



Council Policy & supplementary planning guidance for residential accommodation in Cliftonville West Renewal Area

**Council Policy, supplementary planning
guidance and supporting statement**



**Thanet District Council – Council Policy & supplementary planning guidance –
Cliftonville West Renewal Area**

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• Introduction

Adoption Statement

The Council Policy & supplementary planning guidance set out in this document, was adopted by Thanet District Council on 14th December 2006.

COUNCIL POLICY & SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING GUIDANCE AND SUPPORTING TEXT & NOTES

COUNCIL POLICY & SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING GUIDANCE

Thanet District Council will resist further proposals to provide single bedroom flatted accommodation, bed-sits and non self-contained accommodation (houses in multiple occupation) within the area of the declared Cliftonville West Renewal Area. This includes provision by way of conversion of existing buildings and by way of new build. The Council will have particular regard to this policy objective in exercising its development control functions and planning applications to provide such accommodation in the Renewal Area will be refused.

The supporting text and notes to the policy and supplementary planning guidance are set out overleaf.

SUPPORTING STATEMENT FOR POLICY AND SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING GUIDANCE RESTRICTING NEW 1 BED FLATS, BED-SITS & HOUSES IN MULTIPLE OCCUPATION

Summary

1 This note sets out the case for the policy and supplementary planning guidance concerning 1 bedroom flats/bed-sit accommodation and HMO's in part of Margate/Cliftonville. It shows that the area suffers deep-seated deprivation across a range of indicators, outlines the reasons why such accommodation is associated with problems of deprivation including crime, fear of it and anti-social behaviour, and that policy has an important role in restricting proliferation of accommodation that would serve to perpetuate the deprivation cycle.

Area of Severe Deprivation

2 Thanet has long been recognised as a deprived area within an otherwise generally prosperous region. The wards of Cliftonville West and Margate Central contain Thanet's most deep-seated and longstanding areas of deprivation. This has been manifested in high levels of social and economic dependency, lack of investment, a generally run down appearance and a community lacking confidence and coherence. The scale of deprivation suffered in this area is confirmed and reflected in the deprivation "scores" provided by the Index of Multiple Deprivation. This IMD reveals that Thanet's 5 most deprived areas adjoin each other and all fall within the Cliftonville West/Margate Central wards. There is anecdotal evidence that symptoms of deprivation associated with these wards, such as fear of crime, are tainting the image of the whole district as a place to live, visit and invest.

3 The following shows the "ranking" of these 5 deprived areas compared with all areas in Thanet, Kent County and the South East. West Margate Central is ranked as (1st) most deprived of all of the 5319 areas in the South East.

Area ("Super Output Areas" within wards)	Deprivation "Ranking" compared to all areas in:		
	Thanet (total of 84 areas)	Kent County (total of 884 areas)	The South East (excluding London) (total of 5319 areas)
West Margate Central	1	1	1
North Cliftonville West	2	2	2
North Margate Central	3	3	9
Central Cliftonville West	4	5	21
East Cliftonville West	5	6	27

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Note: The Index of Multiple deprivation is an established and widely used measure of deprivation. It combines a range of indicators including employment, health, education/skills, barriers to housing and services, crime and disorder, living environment, plus income deprivation affecting children and older people. The ranking shown in the table above reflects the deprivation scores for the named “Super Output Areas” within the wards.

4 Cliftonville West and Margate Central wards fall within the 10% worst (Super Output) areas in England in relation to many of the individual aspects of deprivation covered, and particularly severe deprivation scores exist within them in relation to income, employment, health, crime and disorder, living environment, income deprivation affecting children and older people.

5 Information from the 2001 national population census and other sources confirm the severity of deprivation across a wide range of indicators for Cliftonville West and Margate Central wards. Key illustrative points are set out below. These wards have a significantly high proportion of:

- economically active people who are unemployed. (Highest rate in Thanet and more than double Thanet’s overall rate)
- male job seeker’s allowance claimant rate (more than triple Thanet rate)
- people of working age with limiting long term illness (nearly double Thanet rate)
- hospital admissions due to alcohol/drugs (over five times the County average)
- shared dwellings (Cliftonville West has highest rate at over four times the Thanet average)
- children in households with no earner (Margate Central has highest rate in Thanet)
- residents who are lone parents.
- crime rates. (These wards accounted for 12% & 16% of all recorded crime in Thanet but only contain 5.5% and 3.8% of Thanet’s population).

Action to Reverse the Problems

6 The vision of a prosperous and welcoming community and a safe attractive place to live and work underpin the Community Strategy, the Council's Corporate Plan and the Local Plan. The Council and its partners continue to work to deliver the strategies and support needed to sustainably overturn Thanet's economic and social misfortunes. Initiatives include tackling the barriers to reversing Thanet's image from a deprived area to a district which is desirable to live, work and invest in. For example the Local Plan provides a wide portfolio of business investment sites, greenfield housing opportunities and supports growth of the airport as an economic catalyst. Parallel initiatives also include programmes to kick-start and deliver regeneration of Thanet's most deprived pockets; an example being the recent declaration of a Renewal Area for Cliftonville West. The declaration reflects recognition of the area's concentrated combination of social and environmental problems, and aims to improve the condition of the private sector housing stock, the general amenities of the area, and to improve community safety, confidence and access to quality services.

Cycle of Decline

7 The report by the Prime Minister's Strategy Unit (Improving The Prospects of People Living In Areas of Multiple Deprivation - January 2005), identifies the main drivers of deprivation, and these are closely associated with the symptoms of deprivation suffered in Margate Central and Cliftonville West wards. The report notes that these drivers interact to form a cycle of decline. For example poor quality housing and badly maintained local environments, anti-social behaviour/crime can cause instability in a community, and worsening problems cause those residents who can (generally the better skilled and educated) to move out leaving behind increasing concentrations of deprivation as vulnerable people with little choice move in. This results in concentration of vulnerable residents who are sick/disabled, low skilled, have criminal records, ethnic minorities, asylum seekers, substance abusers and lone parents. The official statistics for Cliftonville West and Margate Central wards confirm this outcome.

8 The Report of the Kent Child Protection Committee Inquiry (June 2005) recognised the links between the general economic and social conditions prevalent in Thanet District, the impact of a transient and extremely volatile population, and the effects of the practices of other local authorities in placing vulnerable people away from their homes and communities. It portrays a community at a "point" where this explosive mixture will have potentially serious consequences for placed people and the local communities unless fundamental measures are taken now. The report sets out recommendations for tackling the root of these problems via a range of agencies, and specifically acknowledges the need to promote the Area Renewal Strategy for Cliftonville West.

9 The seriousness of the social and economic deprivation suffered in Cliftonville West and Margate Central wards warrants a concerted and comprehensive approach to remove their underlying causes. The Council believes that the work of a range of agencies to secure this common objective could be undermined if the stock of accommodation suitable to occupation by deprived or vulnerable people is allowed to increase unchecked.

Transient Population

10 Cliftonville West and Margate Central wards have the highest proportion in Thanet (over double the Thanet rate) of people changing address each year. In-movement exceeds out-movement. This high level of transience combined with the area's existing problems will, if allowed to continue, reinforce and import further dependency and deprivation. In turn this will further erode the prospect of sustainable recovery, and compound perception of the area as a location for people with nowhere else to go, and as a no go area for those who could help stem/reverse the cycle of decline.

Oversupply of small flats/bed sits and HMO's.

11 Cliftonville West and Margate Central wards contain a substantial proportion of larger properties, many previously used as hotels or large dwellings reflecting the popularity of the resort in Victorian times. The size and layout of many of these are too large for, or incompatible with, modern living requirements. With the decline of the traditional seaside holiday, many of these properties became neglected and/or occupied by dependent and vulnerable people. (For example multiple occupation, DSS bed and breakfast, asylum seekers, people placed by outside authorities and homeless people in private rented accommodation). The presence and availability of cheap housing has helped the area to become a destination of choice for a transient population, ranging from the homeless to those attracted by the "seaside" lifestyle. The effect of the "Dole on Sea" era continues to be reflected in the statistics confirming the area as Thanet's most deep seated pocket of deprivation.

12 The 2001 census shows that flatted accommodation already forms a high proportion of Thanet's housing stock, compared to Kent and the South East (24%, 16% and 18% respectively). Thanet's two most deprived wards of Cliftonville West and Margate Central also have the highest proportion of flats in the district (60% and 57% respectively). Within certain areas of these wards flats can form 2/3 of the stock. These wards also have a substantially higher proportion of smaller accommodation (1 or 2 rooms) only compared to Thanet (7%, 9% and 3% respectively). Within them the proportion is as high as 13%.

13 The proportion of rented accommodation in these wards significantly exceeds the proportion for Thanet. (Cliftonville West 53%, Margate Central 59% & Thanet 30%). These two wards have the highest proportion in Thanet of rented accommodation having private (as opposed to Council/registered social) landlords.

14 The combination of a large number of small flats which are in generally poor condition means that there is a plentiful supply of cheap rentable property which attracts vulnerable and transient people to the area and compounds the deprivation cycle. The oversupply of small self contained units in Cliftonville West and Margate Central is thus a key factor in the area's deprivation and perpetuating the deprivation cycle.

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15 Approximately 60 (about 1/6th) of Thanet's Houses in Multiple Occupation" are located in Cliftonville West Renewal Area. This represents an approximate concentration 10 times higher than the average over Thanet's urban area. It also forms a substantial reservoir of accommodation suitable for occupation by transient/vulnerable people.

16 An increasing quantity of accommodation in these wards is being converted to bed-sit accommodation and flats. While this may represent investment in property and potentially better standards of accommodation than say multiple occupation, many such proposals are for conversion of hotels/dwellings to bed-sits/1 bedroom flats. In an already deprived area such increases in the stock of small accommodation are, in the foreseeable future, likely to be at the low end of the market and serve to fuel the deprivation cycle through importation of an increasing number of dependent and vulnerable people. The building stock offers substantial scope for such conversion to continue. The Council therefore considers that the amount of property in these wards being converted to bed-sits and one bed flats is actually fuelling the importation of socially and economically dependent people. It therefore believes that specific and strong policy action is needed to prevent this situation from continuing and to complement (or at least not undermine) other emerging programmes for restoring a more balanced, sustainable and less vulnerable community structure.

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Policy Considerations

17 Government guidance (reflected in Local Plan policy), generally encourages conversion of larger buildings and dwellings no longer suited to modern living requirements to smaller dwelling units. This helps to make more efficient use of brownfield land, minimises the amount of greenfield land needed to accommodate new homes, and remains an appropriate policy objective for Thanet in general. The Council's Flat Conversions Guide sets out standards for such conversions including one-bedroom units. Local Plan Policy, while not wishing to encourage proliferation of non self contained accommodation such as houses in multiple occupation, does acknowledge that this can provide an inexpensive source of rented accommodation. It sets out criteria to be applied in deciding planning applications to regularise or establish such accommodation. Thanet has a substantial shortage of affordable accommodation and the policy currently remains generally appropriate for the district as a whole.

18 Government planning policy for housing does, however, expect local planning authorities (inter alia) to “provide wider housing opportunity and choice and a better mix in the size, type and location of housing than is currently available and seek to create mixed communities”. Draft replacement Government guidance places increased emphasis on the need for housing and planning policies to support mixed and sustainable communities, and seeks to ensure that everyone has the opportunity of living in a decent home, which they can afford in a community in which they want to live.

19 The Council considers, as a result of the concentration of dependent and transient people in Cliftonville West and Margate Central wards and the attendant deprivation cycle, that this area is one where most individuals would not choose to locate. The preponderance of dependency among the population is the very antithesis of a mixed community. In these circumstances, and bearing in mind the magnitude of deprivation, the Council considers it is justifiable and highly appropriate to adopt as policy the objective of resisting provision of further 1 bedroom flatted accommodation and non self contained accommodation in order not to further fuel the deprivation cycle.

20 Cliftonville West Renewal Area straddles (but does not wholly contain) both these deprived wards. It also contains much of the larger accommodation physically suitable for subdivision to smaller units of accommodation. This declared Renewal Area is considered to be an appropriate one within which to exercise and monitor the impact of the following Policy and Supplementary Planning Guidance.

21 The Policy and Supplementary Planning Guidance, coupled with other initiatives to promote sustainable local area regeneration, are expected to result in a wider range in the size and tenure of residential accommodation in the Renewal Area. This in turn can be expected to result in a more balanced community structure, lower levels of deprivation and crime, better quality accommodation an improved local environment and perception of the area as a desirable one in which to live, work and invest. The Council will monitor the need to maintain and adjust the Policy and Guidance in light of monitoring against the indicators featured below.

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22 The Policy and Guidance will apply to proposals to provide additional 1 bedroom accommodation or houses in multiple (non-self contained) occupation in the Renewal Area. They will not have any direct impact on the existing supply of such accommodation in the Area or elsewhere in the District. The Council is aware that accommodation of this type in any location can, if poorly managed or constructed to poor standards, adversely affect quality of life and perception of an area as a desirable location to live. In particular such accommodation can give rise to problems of anti-social behaviour, crime/fear of crime. In addition to introducing the Policy and Guidance the Council continues to work to encourage the highest standards of accommodation district-wide and, where necessary to co-ordinate cross-departmental action so that any enforcement powers are, where needed applied fairly, firmly and effectively.

23 For the reasons set out in the above, Thanet District Council considers it is justified and appropriate to apply the following Policy and Supplementary Planning Guidance.

COUNCIL POLICY & SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING GUIDANCE

Thanet District Council will resist further proposals to provide single bedroom flatted accommodation, bed-sits and non self-contained accommodation (houses in multiple occupation) within the area of the declared Cliftonville West Renewal Area. This includes provision by way of conversion of existing buildings and by way of new build. The Council will have particular regard to this policy objective in exercising its development control functions and planning applications to provide such accommodation in the Renewal Area will be refused.

Note regarding 2001 Census Data referred to:

Source 2001 census (Crown copyright 2003). Crown copyright material is produced with the permission of the controller of HMSO.

Operational Notes to Policy and Guidance

Area

The area to which the Policy and Guidance apply is defined on map CWRA1.

Minimum size of 2 bedroom unit

The Council has previously adopted separate supplementary planning guidance (Flats Conversions Guidelines) setting out the criteria it will take into account in considering planning applications for conversion of existing properties to flats in the District. This includes a minimum floorspace of 50 sq. metres for a 2 bedroom self-contained flat. The Council believes that this floorspace standard is also applicable for the purposes of the above Policy and Guidance, and proposals to provide flats (both new build and conversion) having a floorspace below the 50 sq. metre minimum will be regarded as of insufficient size for two or more bedrooms and thus contrary to the Policy and Guidance.

The other aspects of guidance in the Flats Conversions Guidelines also apply to proposals both within the Regeneration Area and other parts of the District.

Monitoring

The impact of the Policy and Guidance will be reviewed in monitoring achievement of policy objectives for the Renewal Area, and in the light of updated information on the area's social and economic position.

The following indicators will be applied in monitoring the effectiveness and continuing relevance of the Policy and Guidance. Reference to "relevant wards" signifies Cliftonville West and Margate Central respectively. Many of the indicators most pertinent to the policy objectives are only updated periodically including the population census and Index of Multiple Deprivation. The following indicators will be applied and monitored at such time as updated information becomes available. Targets may be framed in terms of when updated information is expected, and may be amended in light of review.

Contextual Indicators

Indicator 1- Number of Jobseeker claimants as a proportion of residents of working age (Baseline October 2005 Relevant wards = 10 & 9% respectively. District average = 4%).
Target - Levels for relevant wards to reduce annually towards and equal district average by 2016.

Indicator 2 - Percentage of people reporting limiting long-term illness (Baseline 2001 Census Relevant wards 27% & 27%. District average = 23%)
Target Levels for relevant wards to equal 25% by 2013

Indicator 3 - Proportion of population moving in to and out of area (Baseline relevant wards 16% & 15% in, 13% & 14% out. District av. = 4% in & 3%out.
Target. Levels for relevant wards to equal district average by 2013.

Output Indicators

Indicator 4 - % of single bed and/or non self-contained accommodation proposed in Cliftonville West Renewal Area and in “other monitoring areas” (see notes below).

Baseline (To be established - see note below)

Targets

- 0% applications within the Renewal Area within 6 months of adoption of Policy and Guidance.
- Nil % increase in “selected monitoring areas”.

Indicator 5 - % of single bed and/or non self-contained accommodation permitted in Cliftonville West Renewal Area and in “other monitoring areas”.

Baseline (To be established - see note below)

Target

0% permissions within the Renewal Area following introduction of policy and guidance.
Nil increase in % in other “monitoring areas”.

Notes regarding Output Indicators

Indicators 4 & 5 refer to % of total dwelling units proposed/permitted in planning applications for new build and converted residential accommodation being single bed flats or non-self contained.

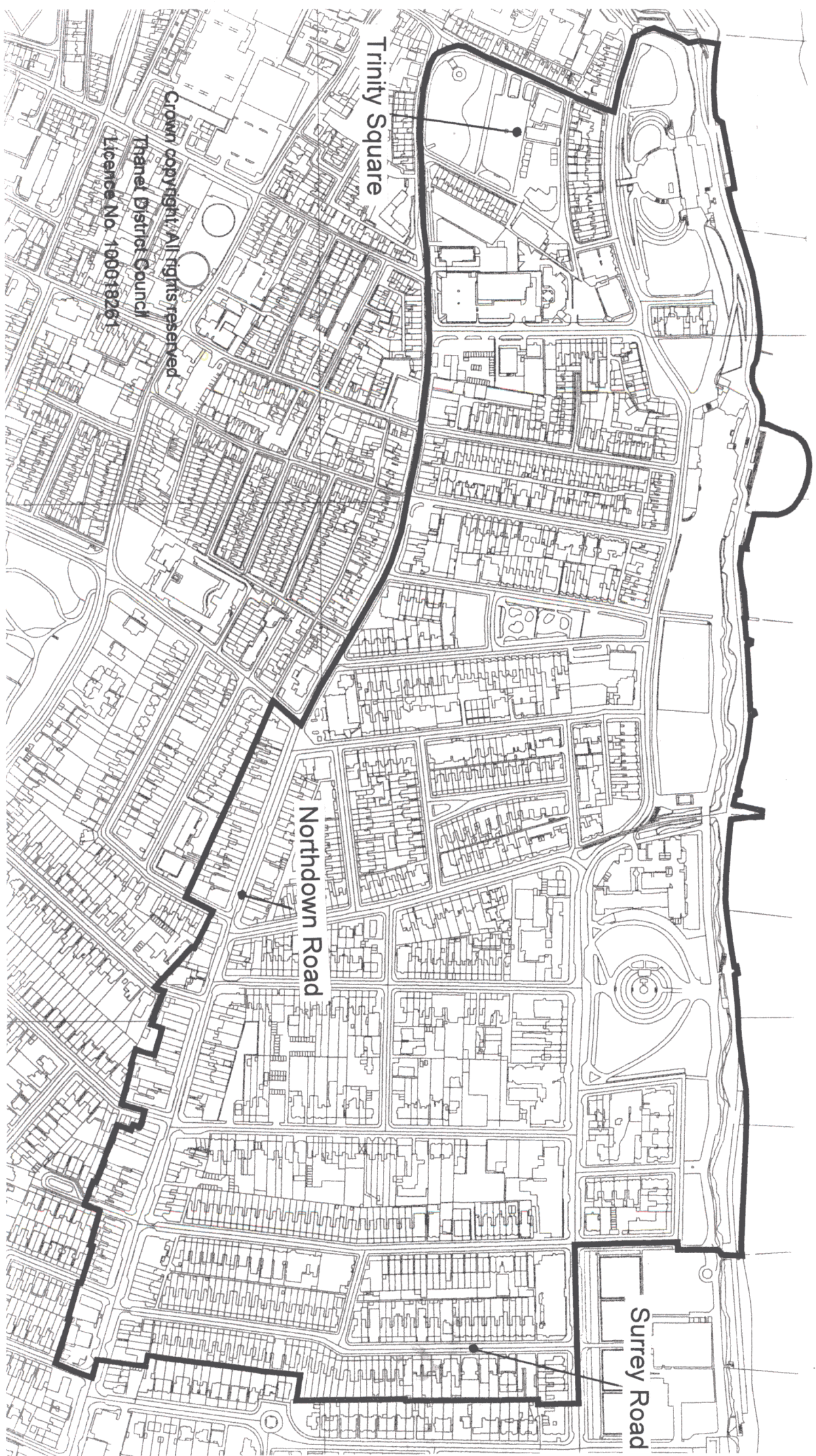
In order to ensure that the policy and guidance are not resulting in displacement of pressures to provide single bedroom/non-self contained accommodation, indicators 4 and 5 will also be applied to “other monitoring areas” in the District which may be vulnerable to displacement

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pressures. Such areas are to be defined by relevant statistical analysis and will include a buffer area around the Renewal Area itself.

A baseline will be provided by relevant percentages over the two year period prior to the current restriction applied in advance of introduction of the policy and guidance.

Map CWRA1 - "CLIFTONVILLE WEST" RENEWAL AREA (as declared 2005).



Trinity Square

Northdown Road

Surrey Road

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