

“A naturally vibrant Isle”

**Culture Matters -
Thanet District Council’s Cultural
Strategy**

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What is culture?

Culture means different things to different people. Some think of visits to art galleries or theatres, but it is much broader than that, including tourism, sports activities, learning new creative skills, children playing, enjoying events and festivals and our local environment. However, it would be fair to say that people's lives and lifestyles have a large impact on what is perceived as being culture and how they respond to this.

Here in Thanet, our environment provides a wide range of cultural opportunities for us to enjoy. Our 26 miles of coastline, regarded as amongst the most stunning in the country, our three unique main towns, each with their own, very different heritage and architecture and our large areas of parks and open spaces, including our seafront promenades, all offer very different opportunities to enjoy our leisure time. The area is also home to a vibrant and growing creative community, offering activities in the arts, literature, performing and sporting sectors. This variety is further extended when Thanet's unique social mix, location and opportunities for lifelong learning are factored into the definition of culture.

This fits in with the definition of culture by the government's Department of Culture, Media and Sport, which includes the arts, architecture and heritage, museums, sport, tourism, open spaces and events.

Why is culture important?

Culture can make a huge difference to an area's economy and evidence of this can already be seen in Thanet.

From a position in the early 1990's, when unemployment rates hit 15% and the area was suffering from massive deprivation, a major investment in culture over the last decade has helped to transform the area.

Ramsgate's seafront has become an attractive destination for visitors and residents, with a thriving cafe culture now established around the Royal Harbour Marina. Regeneration grants have helped to create a cultural quarter in Margate's Old Town, with the arrival of restaurants, galleries and niche shopping. Much of the attraction of Broadstairs to its many visitors is cultural, including its literary links to Charles Dickens and the hugely successful Folk Week Festival each year.

Many people are already employed in Thanet in culture related jobs. These include the tourism sector, which is estimated to support 4,481 actual jobs (Thanet Tourism Economic Impact Estimates 2003). Research has also shown that creative and cultural industries in Thanet already employ nearly 800 people, around 2% of the total workforce, in 148 predominately small businesses.

But culture is about more than improving our economy. It is also inclusive and provides opportunities for the whole community to participate in a range of different activities. To do this, it is vital to ensure that everyone has access to cultural facilities in the area.

Another important element of culture is lifelong learning, whether it is through learning a new skill through adult education, at local leisure centres or through participation in community groups and local organisations, such as theatres, arts or sports groups or involvement in events in the area. The area's further and higher education sites, Thanet College and Canterbury Christ Church University, between them offer a range of courses focusing on culture, including photography, music, digital media, art and design, the performing arts and catering. Canterbury Christ Church also holds weekly term time live commercial music performances at Horizon's Bar and exhibitions of art and photography in their Atrium Gallery. Ursuline College in Westgate is a Specialist Sports College and also holds the Sportsmark Gold Award from Sport England in recognition of the quality and amount of extra-curricular sports provision on offer to pupils.

Culture also provides opportunities to improve the health and wellbeing of the community, particularly through sport, play and leisure activities that include physical activity, such as walking or work on local allotment sites.

Why produce a cultural strategy?

Thanet District Council recognises the important role that culture plays in our community.

We also recognise that, in the past, culture has been an area of weakness in the Council's service delivery. We are a listening council and are responding to the views of the community with the development of this Cultural Strategy.

The strategy will support our broader objectives, which have already been set out in our Corporate Plan. These include Thanet's Economy, Beautiful Thanet and Healthy Communities. Culture has a major role to play in achieving each of these themes within the plan.

We are committed to improving the cultural offer in our District and this strategy will look at how this aim can be achieved. It sets out specific actions that the Council, with the help of its partners, will need to achieve over the next four years.

Main consultation findings

This strategy has been based on the priorities of local people and the resources available to Thanet District Council. Its development has been shaped by a range of groups involved in cultural activities in Thanet, who participated in focus groups to give their views. It has also been shaped by the results from the Council's residents' panel, Community Matters, who were asked for their views on culture and leisure.

The key points raised during the consultation were:

Vibrant busy beaches all year round

People wanted to see Thanet's beautiful beaches being enjoyed all year round, with a range of activities available for local people. These could include water sports, bistros, cafes and colourful, modern beach chalets. The achievement of this needs to reflect the potential impact of inclement weather, and the development of wider uses that are less weather dependent.

Facilities available for everyone

The consultation highlighted that cultural facilities should be available to everyone and suggested that activities should be available in particular for older people, young people and those with disabilities.

Conservation of the existing environment

People suggested that measures should be put in place to conserve and improve the existing buildings and environment in Thanet. They also wanted to see the number of derelict and rundown buildings reduced and felt it was important that Thanet's heritage and traditional seaside appeal were retained.

A programme for festivals

People wanted to see a regionally recognised, dynamic annual festivals and events programme that would celebrate culture in all its forms and would appeal to both residents and visitors.

Involvement in cultural plans

Groups wanted more involvement in the development of cultural facilities in the future. They felt that they could bring a wide range of expertise and provide some input during the discussion of such plans.

In addition, the results of the Best Value surveys, which are carried out across the country once every three years, by an independent agency, have also been taken into account.

These showed that satisfaction levels with sports and leisure facilities were 55%, putting Thanet into the worst 25% of Councils across the country. Satisfaction with museums and galleries dropped by 10% from the previous survey to just 33%, while satisfaction with theatres and concert halls fell by 12% to 43%. The survey also showed that people were less satisfied with the area's parks and open spaces, with the figure falling from 77% to 73%.

This is in sharp contrast to the overall satisfaction levels that the Council achieved during this survey. It was one of the top improvers in the country, with an increase in its overall satisfaction rate from 41% to 53%, with significant improvements also seen in satisfaction with street

cleanliness and waste collection and tenants and customers of the Council's benefits section also reporting higher levels of satisfaction.

It is therefore clear that the Council needs to concentrate in improving its satisfaction levels with the cultural services that it provides. Work is already underway to do this; the recent Audit Commission inspection rated the Council's cultural services as 'fair with promising aspects for improvement. There are plans in place to provide new swimming facilities in the area and improve facilities at the area's parks and open spaces.

The local context

The District of Thanet is a unique and vibrant coastal area, with 26 miles of nationally and internationally recognised coastline, with seven Blue Flag award winning beaches and bays, more than any other area in the country. These help to attract an estimated 2,500,000 visitors each year to Thanet, on either day trips or longer stays.

The population of the area is 127,688 and the vast majority live in the area's three main towns, Broadstairs, Margate and Ramsgate. Thanet is classed as the 85th most deprived district in England out of 354. Six wards in Thanet – Cliftonville West, Dane Valley, Eastcliff, Margate Central, Newington and Northwood contain areas that are amongst the 10% most deprived in the country.

The area has a much higher proportion of over 65 year olds than elsewhere in Kent and there are also a large proportion of young people in Thanet. Of the working age population, 39% are unable to work because of a long-term illness, as opposed to 28% in Kent as a whole.

The area's proximity to mainland Europe means that it has a long history of visitors, from the arrival of Hengist and Horsa in 449AD on the sands of Broadstairs, who became the first Kings of the Anglo-Saxon kingdom of Kent.

The area began to develop into the place we know today in the early 18th century, with the creation of a harbour in Ramsgate and the recognition of the power of the healing waters off the coast of Margate, which led to the town becoming the country's first seaside resort. At around the same time, Broadstairs was attracting interest through Charles Dickens' regular visits to the town

Tourism grew rapidly from the mid 19th century over the next 100 years, with the industry going into slow decline from the 1950's onwards, due to foreign package holidays. The cumulative effect over many years had a considerable impact on Thanet's economic position, with unemployment levels reaching a high of 18% in the early 1990's.

Since then, work has been undertaken by the Council and its partners to regenerate the area, with a concentration on the area's culture and heritage. In particular, this would focus on Margate, building on its links with Turner, and on revitalising Ramsgate's maritime past with investment into the Royal Harbour Marina and town centre. This concentration on culture led to Margate being named amongst the top 20 most creative towns in the country and in the top 10 towns to watch in the future in 2007. Broadstairs fortunately escaped the worst of the area's economic problems and continued to prosper. In recent years, the emphasis has been – and continues to be – on preserving the character of this popular seaside destination.

The cultural context:

The development of Thanet's culture is very different to many other areas in the UK.

The Council owns the foreshores, seafront promenades, beaches and bays and harbours in each of the three main towns, along with more traditional assets, such as museums and concert halls. This means that the Council has ownership of an unusually high level of property and land, putting budgetary pressure on the authority.

The Thanet coast, together with Pegwell Bay, is internationally important for wintering birds and marine life, associated with the chalk reefs, caves and sandy bays. They form part of a larger area, consisting of several international nature conservation designations – two Special Areas of Conservation (SACs), one Special Protected Area (SPA) and a site designated under the RAMSAR convention. Collectively this area is known as the “North East Kent European marine sites.”

The Thanet Coast Project was established to raise awareness of this important coastline, work with people to safeguard wildlife and to run wildlife related events or activities. They have been extremely successful with their year round programme of events, which attract around 3,000 people each year. They also organise educational activities with community groups, businesses and schools to reach another 5,000 people annually. One of their flagship projects has been to establish a Thanet Coastal Warden Scheme, which more than 100 volunteers acting as the “eyes and ears” of the coastline.

Thanet is fortunate to have 136 hectares of parks and open spaces, a figure which exceeds the government's minimum standards. Surveys show that the vast majority of people feel the parks in Thanet meet the needs of their family. However, the Open Space and Indoor Sport Audit identified that Thanet has below the national recommended level of semi natural and natural open space, such as woodland.

Indoor sports provision in Thanet needs urgent attention, with plans already in place for the replacement of Ramsgate Swimming Pool and the refurbishment of Hartsdown Leisure Centre. The area has also a relatively new facility, the Ramsgate Sports Centre, which includes a sports hall, available for 5-a-side football, basketball, badminton and table tennis, along with a fitness studio and spa suite.

There is a good range of football, cricket and rugby pitches in Thanet, with Margate and Ramsgate Football Clubs both in the Ryman Premier Division. Thanet Wanderers RUFC is based at St. Peter's Recreation Ground in Broadstairs and is currently competing in London League 1.

In consideration of the PPG 17 report on future provision of sports facilities in Thanet, the Council in partnership with Sport England to ensure better provision of tennis courts locally.

With the highest density of listed buildings in Kent, Thanet's buildings showcase the area's rich heritage. The Council is actively working to ensure that the existing Conservation Areas are protected for future generations.

Thanet's history is also covered by a range of diverse museums. The Dickens House Museum in Broadstairs contains Dickens memorabilia, prints and costumes, while the town's Crampton Tower Museum pays tribute to Thomas Crampton, who designed locomotives and railways, with working drawings, models and artefacts from his life.

Ramsgate Maritime Museum explores the maritime heritage of the area from ancient times to the present day and Margate's history from Iron Age to the 1960's is the focus of Margate Museum. Whilst the current use of museums requires a review of their operation and value for money, there still needs to be a high quality museum offering in Thanet for its large collections (including the display of archaeological finds), and enhanced access to this using IT and on line archiving.

In the villages, Quex Museum has a world class collection of objects and animals from Africa and Asia, arranged in stunning diorama. The RAF Manston History Museum looks at the development of the famous airfield from 1916 to the present day.

Thanet is home to the second oldest theatre in the country, the Theatre Royal Margate, which is supported by public sector funding. Other significant performance venues in the area are the Granville Theatre in Ramsgate, the Pavilion in Broadstairs and the Winter Gardens in Margate.

The area also has a vibrant music scene, with the Broadstairs Folk Week attracting thousands to the town each August, supplemented by successful Jazz Festivals and live music in Margate and Ramsgate during the summer months. The area also has an annual Music and Drama Festival, held each spring.

Plans for Turner Contemporary form a major part of the regeneration focus for Margate, with the new gallery likely to be a catalyst for further developments in the town. Internationally renowned David Chipperfields Architects Ltd., recently awarded the Stirling Prize, the most prestigious award in architecture, have been appointed to design the gallery, which will celebrate JMW Turner, who was a regular visitor to Margate throughout his life. More than 100 of his works, including some of his most famous seascapes, were inspired by the East Kent coastline.

The prospect of the new gallery has already made a major impact on Margate's regeneration. A range of art galleries and niche shops are open in Margate's emerging creative quarter in the Old Town, which is helping to regenerate part of the town, which was mainly derelict in the past. The Margate Renewal Partnership has been formed, made up of key stakeholders who have an important role to play in transforming Margate. The Partnership has already secured over £35million, which it is investing in the town, with other work focused on the public realm and cultural activities, as part of its work to change perceptions about and raise the profile of Margate. The particular investment opportunities inherent in Margate's regeneration within the lifespan of the Cultural Strategy have impacted significantly on the development of the action plan in section 9 and the need to reference and take advantage of this.

Planning guidance has been developed by Thanet District Council in association with the Partnership, suggesting a mixed scheme on the Dreamland site. Under the proposals, the majority of the site, including the listed Dreamland building and Scenic Railway, would be kept as part of an amusement based destination, along with an element of other development, including residential.

Perhaps one of the most important elements of Thanet's culture is its rich supply of voluntary groups and organisations already working in culture, many of which have been involved in consultations on this Cultural Strategy. There are too many to mention here, but they play a valuable role in enhancing projects that encompass arts, sports, heritage, the coast and tourism in Thanet.

The vision and overarching themes

Vision:

By 2012, Thanet will be recognised as an area that has changed its fortunes, thanks to a thriving and sustainable cultural community and economy. “Must experience” areas across the isle will attract residents and visitors alike to enjoy our revitalised cultural heritage, the vibrant energy of local creative industries and the unique coastal offer. Participation in, and enjoyment of, culture will have become a way of life for Thanet's residents, as part of the continuing regeneration of the isle.

To achieve this, we will continue to focus on cultural regeneration, building on the area's rich coastal heritage to strengthen our community and create a District that is home to both the innovative and the traditional.

To achieve this vision, the Council has developed an action plan, which sets out what it aims to do over the next four years.

Overarching themes

During the consultation process, a series of different overarching themes emerged and each of the actions has been grouped under one of these themes:

1. Developing a vibrant arts and events scene
2. Enabling cultural economic regeneration
3. Making the most of the coastal and natural environment
4. Building on the past to inform the future
5. Encouraging participation in sport and leisure

Developing a vibrant arts and events scene

Events have been an established part of the tourism draw to Thanet for a number of years, with some of the biggest festivals, such as the Broadstairs Folk Week, Ramsgate Powerboat Grand Prix and Margate's Big Event, attracting more than 50,000 people. Events also have a vital role to play in giving local people the opportunity to explore and enjoy their area. Evidence from other parts of the country, such as the Lowry Salford and the Tate St. Ives, indicate that arts can play a similar role in bringing visitors into an area.

Enabling cultural economic regeneration

The success of recent years has shown that culture has a valuable role to play in supporting Thanet's regeneration and bringing more visitors and inward investors into the area. In Margate Old Town, work to establish a creative quarter has already seen more than 60 buildings refurbished, the creation of around 65 jobs and a dramatic increase in property prices.

Making the most of the coastal and natural environment

Thanet's coastline is internationally and nationally recognised, with designations including two Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and a Special Protection Area (SPA). The area is home to the longest continuous stretch of coastal chalk in Britain, which attracts internationally significant numbers of birds, such as turnstones and golden plovers. In addition, the beaches and bays are a major attraction to visitors and, between them; they hold seven Blue Flag awards.

Building on the past to inform the future

Thanet is home to some of the finest architecture in the south east and has the highest density of listed buildings in Kent. The area was ranked 34th in the country for listed buildings per square kilometre in the Local Futures Amenities Index. Ramsgate alone has 900 beautiful listed buildings, principally made up of Victorian, Edwardian and Georgian properties and is home to Kent's largest conservation area.

Encouraging participation in sport and leisure

Local people have identified improvements to sport and leisure provision in Thanet as one of their top priorities. It is recognised that some of the area's key indoor leisure facilities need to be replaced imminently and work is underway to address this.

The consultation also suggested that cultural identities could be adopted for each of the three main towns:

- Creativity and the arts in Margate
- Maritime and architecture in Ramsgate
- Family seaside attractions and literary links in Broadstairs

These identities would maximise the existing offer of each town.

Underlying principles

Delivering this strategy and achieving our five key themes can only be achieved by working closely with our partners in the public, private and voluntary sector. Some of these partnerships already exist and need to be strengthened, while others may need to be created.

In particular, the contribution that the voluntary sector makes to culture in Thanet cannot be under-estimated. Through the area's strong network of voluntary groups and organisations, local people and visitors can enjoy opportunities for lifelong learning and become involved with a range of cultural offerings. The co-ordination by the voluntary sector of their activities is an essential component of maximising their contribution.

Consultation will play an important role in delivering this strategy. Young people have already been asked about improvements to services targeted at them and a similar exercise is due to be undertaken with our older residents. The Council will also be consulting on how it can reduce the impact it has on the environment and residents can also expect to be asked about issues that matter to them. Increasing opportunities for local people to engage in decision making is an important element of the Council's Corporate Plan.

This strategy will sit alongside others that are currently being developed by Thanet District Council – for example, youth, economic growth and regeneration strategies, visitor economy, sports, arts and play development plans will all inter-relate with the Cultural Strategy and will seek to develop further some of the themes set out in this strategy.

Action Plan

The delivery of this action plan will help to improve cultural provision in Thanet over the next four years and will help move us closer to our overall vision.

Some of the projects set out in this action plan will require external sources of funding, which the Council is working to secure. This action plan has not been divided into high, medium and low priorities. Instead, all the actions set out in this plan are regarded by the Council as high priorities, which we will be working to achieve between now and 2011.

a. Developing a vibrant arts and events scene

Objective:

Create a full annual events programme targeted at local residents and visitors to help support the Thanet economy by increasing visitor numbers and spend within the area.

Actions:

- Review the Council's support and evaluation of events to deliver a new annual Thanet festival programme by 2009
- Support at least 20 public events every year between now and 2011
- Support the transition of budding young cultural practitioners from education to work through a website allowing them to advertise their skills, network with other professionals, seek affordable studio space and seek the advice and support of Business Link

Objective:

Support Thanet's unique arts venues to develop programmes that will increase satisfaction levels with the area's theatres, concert halls, museums and galleries.

Actions:

- Support Kent County Council to prepare for opening of Turner Contemporary, including the securing of planning permission in 2008
- Support the Theatre Royal Trust to secure additional capital funding by 2011
- Help the Theatre Royal Trust to develop a successful community programme between by 2009
- Develop an asset management strategy by December 2007 and review the future management and ownership of the area's cultural assets, including museums, concert venues and theatres to ensure that best use is being made of all the area's existing assets by December 2008

Objective:

Enable local groups to continue their involvement in cultural activities to provide a broader base of cultural facilities.

Action:

- Review the grants funding programme to ensure it delivers maximum benefit and the process is transparent by November 2008
- Establish a Cultural Forum with partners, to meet on a quarterly basis by March 2008 to ensure that groups in the creative sector are kept up to date with the Council's and other agencies plans
- Continue to promote cultural events put on by volunteer groups through publications such as "Thanet Matters" and the "Isle Magazine"
- Establish service standards for Cultural Services by September 2008, so that local groups and individuals understand the level of service they can expect from the Council.
- Establish an East Kent Cultural Partnership by July 2008
- Consult with older people on priorities for improvements in services for them and to ensure that facilities are available for them by March 2009
- Establish an "IsleArts" website to act as a "shop window" for those involved in the creative industries by May 2008
- Create an arts action plan by September 2008

b. Enabling cultural economic regeneration

Objective:

Maximise opportunities from 2012 Olympic and Para Olympic Games to ensure that Thanet benefits from the economic effects of the event.

Action:

- Develop a four year action plan by July 2008 with Kent County Council and the Kent Tourism Alliance

Objective:

Work with partners to develop the existing built environment to create welcoming and attractive places that help to regenerate the area's town centres.

Actions:

- Secure planning permission for the former Marks & Spencer building by July 2008
- Develop a scheme to rejuvenate the existing facilities at Margate harbour to include restaurant and crafts shops by March 2008

- Develop draft policy for café culture for consultation by February 2008

Objective:

Support tourism businesses and market Thanet at a regional and national level to increase the number of day trip and staying visitors to the area.

Actions:

- Introduce system to allow events and tourist attractions to be bookable online at Thanet Council's tourism website by December 2008
- Evolve the Visitor Information services operation to develop a new format and focus for delivery, including possible commercial partners, by May 2008
- Produce a tourism development framework action plan and develop methods for measuring the benefits of tourism to the local economy by March 2008
- Establish a Coastal Kent partnership to market the area by March 2008
- Develop a tourism-signing plan leading to the erection and rationalisation of signs across Thanet

c. Making most of the coastal and natural environment

Objective:

Ensure that beaches and coastline remain among the best in the country to allow residents to make the most of the area's local amenities and to encourage more visitors to come to the area on day and staying trips.

Actions:

- Work to retain seven Blue Flags for the area's beaches between 2007 and 2011
- Assess potential for concessions and improve facilities at main beaches by March 2008
- Develop range of facilities for beach sports and organise a variety of regular sports events by April 2008

Objective:

Protect and promote our internationally renowned coastline for the enjoyment of our residents and to encourage additional visitors.

Actions:

- Develop a business work plan for Thanet Coast Project by June 2008

Objectives:

Provide facilities to allow everyone to enjoy the natural environment to help improve satisfaction levels with the area's parks and open spaces and increase use of public transport locally.

Actions:

- Complete improvement works to Dane Park, funded by the Safer Stronger Communities Fund, by March 2008
- Secure two Green Flags for Thanet's parks and opens spaces by 2011
- Extend and improve existing walking and cycling routes including the Dickens to Turner Trail around Thanet by 2009
- Provide a tree policy for the Council's parks and open spaces by March 2008
- Use Kent Highways funding, working in association with KCC and South Eastern Railways, to improve the poorly positioned secure cycle parking at Margate Station, and seek additional funding to improve the overall quality of these facilities at all Thanet Stations
- Implement new multi-modal interchange facilities (including cycle storage) at Minster station by March 2010
- Complete funding bids for the provision of fish landing facilities at Ramsgate Marina by April 2008

d. Building on the Past

Objective:

Deliver improvements in the appearance of the historic areas of our key towns to help residents appreciate their heritage and enjoy the landscape.

Actions:

- Improve 250 listed buildings in the Ramsgate Townscape Heritage Initiative scheme by 2011
- Produce two Conservation Area Appraisals each year until 2010
- Install new lighting, orientation signage and CCTV in Margate Old Town by March 2008

Objective:

Work with private sector partners to ensure high quality development of key sites across Thanet to maximise use of space and enable economic development.

Actions:

- Agree planning guidance for the Dreamland and Arlington Square site by early 2008
- Work with the owners of the Dreamland and Arlington Square to agree plans to regenerate the site by 2009

- Work with Kent County Council and the preferred developer on proposals for a mixed use development on the Rendezvous Site by 2010

Objective:

Provide and promote accessible and quality museum facilities for everyone to increase visitor levels to the area's museums

Actions:

Develop a plan of action to improve the management and performance of Council funded museums and art collections by September 2008, including opportunities (through facilities such as the Quex Museum) to display key archaeological finds appropriately

e. Encouraging participation in sports, leisure and active lifestyles

Objective:

Ensure the quality of the facilities provided by Thanet District Council and its partners meet the needs of residents to help improve increasing involvement in active lifestyles and satisfaction levels amongst local residents with leisure facilities.

Actions:

- Complete a three year rolling programme of improvements to the facilities at allotment sites across Thanet by March 2010
- Review leisure provider contracts to ensure value for money for customers by March 2008
- Explore opportunities for joint working between Leisure Trusts in East Kent by 2009
- Support development of community space in Broadstairs and Ramsgate by 2011.
- Work with Kent County Council as part of the Kent Agreement 2 priorities to increase the access and strategic location of leisure facilities in fully serviced schools (Building Schools for the Future programme) by 2009

Objective:

Enable access to sport for all parts of the community to help increase adult and child participation rates in sport.

Actions:

- Prepare and submit bids to secure funding for Sport 4 NRG by January 2008
- Open the new Ramsgate Swimming Pool by 2011
- Develop a Sports Facilities Development Plan, in partnership with Sport England and Kent County Council by October 2008

- Continue to support and develop Thanet Sports Network with other key partners in the industry to deliver its annual objectives

Objective:

Provide activities and facilities that enable children and young people to maximise their leisure time, so that residents feel the Council is addressing one of their key concerns, identified in the MORI survey.

Actions:

- Develop and agree a Youth Strategy by March 2008
- Develop a Thanet Coast Play programme by April 2008, which will look at the opportunities for increasing exercise and play by developing and improving play areas in Margate and Ramsgate
- Deliver a feasibility study to look at the development of a motorbike scrambling centre by March 2008, ensuring community consultation to address local concerns
- Fund provision of out of school activities for young people in the summer and Easter holidays every year until 2011

Evaluating delivery of the Cultural Strategy

Progress on delivering the Cultural Strategy will be monitored by Thanet District Council and reported back to the local community in a variety of ways, ensuring everyone is aware of the actions that are being delivered.

A report will be given to the local Cultural Forum every six months, updating groups in the creative sector on progress with implementing the Cultural Strategy. This will also be provided for information to the members of The Overview and Scrutiny Panel, together with a formal annual report to the Panel on progress against the action plan.

Local residents and businesses will be kept updated on progress with individual action points in the strategy through the press, the Council's website and the Council's magazine "Thanet Matters."

Cultural aspirations

1. By 2011, Thanet will be recognised nationally as a coastal area that has changed its fortunes, largely on the back of having re-established a thriving and sustainable cultural and visitor economy. Perception of the area has changed from one of faded seaside resorts to an attractive and appealing coastal environment with beautiful bays and beaches and strong cultural appeal.

2. Core to the turnaround is the new Turner Contemporary, which has been a major success in its first year and attracted tens of thousands of new visitors to see the building itself, along with its collections and displays.

3. The success of the Turner Centre has had a ripple effect, with new, high quality accommodation providers and artists studios opening for business in Margate. The Old Town is a 'must see' for any visitor to the town and a cultural hub of galleries, quality retail, cafes and restaurants.

4. Along with Turner Contemporary and the Old Town, the emerging Dreamland Heritage Park will form a triumvirate of attractions to supplement the town's focal point of the beach and bay.

5. Leisure and cultural facilities have come on stream, the new Ramsgate Leisure Centre has opened, Margate Football Club is attracting new supporters, the extension to the Theatre Royal is well received by patrons and Dane Park retains its Green Flag award for the third year running.

6. Ramsgate's nautical attractions have been enhanced through the addition of a fish landing area and associated market. These have led to the opening of a handful of new eateries, which have helped to put Ramsgate on the culinary map and brought extra liveliness and vitality to the Marina and Harbour.

7. Broadstairs continues to feature prominently in national polls of the most popular seaside towns. A number of new, high quality places to stay and eat have opened, providing more visitor business for the town throughout the year. Selective development of the Harbour has added further vitality to town and increased its acknowledged visitor appeal.

8. The renaissance of Thanet's visitor economy has been underpinned by improvements in support infrastructure. The core visitor areas are well signed, as are car parks and directions from other points of arrival such as the main rail stations. Visitor information services have been modernised and streamlined, utilising ICT. New events have been introduced to broaden further the visitor offer, with a strong emphasis on local culture.

9. More residents than ever are accessing local cultural and leisure facilities and participating in activities, particularly the young and old who are being helped to improve their health and fitness; the annual festival programme continues to attract national interest.

10. Destination development has been matched by enhanced destination marketing, resulting in more visitors spending more money and supporting more jobs. The visitor economy's contribution to Thanet's well-being continues to grow in importance.

11. Thanet's renaissance is mirrored elsewhere in coastal Kent, with the Kent coastal towns working in harmony to develop their individual identity and collective cultural and visitor appeal. This has been underlined through the success across the area of the second Folkestone Triennial and the British Open Golf Championship. Both events have paved the way for

cooperation aimed at ensuring that the potential benefits of the forthcoming London 2012 Olympics are fully realised.

Funding for some of these aspirations will need to be identified, as not all are set out in the Council's Corporate Plan, which defines the Council's work plan between 2007-11. Options that can be considered include sponsorship and grants from external bodies.

Local business will also have a role to play in supporting the delivery of these aspirations.

Appendix 1: Developing the strategy

In developing this strategy, the Council has taken into account other key strategies and documents that have been developed, at a national, regional and local level.

National level:

- Changing Lives and Places – Lessons from the Cultural Pathfinders (Department of Culture, Media and Sport and the Local Government Association)
- Winning: A tourism strategy for 2012 and beyond (Department of Culture, Media and Sport)
- Staying Ahead: The economic performance of the UK's creative industries (Department of Culture, Media and Sport)
- Time for Play: encouraging greater play opportunities for children and young people (Department of Culture, Media and Sport)
- Developing Entrepreneurship for the Creative Industries (Department of Culture, Media and Sport)

Regional level:

- Regional cultural strategies
- The Regional Economic Strategy 2006-16 (South East England Development Agency)
- Demonstrating the Case for Culture (South East England Development Agency)
- Towards 2010 (Kent County Council)
- East Kent Partnership Delivery Plan 2006-08
- East Kent Partnership Strategy 2005-15

Local level:

- Thanet District Council Corporate Plan 2007 – 2011
- PPG17, the Open Space and Indoor Sport Audit, an independent report that assesses where the area has shortfalls and surpluses in provision.
- Thanet District Council Residents' Survey 2005, carried out by MORI
- Cultural Inspection (Audit Commission), results published in August 2006
- Comprehensive Performance Assessment (Audit Commission), results published in June 2007
- Community Strategy for Thanet
- Thanet District Council Economic Growth and Regeneration Strategy

Appendix 2

Cultural Strategy Key Stakeholders -consultees

Organisation name	Key contact - name	Key contact - job title
Kent County Council	Elizabeth Holliday	Acting Team Leader & Kent Coastal Officer Director of External Relations & Development
Arts Council South East	Richard Russell	
Beach clean volunteers	Brian Smith-Stewart	
Broadstairs Civic Society	Kath Hotson	
Broadstairs Tourism and Leisure Association	Mike Clarke	Programme Director.
Christchurch Canterbury University	Andrew Gower	Business Framework, Broadstairs
Christchurch Canterbury University	Grenville Hancox	Head of Music
Local Artist	Chris Tipping	
Civic Society Ramsgate	Peter Landi	n/a
Probation Service	Ian Craig	Managers
CRATE	Chris Yates	
Creative Partnerships Kent	Esme Chilton	Director
Derek Pegden	Margate concessionaire	
East Kent Partnership	Graeme Haggerty	
Natural England	Ingrid Chudleigh	Officers
Folk Week	Joe Tufts	Festival Organiser
Foreness Ski Club	Steve Royce	60 Southwood Gardens
GOSE	Claire Fisher	East Kent Team
Isle of Thanet Tourism Association	Ann Smith or Steve Davies	Chairperson
Kent County Council	Keith MacKenney	
Kent Tourism Alliance	Sandra Matthews Marsh	Chief Executive

Local Strategic Partnership	Paul Trumble	Independent Chairman
Margate Civic Society	Margaret Main	Margate Civic Society
Margate Renewal Board	Derek Harding	Director
Margate Renewal Board	Ann Knight	
Margate Rocks	Janet Williams	
Margate Town Partnership	Dave Kinnear	Co-ordinator
Millennium Volunteers	Sam Morgan	
Old Town Gallery	Stephen Roper	Chairman Old Town Action Group
PIE factory music	Mike Fagg	
Ramsgate Town Partnership	Darren Simpson / Pym Brewer	Co-ordinator
SEEDA	Susan Priest	Area Director, Kent & Medway
SEEDA	Anne Knight	
St Peters Village Tour	Brian Sleightholm	Lead Organiser
TADSAD	Jack Spalding	Hon Secretary
Thanet Community Development Trust	Karen McChesney	
Thanet Leisure Force	Steve Davies	Managing Director
Thanet Leisure Force	Warren Reeves	
Thanet Youth Council	Nigel Cross	
The Dane Park resident group	Jocelyn McCarthy	
Tony Frangoudis		
Turner Contemporary	Victoria Pomery	
Windmill Project	Jules Ellis	
Youth Forum	Michael Andreas	
EKCVS	Vera Elliott	
Chalkfoot Theatre Arts	Claudia Leaf	Outreach Director
Independent Curator / Board Member of CRATE	Sue Jones	
Studio Baum	Jessica Owide	
Gallery Iota	Phillip Oldfield	
East Kent Maritime Trust	Terry Meech	

Thanet District Council	Councillor Roger Latchford	Deputy Leader of Council Cabinet Member-
Thanet District Council	Councillor Jo Gideon	Communities, Health & Safer Neighbourhoods
MLA South East	Helen Jackson	Chief Executive
Sport England S.E	Judith Dean	Regional Director
English Heritage. South East Region		Regional Director
Kent County Council	Sarah Wren	Arts and Regeneration Officer
Theatre Royal	Will Wollen	Artistic Director
Thanet Archaeological Society		