Overview: Thanet District Council

- I. The concerted effort to regenerate Thanet started in 1994 with the award of Assisted Area Status and Objective 2 funding from the European Commission and for the first time Thanet had access to Regional Selective Assistance (RSA) and Objective 2 funding. RSA gave grants to companies (both inward investors and local business expansion) for the creation of new jobs and Objective 2 gave access to both the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and the European Social Fund (ESF). The main aim of Objective 2 is also to create and safeguard jobs.

- II. The requirement for match funding for the Objective 2 programme brought government attention to the area and, as a result, Thanet was successful in bidding for the Single Regeneration Budget Challenge Fund (SRB). The regeneration of Thanet has therefore been inextricably linked to the Objective 2 strategy, which has always resulted in a consistent and focused approach to achieving desired outcomes. An overview of each of the Objective 2 and SRB programmes is outlined below.

Programme & time frame	Award	Objectives
Objective 2 1994-96	£11million	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The central island initiative to develop business parks and attract inward investors • Support for the development of Manston airport, Ramsgate Port rail and road • Support for tourism • Stimulation of new enterprises and provision of vocational training/workforce development
Objective 2 1997-99	£14 million	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provision of sites and premises, training and business support from SMEs • Targeted community economic development* to develop the skills base of communities and improvement to the physical conditions of the neighbourhoods • Development of the tourism industry through marketing, training and improvements to visitor facilities with focus on Thanet's unique historical heritage • Ramsgate Harbour approach road
SRB 1 1995 – 2000	£10 million	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The central island initiative to develop business parks and attract inward investors • Support for the development of Manston airport, Ramsgate Port rail and road • Support for tourism • Stimulation of new enterprises and provision of vocational training/workforce development
SRB 3 1997 –2003	£5.57 million	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investing in Business Success • Investing in Housing and the Built Environment • Investing in the community
SRB 4 1998 –2002	£0.82 million	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Early intervention to break the cycle of deprivation among young people and families • Giving young people the basic skills they need for work • Addressing educational underachievement and lack of employment opportunities for young people • Developing community leadership and citizenship skills of young people and families and provide new community facilities • Developing an integrated partnership supporting the needs of young people and families
SRB 5 1999 – 2003	£2.24 million	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collection, collation, verification of statistical information to provide an accurate picture of socio-economic conditions • Formation of an appropriately constituted organisation to sustain community development throughout Thanet in the long term • Formation of strong local structures and networks to facilitate local representation, participation and implementation of identified need

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage community capacity building in a proactive manner in identified target areas • Address the lack of basic skills and provide educational opportunity at neighbourhood area • Address the real and perceived fear of crime and other community safety issues at neighbourhood level • Remove the lack of affordable accessible transport as a factor that narrows local residents' horizons and aspirations
Objective 2 2000 –06	£15 million	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business Support, training, Higher Education and Innovation • Community Economic Development - to build on and broaden the work started in SRB 5 • Spatial Development – the development of fully serviced sites and utility infrastructure through the creation of a recyclable fund • Heritage Culture and the Environment - to facilitate the urban renaissance of Margate and Ramsgate and support the sustainable development of related business infrastructure
SRB 6 2000 – 2006	£10 million	SRB 6 mirrors the Objective 2 programme and provides some of the match funding for initiatives funded by ERDF
Total	£68.63 million	

*Wards targeted included the Cliftonville West ward

III. Since Thanet received Assisted Area Status 150 grants have been awarded valuing £17.76 million in total. This has levered in a total investment of £161.76 million and resulted in the creation of 3,132 jobs. Thanet has also benefited from substantial investment from the Heritage Lottery Fund, the Community Fund, South East Arts and two SureStart programmes as well as substantial investment from its own resources and other public sector partners such as KCC.

IV. Fuller details of the current SRB/Objective 2 programme are contained in the table below.

SRB 6/Objective 2 Priorities	
Business Support, Training, Higher Education and Innovation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ The Thanet Business Support Strategy – to strengthen the competitiveness of Thanet's business base. ◆ Higher Education and Innovation Centre – to provide additional capacity for Higher Education and an Innovation Centre on the Thanet Campus with managed incubator workspace suitable for supporting high growth technology based business. ◆ Training - Basic Skills Development, Widening Participation and Workforce Development <p>The main aims of this priority are to strengthen SME's and the micro business base with emphasis on those that have high growth potential. To encourage the development of innovation, technology transfer and entrepreneurship, and provide the requisite training to enable businesses to prosper and communities to access and share in that prosperity.</p>
Spatial Development	<p>Spatial Development is concerned with the development of fully serviced sites and the provision of a utilities and transport infrastructure of sufficient capacity to support the future needs of the Central Island/Sandwich Corridor.</p> <p>The aim of this priority is to enhance the productivity of Thanet's (including the Sandwich ward in Dover District) land resources and improve the quality and capacity of development sites for both industrial and service sector business. This will provide the opportunity for the local economy to create a substantial number of good quality jobs during the lifetime of this bid and beyond, and to raise the potential for economic growth.</p>

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Heritage, Culture and the Environment	<p>Heritage, Culture and the Environment to facilitate the urban renaissance of Margate and Ramsgate and the promotion of Minster as a Heritage Village in rural Thanet, all supported by activity to encourage social inclusion through participation in arts and sports.</p> <p>The main aim of this priority is to create employment and encourage social inclusion through balanced and sustainable development of heritage, cultural and environmental business infrastructure.</p>
Community Economic Development	<p>Community Economic Development to continue and broaden the work commenced in SRB 5 to other targeted* areas of need.</p> <p>The main aim of this priority is to release the potential of individuals and groups within targeted communities by providing diverse and area wide opportunities for reintegration into mainstream economic life whilst ensuring equality of access to the benefits of regeneration.</p>

* Includes all the Thanet wards in the worst 10% of wards nationally (IMD 2000) and Cliftonville (West) & Northdown Park (South)

- V. The residents of Cliftonville West have had many opportunities to engage with SRB/Objective 2 projects and training schemes. For example, Thanet Basic Skills, Education Assisted Reading, Social Development Scheme, Summer School, the Isle of Thanet Credit Union, support and development of the Thanet CAB plus many more. However, these projects were generic in nature and targeted at all the deprived wards and it is not possible to say how many beneficiaries came from each of the wards concerned.
- VI. Cliftonville West has benefited from direct projects such as the development of the Café and training facility at St Paul's Community Centre, the Young Builders Initiative and most recently the Dalby Square Residents Associations Environmental project.
- VII. The SRB programme has come to an end and the South East England Development Agency (SEEDA) is taking a new approach to regeneration through strategically focused sub regional partnerships. The East Kent Partnership (EKP), covering Canterbury, Dover and Thanet, has agreed its strategy and initial action plan. The difficulty as far as 'community' projects are concerned is that many do not fit the criteria to access SEEDA funding which must be directed at job creation, development of new business, training and brownfield site reclamation. The focus for community economic development must therefore be on the creation of social enterprise and individuals' social capital through training. In order to achieve this aim the EKP are looking to develop an East Kent model for a Development/Enterprise Trust, based on best practise from Thanet, that can support and sustain this aim in the long term.

CHAPTER SEVEN: SERVICE DEVELOPMENT AND REGENERATION

References:

1. *Area Business and Performance Management Unit
Data provided for Thanet Inquiry Board
Referrals to Children and Families 2003 and 2004*
2. *Information provided for Inquiry Board
Exclusions Officer, Education and Libraries*
3. *Evidence presented to the Board of Inquiry, Martin Doole, AEO, Education & Libraries*
4. *Principle Service Developments:*
 - ❖ *Homestart*
 - ❖ *Thanet Early Years Project*
 - ❖ *Play and Learn Scheme*
 - ❖ *SureStart Programmes x 2*
 - ❖ *LEA Nursery Provision (including proposed at Cliftonville and St Gregory's Primary Schools)*
 - ❖ *Drug and Alcohol project for families*
 - ❖ *Primary Intervention Programme*
 - ❖ *Break Through Family Adolescent Mediation Service*
 - ❖ *Moving Forward scheme*
 - ❖ *Primary Care Health Visitor + GP + social services project*
 - ❖ *Thanet Multi-Agency Therapeutic Service*
 - ❖ *Services for parents with mental ill health*
 - ❖ *Concurrency Project*
 - ❖ *Oak Tree sexual abuse project*
 - ❖ *Community Based Family Centres*
 - ❖ *Children's Centres*
 - ❖ *Adolescent Resource Centre*
 - ❖ *Marlowe Academy*

Chapter One – The Economy

1. Economic shifts and the nature of industry in Thanet has resulted in it having the highest levels of socio-economic deprivation in Kent and the most limited life chances for its residents. The collapse of the area's traditional industry and tourism has resulted in low wage levels, limited transferable skills, low property prices and a surfeit of Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs). Perversely, although property prices are low, the affordability gap between earnings and house prices means that the affordability gap in Thanet is greater than elsewhere in Kent (source JRF 2003 affordability study).
2. The mix of population in Thanet shows an above average number of children and above average number of people over 65. As a percentage of its overall population, Thanet has the lowest proportion of its population of working age of any Kent district.
3. The public sector, particularly the Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother hospital (QEQM), Thanet District Council (TDC) and Kent County Council (KCC) are the key employers in Thanet, although developments at Westwood Cross, EuroKent Business Park and Manston are bringing larger private sector employees into the area.
4. The present social and economic structure of Thanet has lent itself to the development of a formal care industry, ranging from elderly care homes, hostels for vulnerable adults, private children's homes and a multitude of independent foster carers. It has also become a destination of choice for a transient population, ranging from the homeless to those attracted by the "seaside" lifestyle.
5. The development of accommodation and institutions to cater for these trends has brought short term economic benefits to the area but at both the cost of the longer term regeneration of Thanet, and the ultimate life chances of the transient population within Thanet.

Chapter Two – The Stable or Core Population of Thanet

1. Thanet has historically developed a specific island identity that has resulted in it being seen as a desirable destination by those outside, to visit and access services. Once resident in Thanet however, people are more inward looking, are less likely to access external services, or integrate newcomers. This factor does however help to create a very strong sense of local identity and pockets of very strong community loyalty.

FINDINGS

2. The core population of Thanet is relatively stable with very little permanent migration. The limited internal immigration of either high skills or education undermines economic regeneration.
3. Travel to work patterns show that there is less movement out of Thanet to work elsewhere in Kent than the average for Kent districts. This reinforces the sense of isolation from the neighbouring towns of Dover and Canterbury.

Chapter Three - The Transient Population: 'The Churn'

1. The transient nature of the most vulnerable sections of the Thanet population means that agencies have difficulty in developing appropriate services for them particularly since preventative services require time and stability to take effect.
2. This impact is compounded by a residual effect of the transient population, with, for example, high numbers of children becoming looked after to Kent social services as a result of this population movement. It is estimated that a third of the children becoming looked after in Thanet are children of the transient population.
3. These investments and the plethora of multi agency initiatives have not, and could not reasonably be expected to, significantly benefit or enhance the life chances of the transient population, who remain peripheral to the community in which they are placed.

Chapter Four - Thanet's Vulnerable Population: - Adults and Children

1. There is significant transient migration of groups of vulnerable children and adults into Thanet. This influx tends to be focused around the most deprived areas of Thanet, most notably Cliftonville West.
2. There are significant cost benefits to the placing agencies, but the benefits to the local economy of the placement of vulnerable people are short term.
3. As well as the peripheral churn that militates against integration, the sheer saturation of vulnerable children and adults in wards such as Cliftonville West will heighten both the vulnerability and the alienation of those placed.
4. It is also the case that the most vulnerable within society, Looked After Children, people with learning disability, mental health problems, drug and alcohol addiction are being placed within a 'ghetto' which is not only the most deprived but is also the most geographically constrained in size.

FINDINGS

5. Effectively, vulnerable children and adults are being placed in the area of South East England in which they are least likely to be integrated, and are likely to have their life chances diminished rather than enhanced.
6. Placing agencies may assume that sending their poor and their vulnerable to the sunny green climes of Kent (but without any real knowledge of the environment of the placement itself) is beneficial. The Inquiry was unable to find any evidence that the placement of vulnerable children and adults in Thanet provided any benefit to the recipients. Conversely, all the evidence suggests that these placements only exacerbate the vulnerability of those placed.

Chapter Five – Looked After Children

1. The majority of vulnerable children placed within Thanet live in what are effectively closed communities, alienated both from their originating community, and socially, economically, and emotionally peripheral to the host community.
2. The evidence to the inquiry suggests that the majority of Looked After Children placed by Other Local Authorities (OLAs) in private children's homes in Thanet stay on average about 9 months. Moreover, within that time they tend to be isolated within the unit in that they do not access mainstream local education, youth services, therapy, or other social supports.
3. This lack of integration, combined with the social psychology of seaside towns means there are only the most tenuous constraints on the behaviour of OLA Looked After children when they venture into the community. Once outside the restrictive parameters and often punitive sanctions of the children's home, their behaviour is unlikely to be socially cohesive. Management of the units is about safe constraint within the units, outside these constraints there is little guidance and behaviour is likely to be less controlled.
4. Adolescents distinctively require a strong sense of identity. OLA Looked After Children, alienated from all the benefits and the constraints of both home and host community, will increasingly form an identity around being looked after and the stance they take against any authority. Low skill levels and social dysfunction will further reinforce this process.
5. The difficulty in developing appropriate services is further compounded by the lack of social networks to support these programmes. These networks may include the availability of social workers from the placing authority, both because of geographical distance and the prevalence of high vacancy rates and agency workers in placing authorities.
6. The density of placements means, for example, that Thanet, the most deprived district in Kent, has proportionally 7 times the number of Looked

FINDINGS

After Children as the most affluent areas of Kent. The density in Cliftonville West is significantly higher.

7. The impact of the transient population on local services is significant. While benefiting only minimally from these services they nevertheless place considerable strain on services in the form of e.g. police investigations into runaways, and the investigation of criminal offences.

Chapter Six - Significant Crime Features

1. There is undoubtedly a significant correlation between the placement of vulnerable young people in Thanet and Cliftonville West and high crime rates. The pattern of crime seems however to be distinctive.
2. The profile of both offenders and victims in Thanet suggests that the greatest impact of high crime rates is in fact on the vulnerable transient population itself.

Chapter Seven - Service Development and Regeneration

1. As evidenced by, for example, the recent Public Service Agreement, and the work of the Local Strategic Partnership, Drug and Alcohol Action Team, and the Community Safety Partnership, there is significant evidence of the integrated and focused multi-agency partnerships within Thanet.
2. There have been substantial investments through both local agencies and nationally (e.g. SureStart) to improve the life chances of Thanet residents. These investments have significantly improved the social and economic fabric and the opportunities for Thanet residents over the past few years.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The recommendations of this Board of Inquiry are at once wide-ranging and achievable. They do require action. If we miss this opportunity to address the well-documented needs of this community, then this Inquiry will serve only to sit as another landmark on the shelf marked 'Thanet'.

The recommendations of the Thanet Board of Inquiry fall broadly into 6 categories.

1. Economic Regeneration

	RECOMMENDATION	TARGET AGENCY/IES	TIMESCALE	OUTCOME
1	To continue to promote the Area Renewal Strategy for Cliftonville West. This will include regional and national support for infrastructure such as rail links (fast track to principle Thanet towns)	<input type="checkbox"/> GOSE <input type="checkbox"/> Network Rail <input type="checkbox"/> Thanet District Council (TDC) <input type="checkbox"/> Kent County Council (KCC) Strategic Planning Directorate	Summer 2005	<p>Two major features for Cliftonville West with improved housing and stabilised economy. More widely, a broader based economy for Thanet.</p> <p>Using PSA2 empty property purchase & refurbishment to support Area Renewal</p>
2	Targeting employment and skill development at local population, particularly alongside new or major developments.	<input type="checkbox"/> TDC <input type="checkbox"/> Learning and Skills Council (LSC) <input type="checkbox"/> KCC	Agreed protocols to inform future planning applications in place by the end of the financial year	<p>Progress to full employment (TDC Strategic Vision).</p> <p>Progress towards a more skilled workforce.</p> <p>Introducing local labour & training clauses into local public sector contracts</p>
3	Recognising the impact of the current older, poorly skilled and low level of health population, there needs to be a proactive approach to recruitment into the District. The economy will be increasingly less viable if this is not delivered and sustained.	<input type="checkbox"/> Major local employers <input type="checkbox"/> Connexions <input type="checkbox"/> University of Kent at Canterbury (UKC) and Christchurch University College (CCCUC) <input type="checkbox"/> Locate in Kent	April 2006	There will be a shift in the employment profile across the District, towards a younger and more qualified workforce.
4	To support the appointment and retention of staff in key services, and to encourage the migration of high skill base employees into Thanet	<input type="checkbox"/> Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) – (schemes to support access to housing) <input type="checkbox"/> TDC	Immediate	Securing of key staff in partner agencies.

RECOMMENDATIONS

2. Education and Young People

5	To build on the progress to date of the local 14-19 Education Consortia delivering the alternative and vocational curriculum. This will need to take account of the high level of vulnerability of some students, and reference the high proportion of Looked After Children across Thanet.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> LSC <input type="checkbox"/> Connexions 	September 2005	For a higher % of school leavers to achieve formal qualifications, in line with PSA 2 planning.
6	The development of adolescent services, that clearly target the disaffected and vulnerable group of young people	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Education and Libraries <input type="checkbox"/> Connexions <input type="checkbox"/> Kent Social Services (SSD) <input type="checkbox"/> Youth Offending Service (YOS) <input type="checkbox"/> Primary Care Trust (PCT) <input type="checkbox"/> Children and Adolescent Mental Health Trust (CAMHS) 	Autumn 2005	A format of service delivery that develops clear links with the 14 – 19 Education planning (Recommendation 3), and cross-references the NSF health planning.

3. Crime and Disorder

	RECOMMENDATION	TARGET AGENCY/IES	TIMESCALE	OUTCOME
7	For there to be greater flexibility in guidance regarding the reporting of missing young people, particularly Looked After Children from care facilities. This would need to be accounted for in Regulations and Standards.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Commission for Social Care Inspection (CSCI) 	Autumn 2005	<p>That carers would be enabled to exercise judgement in reporting a child missing – for example, a 15-year-old late home; that the carers would have initiated local search (in line with responsible parent actions) prior to calling police.</p> <p>This would further support a more effective use of limited resources, such as police time.</p>

RECOMMENDATIONS

8	Promotion of the local pilot in P&V Care homes for alternative resolutions to anti social behaviour.	<input type="checkbox"/> YOS <input type="checkbox"/> TACCS <input type="checkbox"/> Kent Police <input type="checkbox"/> CSCI	Autumn 2005	That there is a number of options available in work with young people on managing their behaviour. Not only will this free up resources such as police time, but offers alternatives to criminalising the activities of young people.
9	Establishment of protocols for placing of offenders – particularly in relation to drug offences.	<input type="checkbox"/> Probation <input type="checkbox"/> Kent Police <input type="checkbox"/> TDC <input type="checkbox"/> Home Office <input type="checkbox"/> Local Authorities	Autumn 2005	All key agencies would be signed up to a planning process that not only managed the placement of offenders more effectively, but also enabled information to be shared to better direct service interventions.

4. Placements by Other Local Authorities

	RECOMMENDATION	TARGET AGENCY/IES	TIMESCALE	OUTCOME
10	To develop a 'surcharge' on Other Local Authorities (OLAs) who place vulnerable adults and children within Thanet.	<input type="checkbox"/> KCC <input type="checkbox"/> Other Local Authorities who place in Thanet	1 st April 2006	Additional community resources to meet the extended local costs, and to recognise the 'cost benefit' to the placing authority.
11	Care Placement Plan to be developed prior to placement by any OLA on all individuals, adults and children. This will need to be made with the receiving authority, and include all key partners.	<input type="checkbox"/> Other Local Authorities <input type="checkbox"/> DfES and DoH approval <input type="checkbox"/> KCC <input type="checkbox"/> PCT <input type="checkbox"/> Kent Police <input type="checkbox"/> TDC	Autumn 2005	Clear monitoring and tracking of all placed in the District, including level of needs and vulnerabilities.
12	Strategic plan to be developed by all OLA who place a <i>given</i> % outside of their own boundaries, to effect and develop local appropriate services to meet the need. (Looked After Children; Offenders; Learning Disability; placed homeless).	<input type="checkbox"/> DfES and DoH <input type="checkbox"/> Local Authorities <input type="checkbox"/> Homelessness Directorate at ODPM	Autumn 2005	<p>For local services to be developed to meet the needs of that community. Individuals should thus be more able to remain within their own communities.</p> <p>Evidence for such strategic planning should be identified in subsequent Joint Reviews.</p>

RECOMMENDATIONS

13	The development of a Sub-Regional Strategic Commissioning Forum. This key partnership between Kent & the outer London Authorities would have as its frame of reference the commissioning of service & practice developments to prevent “out of community” Looked After Children placements and influence effective commissioning across the South East.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ DfES ❑ DoH ❑ Kent SSD ❑ Outer London Boroughs 	Autumn 2005	A significant drop in out of County placements by OLAs.
14	For DfES & DoH to write to placing authorities and PCTs, noting they have received a report on the impact of continued placement into Thanet.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ DfES ❑ DoH 	Summer 2005	That there will be not only a reduction in Looked After Children and other vulnerable adult placed into Thanet, but that effective service development in OLAs will continue to be supported.
15	Formal tracking of all vulnerable placements made into Kent, and specifically into Thanet. This would include vulnerable adults, on whom there is currently no statutory requirement to report.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ KCPC (or future Safeguarding Board) ❑ Kent and Medway Multi-Agency Adult Protection Committee 	Summer 2005	Improved data sharing to facilitate more effective interventions to meet the needs both of the transitional population, and of core vulnerable population.
16	To develop a Protocol with Swale Borough Council restricting the development of Children’s Homes, and where appropriate, Independent Fostering Agencies.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ KCC ❑ Swale Borough Council 	Autumn 2005	To reduce the impact of placements into Swale made by OLAs as Swale also receives significant numbers of Looked After Children from OLAs.

RECOMMENDATIONS

5. Health

	RECOMMENDATION	TARGET AGENCY/IES	TIMESCALE	OUTCOME
17	To develop the health plan in accordance with the NSF, that takes account of the priority needs of Thanet.	<input type="checkbox"/> PCT <input type="checkbox"/> DoH	10 year plan; outline plan currently being drafted.	That resources are most effectively targeted not only to recognise the health inequalities in Thanet, but also to deliver best value.
18	To review the national guidance to PCTs with regard to guidance for Local Responsible Commissioner and Promoting the Health Needs of Looked After Children.	<input type="checkbox"/> DoH <input type="checkbox"/> DfES	Financial year 2006/07	Consistent financial accountability for children who are looked after and placed in different Local Authorities, with regard to their health needs.
19	The development of a multi agency pre-birth assessment and intervention service.	<input type="checkbox"/> KCPC <input type="checkbox"/> Teenage Pregnancy Unit (TPU) <input type="checkbox"/> PCT <input type="checkbox"/> KCC	Summer 2005	A well defined service with early access, that builds on the opportunity offered in the Common Assessment Framework, and maximises the life chances of the newly born.

6. General

	RECOMMENDATION	TARGET AGENCY/IES	TIMESCALE	OUTCOME
20	To maximise the effectiveness of target setting with the opportunities offered by PSA 2 – to have more directional focus rather than Countywide remit.	<input type="checkbox"/> KCC <input type="checkbox"/> TDC <input type="checkbox"/> PCT	To be confirmed in the formal target setting Summer 2005	For targets to reflect District variation – for example, bringing the broad '20% reduction in Tier 3 CAMHS referrals' to a more specific District target.
21	For formula funding to account for the impact of transitional population. This would recognise the impact of additional community costs in investing in reactive services.	<input type="checkbox"/> Treasury <input type="checkbox"/> KCC <input type="checkbox"/> GOSE	Financial planning for 2006/7	More refined allocation of resources, to meet current impact of transitional population, and to support progress towards reduction in placements by OLA.

RECOMMENDATIONS

22	Training of staff in the progression to 'inclusive communities'.	<input type="checkbox"/> KCPC	Summer 2005	For staff to have confidence in delivering their expertise in a number of settings – for example, health workers moving from clinics to community settings or family homes.
23	A more flexible approach to funding streams and hypothecation. If an area of high deprivation can attract funding, may it not also attract a higher level of consequent service users?	<input type="checkbox"/> Treasury <input type="checkbox"/> GOSE <input type="checkbox"/> KCC/TDC	Planning for financial year 2006/7	<p>This should support the establishment of Recommendation 6, in the development of interventions within originating communities.</p> <p>Furthermore, the creation of an asylum service on a County basis secured a more effective delivery of good outcomes, that did not rely on one small location consuming all needs or vulnerabilities.</p> <p>Developing ways of retaining growth in Business Rate & Council Tax base to be re-invested locally.</p>

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Useful Website addresses

www.carersuk.org

www.dfes.gov.uk

www.statistics.gov.uk

www.kent.police.uk

APPENDIX ONE

Estimated number in receipt of Mental Health Service – Thanet Residents January to June 2004

(defined as clients with Thanet postcode having had contact in last 6 months or current inpatients)

Client Count

Thanet Ward	Adult Mental Illness including Psychology & Psychotherapy	Older People Mental Health
Beacon Road	52	24
Birchington North	24	23
Birchington South	58	51
Bradstowe	48	17
Central Harbour	139	42
Cliffsend and Pegwell	40	26
Cliftonville East	45	37
Cliftonville West	244	89
Dane Valley	154	20
Eastcliff	133	25
Garlinge	55	21
Kingsgate	10	23
Margate Central	133	36
Nethercourt	46	15
Newington	98	14
Northwood	83	27
Salmestone	60	29
Sir Moses Montefiore	72	12
St Peters	73	42
Thanet Villages	64	26
Viking	82	53
Westbrook	55	32
Westgate on Sea	93	64
Grand Total	1861	748

Public Health Information Team Manager
Network Locality, K&M Health Informatics Services

APPENDIX TWO

Other Local Authorities with placement of Looked After Children in Thanet as at July 2004

Name of Placing Authority	Total Number of placements
Barking & Dagenham	5
Barnet	4
Bedfordshire	8
Bexley	4
Brent	10
Brighton & Hove	2
Bromley	6
Cambridgeshire	1
Camden	6
Coventry	4
Croydon	6
Dorset	1
Ealing	5
Essex	16
Greenwich	4
Hackney	8
Hammersmith & Fulham	8
Hampshire	5
Haringey	14
Harrow	5
Havering	9
Hertfordshire	2
Hillingdon	11
Hounslow	24
Islington	18
Kensington & Chelsea	6
Kingston upon Hull	1
Lambeth	7
Lewisham	10
Luton	3
Medway Towns	3
Merton	2
Middlesborough	1
Milton Keynes	1
Newham	14
Norfolk	2
North Tyneside	1
Northamptonshire	2
Nottingham	1
Reading	3
Redbridge	5
Sandwell	1

APPENDIX TWO

Slough	3
Southend	8
Southwark	16
Suffolk	2
Surrey	7
Sutton	6
Swindon	2
Tameside	1
Thurrock	3
Tower Hamlets	5
Waltham Forest	7
Wandsworth	3
Westminster	4
Wokingham	1
TOTAL	317

APPENDIX THREE

PREVIOUSLY SELF FUNDING RESIDENTS

Finance Activity and Risk Monitoring (FARM) Report 2004

Area	Total number of cases	Depleted	% Depleted
Canterbury	153	15	10%
Dover	111	13	12%
Swale	68	8	12%
Thanet	186	21	11%
East Kent Total	518	57	11%
Ashford	81	4	5%
Maidstone	106	7	7%
Shepway	108	11	10%
Mid Kent Total	295	22	7%
Dartford	59	4	7%
Gravesham	95	10	11%
Sevenoaks	72	10	11%
Tonbridge & Malling	86	7	8%
Tunbridge Wells	89	8	9%
West Kent Total	401	39	10%
County Total	1214	118	10%

Childrens Referrals - 2003 and 2004

APPENDIX FOUR

Source: CFR560L and CFR530L

Run Date: 20/1/2005

	Referrals from 1/1/2003 to 31/12/2003				Referrals from 1/1/2004 to 31/12/2004			
	All Assessed	Unallocated & Unassessed	Total Referrals	<i>New or Reopened and Ongoing</i>	All Assessed	Unallocated & Unassessed	Total Referrals	<i>New or Reopened and Ongoing</i>
Canterbury	1,193	0	1,193	384	1,124	76	1,200	322
Dover	1,051	0	1,051	389	1,222	48	1,270	449
Swale	1,049	1	1,050	273	1,104	168	1,272	261
Thanet	2,450	0	2,450	401	2,652	83	2,735	337
EK Disability	140	15	155	50	118	63	181	37
EK Total	5,883	16	5,899	1,497	6,220	438	6,658	1,406
Ashford	796	2	798	257	762	150	912	292
Maidstone	775	13	788	167	628	122	750	126
Shepway	1,125	6	1,131	347	934	165	1,099	316
EK Disability	92	0	92	56	69	44	113	37
MK Total	2,788	21	2,809	827	2,393	481	2,874	771
Dartford	749	5	754	164	617	148	765	97
Gravesham	903	1	904	323	843	168	1,011	233
Sevenoaks & Swanley	710	1	711	179	450	109	559	54
Tonbridge & Malling	759	13	772	149	746	187	933	143
Tunbridge Wells	672	3	675	243	610	92	702	229
WK Disability	272	0	272	101	240	15	255	110
WK Total	4,065	23	4,088	1,159	3,506	719	4,225	866
County Total	12,736	60	12,796	3,483	12,119	1,638	13,757	3,043

LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN PLACED IN KENT AS AT 31 MARCH 2003

APPENDIX 5

		District Placed In																		
District Placed By		Total	Kent Children in OLA	C'bury	Dover	Swale	Thanet	East Kent Total	A'ford	M'stone	Shepway (Including 4 Wards)	Shepway 4 Wards Only	Mid Kent Total	D'ford	G'sham	S'oaks	T & M	T'Wells	West Kent Total	
	Canterbury	134	9	74	8	24	14	120	0	0	3	0	3	2	0	0	0	0	0	2
	Dover	77	3	4	39	0	21	64	2	5	2	0	9	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
	Swale	154	15	27	1	87	8	123	1	3	2	0	6	4	6	0	0	0	0	10
	Thanet	292	26	10	16	2	228	256	2	0	4	0	6	0	0	0	1	3	4	
	EK Disability	26	5	4	3	1	13	21	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	EK Total	683	58	119	67	114	284	584	5	8	11	0	24	6	6	0	1	4	17	
	Ashford	88	11	3	3	1	3	10	37	3	22	6	62	2	0	0	3	0	5	
	Maidstone	103	16	0	1	6	7	14	17	36	14	6	67	0	0	0	5	1	6	
	Shepway	118	10	2	6	1	2	11	10	9	76	22	95	0	2	0	0	0	2	
	MKDisability	23	4	0	1	1	0	2	4	4	6	0	14	1	0	2	0	0	3	
	MK Total	332	41	5	11	9	12	37	68	52	118	34	238	3	2	2	8	1	16	
	Dartford	44	7	1	0	1	0	2	0	0	4	1	4	19	7	3	2	0	31	
	Gravesham	72	8	3	2	1	0	6	0	2	0	0	2	13	25	14	4	0	56	
	Sevenoaks	71	13	0	2	5	0	7	0	3	3	0	6	9	11	15	5	5	45	
	T & M	56	8	1	0	0	0	1	0	10	0	0	10	1	10	5	19	2	37	
	Tunbridge Wells	76	8	4	1	0	0	5	2	4	2	1	8	3	0	13	13	26	55	
	WK Disability	17	12	0	0	0	0	0	1	2	0	0	3	0	0	2	0	0	2	
	WK Total	336	56	9	5	7	0	21	3	21	9	2	33	45	53	52	43	33	226	
All Kent LAC	1351	155	133	83	130	296	642	76	81	138	36	295	54	61	54	52	38	259		
Asylum	177	50	29	8	2	22	61	8	3	7	2	18	1	11	3	6	27	48		
OLA	1206	N/A	168	76	219	293	756	85	63	46		194	78	62	69	30	17	256		
COUNTY	2734	205	330	167	351	611	1459	169	147	191	38	507	133	134	126	88	82	563		

APPENDIX SIX

Crime in Thanet: Commencements in KPA 2002-2004

	2002	2003	2004
Thanet	2	9	12
All Kent	75	91	83

	2002	2003	2004
Thanet	1%	2%	3%
All Kent	2%	1%	2%

All Offences	2002		2003		2004	
	Thanet	Kent	Thanet	Kent	Thanet	Kent
Violence against the person	1%	1%	1%	0%	1%	0%
Sexual Offences	1%	2%	2%	1%	3%	2%
Burglary	8%	7%	11%	7%	14%	8%
Robbery	2%	1%	2%	2%	2%	2%
Theft and handling	40%	35%	40%	34%	39%	36%
Fraud and forgery	6%	6%	3%	6%	2%	4%
Criminal damage	1%	3%	3%	3%	3%	3%
Drugs offences	5%	5%	7%	5%	7%	6%
Indictable motoring	1%	1%	1%	1%	2%	1%
Summary motoring	26%	30%	22%	30%	19%	28%
Other Indictable	5%	7%	6%	8%	6%	7%
Other Summary	3%	3%	2%	3%	3%	4%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Please note:

This data reports only on those that become statutory suspension cases for the Probation Service. It therefore represents a different (smaller) cohort to those reported by the Police Authority.

APPENDIX SEVEN

RADIO 4 "TODAY" PROGRAMME - 13TH JANUARY, 2005

INTERVIEW WITH LORD FILKIN

The Government is admitting that many problems caused by children from care homes produce difficulties in towns where they have been placed often far away from their own towns is something that happens quite a lot in the system but the Minister in charge is with us in the studio.

First we are going to hear from Danny Shaw, who is reporting from Worthing in West Sussex where the claim to be a significant rise in anti-social behaviour. Police say they can hardly cope with the problem.

(Danny Shaw) - "To spend a morning at Worthing Youth Court is to enter a world of petty crime. Teenagers appear here accused of offences like theft, affray and driving without insurance. When the Head of the local Magistrates Bench Youth Panel, Brigitte Ewett, examined the caseload she found that almost a third of the defendants lived in children's' homes."

(Brigitte Ewett) - "We are concerned about the number of children we get in from care homes for trivial offences like Criminal Damage or Common Assault, which we think could be avoided with better training for the staff. It is not that we can't cope with the children but one just wonders about the standard of the private care homes....." (the sound of children arguing could be clearly heard in the background).

(Danny Shaw) - "Just outside one care home in Worthing I witnessed an example of the kind of behaviour that could end up in Court proceedings: Two girls, squabbling in the street, disturbing people nearby. Both girls, aged about 14, were drunk. Shouting, spitting, swearing and vandalism are now a feature of street life in some parts of the seaside town. The problems appear to have worsened over the past couple of years as the number of residential care homes has increased. There are now 34 in West Sussex, 27 of them privately owned. The Police Division's Head of Crime and Operations, Superintendent Cliff Parrott, is concerned about the number of children in the homes who are from outside the area".

(Supt. Parrott) "They are placed here for sometimes very short periods of time. Therefore they do not have significant local contacts, - they don't have significant contacts in terms of school, they have a lot of time on their hands. If they are choosing to use that time criminally their ability to get very well known to the local Police is heightened".

(Danny Shaw) - "Earlier this year Police added up the number of missing persons reports from four children's homes in Worthing. In a six-month period they were called out 382 times. It took the equivalent of 24 days just to do the paperwork! All of the children who disappeared were found, one even turned up at the Police Station to get a lift back, according to Acting Sgt. George Carrington".

(George Carrington) - "At 4 o'clock in the morning we had a call at the front counter and it was a young lady who walked in the door and proudly announced herself as a "missing person from a local children's home" and she said she wanted a lift home, so when we started to say well its not quite as easy as that she said to us "I know you have got to take me home because you have got a duty of care", so there you go. They know the scheme and they work it.

(Danny Shaw) - "What we are coming into now is a part of the school. We have in here a Music Room....."

The Boys at Hillcrest, a care home near the West Sussex village of Slynfold, are no different from children at other privately run units. Most have a history of absconding, many have a criminal record and have dabbled with drugs or alcohol. But Hillcrest, set in the countryside is larger and better equipped than most of the smaller centres based in urban areas. Its results are impressive and that, says the Manager, Mark Pollock, is due in large part to the care workers.

(Mark Pollock) - "We tend to keep our staff for longer so I have got quite a large number of staff on this site who have 5/6 years experience from starting here and that's a little unusual I think in childcare circles that we don't have the staff haemorrhaging that many other providers or even Local Authority homes experience".

(Danny Shaw) - "But the Chairman of Sussex Police Authority, Mark Dunn, says it's not just about retaining staff, better pay and training, too many children are in care he says when the emphasis should be on finding foster families and mentors."

(Mark Dunn) - "They are allowed, so to speak, to lead a sort of ferral existence on the basis that because they own a licensed children's home they are ok. Well that's not the case. They are not ok."

"Well that was Danny Shaw reporting from Worthing and the Minister of the Department for Education & Skills, who has responsibilities for these homes is Lord Filkin, who is with us in the studio. Good morning.

We are talking about 60,000 children or so aren't we who are in this situation....."

"In care, in some way or the other, yes".

"Do you think that there is a problem in the number of them who are in places far away from home?"

"Yes, there is and it looks to us from the figures we see that too many are placed either in foster parents' or in care homes a long distance from their own area".

"In some cases presumably there is a good reason for this specialist care which is required, or something of that nature but are the circumstances where it just happens administratively for a good reason?"

"There are some cases where specialist care can only be sensibly provided at a distance. What we think happens though is that because a Local Authority itself has not developed sufficient local foster parents or sufficient care homes in their area or near to their area, when they have got to place somebody in an emergency they go where they have got to go and they find where there is a vacancy and that this has led to a growth of the private market in particular areas like in Sussex. Sussex doesn't need 34 children's homes".

"Do you accept the tenor of Danny's report there that suggests that a lot of the difficulty that the local courts find themselves in comes as a result of too many people being there perhaps in a concentration in a small area who shouldn't be there?"

"Well I don't particularly want to focus on that particular aspect of it because clearly children in care have got some of the most challenged circumstances. But if you have got a 14 year old and that child, for no particularly good reason, is taken away from the school that they are in and they are taken away from their family and their friends and they are put in an area where they know no-one, it is not surprising they are going to find it difficult to settle and to settle down. What was also noticeable from that clip was the number that weren't in school. They should be in school and the Local Authorities who have a duty, both in terms of the residential care and the child protection system and in terms of the educational attainment of Looked After Children have got to get them into school and support them there".

"Relatively easy to identify the problem in the terms that you have laid out for us there, more difficult to change the situation. What have Local Authorities got to do? - what responsibilities are you going to give them that they don't have at the moment? "
"They don't need more responsibilities. They have got very clear responsibilities for Looked After Children, for the quality of residential care".

"But if they are not producing the homes in their own areas that they need....."

"Well I think basically it's a wake-up call because a number of Local Authorities manage this and they manage it well. For those that don't I shall be writing to them bringing to the attention of Senior Members why is it that their Authority appears to have a situation where it looks to the outsider as if children are placed a long way away and then are in danger of being forgotten. That's got to change. I also want the Commission for Social Care Inspection, which has been inspecting Children's Homes since April, to have a discussion with me about how we are going to ramp-up the standards, both public and private children's homes, so that they meet the standards of trained staff, as we heard from one of those examples. You have got to have good quality staff in there. And lastly, they have got to develop more local fostering and homes. They have got to plan that. It won't be quick but they have got to seriously engage with doing it"

"Lord Filkin, thanks very much"

APPENDIX EIGHT

As at 30 th April 2003	Per 10000 0-19 population						
	KCC LAC	OLA LAC	All LAC	0-19 pop	Kent Lac	OLA LAC	Total Lac
Canterbury	44.3	58.4	102.7	33,089	147	193	340
Dover	32.2	25.2	57.4	26,074	84	66	150
Swale	48	57.8	105.8	32,552	156	188	344
Thanet	87.5	110.8	198.3	31,551	276	350	626
Ashford	34.3	36.3	70.6	26,344	90	96	186
Maidstone	22.9	14.14	37.04	33,843	78	48	126
Shepway	48.5	19	67.5	23,002	112	44	155
Dartford	21.8	31.1	52.9	22,138	48	69	117
Gravesham	25.3	31.1	56.4	25,339	64	79	143
Sevenoaks	28.1	26.7	54.8	27,151	76	72	149
Ton/Malling	19.1	15.7	34.8	28,229	54	44	98
Tun/Wells	22.4	7.7	30.1	26,351	59	20	79
							2513