Thanet District Council

Employment Topic Paper

Background document to Thanet Local Plan

May 2013

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Purpose of Topic Paper

The purpose of this topic paper is to draw together evidence to develop and assess policy options relating to the economy of Thanet. We need to understand the existing Thanet economy, and assess its strengths and weaknesses, identify the vision and aspirations for the future and develop this into an appropriate strategy to support and deliver employment growth in Thanet that meets the objectives of the Council, partners, stakeholders and the wider community.

Economic growth spans a number of sectors and so this topic paper deals with various areas of the economy separately. **Part A** looks at the overall economic strategy dealing firstly with the total level of employment growth in terms of job numbers that need to be planned for, including consideration of the role of the airport. This section also deals with options for other general policies relating to the economy.

Part B focuses on floorspace, land and site requirements. It identifies which sectors future employment growth is expected in, and how this should be planned for in terms of location and land requirements. This part concentrates on the role of the B-use class[1] jobs and looks at ways of dealing with employment growth that is not traditionally found on a business park or in a town centre. It looks at how much employment land is needed, where this should be located, and considers in relation to existing sites, whether allocation or retention of sites is necessary or whether de allocation or greater flexibility is required.

Part C deals with the role of tourism in Thanet's economy. It outlines current tourism trends including strengths and weaknesses and Thanet's opportunities. It develops options for the best strategy to support Thanet's tourism economy through policy and other interventions.

Part D deals with the rural economy in Thanet and ways of supporting the rural economy in a sustainable manner, and considers policies that support this.

Part E looks at a strategy for the town centres and options for their future role. It considers potential future development requirements and ways in which this can be accommodated.

[1] Those uses traditionally found on business parks

INTRODUCTION

The Local Plan will need to set a vision and strategy to strengthen and diversify the economy of Thanet. Its role is to put in place policies that accommodate growth in both existing and emerging sectors. This is to enable existing businesses to stay and expand and for new businesses to locate to the area.

In preparing the Local Plan the Council must have regard to a number of overarching documents and work within the context of National Policy. This topic paper firstly looks at the policy framework at National, County and Local level and how it influences the Local Plan. It then looks at evidence gathered, past trends and barriers and opportunities to growth. Issues arising from the literature and evidence review are then summarised and the draft Local Plan objectives are outlined. The paper is then divided into Parts A to E which look at how the Local Plan might deal with the issues that arise.

National Planning Policy Framework

The Local Plan must be in conformity with the National Planning Policy Framework. It came into force on 27th March 2012 and emphasises the importance of economic growth and Local Planning Authorities taking a pro active approach to accommodating and supporting all foreseeable types of economic growth. This is the principal planning document influencing the Local Plan.

The Framework requires that Local Plans:

- set out a clear economic vision and strategy for their area which positively and proactively encourages sustainable economic growth;
- set criteria, or identify strategic sites, for local and inward investment to match the strategy and to meet anticipated needs over the plan period;
- support existing business sectors, taking account of whether they are expanding or contracting and, where possible, identify and plan for new or emerging sectors likely to locate in their area. Policies should be flexible enough to accommodate needs not anticipated in the plan and to allow a rapid response to changes in economic circumstances;
- plan positively for the location, promotion and expansion of clusters or networks of knowledge driven, creative or high technology industries;
- identify priority areas for economic regeneration, infrastructure provision and environmental enhancement; and
- facilitate flexible working practices such as the integration of residential and commercial uses within the same unit.

The NPPF also has the following requirements in terms of the evidence base which must underpin the plan. It says Local Planning Authorities should assess:

- the needs for land or floorspace for economic development, including both the quantitative and qualitative needs for all foreseeable types of economic activity over the plan period, including for retail and leisure development;
- the existing and future supply of land available for economic development and its sufficiency and suitability to meet the identified needs. Reviews of land available for economic development should be undertaken at the same time as, or combined with, Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessments and should include a reappraisal of the suitability of previously allocated land;

- the role and function of town centres and the relationship between them, including any trends in the performance of centres;
- the capacity of existing centres to accommodate new town centre development;
- locations of deprivation which may benefit from planned remedial action; and
- the needs of the food production industry and any barriers to investment that planning can resolve.

South East Plan 2009 (now revoked)

Local Plan preparation had to be in accordance with the Regional Spatial Strategy which was the South East Plan 2009. The Localism Act 2011 abolished Regional Spatial Strategies.

The East Kent section of the South East Plan estimated employment growth delivery over the Plan Period (2006-2026) to be 50,000 jobs. This was mainly proposed through significant growth at Ashford with supporting roles of Dover and Canterbury. Given the abolition of the South East Plan, Local Authorities in the region have been commissioning separate projections for employment growth at individual local authority levels and discussions regarding overall levels of growth in the region are being borne out through the Duty to Co Operate.

Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP)

The East Sussex, Essex, Kent, Medway, Thurrock and Southend LEP exists to help businesses grow and focuses its efforts on areas of cross-border economic importance where there is added value in working together. The LEP's vision states that it serves to promote steady, sustained economic growth over the next two decades. It is the largest strategic LEP in England and has a combined population of 3.9 million people, which is larger than any UK city region outside of London. Its main priorities are as follows:

- To unlock the potential of the Thames Gateway.
- To unlock the potential of coastal East Sussex, Greater Essex and Kent and Medway.
- To unlock the potential of rural East Sussex, Greater Essex and Kent and Medway.
- To unlock the potential of our key towns and cities.

Particular attention is given to skills, housing, tourism and infrastructure across the LEP area. By bringing together leaders from business, local government and further and higher education the LEP aims to achieve its priorities and act as an enabler rather than an implementation body. One example of an enabling activity is work with businesses, local authorities and broadband providers to roll out superfast broadband in the LEP area to accelerate economic growth.

Of particular interest to Thanet is objective 2 "to promote investment in coastal communities" This objective focuses on unrealised potential of significant growth at the coastal towns and the opportunities that exist in tourism and low carbon technologies (including offshore wind, solar power and other renewable resources) and creative and cultural industries.

The Council is in liaison with the LEP and will continue to engage throughout the production of the Local Plan.

Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS)

Current plan making guidance requires the Local Plan to be set in the context of the SCS. The SCS is particularly important as it reflects the opinions of the community.

The document acknowledges that economic underperformance has in the past frustrated progress in east Kent. It states that opportunities should be sought to attract clusters of businesses that complement each other. It states that it is not sufficient for Local Authorities to simply allocate employment land but instead should work jointly in a “single conversation” across East Kent.

The SCS says that East Kent should prioritise transport links to ensure an enduring source of employment. It should build on well established enterprises such as taking advantage of local attractions and sustaining tourism demand. The document also stresses that there is a need to press for further development at Kent International Airport.

The strategy says that new business opportunities should be exploited such as the education sector and green industries. Strong european links, and the prime coastal locations are attracting emerging technologies such as those behind green energy generation and marine engineering.

Council’s Corporate Plan

Thanet Council’s Corporate Plan 2012-2016 sets out the priorities for the District over a four year period. Priority 1 of the Plan states that the Council will support the growth of our economy and the number of people in work. By 2016 the Council aims to:

- increase the number of employment opportunities in Thanet
- decrease the number of unemployed people living in Thanet
- increase wages
- improve levels of qualifications
- reduce journey times to London
- increase in development of the Council’s land and commercial buildings to support business growth

In order to achieve the above the Corporate Plan will focus on making the best use of land and identifying new opportunities for business, encouraging development in the right place and progressing regeneration projects to support job growth. The Council will lobby for infrastructure improvements and will work with partners to encourage businesses to the area, support business start ups and improve access to digital services. The Council will also support higher and further education organisations influence the growth of tourism/leisure and sustainable energy sectors and protect and diversify the commercial function of the Port of Ramsgate.

Economic Growth is at the top of the Council’s agenda.

Draft Economic Strategy

Work began on the Draft Economic Strategy in January 2012 by the Thanet Regeneration Board led by the Regeneration and Economic Development team at the Council. Consultation closed on the draft document on 19th October 2012. Phase three includes the development of an action plan which has now been produced and will be subject to consultation to then be finalized with the strategy.

The documents purpose is to accelerate economic growth to achieve greater productivity and profit for our businesses, more jobs, and increased prosperity for Thanet's residents. It aims to:

- Develop the right environment and conditions to deliver real economic growth and prosperity
- Place businesses at the forefront to give an enterprise-led focus to activities and programmes of the public sector
- Capitalise on our natural assets, heritage and culture that are our unique selling points, to encourage private sector investment and support the visitor economy
- Capture potential opportunities from moving to a low-carbon future
- Encourage the business community to exploit the opportunities of new technologies to improve productivity and resilience
- Work with education and training providers to develop a skilled and ambitious workforce, in current and future generations.

Evidence Base supporting the Local Plan

As part of the Local Plan preparation process, in addition to reviewing overarching documents and the policy framework, the Council have been researching economic circumstance and preparing an evidence base. This is contained within the Employment Land Review published in 2010. In addition to this the Council commissioned two pieces of work in 2012. An Economic and Employment Assessment carried out by Experian and secondly a Town Centre Retail, Leisure, Culture and Tourism Assessment carried out by Nathaniel Lichfield and Partners.

The Employment Land Review is a detailed review of employment land in Thanet including an assessment of existing employment land and space, an appraisal of all employment space, an analysis of the commercial property market of Thanet in liaison with commercial property agents and Locate in Kent, and an assessment of future land requirements.

The Economic and Employment Assessment carries out an assessment of job growth to 2031. The work includes an assessment of Thanet's economy including business base and labour market, strengths and weaknesses, and trends such as migration profile. The work also assesses business sectors, percentage of jobs in the B Use Classes, clusters or networks of knowledge driven creative or high tech industries, and the rural economy.

The Town Centre Retail, Leisure, Culture and Tourism Assessment 2012 evaluates the need for retail development as well as an audit of leisure, culture and tourism uses and possible future need for those uses.

The various pieces of evidence will be referred to and considered throughout the topic paper. For example the Town Centre Assessment will be explored in Part E.

Thanet's economy

It is important to have a thorough understanding of the Thanet economy, in order to identify the issues that need to be dealt with and what we should be planning for in the future. This section is a brief overview of Thanet's economy, drawing on the evidence documents outlined above. It looks at the nature of Thanet's economy, how it has evolved and the current trends.

Thanet's economy has historically been based on tourism. The boom in cheap foreign holiday travel over the last 30 years has led to decline; however, the District retains a tourism draw due to its attractive natural environment, built heritage and a legacy of tourist infrastructure. The manufacturing base in Thanet has traditionally been weak and characterised by small scale manufacturing industries.

Thanet suffers from severe socio-economic problems. Unemployment has historically been above average and the gap has been widening. Thanet's claimant rate peaked at 6.4% in February 2012 and is almost double the UK average. The District also performs poorly in terms of education, skills, health, and wages. Thanet has a transient population particularly in Margate Central and Cliftonville West where more than 30% of residents move in and out of the area on an annual basis.

There is evidence to suggest that Thanet has a higher proportion of part time workers when compared with the South East and England averages. In 2011 40.5% of Thanet's employees were part time compared to 33.7% in the South East and 32.4% in England. This figure has grown slightly in Thanet since 2008 when the percentage of part time employees was 38.5%. The evidence does not tell us whether this is a problem for Thanet in that this is the only work available or whether people are choosing to work part time through personal choice.

Employment land allocations established over previous Local Plan periods have remained vacant, and there is strong competition from elsewhere in Kent.

According to 2011 Business Register and Employment Survey (BRES) data Thanet experienced a decline in employment in 2011 of 2.36%. In the South East there was a decline of 1.06% and in England this was 0.25%. The figures for total employees shows that Thanet's job numbers have fluctuated year on year, but remained fairly stable with jobs currently at 2009 levels, showing no net growth since then.

Table 1 below shows key economic indicators for Thanet:

Table 1: Key Economic Indicators

Thanet Economic Indicators	**2009**	**2010**	**2011**	**2012**
% 16-64 claiming out of work benefits	14.9	17.2	17.6	17.3
Unemployment rate (%)	3.2	5.1	5.2	5.6
Median Gross weekly Workplace earnings (£)	383.7	375.9	370.3	392.1
Median Gross Weekly Resident Earnings (£)	426.3	423.4	402.9	412.5
Employment Rate (%)	63.5	70.9	73.2	70.5
Total Employees	39,600	40,100	38,700	39,700
Stock of businesses	3,650	3,625	3,630	3,560
3-year Business Survival Rate (%)	59.8	61.9	63.4	60.4
GVA per Head (£)	12,601	13,250	13,602	13,239
% Employees in the Knowledge Economy	9.7	9.4	9.7	9.4
% NVQ4+	21.7	17.3	20.7	24.5

Source: Kent Economic Indicators 2012

Tourism and the green sector in Thanet comprise a larger proportion of total businesses in comparison to the South East region and England. The proportion of people that are home working is relatively high in Thanet. Occupations that are dominant are skilled trades, caring, leisure and other service jobs. Thanet has fewer professional and managerial occupations than the South East and also England although the number of people employed in these occupations has been rising for the last few years.

Thanet is perceived as peripheral although in reality transport infrastructure is extremely good with excellent road access to the M2 and M25 along with the new East Kent Access links to the south. The port and airport are important links to the continent and beyond and the High Speed rail link has greatly decreased commuting times to London.

Thanet has an international airport at Manston. At present it handles mainly freight. In 2011 figures indicate that it handled 37,000 passengers and 27,000 tonnes of freight per year. Dutch airline KLM has recently signed up to run a shuttle service to Schipol Airport in Amsterdam where a significant number of onward connections can be accessed by UK customers. The current terminal is capable of handling up to 700,000 passengers per year.

The current owners of the airport, Infratil, produced a Masterplan in 2009 which estimated a significant increase in passenger and freight numbers for the airport to 2033 along with details of future airport expansion such as a new terminal building. The airport is currently up for sale and the estimates for growth proposed in the Masterplan have not been achieved. In addition, given the uncertainty regarding the government's position on aviation within the South East, the future of the airport is uncertain. However, it remains an important economic asset and opportunity to encourage growth in Thanet.

Whilst Thanet faces some economic challenges, these are balanced by a range of opportunities. Thanet has a number of economic assets that could be exploited. As well as the airport the Port and the High Speed rail link are significant pieces of infrastructure. Thanet's attractive natural and historic built environment is also an important asset which allows the opportunity to substantially grow the Tourism sector.

Barriers and Opportunities to Growth

Key barriers to the growth of the Thanet economy have been identified as have a number of opportunities that may be exploited in the future.

Barriers

One of the major issues for Thanet's economy is its relatively ***peripheral location*** and distance from important markets such as London.

Labour supply is a problem when attracting new firms to Thanet. High unemployment, low skills, a transient workforce and a high level of retired people are all constraints and education and training are identified as a priority in order to attract business to the area.

The ELR found that although there has been growth in overall employment stock, particularly office and warehousing, the ***quality of the property is relatively poor*** in Thanet which could prove a challenge for attracting new investors to the area, both from overseas and elsewhere within the UK. The amount of property is also low and there is little or no market for speculative building of commercial property.

In Thanet there are certain areas or "pockets" of significant ***deprivation*** and a number of areas in need of physical regeneration. These pockets give the area as a whole a poor image, detract from Thanet's attractive appearance and are potentially damaging to inward investment.

Similarly Thanet's ***town centres*** have high vacancy rates and in some areas have a run down feel which convey a poor image especially as they are the hubs of the local community.

Opportunities

Employment opportunities within the ***'green sector'*** are identified in the Draft Economic Strategy. Both primary and secondary sector employment is significant and has been growing at a faster pace than national and regional benchmarks.

Employment within the ***tourism sector*** is above the England average and a significant proportion of businesses have experienced high growth over the last three years.

The ***retail sector*** is a large employer and although it has been hit by the challenging economic climate there are opportunities for development. There is a need to plan for tourists and local residents. There is an opportunity to further develop and plan for retail growth at Westwood and develop the individual roles and identities of the coastal town centres.

Employment Land Allocations. Thanet has a significant amount of land available in public ownership that is serviced and available immediately for development.

Facilitating further growth at the ***Airport and Ramsgate Port*** could unlock further opportunities. Current export levels from Thanet are low and there could be growth potential in this area given the close proximity of Thanet to Europe coupled with transport links. There is also the potential for growth given knock on effects from the airport in terms of the supply chain.

Knowledge Intensive Sectors are currently below the regional and national average in Thanet, but employment and business growth in this sector has been strong. Thanet Reach Business Park offers an opportunity to develop this sector further particularly given the existing cluster of businesses and the location of Kent Innovation Centre and Canterbury Christ Church University College Campus.

Close proximity to the nearby ***Discovery Park*** at Sandwich, as an Enterprise zone offers further opportunities for spin off/knock on benefits for the economy.

Relatively ***cheap employment land and housing*** is also an advantage as investors may be attracted by cheap premises and the potential of higher profit margins.

Draft Local Plan Objectives

Following a review of the literature and evidence and having considered the responses received to the Core Strategy Preferred Options Consultation in 2009, the draft Local Plan objectives in relation to the economy are to:

- Support the diversification and expansion of existing businesses in Thanet, and provide the right environment to attract inward investment, particularly in the tourism and green sectors.
- Retain and attract skilled people.
- Support the sustainable growth of Manston Airport and Ramsgate Port
- Support additional improvements to the high speed rail links that will achieve further reduction of journey times.
- Provide a sufficient and versatile supply of land to accommodate expansion and inward investment by existing and new business.
- Facilitate the provision and evolution of accessible, modern and good quality schools and higher and further education and training facilities to meet the expectations of employers and a confident, inclusive and skilled community.
- Facilitate the tourism economy to take advantage of the area’s unique coast, countryside, and the townscape and cultural heritage and potential of the coastal towns, while safeguarding the natural environment.

The issues that the Local Plan will need to address

The key requirements that have come out of the policy documents and evidence that the Local Plan should address are highlighted in this section. The Local Plan will need to find solutions to the barriers, take advantage of the opportunities and meet National Policy requirements and objectives. There are a number of issues emerging from the policy documents which are dealt with in the following sections and outlined below.

The main issue identified is that the Local Plan must contain an appropriate economic strategy and this is considered across all sections of the topic paper. Part A deals specifically with what levels of employment growth we should be planning for. There is a need to identify land requirements to accommodate the job growth for all foreseeable types of economic development and this is looked at in part B.

Many of the plans and strategies outlined highlight Tourism and the Green economy as potential areas for growth. Evidence gathered shows that Thanet contains a higher proportion of these sectors than in other areas. The Local Plan needs to consider ways in which these sectors can be supported to ensure growth potential is realised. Tourism is dealt with in Part C of this topic paper.

Considering appropriate futures for the town centres in Thanet is identified as a local issue. This is also required by National Policy which states that Local Authorities should recognise Town Centres as the hubs of their community and develop appropriate strategies to accommodate all town centre growth. Part E looks at this issue.

Home working has been identified as significant in Thanet in comparison to other areas. National planning policy requires us to consider its development. It is not clear from the evidence whether these are small local business starting up from home or employees of companies potentially outside the District. In either case this is considered beneficial to the wider economy in terms of money spent in the local area.

The largest growth identified is anticipated to be in the non industrial uses not traditionally found on employment sites, we will need to ensure that growth in these sectors is provided for.

The National Planning Policy Framework and South East Plan place importance on supporting rural business and diversification. The Local Plan needs to consider ways in which this can be achieved without detriment to sustainability objectives. This is covered in Part D.

The National Planning Policy Framework says we need to identify priority areas for economic regeneration, infrastructure provision and environmental enhancement. The Council has produced a specific Development Plan document dealing with Cliftonville and the social and physical regeneration needs of the area. In addition infrastructure provision and environmental enhancement are dealt with in other parts of the Local Plan.

The various issues regarding employment growth are dealt with in the sections below:

Part A – Levels of employment growth, economic assets, and general policies
Part B – Floorspace, and requirements and site selection of industrial uses
Part C – Tourism
Part D – Rural Economy
Part E – Strategy for the Town Centres

Part A – Level of Employment Growth

Introduction

This part of the topic paper considers a range of alternative futures for the economy of Thanet, outlining options to be considered and the implications in terms of the number of jobs that should be planned for. It also includes consideration of the role of Thanet's economic assets and how general policies can facilitate economic growth.

It is important to understand potential job growth over the plan period, as this factor informs and influences the amount of land that needs to be planned for. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) requires Local Plans to 'assess the needs for land and floorspace for economic development, including both the quantitative and qualitative needs for all foreseeable types of economic activity over the plan period,' and these job growth figures provide a starting point for assessing this need. Job growth figures are also a consideration in planning for the right number of homes over the plan period (The Housing Topic Paper considers this further)

Future Scenarios for the economy of Thanet

Potential scenarios have been identified for the economic future of Thanet. These have been developed following a thorough review of the economic situation in Thanet, including identifying the potential threats and opportunities that exist, a review of the relevant policies, plans and strategies, as well as stakeholder input. Experian were commissioned to develop and test the following scenarios:

- Baseline (economy continues to perform in the way it has done in the past)
- Policy – on (assumes high growth especially in the green and tourism sectors)
- Risk Based (assumes that the economy returns to recession)

We also separately considered the effect of potential growth at the airport in addition to these scenarios.

<u>Baseline Scenario</u>
One potential future for Thanet is that the economy continues to perform in the way that is has done in the past, when compared to the regional and national pictures. This scenario takes into account what is expected to happen at a national and regional level, but also reflects the profile of Thanet's economy, and takes into account where Thanet's economy has performed better or worse than regionally and nationally. In this scenario continued growth is expected in the service sector, along with caring, leisure and other service occupations, with declines in manufacturing.

This scenario results in a net growth of 3,100 jobs over the 20 year period from 2011 to 2031.

<u>Policy-on Scenario (High Growth)</u>
An alternative scenario has been developed around growth in areas which the Council has recognised as having future potential. The Council's Draft Economic Strategy highlights two clear areas of growth potential in the District; the heritage, culture and visitor economy, and the green economy. These two areas of opportunity are also recognised within the Council's Corporate Plan and the East Kent Sustainable Community Strategy. These sectors comprise a higher level of total employment in Thanet when compared to the region and England, and evidence also shows that these sectors have grown at a faster rate in recent years than at the regional and national level. This demonstrates the potential for future stronger growth in

these sectors. A scenario has therefore been developed assuming stronger growth in these sectors, over and above the baseline growth rates. This has a knock-on effect on the wider economy, resulting in enhanced productivity and wages in certain sectors, contributing to on overall stronger output and a boost in all sectors.

This scenario results in a net growth of 5,100 jobs over the 20 year period from 2011 to 2031.

Risk Based Scenario (Low Growth)
A further potential scenario for Thanet is based around the uncertainty regarding the national economic situation, and considers what would happen if the economy returns to recession. In this scenario overall output is significantly reduced and total employment levels experience a sharp downturn, only returning to pre-recession levels by around 2020. The majority of sectors are negatively impacted under this scenario when compared to the baseline, with construction and skilled trades being impacted strongly, as well as service sectors, such as retail.

This scenario results in a net growth of 1,200 jobs over the 20 year period from 2011 to 2031.

Which of the scenarios should we plan for?

Predicting what may happen in the future is not an exact science, and there are a number of varying factors which may affect the likely outcome. Whilst there should be an element of ambition, the Local Plan needs to be realistic and demonstrate that its proposals are deliverable. This section considers the implications, risks and opportunities and the likelihood of the job growth identified within each scenario being achieved.

Experian using their economic forecasting methods consider the Baseline Scenario to be the most likely growth in the district over the plan period. This scenario would meet the Council's objective of growing the tourism and green sectors, as these sectors have been performing better in recent years when compared to the regional and national picture, and the baseline scenario would see this continuing. The jobs created would be across of wide range of sectors, and whilst there may be issues in terms of local skills, that will have to be addressed, this scenario would provide job opportunities for Thanet's residents. Thanet's labour force is expected to decline over the plan period, as a result of the ageing population, and this scenario would result in the need to bring people in to the district to take up the jobs, whether this is by virtue of them commuting from outside of the district or re-locating here. There will be competition for this labour supply from surrounding districts as the issue of limited labour supply is not unique to Thanet. As a result of this, housing will need to be planned to accommodate any in-migration occurring.

The Policy-on scenario assumes a larger growth in the tourism and green sectors, which strongly support the Council's ambitions. If this number of jobs could be achieved there would be significant benefits for district in terms of its economic situation. However, in order to achieve this higher level of growth, significant intervention and support is likely to be required, from both the Council and its partners associated in delivering economic growth in the district. This scenario would require planning for a higher number of homes in Thanet, in order to attract the labour supply to take up the jobs. It is therefore essential that we understand the likelihood of achieving the full potential of this growth, to ensure that the appropriate number of homes and necessary infrastructure are planned for. It is considered that for development in Thanet to be sustainable, and to meet the objectives of the Local Plan, the numbers of homes should be balanced by job opportunities in the district. As has been shown over past years, high delivery of housing has not resulted in positive benefits to the economy.

Planning for the risk based scenario could be considered pessimistic and not consistent with Local Plan objectives or with the objectives of the Council's Draft Economic Strategy or Corporate Plan in actively encouraging and growing the economy. However this scenario is based upon the wider economic climate over which the district has little control. This scenario may also be considered in conflict with the National Planning Policy Framework, in that it does not take a positive and pro active approach to growing the economy.

The Airport

None of the above scenarios take into account any potential growth at Manston Airport. Given its presence in Thanet, and the stated plans of its owners for significant expansion, it is necessary to consider the impact this may have on the wider economy. An assessment has therefore been made of the potential impact that growth at the airport will have upon job growth, both directly at the airport and in the wider economy. This assessment has been carried out in relation to the number of passengers and amount of freight cargo which the airport handles in a year. Two scenarios for the airport have been developed.

The first assumes that the airport grows in line with the ambitions set out in the current owners Masterplan. If the airport were to grow in line with the growth plans set out in the current owners Masterplan, this has the potential to result in an additional 2,420 jobs in the district.

However, there is uncertainty regarding the potential of the airport to achieve these growth targets. There are a number of challenges which exist including that of the wider economic situation, the relatively peripheral location of the airport, and uncertainty regarding the Government's intended aviation policy. The airport is also currently for sale, and the targets in the current owners Masterplan have not been achieved to date. The second scenario therefore looks at an alternative lower growth level at the airport, which has been developed by Experian, benchmarking against other airports of a similar size and in similar locations. The scenario sees passenger numbers growing to 200,000 per annum during the plan period, which would result in an additional 240 jobs in the district.

These two scenarios show significant variations in the potential levels of job growth that could occur, depending upon the level of growth at the airport. The lower growth scenario would require a five-fold growth in passenger numbers from the current level. There is uncertainty regarding the future of the airport, and we need to consider whether growth at the airport should be planned for. Any resultant job growth would be beneficial for the economy of Thanet, but if too much growth is planned for the risks in relation to labour supply and housing delivery as outlined in relation to the policy-on scenario would apply. Any growth at the airport will also have to take into account environmental factors.

As well as considering whether growth at the airport should be planned for within future job growth, there is also a need to consider whether specific policies should be included in the plan in relation to the airport. The 'saved' policy EC2 from the 2006 Local Plan supports proposals for development at the airport, but subject to a number of criteria, including considering impacts of noise, air quality, surface transport, contamination of groundwater, visual impact and landscaping, and compliance with the S106 agreement. There are also 'saved' policies that restrict use of parts of the airport for airside development, and for uses that support the operational requirements of the existing airport terminal, until such a time that a new terminal is built. (See Annex A1 for the policy extracts).

We need to consider whether these policies are still appropriate, or whether alternatives would be more suitable. A policy in relation to the expansion and diversification would enable us to manage the potential impact of growth at the airport and ensure that new development takes appropriate account of environmental and other factors.

Ramsgate Port

Ramsgate is a major cross channel port with passenger and freight services currently running to Belgium. The port is well placed geographically to exploit links to northern Europe and is a sensible alternative to other channel ports. It was recognised as a port of regional significance in the South East Plan. The port dealt with 127,000 freight units per annum in 2009 and 186,000 passengers per annum in 2010. In May 2013 TransEuropa ferries suspended its services from Ramsgate due to financial difficulties. The Port is however, still a key piece of infrastructure to support the growth of the economy and in particular elements of the green economy.

'Saved' policy EC9 of the 2006 Thanet Local Plan supports development at the port, but restricts that to development which has a demonstrable port related need, and where there is also a lack of a suitable alternative inland location. The policy also has other criteria relating to the character and function of Ramsgate seafront and the Royal Harbour, as well as environmental issues (See Annex A2 for the policy extract).

The new Local Plan needs to consider whether or not to continue this policy support, or whether changes need to be made to it. For example, to relax the potential future uses to allow development that does not have a port related need, or the criteria included in the policy.

Thanet is preparing a Port Masterplan which will guide future development. The Local Plan will need to reflect and support this. It will therefore be necessary to review the current policy to ensure that it remains consistent with the Masterplan.

Rail Infrastructure to support economic growth

Objectives of the new Local Plan include supporting additional improvements to the high speed rail links that will achieve further reduction of journey time and also to facilitate the enhanced integration of the High Speed 1 network with wider public transport and highways networks by supporting infrastructure that would maximise its benefits.

The introduction of faster trains on the Ramsgate to St Pancras route, utilising the High Speed rail link (HS1), in December 2009, means that Ramsgate is only 76 minutes from London. This may have positive benefits for Thanet, whether this be by attracting additional business to the area, or with people living here any working outside of the District.

Kent County Council's Local Transport Plan 'Growth without Gridlock', includes proposals for a new station on the High Speed 1 line, located in the region south of the airport and west of Cliffsend. Access would be provided from the new East Kent Access road, which borders the site to the west, north and east, thereby minimising its potential impacts on local residents. The Plan states that proposal would reduce journey times between St Pancras and the station to approximately an hour, which would provide a significant boost to tourism and the regeneration of the area and also enhance access to private sector employment at Ashford and Ebbsfleet. It is estimated the costs to deliver the station would be in the region of £10 million.

Another way of facilitating enhanced integration of the HS1 is to utilise the existing stations and to plan for their increased use. In order achieve this it may be necessary to increase capacity at Ramsgate station, which is the closest to the airport and has the shortest connection time to London. This could include for example additional parking provision.

KCC's Local Transport Plan also looks at other ways of improving connectivity, facilities and infrastructure at other stations across Thanet. Funding is in place to improve both Margate and Ramsgate railway stations in terms of accessibility by public transport.

Given these proposals it is necessary to consider how the Local Plan should deal with them, and consider whether supporting policies would be appropriate.

Communications Infrastructure

Advanced, high quality communications infrastructure is essential for sustainable economic growth. The development of high speed broadband technology and other communications networks also plays a vital role in enhancing the provision of local community facilities and services.

Many of the overarching documents see communications infrastructure as important and the National Planning Policy Framework says that when preparing Local Plans, local planning authorities should support the expansion of electronic communications networks, including telecommunications and high speed broadband. It also requires us to facilitate flexible working practices such as the integration of residential and commercial uses within the same unit (live/work).

Home-working is a sustainable method of working and can be encouraged as a way to strengthen the economy. The proportion of people that are home working is relatively high in Thanet. Home based working is a growing trend and 63% of home based businesses are in the service sectors[2] As the service sector represents a significant proportion of Thanet's economy it is reasonable to assume that live/work is a growth opportunity for Thanet's economy and should be supported.

The Economic and Employment Assessment 2012 highlighted that home working is significant in Thanet. It is not clear from the evidence whether these are small local businesses starting up from home or employees of companies potentially outside the District. In either case this is considered beneficial to the wider economy as it likely to bring money into Thanet.

Some small scale home-working may not require planning permission. However, where home-working does require planning permission considerations should be had to the impacts upon the neighbourhood, including for example traffic, noise and disturbance. In order to support such proposals but to ensure that any potential impact is acceptable, an option is to include a positive policy supporting such uses subject to criteria.

Flexible office space (workhubs) with professional equipment and meeting space that can be hired and used in an ad hoc manner by home based workers can also support home working. Business advice may also be important. It is considered that these facilities can be accommodated on identified Business Parks or in the town centres or we could have specific policy to support and identify sites.

[2] Understanding Kent's Home Based Business Sector. Service sector is the sector of the economy that provides services rather than goods, and includes attention, advice, access, experience and discussion. For example transport, sale of good, entertainment, hotels and banking.

As well as supporting home based working, communications infrastructure is essential to a successfully functioning economy.

The development of high speed broadband technology and other communications networks also plays a vital role in enhancing the provision of local community facilities and services.

Kent County Council have been campaigning through their plan “connecting Kent” to get improved fast broadband facilities for Kent by working with local communities and encouraging them to bid, and discussing with broadband suppliers to increase market activity in Kent.

In order to support this, an option for the Local Plan is to ensure all new development or particular developments are appropriately supported by high speed broadband and other communications technology. However, this may not always be feasible and/or viable.

PART B Floorspace, land requirements and site selection

Introduction

This section of the topic paper looks specifically at land requirements for the different types of economic development in Thanet over the plan period. It outlines the likely floorspace and land requirements and identifies options for locating the development.

The National Planning Policy Framework requires us to plan for all foreseeable types of economic development that may come forward during the Plan Period. The NPPF also says that planning policies should avoid the long term protection of sites allocated for employment use where there is no reasonable prospect of a site being used for that purpose.

There are three main pieces of evidence which the Council have used to identify the different sectors and levels of growth in each. The Employment Land Review was carried out in 2010 and in addition to this work the Council will use information from the Economic and Employment Assessment 2012 carried out by Experian which forecasts employment growth. In order to establish floorspace need in Thanet's town centres the Council commissioned Nathaniel Lichfield and Partners to carry out a Town Centre, Retail, Tourism and Culture Assessment.

This paper considers all sectors of the economy and what the Local Plan to do to in terms of providing land for these sectors. The sectors of the economy that are forecast to see growth according to the Economic and Employment Assessment are Education; Accommodation & Food Services; Professional Services; Health; Residential & Social Work; Administrative & Supportive Service Activities; Land Transport, Storage & Post; Retail; Real estate and Specialised Construction Activities. It is important to note that approximately 30% of growth is expected in the B uses classes i.e. those uses which are traditionally found on business parks.

The table in Annex B3 explains what the different use classes referred to in this paper are.

Existing allocated employment land

There is already an existing supply of employment land in Thanet, and this is currently identified in 'saved' policy EC1 of the 2006 Thanet Local Plan.

The ELR 2010 quantified this employment land as having a total site area of all 134.42 hectares. Of these sites there is approx 79 hectares of undeveloped land and only 5.7 hectares has planning permission.

More up to date figures come from the KCC Commercial Information Audits of 2010/11 and 2011/12. The conclusions of these are set out in Table B1, showing there is approximately 74 hectares of available employment land in Thanet.

Table B1 Existing allocated employment land

SITE	Size	Remaining Developable Area (ha)
Manston Business Park	75.2ha	46.07
Eurokent Business Park	38.6ha	19.85
Thanet Reach Business Park	9.7ha	4.59
Manston Road, Ramsgate	North 1.67ha South 6.8ha	1.07 1.59
Hedgend Industrial Estate	2.46ha	1.47
TOTAL	134.42	74.64

In addition to the allocated sites 'saved' Policy EC12 of the 2006 Local Plan protects a number of existing sites (listed in Annex B1). These sites are considered important as they provide a range of affordable premises which has been identified as important in the local market. These sites equate to 86.41 hectares of employment land and have a potential additional development area of 6.4 hectares. In the past there have been losses to alternative uses.

In terms of delivery of employment floorspace, the Commercial Information Audit shows that over the past 2 years very little development has occurred on the allocated sites. This may be as a consequence of the recession but may also suggest that there is generally a low demand for this type of land and that further allocation is unnecessary during the current plan period to 2031. In the past, development of these sites has been allowed for alternative (non B) uses, for example, the leisure development at Westwood Cross.

Table B2 shows the total commercial floorspace completions in Thanet over the past 7 years. This shows the majority of development in office (A1/B1) and distribution uses (B8), with limited development of industrial premises (B2)

Table B2

Floorspace developed for employment by type (all sites in District				
Completed year	A2/B1 sq.m	B2 sq.m	B8 sq.m	A2/B1-B8 sq.m
2010-2011	342	300	2,144	2,786
2009-2010	1,156	343	144	1,643
2008-2009	16,731	523	4,765	22,019
2007-2008	4,269	150	3,875	8,294
2006-2007	3,860	1,889	13,031	18,780
2005-2006	3,523	9,797	4,585	17,905

Source: Commercial Information Audit 2010-2011

The 2011/12 Commercial Information Audit shows that for the year 2011-2012 there were 9,617sq.m of gains in the B1-B8 uses classes but there were losses of 13,536sq.m, resulting in a net loss of employment floorspace. It also shows there were gains in A1-A5 retail and D1-D2 assembly and leisure (see Annex B2).

This clearly shows that currently growth is much stronger in the non B use classes. Although much of this growth will be accommodated within the town centres there may be an element that would require employment land. This is also reflected in the employment growth projections discussed in Part A, with only 30% of employment growth being in sectors which would traditionally locate on a business park.

B Use Classes – how much land should be identified/allocated for this use?

B-use classes account for approximately 30% of employment over the plan period. The sectors that tend to wholly or partly fall within the B-Use Classes include manufacturing, construction, distribution, transport and communications, financial and business services and some government services. It is also considered that the green economy (which has been specifically identified for growth) which spans the primary and secondary green sectors, has the majority of its uses within the B uses of manufacturing and distribution (Annex B4).

The Employment Land Review 2010 analysed employment land requirements for Thanet to 2026. Based on the guidance document Planning Policy Guidance 4: Industrial, Commercial development and Small Firms, it looked at different methods to project employment growth and land demand.

The ELR applied the following two methods:

- 1: Labour demand techniques – forecasts for employment growth in the main B sectors
- 2: Past take up of employment land projection based upon the past take up of employment land with adjustments necessary to reflect any changing future circumstances.

Method one used Experian forecasts to project likely growth to 2026 and this concluded that there would be an increase of 1187 jobs in the B use classes to 2026. This employment forecast suggested that there would be a land requirement of 7.7ha of employment land up to 2026 with the greatest need in distribution uses and some office, but with an overall decrease in the need for land in manufacturing.

Method 2 looked at data on the past take-up of employment land and projected this trend forward to 2026. The data was taken from Kent County Council's annual Commercial Information Audit. Under this scenario the land requirement to 2026 is 26.6ha.

There are strengths and weaknesses with both methods. The ELR concluded that method 1 seemed very unoptimistic given past take up rates and the weakness with method 2 is over the long term it cannot take into account changing circumstances.

The ELR concluded that the past take up of employment land projection should be used and that a 50% safety margin should be applied. This higher level growth scenario reflects the aspiration of Thanet to reduce the economic and social deprivation that exists. It also allows for uncertainties in the forecasting process. It is further justified because there had been a loss of employment land to other employment generating uses in recent years. Given the growth expected in alternative employment generating uses, such as healthcare, education, hotels and leisure, it is reasonable to assume that further development may occur on allocated sites unless we specifically allocate for these uses. This generous supply also allows for movement and expansion of firms and a choice for new and existing business and there may be scope for redevelopment of existing site. The ELR therefore concluded that the following amount of land is required until 2026 (Table B3)

Table B3 Extract from Employment Land Review 2010 – B Use Class Floorspace and Land Requirements 2009- 2026

	Additional Floorspace Needs (sqm)	Additional Land Needs (ha)
B1	74,355	18.6
B2	56,123	14.0
B8	75,813	19.0
Total	206,292	51.6

In 2012 the Council commissioned work on assessing employment growth to 2031 using Method 1, labour demand .The Economic and Employment Assessment concluded that Thanet need to plan for between -15 to 3 (ha) of B use class land during the plan period to 2031, see Table below. The range reflects the three scenarios applied to growth projections set out in Part A. It should be noted that this is a net figure and assumes the losses of B2 manufacturing uses would have already occurred; therefore in order to ensure that land would be available if the new development were to come forward prior to the loss of existing floorspace, it is considered necessary to plan for the gross increase required, which is in the region of 15 ha. The Assessment concludes that a margin of error will also need to be factored in.

Table B4 Land and Floorspace Requirements 2011-2031

Use Class	FTE Employment change 2011-31	Floorspace Need (sqm)	Land Need (ha)
B1	700 to 1,000	10,500 to 15,000	3 to 4
B2	-1,400 to -1,000	-63,000 to -45,000	-18 to -13
B8	0 to 600	0 to 42,000	0 to12
Total B Class	-700 to 600	-52,500 to 12,000	-15 to 3

Source: Experian Economic and Employment Assessment 2012

Despite the conclusions of the Economic and Employment Assessment that there is a relatively low floorspace requirement when compared to the supply available, it is considered that the justification for a generous supply of employment land outlined in the ELR still remains valid.

The Local Plan will need to consider whether the supply of land should be generous, or whether the quality of sites needs to be improved, and therefore whether there is a need to allocated new sites and/or de-allocate some allocated sites. It is important to note that the National Planning Policy Framework says we should avoid the long term protection of allocated sites where there is no reasonable prospect of the site being used for that purpose.

We should also consider whether to continue to protect the sites currently covered by Thanet Local Plan Policy EC12 "Retention of Employment Sites (Annex B1). If these sites are not protected there would be pressure for them to be lost to other uses such as residential. These sites do provide a particular function in the Thanet economy, as they provide low cost, affordable premises. However a lot of the premises are in poor condition and current market indications suggest that redevelopment may not be viable.

Some businesses on the retained sites may want to expand and move to the allocated sites leaving their old premises. This could be positive as it would free up ready to move in to business units. The Council are currently reviewing both the retained and allocated sites to ensure they are still fit for purpose and it may be appropriate that some of the current sites should not be protected in the future.

Choice and Location of B Use Employment Land

The ELR concluded that the majority of growth in the B use classes is likely to be within the B1 and B8 uses. Development of B1 (Offices) are likely to take place within the town centres, on business parks or could be identified alongside housing in residential areas. However, growth in B8 (Storage and Distribution) units would require land opportunities located in close proximity to the strategic road network. Manufacturing processes are best located away from residential areas to protect residential amenity. Potential development at the Airport may be a catalyst for economic development and therefore sites surrounding the airport in the Central Island could be considered important. Much of Thanet's allocated employment land is located centrally in Thanet.

The ELR assessed all sites in terms of their marketability, sustainability, deliverability and strategic planning factors and each site was given a score. Some examples of criteria used included age and quality of buildings, ease of access to the main road network, physical constraints and the possibility of alternative uses better for the site. The full list of criteria used in detailed on page 59 of the Employment Land Review Appendices May 2010. The main aim of the exercise was to establish whether the existing sites satisfy the future requirements of employment growth in the district.

The scores of the Thanet Local Plan's EC1 Allocated Employments Sites are contained in Table B5

Table B5 Appraisal and Ranking of Employment Sites

Site Name	Location	Size (ha)	Remaining Developable Area (ha)	Potential Uses	Score (out of 20)	Quality
Manston Road (N)	Ramsgate	1.67	1.07	B1 B2 B8	19	Excellent
Manston Park	Manston	75.2	47.37	B1 B2 B8	18	Good
Eurokent	Westwood	38.6	20.5	B1	16	Good
Hedgend	St Nicholas	2.46	1.61	B1 B2 B8	16	Good
Thanet Reach	Broadstairs	9.74	6.89	B1	16	Good
Manston Road (S)	Ramsgate	6.8	1.59	B1 B2 B8	14	Average

Source: Adapted from Table 27 of the Employment Land Review 2010

We will need to consider whether the existing employment land is located in the right place and is appropriate to accommodate the growth anticipated. Or whether there is a need to allocate new sites in more appropriate areas. The ELR suggests that the existing sites do provide appropriate and suitable land to match the requirements. The Council is currently working on a review of the ELR which will reflect changes since the ELR and will involve reassessment of the sites.

It is also considered that a range of sites should be provided to meet differing needs of businesses. For example, Thanet Reach Business Park has been identified as an opportunity for development in the knowledge intensive sectors given its location adjacent to the University and Kent Innovation Centre, whilst businesses requiring quick access the direct road links to the wider area may prefer Manston Business Park. The range of currently allocated sites provides choice and flexibility for businesses.

Land Provision for other sectors/uses

The table at Appendix B shows the broad sectors of the economy and highlights the different areas of growth that the Local Plan may need to consider when devising a strategy to accommodate all foreseeable types of economic growth in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework. The Economic and Employment Assessment identifies growth in a number of sectors not traditionally found on business parks which are outlined below.

Town centre and Tourism Uses

A number of town centre and tourism uses have been identified to grow over the plan period, and provide additional employment. Retail is identified as a growth sector with an estimated 200 jobs to 2031. Accommodation and Food Services are also expected to grow with 700 net jobs being created to 2031. Professional services, such as legal, accounting and architectural services, that are expected to grow will also be partially accommodated within town centres.

The Town Centre Retail, Leisure, Tourism and Culture Assessment 2012 carried out a Household Expenditure Survey to assess need to retail and certain other uses. As well as providing an analysis of retail floorspace requirements the study also looked at the need for leisure, tourism and cultural facilities. The conclusions of this report and options for accommodating development of town centre uses are discussed in Part C and E of this topic paper. Part C looks at Tourism and Part E considers the Strategy for the Town Centres.

Government and other services

An important broad sector to be considered is the Government and other Services Sector which includes public administration, education, health and care uses. Education is estimated to grow by 750 jobs, Health by 650 jobs and Residential and Social Care by 500. Public administration is primarily office based uses which can be accommodated within town centres or on business parks. Education, health and care uses are all growth sectors that the Council needs to consider in relation to providing the appropriate facilities for communities. The requirements to plan for them will therefore be considered within the Communities, Heath and Well Being Topic Paper.

Agriculture

Agricultural uses are not expected to see growth to 2031 according to the assessment; however, supporting the needs of the food production industry is considered in Part D, the “Rural Economy” of this topic paper.

Sui Generis Uses

The Use Classes Order has a number of uses which do not fall into a particular use class. Some of these uses may not be appropriate for town centres, for example petrol filling stations and motor car show rooms. In the past land has not been identified of these uses and some development has occurred on the existing employment sites, as departures from policy.

The Local Plan needs consider whether it should plan for growth in these sectors. It is not considered appropriate to identify specific land solely for these uses as demand is difficult to predict, therefore in order to accommodate these uses it may be appropriate to adopt a degree of flexibility on employment land. This may result in the need for a generous supply to be provided. A criteria based policy allowing some flexibility on certain employment sites may be appropriate.

Summary

The Council need to consider whether employment land should be provided in a variety of sites in a range of locations across the district or whether there should be a cluster in one location. An option is to select sites from the current supply. Other considerations include whether we should still protect existing employment sites and whether we should be flexible and allow other uses on employment land or whether we should be specifically allocating for these non B class uses.

PART C The Visitor Economy

Introduction and Background

Thanet has been a traditional tourist destination for hundreds of years and whilst the popularity of seaside tourism may have declined it is still important in terms of the Thanet economy. Tourism jobs are traditionally found within Accommodation and food services; Arts, entertainment and recreation; and Retail[3]. Total employment across the tourism related industries in 2011 was 4,069 employees, 52.8% of these were part time.

A good visitor economy can also provide benefits for Thanet residents in terms of leisure facilities, attractive public realm and quality of life which can also encourage businesses and families to move in to an area.

Tourism accounts for 9% of the economy according to the 2009 Visit Kent Survey “The Economic Impact of Tourism on the District of Thanet” and therefore tourism makes a significant contribution to the local economy. Visit Kent data from 2011 “The Economic Impact of Tourism on Kent and Medway, Estimates for 2011” concluded that there were around 2.6 million tourism day trips to Thanet which was an increase on 2009. The number of overnight tourism trips in 2011 is estimated at 524,000. Around £97,455,000 was spent in 2011 by overnight visitors. 37% of all overnight visitors stayed with friends and family. These figures are significant and clearly there is scope to increase the staying visitor to provide further benefit’s to Thanet’s economy. It is therefore appropriate to put into place planning policies that encourage tourism related development and seek to revitalise the seaside towns. The purpose of this document is to explore ways of achieving this.

Characteristics that benefit the visitor economy in Thanet are the attractive sandy beaches in close proximity to London, the established successful tourist destination of Broadstairs, the development of the Turner Contemporary Gallery and the strong character of Thanet as a traditional tourist destination within Kent. Current weaknesses are the relatively low number of visitors that stay overnight, the current trend that daytrippers to the beaches spend very little and the reputation of the area, particularly Margate, which is poorly portrayed by some media.

Representations to the Council’s Core Strategy consultation in 2009 emphasised that there wasn’t enough importance placed on tourism in the draft plan. The objectives within the Thanet Local Plan 2006 are to promote and provide opportunities for new tourism facilities and to protect and enhance the local economy in Thanet. These are still relevant as the Council wishes through the Economic Strategy and Destination management Plan to encourage the staying visitor and increase tourist spend. Policies from the Thanet Local Plan 2006 are contained within Annex A.

[3] Tourism within the following SIC (industrial classification) codes are hotels; camping sites etc; restaurants; bars; activities of travel agents etc; libraries, archives, museums etc; sporting activities; and other recreational activities.

Policy Background

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

The NPPF says that Local Planning authorities should support existing markets and identify and plan for sectors and clusters in the general economy. Tourism is an existing market that has strong growth potential.

It also says in paragraph 23 that to ensure the vitality of town centres a range of sites should be allocated to meet the scale and type of retail, leisure, commercial, office, tourism, cultural, community and residential development needed in town centres. It is important that needs are met in full and are not compromised by limited site availability. Tourist development (including theatres, museums, galleries and concert halls, hotels and conference facilities) is defined as a town centre use in the glossary of the National Planning Policy Framework.

At paragraph 28 the NPPF states that in order to support a prosperous rural economy Local Plans should support sustainable rural tourism and, leisure developments that benefit businesses in rural areas, communities and visitors, and which respect the character of the countryside. They should include supporting the provision and expansion of tourist and visitor facilities in appropriate locations where identified needs are not met by exiting facilities in rural service centres.

Sustainable Community Strategy

One of the priorities of the 2009 document “Lighting the Way to Success” is to create a distinctive profile as a visitor destination, with a wealth of cultural treasures, sustaining a thriving tourist industry. This will take advantage of the area’s natural assets of the natural environment and culture and heritage. The strategy highlights current low visitor spend and the need to attract the staying visitor.

The Corporate Plan

Tourism is supported under Priority 8 “ We will support excellent and diverse cultural facilities and activities for our residents and visitors” of the Corporate Plan 2012-2016 and in Priority 9 “We will support a broad range of sports, leisure and coastal facilities and activities”

Draft Thanet Economic Strategy

One of the key themes of the Draft Economic Strategy is to capitalise on our natural assets, heritage and culture that are our unique selling points, to encourage private sector investment and support the visitor economy

Work to enhance and support the heritage, culture and Visitor Economy will include:

- Developing a new Destination Management Plan to steer and align our tourism support activity
- Work with attractions operators and owners to build the links between different attractions and areas of Thanet.
- Work with transport providers to develop public transport links between visitor attractions
- Improve signage between key points in each of our towns
- Work across council departments to improve the public realm.

Draft Local Plan Objectives and Vision

A draft Local Plan objective is to strengthen and diversify the local economy. One of the ways to achieve this is to:

- Facilitate the tourism economy to take advantage of the area's unique coast, countryside, and the townscape and cultural heritage and potential of the coastal towns, while safeguarding the natural environment.

A key part of the Local Plan vision is that:

- Thanet has a sustainable, balanced economy with a strong focus on tourism, culture and leisure, supported by the three thriving coastal towns.

Issues for the Local Plan to address

The evidence and policy suggests that we should be positively supporting the tourist economy and the Local Plan will need to provide the framework for developing a local distinctive tourism economy with an attractive public realm. The Plan will need to consider how we wish to see tourism develop, how to promote new tourist facilities and whether it is appropriate to protect existing tourist facilities. It will have to consider how to deal with tourism and culture uses within the town centres and rural tourism in order to satisfy the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework.

The challenge for Thanet is to increase visitor spend by encouraging the overnight visitor and developing more of a year round tourism offer. These are issues identified locally that the Local Plan should address.

The South East Plan said that Local Authorities should adopt an Integrated Cross Border Approach to the provision of public transport and visitor management. The Council are developing a Destination Management Plan to facilitate the development of a Shared Story approach to working with partners in different resorts and across the District to agree what that means for their destination, what actions they need to prioritise and how to deliver them. This is being carried out by the Economic Development team of the Council at a strategic level and the Local Plan will need to consider how it can promote and align with these strategies.

Promoting New Tourist Facilities

New Tourism Facilities

Although Thanet has a wealth of existing tourism facilities, in order to further enhance the visitor experience and encourage overnight stays, there is a need to promote new facilities and services.

The current Local Plan 2006 contains a policy that allows new tourist facilities where i) they support the range of facilities in the area, ii) increase the attraction of the area, iii) extend the season. We need to ensure that new tourism facilities are appropriate for the area and will positively contribute the attractiveness of Thanet as a tourism destination. As new tourist facilities are so important to Thanet's economy we are considering whether additional criteria should be introduced to ensure that tourism facilities are appropriate for Thanet. For example, whether it:

- reinforces the distinctiveness of the locality;
- is accessible in terms of both public transport and publicity;
- facilitates regeneration;
- complements existing attractions;
- displaces an existing facility.

New facilities in town centres

National planning policy supports tourism uses within town centres. The provision of facilities in the town centres should be encouraged to support the town centres, as well as to provide clusters of facilities in accessible and sustainable locations. However it may also be beneficial to the visitor economy to allow tourism uses in other locations.

A Town Centre Retail, Leisure Tourism and Culture Assessment was carried out in 2012 to assess the need for these uses and how they can be accommodated. The study carried out by Nathaniel Lichfield and Partners concluded that there was no requirement for any major leisure facilities such as health clubs or casinos however a need for cafes, restaurants and drinking establishments (A3-A5 use classes) was identified in Margate and Westwood Cross which is an important consideration when attracting tourists to these areas. The Strategy for the Town Centres, Part E section of this topic paper deals with town centre uses. Margate's vacant units can accommodate such uses but Westwood Cross will need to consider increasing its A3-A5 offer (cafes, restaurants etc).

Accommodation

Existing hotel provision in Thanet currently caters more for the budget market. Thanet has a number of touring and static caravan sites which provide self-catering accommodation suitable for families.

The Town Centre Retail, Leisure, Tourism and Culture Assessment recommends that additional hotel facilities should be planned to meet the deficiency in boutique and 4* and 5* establishments to provide further choice in the mid range sector. Hotel facilities must be attractive to tourists to capitalise on the trend for shorter breaks in the UK and demand for better overall quality and service. There is increased demand for boutique and designer hotels rather than 3* chain hotels fuelled by more sophisticated tastes.

Hotel developments are proposed on a number of sites around Thanet. The proposals to regenerate Arlington include a hotel. The premier Inn next to Margate station will also be adding a further 32 rooms. The Royal Sands development on Ramsgate seafront includes permission for a 60 bed hotel with conference and function facilities.

Hotels are an important element of the visitor experience, and can help to increase tourist spend as visitors stay longer in the District. The new Local Plan will need to consider how to encourage hotel development in Thanet. Policies from the Thanet Local Plan 2006 are included at Annex A.

Existing policy T2 supports serviced accommodation but is more of a statement that serviced accommodation is desirable rather than a practical way of planning for it. The wording may need to be strengthened or a supportive objective may suffice. Hotels are a town centre use and as such would be supported within out town centres but the Council will also need to consider whether to allocate areas outside town centres where hotels would be encouraged. However, it is important to bear in mind that hotel development is growing in the District in recent years without specific allocation policies though existing local plan policies that support new tourist facilities and serviced accommodation.

Similarly Policy T3 encourages self-catering accommodation with more criteria included about where these will be allowed as caravan parks could be intrusive in coastal and countryside locations. It is an option to continue with current policy for self-catering accommodation, which supports touring and static caravan accommodation apart from at the coast. However, there is currently a lack of alternative family accommodation near the coast. It therefore may be appropriate to consider allowing touring caravans near the coast, in particular locations.

Consideration also needs to be given to the overall level of support to be given to new and expanded caravan parks in Thanet. Caravan parks can provide good value family accommodation and support the tourism economy; however there are also environmental impacts which need to be taken into account, such as traffic and landscape.

Rural Tourism

It is appropriate that tourist facilities should be located in rural settlements as well as in urban areas. There are currently a number of tourist facilities located within the rural area such as Minster Abbey, Sarre Windmill, Monkton Nature Reserve, the Norman Church at St Nicholas and the Foxhunter park at Monkton. Many of these facilities actually require a rural location in order to be attractions. In line with the Council's economic strategy it is important that such uses are supported.

Natural Economy East Kent (funded by KCC) and Visit Kent are particularly focusing on rural tourism as a way to regenerate the east Kent economy. The vision for their work is that natural, rural and heritage assets support the revitalisation of the east Kent visitor economy and that they play a role in the development of a distinctive and quality visitor destination. Through their work they are concentrating on:

- raising awareness of east Kent's natural assets and how they can support a sustainable and prosperous economic future for east Kent.
- supporting future improvements and sustainable economic growth.
- developing demonstration projects to show the economic value that can be gained.
- seeking funding to take this work forward.

An example of their work includes developing walking and cycling trails designed to increase spend in businesses. Visit Kent also list the attractions and activities available in Thanet and the surrounding countryside. This can be found at Annex C. We will need to consider ways in which the Local Plan can support rural tourism facilities and ensure that they area accessible and sustainable.

New rural tourist facilities could also include the re use of rural buildings and conversions. This could be appropriate subject to environmental and traffic considerations. The new Local Plan may need a specific policy on supporting conversion of rural buildings for tourism uses. Rural tourism could include modest facilities supporting green tourism such as nature walks and picnic areas and a policy supporting this could be appropriate.

Potential Site Allocations

The Local Plan 2006 contains policies supporting tourism on key sites that could support their re use and regeneration. These are the Former Hoverport at Pegwell Bay and The Lido site in Margate.

Former Hoverport, Pegwell Bay

The former hoverport at Pegwell Bay is located in Cliffsend and comprises 8 hectares of hardstanding. Pegwell Bay is part of the Sandwich Bay/Hacklinge Marshes Site of Special Scientific Interest and part of a European Special Protection area and a Ramsar site protecting its community of wild birds. It is also part of the Sandwich Bay Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and the Thanet Coast Marine SAC also designated under European legislation. The importance of the surrounding Pegwell Bay area has also been reflected in its designation as a National Nature Reserve. The cliffs near the Hoverport site are also of special scientific interest because of their geology. A rare moth identified in the Biodiversity Action Plan has been discovered on the site attracted by natural succession.

The removal of the hardstanding to return the site back to nature is not a practical or an economic proposition. The hardstanding is built on coal slurry which is of environmental concern as it leaks into Pegwell Bay. Any development would have to first deal with the issues of the hardstanding.

The Council will need to establish whether a tourist facility on the site is still supported and if so will need to address the environmental issues which are of upmost significance and a policy guiding a balanced decision will be important. Policy T4 of the Thanet Local Plan 2006 says that development of the hoverport will be granted within its existing boundaries subject to no harm to the European sites and wildlife and landscape designations and character of the area. It may be appropriate to carry this policy forward to the new Local Plan possibly with more guidance on what kind of tourist use would be acceptable. We will need to work on delivery of a practical viable solution for the site.

The Lido

The run down redundant Lido leisure complex lies on the seaward side of Ethelbert Terrace on the cliff face close to the Winter Gardens and the Turner Contemporary. The coastal location provides an ideal opportunity for a mixed use development with uninterrupted sea views. Given its location it is important that any development of the site is sympathetic to the character of the area and retain a high proportion of sea views from the avenues of Cliftonville. Policy T5 of the Thanet Local Plan 2006 says that a mix of tourism, leisure and housing uses would be appropriate and that sea views and the character of the area should be maintained. Given the importance of the site it may be appropriate to have a policy on the Lido however there is potentially more information the policy needs to provide such as a cross reference to the Cliftonville Development Plan Document which also covers the site and contains specific requirements for types of flats in the area. There are also important heritage assets in the form of subterranean structures on the site which are in need of restoration and repair.

Protection of Existing Facilities

Thanet has a wealth of existing tourist uses and leisure facilities and hotels as Thanet has traditionally been a thriving tourist destination. These are listed at Annex B. Many of these are well used and are of great benefit to the economy as evidenced by the fact that currently 9% of the economy derives from tourism.

Maintaining Facilities

As well as encouraging new tourist facilities we need to consider ways in which can maintain appropriate facilities in Thanet. It could be appropriate to protect facilities and resist certain changes of use. The danger with this approach is that tourist facilities may remain vacant and become derelict if they are no longer in use. A policy that requires evidence that a tourist use is no longer viable may be appropriate. An example of the loss of a tourist facility through a change of use is the Ramsgate Model Village in 2003. This change of use to a residential garden in relation to west Cliff lodge had to be granted in the absence of a policy protecting existing tourist facilities. An extract of the committee report reads as follows:

> *"The proposal will inevitably result in the loss of an existing tourist facility, and for this reason the application was advertised as a departure to the aforementioned Local Plan policy BC9[4]. However following further consideration of the adopted policies relating to tourist facilities in the District, whilst encouragement is given to the expansion or creation of new tourist facilities, there is no policy text directly relating to the retention of existing facilities. For this reason I do not consider that the proposal would be in conflict with current Local Plan policy."*

Beaches

We also need to decide how best to protect our natural assets that are of benefit to the tourist economy such as the character of the beaches. In order to take full advantage of the beaches, they require sufficient facilities and services, such as parking and amenities, to enhance their attractiveness. This can also help support the management and maintenance of the beaches.

Certain beaches may be suitable for development of beach concessions and chalets and others may not. Zoning areas where such uses would be approved is being considered. We are working with the Council's Tourism Team to ensure that future policy supports and enables proposals within the Destination Management Plan. The current policies on major holiday beaches, intermediate beaches and undeveloped beaches in the Local Plan 2006 may still appropriate for all of the beaches in Thanet.

The 2006 Thanet Local Plan identifies major holiday beaches, intermediate beaches and undeveloped beaches and identifies what level of development would be acceptable for each. Major holiday beaches are Margate main sans, Ramsgate main sands and Viking Bay, Broadstairs and are considered suitable for a wide range of recreational facilities and services. Intermediate beaches such as St Mildreds Bay and Joss Bay are areas where the Council would support a more limited range of facilities such as kiosks supplying food and beach furniture. Undeveloped beaches are not considered suitable for tourist facilities. The Council will need to consider if these policies are still relevant or whether a re evaluation is required.

Dreamland

Dreamland is an example of a tourism use on a key site that the Council wishes to protect. The park closed after the 2006 season. A CPO has been approved on the site for the

[4] Policy BC9 of the Isle of Thanet Local Plan 1998 relates to New Tourist Facilities

Council to open the amusement park as a not for profit business comprising historic rides with classic side shows, cafes, restaurants, special events, festivals and gardens incorporated the restored famous scenic railway. This would serve as a major tourist attraction in Margate and a key part of the towns regeneration.

Policy T8 “Dreamland” of Thanet Local Plan 2006 was central to the Compulsory Purchase Inquiry. The first part of the policy supports proposals that would extend, upgrade or prove the attractiveness of the amusement park and resists proposals that would reduce the attractiveness, leisure and tourist potential of the park. The second part states that exceptionally a limited part of the site may be accepted providing that assures the future viability of the amusement park. Evidence is required in the form of an independent professional assessment, to demonstrate that it is not economically viable to operate an amusement park of the whole or majority of the site in the foreseeable future. If this is demonstrated, alternative leisure uses that would sustainable contribute to the economic well-being and rejuvenation of Margate would be acceptable.

The Council wishes to realise a comprehensive scheme for the site, maximising its potential to contribute to the economic well-being and attractiveness of Margate as a visitor destination and area in which to live and invest

Other Issues:

Language Schools

Thanet contains a considerable number of language schools and a large percentage of students using these services stay with Thanet families or as paying guests. In 2009 the contribution of Language Schools to the Thanet’s economy was £14 million. In 2011 £11,433,000 was spent on accommodation alone, this was up 6% on 2009. Language schools can cause issues with noise and disturbance particularly where there are concentrations of uses in an area resulting in large gatherings of young people. We need to balance these issues with the benefit to the economy. As language schools are such a major contributor to the economy it would be appropriate that the Local Plan contains a policy supporting such uses subject to criteria. We could have a policy that is supportive of language schools where clustering of such facilities would not cause harm such as in residential areas. The Thanet Local Plan 2006 contains a similar policy.

Amusement Uses

Due to Thanet’s history as a major holiday centre the area is well served by a variety of amusement uses. There are two types of amusement use. “Amusement arcades” offer a mix of amusements with prizes as well as entertainment-only machines ranging from pin-ball to video games. Arcades are often open to all age groups and offer a bright noisy holiday atmosphere. These kinds of amusements are often found on the seafront.

The other type of amusement use is an amusement centre. This is usually limited to amusements with prizes, although ancillary retail and refreshment facilities may also be provided. These uses are based on the traditional amusement arcades but they exclusively use modern electronic machinery. Prize bingo is normally played on console machines. Centres tend to be far more discreet than arcades and are closed shop fronts suppressing noise within the property. Access is usually denied to clientele under a certain age. Operators tend to seek to locate these centres in traditional High Street locations.

The main issues to consider when planning for amusement uses are the character of the area, noise and disturbance and appearance. Open fronted amusement arcades can be loud and often have brash frontages and slot machines outside. This would not be appropriate in all locations. The Thanet Local Plan 2006 looked at various locations and what kind of amusement use would be appropriate depending on the character of the different town centres and seafront areas. It was concluded that such uses were wholly incompatible with residential areas. Amusement “Arcades” were considered appropriate in certain parts of Margate and Ramsgate only as these reflect the character of these seafront areas. Amusement “Centres” are a town centre use and the closed fronted centres were more appropriate within defined town centre locations subject to certain limitations.

The Thanet Local Plan 2006 policy may still be appropriate when considering new applications for amusement uses. Without a policy it may be difficult to refuse amusement uses in inappropriate locations.

Summary

Options for consideration include how to support new tourist facilities and protect existing ones. Other decisions include whether to support hotel development outside of town centres, and how to support caravan parks in appropriate locations.

PART D The Rural Economy

Introduction

Thanet is characterised by a large urban area stretching around the coast and an open central island interspersed with villages. Thanet has 7 rural settlements of Acol, Sarre, St Nicholas, Monkton, Manston, Cliffsend and Minster. With the exception of Minster most of the settlements are small with limited services. Around 6000 people live in Thanet's villages, approximately 4% of the total population, and over half live in Minster. 95% of the population lives in the main urban centres (according to the 2002 census mid year estimates).

Thanet contains a large amount of agricultural land (mostlybest and most versatile land). Approximately 70% of the District is rural primarily in arable production and 30% of the District is urban. (Thanet Contaminated Land Survey)

One of the major factors to consider is the proximity of the rural settlements to Thanet's urban area and the reliance of the rural population on the towns for employment and services. A considerable number of rural residents both work and use services in the towns as well as in Canterbury and Dover. The level of car ownership in the villages also tends to be higher than in the towns. This could suggest that Thanet's villages perform more of a suburban function than a rural one; however, the majority of residents are reliant upon a car. Given the size of the rural area and its proximity to the urban area and employment land, as well as its relative affluent socio economic profile it is not considered that rural economic growth is a priority. However, it is acknowledged that economic growth in the whole District is desirable particularly in terms of rural tourism and delivering services to the local population. These uses require development that is in keeping with rural areas and have proportionate catchments. It is also important to preserve the attractiveness of the villages and the rural area.

The purpose of this section of the paper is to explore ways in which the rural economy can be supported in a sustainable manner that fits within the local context.

The Thanet Rural Economy

The Employment Land Review concludes that Thanet has quite a low representation of rural employment enterprises when compared to the rest of the South east and England, with less than 10% of all VAT registered businesses being located in rural areas. According to the Thanet Economic and Employment Assessment 2012 the sectors which have an above average proportion of rural firms include wholesale and, retail and construction. There is a cluster of construction businesses around Minster. The green sector in particular the secondary green sector (manufacturing processes) has an above average proportion of firms within rural locations (20%).

Many of Thanet's employment sites are located within the rural area. 42% of the existing employment land identified is in the rural area. The main contributor to this is the Manston Business Park, which is the main strategic allocated employment site located in close proximity to the airport. Other substantial rural employment sites include Laundry Road Industrial Estate and Hedgend Industrial Estate. The majority of the former is occupied along with a significant element of the latter. This demonstrates that a substantial range employment sites and opportunities are accessible to the rural community.

Other rural employment provision includes former agricultural buildings that have been converted into B1, B2 and B8 uses such as the Sarre Business Centre.

The report suggests that given the split of businesses in the area the focus for economic growth should be within the urban area. However there are a number of areas of support which could be critical for rural based businesses. A focus on transport and communications infrastructure is recommended as it would ensure that businesses within rural areas have access to high speed broadband that could unlock growth opportunities and further enable home working. The transport network must also be robust in order to easily access larger centres and support networking opportunities such as the Kent Innovation Centre.

A report into home working Understanding Kent's Home Based Business Sector by Kent County Council suggested that this sector is growing. It is a sustainable way of working and should be encouraged as a way to strengthen the rural economy. With the level of home working increasing and technical innovations of food production and farming it is vital that telecommunications infrastructure in the rural area is supported. The report also concludes that effective business support is important to this sector and that workhubs can act as an effective tool to grow the home based economy. Workhubs act as flexible office space with professional equipment and meeting space that can be hired on an ad hoc basis. Thanet already has professional business support services in the innovation centres and it is anticipated that any further development of this kind can be accommodated on the B Use class allocations and centrally located for accessibility to the rural area.

The EEA also recommends that there is an opportunity to grow rural based tourism businesses and additional tourism infrastructure in rural areas in line with the strategy outlined in the Council's Draft Economic Strategy.

Policy Background

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) dedicates a specific section to the rural economy and says that Local Plan policies should support economic growth in rural areas in order to create jobs by taking a positive approach to sustainable new development. To promote a strong rural economy, local and neighbourhood plans should:

- support the sustainable growth and expansion of all types of business and enterprise in rural areas, both through conversion of existing buildings and well designed new buildings;
- promote the development and diversification of agricultural and other land-based rural businesses;
- support sustainable rural tourism and leisure developments that benefit businesses in rural areas, communities and visitors, and which respect the character of the countryside. This should include supporting the provision and expansion of tourist and visitor facilities in appropriate locations where identified needs are not met by existing facilities in rural service centres; and
- promote the retention and development of local services and community facilities in villages, such as local shops, meeting places, sports venues, cultural buildings, public houses and places of worship.

The NPPF also says that a Local Plan evidence base should assess the needs of the food production industry and any barriers to investment that planning can resolve.

Local planning authorities should take into account the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land. Where significant development of agricultural land is demonstrated to be necessary, local planning authorities should seek to use areas of poorer quality land in preference to that of a higher quality.

One of the core principles of the National Planning Policy Framework is to encourage multiple benefits from the use of land in urban and rural areas, recognising that some open land can perform many functions (such as wildlife, recreation, flood risk mitigation, carbon storage or food production).

Issues for the Local Plan to address

We should consider ways in which to support sustainable economic growth in rural areas particularly through supporting expansion of rural business through conversion of rural buildings and well designed new premises, promoting development and diversification of agricultural and other land based businesses, support sustainable rural tourism and promote the retention and development of local services and rural communities. Integral to this we will need to consider the needs of the food production industry.

It is important to establish what sustainable rural economic development is for Thanet. From the evidence and characteristics a definition of sustainable rural economic development is proposed:

“Economic development within the villages at an appropriate scale that supports local job growth, tourism in Thanet and a level of local services that sustains the local community without the need to use the car“

Rural economic development of an appropriate scale reflects the proximity of the rural area to the urban area and existing employment opportunities.

Conversion of Rural Buildings and New Build

The reuse of rural buildings for economic development is particularly desirable as it supports the rural economy without land take and brings redundant buildings back in to use which can enhance the appearance of the rural area. Uses that may be compatible with conversions could included rural tourism uses, retail, offices or the general B use classes providing they were compatible with the location. This could also be beneficial in terms of reliance on the car. An important consideration is to ensure that all rural conversions would be sensitive to the character and appearance for the rural area in order to maintain their appeal and sustainability. Another issue to consider with rural conversions is that some species may be present that are protected by the Wildlife and Countryside Act and other legislation e.g. bats and barn owls.

The Thanet Local Plan 2006 contained a policy on the conversion of rural buildings which permitted conversions where they are in keeping with the character of the area and acceptable in terms of impact on the local highway network. It goes on to say that in buildings where protected species are present then the conversion should ensure the continued use of the building for that purpose. The National Planning Policy Statement 2012 supports conversions but does not contain any further guidance and so we need to consider whether this policy is therefore still appropriate

The NPPF also supports sustainable new build development that is well designed. The concern with supporting this is that it may lead to sporadic economic development in the countryside which could bring about cumulatively significant changes in the character of the open countryside which is typical in Thanet. It is considered that there will be sufficient allocated land available to accommodate all foreseeable types of employment growth. The exception might be where a use requires a rural location such as equestrian uses.

Development should be "sustainable" and it may be appropriate to establish a criteria based policy to outline the sustainability and design criteria are to be used and to give greater certainty as to what development would be considered acceptable by the District council. Important considerations that could be developed as criteria could be that the use requires a rural location, that it is proportionate in scale and design and does not generate a level of trips that would impact negatively on the local highway network.

Agricultural Diversification

The NPPF states the Local Authorities should support farm diversification and therefore the Local Plan could respond by supporting proposals for diversification that would strengthen and protect the productive base of the farm units and allow the continued viability of farms. This is important as it could support the needs of the food production industry and contribute towards the aim of food security for the UK. However, farm diversification projects can also bring with them problems of traffic, landscape and the irreversible loss of land resources and therefore it may be necessary to set a criteria based policy.

The Thanet Local Plan 2006 contained a Policy CC10 which supported farm diversification subject to criteria, including that the use was complimentary to the farm holding, it would be acceptable in terms of impact on landscape setting and nature conservation, there would be no loss of best and most versatile land, that traffic generation could be safely accommodated within the local highway network, the proposal should utilise available farm buildings. We need to consider whether this policy is still appropriate. It notably supported farm diversification projects at Quex Park such as the development of a paintball arena and the use of Quex Barn as a farm retail unit and café. The project has proved successful in attracting tourists whilst remaining compatible with the surrounding area and therefore a positive policy supporting farm diversification subject to certain criteria is important, not just for tourism uses.

Village services

The proximity of Thanet's villages to the town centres and high levels of car ownership in the villages may make their shops and services vulnerable given market forces. However these services are essential for the elderly and people without access to a car and it is not sustainable for residents to have to travel several miles by car for everyday items and services. Many of the villages have already lost their post offices and the Council as well as the Government place importance in maintaining a reasonable level of shops and services for village residents.

Village services include local shops, meeting places, sports venues, cultural buildings, public houses and places of worship.

The settlement hierarchy identifies Acol, Cliffsend, Manston, Monkton, St Nicholas and Sarre as lacking accessible services to meet day to day needs of its resident population. The recommendation for these settlements is that they maintain their individual form and character. Another recommendation is to maintain and where feasible increase local services to a level that serves the village population and reduces reliance on other centres. Large scale development would not be appropriate as this might harm the form and character of the villages. The Town Centre Retail. Leisure, Tourism and Culture Assessment 2012 concluded that small scale facilities should cater for top up and basket convenience shopping and services. Any facility above 280 sq.m would require an impact test. The proposal recommended by the survey is that retail development over and above 280 sq.m outside the identified town centres should be the subject of an impact assessment.

The Thanet Local Plan 2006 contains policies on village services and village shops. The village services policy is a positive one which permits proposals for the use of existing residential properties in the villages to provide shops or other commercial activities or services subject to environmental and traffic considerations and impact on residential amenity. The shops policy says that the Council will seek to use its planning powers to retain a reasonable level of shopping provision in rural settlements. We will need to consider whether these policies are still relevant and whether they go far enough to be able to support village services.

As well as supporting new facilities it is also important that existing village services are protected. The Thanet Local Plan 2006 also contains a policy on Community Facilities (Policy CF1) which both supported and protected community facilities. It states that planning permission for the change of use of an existing community facility to a non-community facility will only be granted where it can be demonstrated that there is no longer a sufficient need for the facility or that adequate alternative accommodation is provided. As village shops and services are so important to the community they are considered under the umbrella of community facilities.

Needs of the Food Production Industry

The East Kent Growth Plan recognises that East Kent contains some of the UK's most productive agricultural land. As a result of increasing transport and fuel costs the UK and South East have become an attractive area for the food production industry, for example, Thanet Earth now produces fruit and vegetables that would otherwise be imported. The Council has been supportive of Thanet Earth and other agricultural diversification and related development in the area

The formal forecasting model in the growth plan projects a fall in agricultural and horticultural employment over the next 15 years but says East Kent may be well placed to gain from new drivers to increase UK production. In comparison Experian forecasts in the Economic and Employment assessment 2012 show a constant level of job growth to 2031 i.e. the same as now, which shows that the agricultural sector is particularly important in East Kent.

Nationally agriculture accounts for 1% of the economy (GVA) and 1% of employment but it produces 60% of the food we eat and manages 70% of the total land area. In terms of the wider economy it supplies the food processing industry which is a much greater contributor to the economy and it provides business to ancillary industries.

The NPPF states that Local Planning Authorities should identify barriers to the food production industry. These barriers include issues such as flexibility for farmers to diversify farming business in order to make the business viable. This often includes converting redundant agricultural buildings to other uses such as shops, leisure uses and offices. The Council currently supports farm diversification through Thanet Local Plan 2006 policy CC10 which has enabled the development of Quex barn and paintball arena.

Best and most versatile agricultural land is a land classification system devised by Government that categorises agricultural land according to its quality. The majority of Thanet's agricultural land is within category 1 (the highest quality). As the protection of best and most versatile agricultural land is important in the light of food security requirements it may be appropriate for the Local Plan to contain a policy protecting it

It is important that policy supports the sustainable intensification of farms in order that they can remain competitive in the current market dominated by large scale supermarkets. New technologies that support farming need to be supported such as renewable energy technologies and on farm water storage. Support for new and replacement farm buildings where the old ones are unsuitable is also important. There could therefore be a need for a policy supporting agricultural related development related to more specific farm activities giving guidance on what would be acceptable.

As well as agriculture the food production industry also encompasses education, research and technology (food technology); financial services such as credit and insurance; manufacturing such as agrichemicals and farm machinery; food processing such as the preparation of fresh produce for market or the manufacture of prepared food products; marketing including advertising and public relations; and, wholesale and distribution including warehousing and transportation. This indicates that a significant amount of the food production industry processes takes place on B use class land which is being planned for.

Availability of affordable housing in rural areas is an important issue for the food production so that workers can access accommodation. The Thanet Local Plan 2006 contains a policy on New Agricultural dwellings that these will be permitted where it can be demonstrated that there is a genuine security reason that necessitates that provision or a new viable agricultural unit requires on site accommodation for operational purposes. This is subject to access, design and location criteria as well as appropriate legal agreements. Former central government guidance advocated this approach which has since been abolished. We will need to consider if a policy of this nature is still appropriate.

PART E Strategy for the Town Centres

Introduction

This section of the employment topic paper considers employment growth within town centres and how this can be accommodated and planned for. The Local Plan will need to address the particular requirements of national policy in relation to town centres and its particular requirements regarding town centres is detailed below.

The purpose of this section is to develop an appropriate strategy for the future of the town centres, to support Thanet's economy, retail needs, tourism, and meet the needs of residents in order to facilitate regeneration of the coastal town centres, whilst also consolidating the role and function of Westwood. The strategy will identify the retail hierarchy and role of the towns; identify need for future development of retail and other uses in the towns; identify primary and secondary frontages and proposed uses within them; identify any additional sites needed for development; identify key regeneration sites; and develop options for policies for determining town centre use applications.

Town centre uses as defined by the National Planning Policy Framework include:
Retail development (including warehouse clubs and factory outlet centres); leisure, entertainment facilities the more intensive sport and recreation uses (including cinemas, restaurants, drive-through restaurants, bars and pubs, night-clubs, casinos, health and fitness centres, indoor bowling centres, and bingo halls); offices; and arts, culture and tourism development (including theatres, museums, galleries and concert halls, hotels and conference facilities).

Please refer to the glossary in Annex E3 where other technical terminology is used.

Thanet's Town Centres

Town centres have been in decline for a number of years for a number of reasons such as the global recession, success of internet shopping and the rationalisation of retailing. Many retailers are choosing to serve larger catchments from a single location with a larger scale store. Thanet has not been immune to this decline and the traditional coastal town centres of Margate, Broadstairs and Ramsgate have experienced high vacancy rates. Tourism markets have also struggled over recent years which have proved harmful to the vitality and function of the coastal towns, although this is now showing signs of recovery.

Westwood Cross opened as a new town centre equidistant from the coastal town centres in June 2005. Its purpose was to claw back expenditure lost to some of the regional and sub regional centres in Kent, notably Canterbury. The Household Retail Expenditure Survey carried out in 2000 showed that Thanet was losing approximately £100 million in retail expenditure outside the District. Westwood Cross serves to deliver the larger scale premises in a single location that retailers now seek and consequently a range of national multiples not previously seen in Thanet have located here. Prior to this the majority of retail development at Westwood was given planning permission at appeal, and initially Westwood developed in a very piecemeal way. Allocating the town centre has provided an opportunity to achieve a more efficient town centre.

Westwood Cross is successful and since its opening has had very low vacancy rates and at times these have been nil. Retention of retail spend in Thanet at 2000 was 53.4% and this improved to 84% (comparison shopping) and 98% (convenience shopping) in 2012 following the opening of Westwood Cross. Given factors such as the level of internet shopping nationally these 2012 retention figures are in the region of a best case scenario.

The challenge now is to maintain and enhance the town centre role of the coastal town centres and facilitate the continued success of Westwood Cross. In order to do this it is important to look at the current strengths and weaknesses of the Town centres. See table below:

Table E1 – Strengths and Weaknesses of Thanet's towns

Strengths	**Weaknesses**
Strong presence of national multiples at Westwood Cross Increased diversification happening at the coastal town centres i.e. Ramsgate Waterfront and Margate Old Town. Improved transport links by road and rail increasing accessibility to the town centres.	Competing catchments Global recession Internet shopping Small stores and constrained coastal town centres Congested road network at Westwood Poor pedestrian and cycle links between commercial areas at Westwood.

Draft Objectives for the Town Centres

A Strategic Priority for the Local Plan is to:

> *Facilitate the continued regeneration of the coastal town centres, developing their individual and niche roles, whilst also consolidating the role and function of Westwood at the District's primary retail centre, ensuring retail expenditure is retained within the District.*

The objectives to deliver this strategic priority are:

- Guide investment in the coastal towns to support the tourism economy and provide for the needs of local communities.
- Reshape Margate town centre and seafront to achieve a sustainable economic heart celebrating its traditions as a place of relaxation, leisure and seaside fun and growing reputation as a cultural destination.
- Assist Ramsgate to achieve its full potential capitalising on its historic and nautical heritage and visitor economy.
- Retain and enhance Broadstairs as a popular location for visitors and residents.
- Enable Westwood to consolidate and evolve as an *accessible,* successful and sustainable residential and business community with an excellent range of homes, schools, leisure, sports, shops and other facilities in an attractive environment.

Policy Background

National Planning Policy Framework

The National Planning Policy Framework contains specific policy and guidance for Local Authorities in drawing up Local Plans as well as general guidance on Local Plans.

A core principle of the National Planning Policy Framework is ensuring the vitality and viability of the town centres. It says that in drawing up Local Plans Local Planning Authorities should:

- recognize town centres as the heart of their communities and pursue policies to support their viability and vitality;
- define a network and hierarchy of centres that is resilient to anticipated future economic changes;
- define the extent of town centres and primary shopping areas, based on a clear definition of primary and secondary frontages in designated centres, and set polices to make clear which uses will be permitted in such locations;
- promote competitive town centres that provide customer choice and a diverse retail offer and which reflect the individuality of town centres;
- retain and enhance existing markets and, where appropriate, re-introduce or create new ones, ensuring that markets remain attractive and competitive;
- allocate a range of suitable sites to meet the scale and type of retail, leisure, commercial, office, tourism, cultural, community and residential development needed in town centres. It is important that needs for retail, leisure, office and other main town centre uses are met in full and are not compromised by limited site availability;
- set policies for the consideration of proposals for main town centre uses which cannot be accommodated in or adjacent to town centres;
- recognise that residential development can play an important role in ensuring the vitality of centres and set out policies to encourage residential development on appropriate sites; and
- where town centres are in decline, local planning authorities should plan positively for their future to encourage economic activity.

The National Planning Policy Framework has specific requirements for Local Plan’s evidence base. Local authorities must assess the needs for land or floor space for economic development including both the quantitative and qualitative needs for types of economic activity including both retail and leisure development. It should look at the role and function of town centres and the relationship between them, including trends in the performance of centres, and the capacity of centres to accommodate new town centre development, locations which may benefit from planned remedial action

In terms of dealing with planning applications the National Planning Policy Framework contains specific policy on how to apply the sequential test and how to carry out an impact test.

It says that we should apply a sequential test to planning applications for main town centre uses that are not in an existing centre and are not in accordance with an up-to-date Local Plan. They should require applications for main town centre uses to be located in town centres, then in edge of centre locations and only if suitable sites are not available should out of centre sites be considered. When considering edge of centre and out of centre proposals, preference should be given to accessible sites that are well connected to the town centre. Applicants and local planning authorities should demonstrate flexibility on issues such as format and scale.

When assessing applications for retail, leisure and office development outside of town centres, which are not in accordance with an up-to-date Local Plan, local planning authorities should require an impact assessment if the development is over a proportionate, locally set floorspace threshold (if there is no locally set threshold, the default threshold is 2,500 sq m).This should include assessment of:

- the impact of the proposal on existing, committed and planned public and private investment in a centre or centres in the catchment area of the proposal; and
- the impact of the proposal on town centre vitality and viability, including local consumer choice and trade in the town centre and wider area, up to five years from the time the application is made. For major schemes where the full impact will not be realised in five years, the impact should also be assessed up to ten years from the time the application is made.

Where an application fails to satisfy the sequential test or is likely to have significant adverse impact on one or more of the above factors, it should be refused.

South East Plan (now revoked)

The South East Plan 2009 (now revoked) identified a network of town centres across the South East. Westwood Cross was designated as a Secondary Town centre within this network.

The plan has now been revoked and the regional hierarchy of centres is no longer defined in policy. Individual authorities are expected to define a network of centres in accordance with national planning policy. The Duty to Co Operate could become a tool assist in agreeing and re establishing a network of centres across the region.

Issues that the Local Plan will have to address for town centres

Following on from the detailed requirements of National and Regional Policy as well as taking into account the views of previous consultation (at Annex E2) and issues and opportunities that Thanet's towns present, we will need to consider a range of issues. These are listed below:

- A retail hierarchy needs to be established.

- The Council need to consider whether there is a need to rebalance the hierarchy of centres particularly in areas with deficiencies in provision and considering the need for regeneration of the coastal towns.

- An assessment of need for all types of town centre use needs to be carried out as the NPPF says the Local Planning Authority should plan for all town centre need.
  - Retail Need
  - A2-A5 Uses (A2: Financial & Professional Services; A3: Restaurants and Cafes; A4: Drinking Establishments; A5 Hot Food Takeaways)
  - Need for other uses (Leisure/Culture/Tourism)

  We need to develop a strategy to accommodate this.

- For each of the Thanet Towns the Thanet Local Plan will need to define the overall town centre boundary and within this identify Primary and Secondary frontages need to be established detailing appropriate uses for each.

- Thresholds need to be considered for the scale at which an impact test is required.

- There is still a requirement through National Policy to apply the sequential test to the development of town centre uses. The Council needs to decide whether this should be translated into Local Plan policy.

Hierarchy of Centres

The Strategy for Thanet's town centres seeks to reinforce the different but complementary roles of the primary centre at Westwood and of the coastal town centres of Margate, Ramsgate and Broadstairs. The objectives of the hierarchy area to:

- Safeguard and sustain Westwood Cross's role in preventing retail expenditure leaking outside the district boundary
- Enable the coastal towns to achieve and maintain a viable, diverse and sustainable commercial base.
- Ensure the scale of development at the District and Local Centres is sufficient to serve local catchments but not harmful to the function of the town centres.

The current Retail Hierarchy is set out below and is considered to correctly reflect the current situation, We are required by national planning policy to set out a network and hierarchy of centres. Identifying the existing hierarchy allows us understand the role and function of the town centres and their inter-relationship. A major factor in determining the role of the centres is the catchment which they serve.

The role and hierarchy of the centres is set out below:

Westwood. This centre sits at the top of the hierarchy as it caters for high order need, attracts the major national retailers and has a catchment that includes the population of the whole of Thanet as well as areas beyond the District boundary, attracting people from outside the District.

The Coastal Town Centres - Margate, Broadstairs and Ramsgate. The catchments of these town centres are their individual town populations and tourist trade with a wide range of shops to cater for everyday need, special interest and the tourist trade. These towns have traditionally attracted national retailers and services as well as local businesses.

District Centres - Cliftonville, Westgate, Birchington and Minster. These centres cater for local needs and services. They serve large residential and semi rural locations but catchments are limited and these locations are not appropriate for large scale retail development.

Local Centres - Several across the District such as Westbrook and St Peters. These cater for a more restricted local need and tend to have a small catchment. These centres provide services such as takeaways, hairdressers and small convenience stores. Business is often local rather than the national multiples. These centres are not appropriate for large scale retail development.

Rebalancing the Hierarchy of Centres

The South East Plan said that Local Authorities should consider whether there is a need to rebalance the retail network where some centres over dominate or in areas where investment should be stimulated. Despite the revocation of the Plan this is still an important consideration especially as Thanet's coastal town centres are vulnerable and in need of regeneration. National policy states that we should define a network and hierarchy of centres and accommodate town centre development in locations that may benefit from planned remedial action.

In accordance with national planning policy we will need to consider issues such as whether there is a need to re-balance the network of centres to ensure they are not overly dominated by the larger centres, whether there are areas where investment should be stimulated, including town centres with deficiencies, deprived areas or areas that will undergo significant housing and employment growth.

Evidence from the Retail Needs Assessment Survey 2009 and the Town Centre Retail, Leisure, Tourism and Culture Assessment 2012 show that the majority of convenience spend in Thanet is directed towards Broadstairs. Specifically the large supermarkets located on sites surrounding Westwood Cross (considered as part of Broadstairs in the studies). Retention rates on convenience shopping would be expected to be high as people would reasonably expect to have their food shopping needs met within the town they live. For sustainability reasons it is very important that we ensure that all communities are adequately provided for in terms of convenience shopping. An option for consideration is to rebalance the roles of the town centres and alter the hierarchy in terms of convenience food shopping, increasing the market share for the coastal town centres and reducing the need to travel to Westwood Cross.

In order to address the imbalance the Council needs to consider if there is a need to rebalance convenience retail spending across the District and whether two retail hierarchies should be proposed. One would be for comparison or high street goods which has Westwood Cross as the principal town centre and one convenience which has Westwood, Margate, Broadstairs and Ramsgate as equal principal town centres.

With high street goods an individual would ordinarily expect to travel to a town centre especially one with a good choice and range of shops. This is not the case with convenience goods that are required on a more regular basis and should be available in all towns. The Council envisages a stronger role for the coastal town centres in terms of convenience goods provision alongside a more cultural, leisure and tourism role.

The Coastal Town centres are unlikely to compete on a level with Westwood in terms of its convenience floorspace provision given the existing distribution of the grocery superstores. However, with the coastal town centres elevated equally with Westwood in the hierarchy then convenience floorspace provision may become more evenly distributed in the future.

Another option for consideration is to increase the market share of Westwood Cross in the sub region potentially changing the wider regional hierarchy. This is discussed under the "Need" section of this topic paper.

The Assessment of Need for Town Centre Uses

Assessing future town centre need is a national policy requirement. In order to establish the levels of need for all town centres uses the Council appointed Nathaniel Lichfield and Partners to carry out a Town Centre Retail, Leisure, Tourism and Culture Assessment.

In terms of retail, a household expenditure survey was carried out by telephone using established national methodology. National growth rates along with information about local spending habits, obtained through a telephone survey in 2012, were used to estimate the need for retail development to 2031 (the Local Plan period). More qualitative means of assessing need to leisure, tourism and culture were applied. The box below shows how need is assessed quantitatively and qualitatively.

Quantitative need is assessed on:
Definition of the catchment/study area
Assessment of current/future spend
Assessment of current shopping patterns/market share
Compare current/forecast turnover with existing floorspace; and
Identify future expenditure capacity and need for new floorspace

Qualitative need is assessed on:
Deficiencies or gaps in existing provision
Consumer choice and competition
Overtrading, congestion and overcrowding of existing stores
Location specific needs such as deprived areas and underserved markets; and
The quality of existing provision

Retail Need

The Town Centre Retail, Leisure, Tourism and Culture Assessment 2012 assessed levels of retail need. The table below details the retail uses considered. The study found that retention rates of retail spend are currently high (84% for core comparison shopping). This figure tells us that the leakage of expenditure of Thanet's residents to areas outside Thanet is currently relatively low. Reflecting this, the tables below show a level of need that reflects a constant market share. In other words this level of need is not attempting to claw back any more expenditure from other Districts. In order to maintain constant market share further development is still required otherwise expanding markets outside of the District could draw trade out of Thanet.

Table E2: Floorspace Requirements A1 Convenience sq.m

Centre	2016	2021	2026	2031
Margate/Cliftonville	146	445	766	1,123
Westwood Cross	-0892	-265	406	1,154
Broadstairs/St.Peters	-449	-68	338	792
Ramsgate	-1,135	-674	-176	376
Birchington/Westgate	192	290	394	510
Other Thanet	-159	-115	-68	-15
District Total	-2,296	-388	1,660	3,941

This shows there is very little need in the District for more shopping floorspace. Only 3,941 sq. by 2031. There is no need for additional food floorspace at Westwood and Broadstairs until after 2021. There is no need for any additional food floorspace at Ramsgate until after 2026. Birchington and Westgate together have a small need of a further 192 sq.m by 2016 increasing to 510 sq.m by 2031.

Table E3: Floorspace Requirements A1 Comparison (sq.m)

Centre	2016	2021	2026	2031
Margate/Cliftonville	-1,321	-652	233	1,372
Westwood Cross	448	7,459	16,487	27,870
Broadstairs/St.Peters	482	1,411	2,599	4,091
Ramsgate	-3,090	-2,197	-990	584
Birchington/Westgate	-931	-643	-255	250
Other Thanet	12	43	83	133
District Total	-4,400	5,422	18,157	34,300

This shows that the need at Westwood Cross is small at 448 sq.m by 2016 but increases to 7,459 sq.m by 2021, 16,487 sq.m by 2026 and 27,870 sq.m by 2031. Broadstairs has a need for a further 4,091 sq.m by 2031. Elsewhere there is very little need for additional floorspace for high street goods.

A2-A5 Uses

The Town centre retail, leisure, tourism and culture assessment concludes that there is scope for a further 20% floorspace that can be occupied by Class A2 to A5 uses and Class A1 non-retail services. This is shown in the table. It is important to note that A3 to A5 uses play an important role in attracting tourists to the coastal towns. The Town Centre Retail, Leisure Tourism and Culture Assessment concludes that the proportion of these uses is currently low in Margate and Westwood.

The need for this non retail floorspace at Westwood is high 7,256 sq.m to 2031 reflecting the calculations for retail need. It may not be appropriate to provide for this level of non retail floorspace as it is better suited to the leisure and tourism role of the coastal town centres.

Table E4: Floorspace Requirements A2-A5 (sq.m)

Centre	2016	2021	2026	2031
Margate/Cliftonville	-294	-52	250	624
Westwood Cross	-111	1,799	4,223	7,256
Broadstairs/St.Peters	8	336	734	1,221
Ramsgate	-1,056	-718	-292	240
Birchington/Westgate	-185	-88	35	190
Other Thanet	-37	-18	4	30
District Total	-1,674	1,259	4,954	9,560

(Town Centre Retail, Leisure, Tourism and Culture Assessment 2012)

Alternative Market Share for Westwood

The Town Centre Retail, Leisure, Tourism and Culture Assessment also assessed an alternative need for Westwood that increases market share. This scenario allows for claw back of trade diverted outside of the District i.e. increasing retention rates beyond the current 84% and competing with other markets outside the District in Canterbury and Dover. This effectively assumes that people who live in Thanet at present and currently shop outside of the District, primarily at Canterbury, would shop at Westwood instead and does not assume competition with Thanet's coastal town centres. This may be a realistic option as transport connections to Westwood improve in the future This would result in the need for additional retail development, and the increased market share figures that outlined below.

Table E5: Increased Market Share at Westwood Floorspace Requirements (sq.m)

Centre	2016	2021	2026	2031
Westwood Cross	6,202	14,280	24,580	37,473

Leisure, Culture and Tourism Need

The Town Centre Retail, Leisure, Tourism and Culture Assessment carried out a Commercial Leisure Assessment which assessed Thanet's need for certain facilities and it concluded:

- there is no requirement to plan for additional cinema provision over the study period the existing facilities are considered sufficient to meet the needs of both residents and also serve tourist visitors;
- existing private health and fitness clubs are considered to meet the current demand from existing residents, and the aim should be to ensure that current facilities are used to their full potential before creating more. Such facilities are not generally used by the tourist population;
- while there is currently no requirement to plan for additional tenpin bowling facilities, it is proposed that one of the centres is to close down as it has permission for a retail use. It would be desirable to seek its replacement in order to serve local residents and attract tourist trade, potentially in Ramsgate or as part of the wider regeneration of Margate;
- the provision of bingo facilities per resident population is broadly in line with the national average and the existing facilities are considered sufficient to meet the needs of local residents. However, to fully meet the needs of tourists and visitors to Thanet, there may be a requirement to provide further bingo facilities, potentially in Ramsgate or as part of the wider regeneration of Margate;
- there is no requirement to plan for additional casinos over the study period – the existing facilities are considered sufficient to meet the needs of both residents and tourists;
- the proportion of Class A3/A5 uses is higher in Ramsgate and Broadstairs than the national average, and lower in Margate and Westwood Cross.

It is clear from the evidence that Thanet does not have a need for major commercial leisure development within the District. The study concluded that the proportion of A3 to A5 uses is lower in Margate and Westwood Cross. For a coastal town wishing to attract tourists the proportion would be expected to be higher, therefore there is scope to encourage these uses both at Margate and at Westwood Cross.

The Tourism Assessment of the District contains a number of recommendations to encourage tourism. Many of the recommendations are strategic and refer to specific sites not within the town centre. One of the main findings of the study is a need for hotels in the District to encourage the staying visitor. Hotel accommodation and the recommendations of the Assessment are considered in Part C of this document, however, hotels are a town centre use would be supported in our towns. The tourism section of this paper considers whether we should support hotel development outside of town centres.

The Arts and Culture Assessment of the Town Centre Assessment concludes that Thanet has a reasonable level of arts and cultural facilities in line with National Statistics. However, given the aspirations of the Council to significantly develop the tourism draw of the District there is potential for more of these facilities within the town centres.

It is considered that given high vacancy levels in Margate and Ramsgate that leisure, arts and tourism development can be adequately accommodated within the vacant frontages. It may be appropriate to allocate additional floorspace in the other towns to accommodate this development.

Accommodating Needs and Primary/Secondary Frontages

When devising a Strategy for the town centres the Local Plan will need to accommodate need and consider whether to increase or decrease the size of the town centre boundaries. Commercial town centre development is directed to areas within the town centre boundary, outside this area, sequential and impact tests would be required for town centre development.

In addition to this the Local Plan needs to define primary and secondary frontages within the town centre boundaries and decide what uses are appropriate in each. The National Planning Policy Framework states that Local Plans should identify primary and secondary frontages and define what uses would be appropriate within each. Traditionally planning guidance has discouraged uses other than purely shops within the core areas of town centres. This is no longer included in national guidance and Local Planning Authorities are now asked to consider what uses would be appropriate.

Given the nature of the coastal town centres and their role in attracting tourism growth it may be appropriate to allow a greater range of town centre uses within the core town centre. Also, allowing an element of residential may add footfall and vitality to the town centres. The Council has historically considered that A1 to A5 uses are appropriate within the primary frontages.

Westwood

Westwood comprises the allocated Town Centre (Policy TC2) from the Thanet Local Plan 2006, map shown at Annex E3; this is known as Westwood Cross which opened in 2005. As well as the retail development area there is a leisure area that opened in 2007. In addition to this core area of Westwood there are a number of surrounding retail parks mainly restricted to large stores selling bulky goods, but increasingly they are selling a range of unrestricted retail goods found on the High Street. Westwood has become a distinct hub and a focus for commercial development. In addition Westwood is located where two main arterial roads converge and this has lead to some congestion issues.

The Draft Transport Strategy will include measures to improve the traffic problems at Westwood. It will consider such issues as new roads and improved junctions alongside widening of the existing arterial roads in the area to provide alternative routes and disperse traffic more efficiently.

Westwood Cross is well served by public transport with a bus hub incorporated into the development. However, the peripheral sites are predominantly accessed by car and the pedestrian linkages between sites are currently poor discouraging linked trips and access by means other than the car.

Map E1 shows the current commercial areas at Westwood.

Map E1: Westwood Existing Commercial Areas

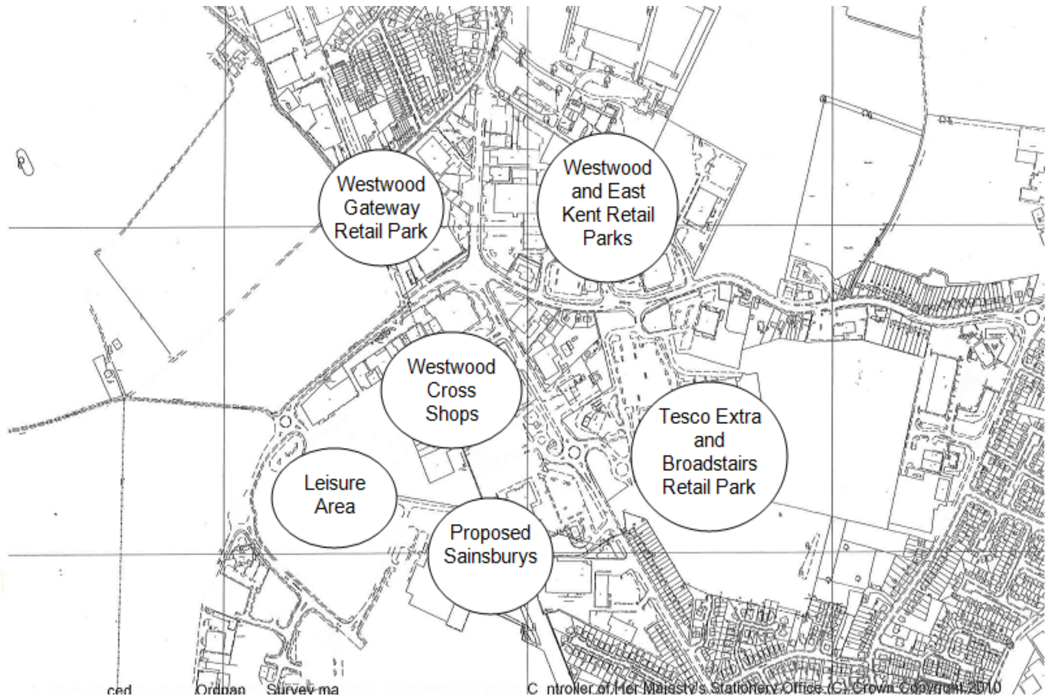


Table E2 shows the retail need to 2031 including the increased market share option. Since the survey was carried out new retail floorspace has opened at Westood; DFS and Primark which have a combined floorspace of 8740 sq.m. This reduces the overall need for retail floorspace until 2031, as shown in Table E2.

Planning approval has also been granted for the demolition of the existing Sainsbury's and major reconfiguration to accommodate a larger Sainsburys development, and an extension to Tesco Extra. These additional commitments amount to approximately 15,000 sq.m and will need to be taken into account when we plan to 2031.

There is vacant floorspace of only 480 sq.m available at Westwood.

Table E2

Gross floorspace Need Identified sq.m to 2031		Vacant Floorspace Available sq.m
Convenience	1,154	480
Comparison	27,870	
A2-A5	7,256	
Total in survey	36,280	
Built Commitments	- 8740	
TOTAL	27,540	
Increased Market Share Comparison	37,473	

Even after the committed developments are taken into account, clearly, accommodating need within the vacant floor 480 sq.m area at Westwood is not a feasible option and some allocation of land may be required. Building on vacant land within the existing commercial area and the redevelopment/reconfiguration of existing sites to accommodate the need is an option.

In order to accommodate the need it may be necessary to extend the existing core retail area to include the retail parks and allow unrestricted retail uses in these areas. The surrounding retail parks are increasingly selling unrestricted high street goods and given the size of the car parks and communal land there is scope to redevelop these areas to accommodate retail growth. Alternatively in order to accommodate the need, it may be necessary to extend the boundary of the existing commercial areas.

We will need to identify the boundary for the town centre and the most appropriate areas for primary and secondary frontages. The plan will need to consider issues such as improved accessibility, traffic management and safe pedestrian and cycle linkages when drawing the boundary as there is a need to effectively plan the environment surrounding the Westwood Town Centre and secure a better development pattern.

Margate

Map E2 shows the current commercial area of Margate. It shows there are a number of different commercial areas such as Margate Old town with its thriving restaurants, shops and galleries. The upper and lower High Street have seen high vacancy rates in recent years and there are a number of unsightly properties. College Square is another development that contains 2 supermarkets and a number of other A1 retail uses. Margate is also unique in that it has a number of sites that cater for or have the potential to cater for tourism and leisure uses. This stems from the historic role of Margate as a seaside holiday resort. The Lido and Rendezvous sites have potential for future tourism uses. Dreamland is the once famous amusement park, now closed, that has been subject to a compulsory purchase inquiry in order to bring it back into use as a heritage amusement park. Adjacent to this the Arlington site is subject to a planning application from Tesco to develop a superstore of approx. 8,000 sq.m along with other uses such as a hotel. The decision to grant this has been called in by the Secretary of State. We will need to decide how best to plan for the different roles and particularly decide on the extent of the town centre boundary for Margate and particularly where the primary frontages should be focussed.

Policies for the Dreamland and Lido sites are considered under the tourism section of this paper and the Thanet Local Plan 2006 wording is included in Annex E4

Map E2: Margate Existing Commercial Areas

Table E3 shows there is 2,970 sq.m of vacant floorspace, which may suggest there is no need to allocate any more land to accommodate the need to 2031. As individual shop units are relatively small, ranging between 30-540sq.m in size there may be a need for reconfiguration within the town centres.

The option for consideration is whether to accommodate Margate's retail need within the vacant frontages. This may involve significant redevelopment where smaller inadequate units exist.

Table E3

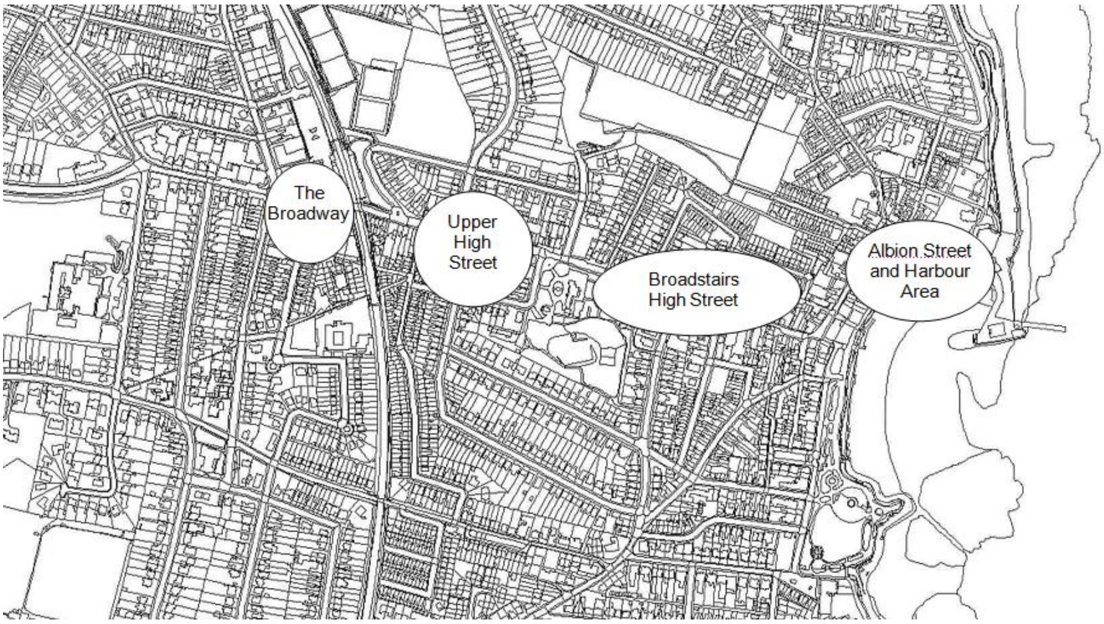
<table>
<tr><th colspan="2">Gross floorspace Need Identified sq.m</th><th>Vacant Floorspace Available sq.m</th></tr>
<tr><td>Convenience</td><td>1,123</td><td rowspan="4">2,970</td></tr>
<tr><td>Comparison</td><td>1,372</td></tr>
<tr><td>A2-A5</td><td>624</td></tr>
<tr><td>TOTAL</td><td>3,119</td></tr>
</table>

According to the floorspace requirements there is a need for 3,119 sq. m of floorspace for all A Use Classes to 2031 therefore residual need to the end of the plan period is only 31sq.m and therefore specific allocation may not be necessary. Given the low level of retention of convenience spend there may be a qualitative case to allow convenience floorspace on appropriate sites on sustainability grounds. Margate residents currently have inadequate provision of food shopping and allowing for this growth in the town could add footfall and vitality to the town centres complementing their leisure and tourism role.

Broadstairs

Broadstairs has a relatively small town centre focused mainly on the High Street. Broadstairs contains a range of independent and locally owned shops which prove popular with local and tourists. It is largely due to this that Broadstairs has seen considerably lower vacancy rates than Margate and Ramsgate, however this has been rising in recent years The Council wishes to support and build on the success of Broadstairs and needs to consider how best to achieve this through planning policy. The map below shows the current commercial areas of Broadstairs:

Map E3: Broadstairs Existing Commercial Areas



Unlike Margate and Ramsgate, Broadstairs does not have many separate commercial areas. The general focus is towards the seaward end of the High Street, towards the harbour area. The exception is the Broadway which is near the station and sustains a small but thriving commercial area. We will need to decide where the primary focus for Broadstairs should be.

Table E4

Gross floorspace Need Identified sq.m		Vacant Floorspace Available sq.m
Convenience	792	600
Comparison	4091	
A2-A5	1,221	
TOTAL	6,104	

Table E4 above shows there is 600 sq.m gross of vacant floorspace which may suggest there is no need to allocate more land in the short term. However, to 2031 there is a residual need for 3491 sq.m for comparison goods. Vacant units currently range from 30 – 540sq. m in size suggesting that the size of the stores is currently potentially inadequate for larger retailers.

This need could be accommodated in the primary or secondary frontages by extending the boundary of the town centre or by reconfiguration of existing premises, although Broadstairs is quite constrained. The Town Centre Retail, Leisure, Tourism, and Culture Assessments suggests that some of this need can be accommodated at nearby Westwood. As Broadstairs is well served by convenience stores there may not be a need to specifically plan for this in Broadstairs town centre in the plan period.

Ramsgate

Ramsgate has a large town centre with numerous separate commercial areas. As well as the traditional High Street there are commercial areas stretching up to the upper High Street and along King Street, although there is increasingly a trend towards to conversion to residential in these areas. Vacancy rates have been high recently in the Ramsgate, however this is particularly in the peripheral areas. There is a thriving commercial area around the harbour which attracts tourists and locals. Map E4 shows the current commercial areas in Ramsgate.

Map E4: Ramsgate Existing Commercial Areas

Table E5 identifies the floorspace need to 2031 and the current level of vacancy in the town centre.

Table E5

Gross floorspace Need Identified sq.m		Vacant Floorspace Available sq.m
Convenience	376	3,230
Comparison	584	
A2-A5	240	
TOTAL	1,200	

There is 3,230 sq.m gross vacant floorspace which may suggest that there is no need to allocate more land in the town centre. Reconfiguration or redevelopment of existing stores may be appropriate although Ramsgate has a range of vacant store sizes (from 20 to 1,840 sq.m)

Again, as in the case of Margate, Ramsgate has a low retention rate on convenience spend suggesting that there is a qualitative case to allow convenience floorspace on appropriate sites on sustainability grounds. Ramsgate residents currently have inadequate provision of food shopping and allowing for this growth in the town could add footfall and vitality to the town centres complementing their leisure and tourism role.

District and Local centres

District and local centres perform an important role in the retail hierarchy catering for basket and top up shopping located in sustainable locations often walkable from residential areas.

The Thanet Local Plan 2006 contained a policy on District and Local Centres and this is in Annex E4. The Council envisaged that any new retail shops within these centres should be local shops, to serve the local catchment of the particular centre. It was recognised that there may be a need for local food stores that may be larger than other local shops, but these should have a maximum floorspace of 1000 square metres.

The Town Centre Retail, Leisure, Tourism and Culture Assessment 2012 calculates retail need to the end of the plan period for Birchington and Westgate to be 510 sq.m and for the rest of Thanet (i.e.local centres) -15 sq.m. Given this information the 1000sq.m threshold in Policy TC8 is therefore too large and the Council needs to decide whether this policy is still appropriate and particularly needs to consider reducing the 1000 sq.m threshold.

Development Management Policy

The National Planning Policy Framework includes specific policies to be used when determining planning applications for town centres uses that is clear and robustly worded. These require the application of the sequential test and impact test. The Council will then need to decide whether to reiterate the sequential test and impact test through the Local Plan.

Sequential Test and Impact Test

National planning policy requires that commercial town centre development should be located in existing town centres. Where this is not possible it should be accommodated on suitable edge of centre sites. Where that is not possible the need should be met in other accessible locations that are well connected to the town centre. This is called the sequential approach.

The NPPF contains very specific wording on the sequential test. It therefore may not be necessary to repeat this in the Local Plan, although it may be helpful to set out the sequential test in the Local Plan and to give guidance, for instance on what distances are considered to be edge of centre

The National Planning Policy Framework states that impact tests should be carried out for all town centre development proposed outside of town centres and not in accordance with a development plan. It says that we should set local thresholds for triggering an impact test locally. If a local threshold for this impact test is not set then the NPPF suggest 2,500 sq.m as a threshold. As development should be appropriate in terms of scale and nature to the centre in which it is located, Nathaniel Lichfield and Partners have proposed that impact tests should be applied at the following thresholds for Thanet’s towns:

Westwood Cross, Margate and Ramsgate	1000sqm
Broadstairs, Cliftonville, Birchington and Westgate	500sqm
Everywhere else in the District	280sqm

The recommendation states that that this should apply to all edge and out of centre food and non food retail proposals. The assessment states that developments in local parades and centres should primarily serve the community within which it is located and therefore catchment areas should not be more than 800 metres.

An example of applying the above thresholds would mean that outside of the town centre boundary in Margate but within Margate any development over 1000 sq.m would need to apply an impact test. The Council will need to identify the area on a plan.

Annex A1 - Current 'saved' policies from Thanet Local Plan 2006 for the Airport

POLICY EC2 - KENT INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

PROPOSALS THAT WOULD SUPPORT THE DEVELOPMENT, EXPANSION AND DIVERSIFICATION OF KENT INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT WILL ONLY BE PERMITTED SUBJECT TO THE FOLLOWING REQUIREMENTS:

1. DEMONSTRABLE COMPLIANCE WITH THE TERMS OF THE CURRENT AGREEMENT UNDER SECTION 106 OF THE TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1990 OR SUBSEQUENT EQUIVALENT LEGISLATION;
2. NEW BUILT DEVELOPMENT IS TO BE DESIGNED TO MINIMISE VISUAL IMPACT ON THE OPEN LANDSCAPE OF THE CENTRAL ISLAND. PARTICULAR ATTENTION MUST BE GIVEN TO ROOFSCAPE AND TO MINIMISING THE MASS OF THE BUILDINGS AT THE SKYLINE WHEN VIEWED FROM THE SOUTH;
3. APPROPRIATE LANDSCAPING SCHEMES, TO BE DESIGNED AND IMPLEMENTED AS AN INTEGRAL PART OF THE DEVELOPMENT*:
4. ANY APPLICATION FOR DEVELOPMENT FOR THE PURPOSE OF INCREASING AIRCRAFT MOVEMENTS IN THE AIR OR ON THE GROUND, AUXILIARY POWER OR ENGINE TESTING, MUST BE SUPPORTED BY AN ASSESSMENT OF THE CUMULATIVE NOISE IMPACT AND THE EFFECTIVENESS OF MITIGATION MEASURES TO BE IMPLEMENTED IN ORDER TO MINIMISE POLLUTION AND DISTURBANCE. THE ACCEPTABILITY OF PROPOSALS WILL BE JUDGED IN RELATION TO ANY IDENTIFIED AND CUMULATIVE NOISE IMPACT, THE EFFECTIVENESS OF MITIGATION AND THE SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC BENEFITS OF THE PROPOSALS;
5. AN AIR QUALITY ASSESSMENT IN COMPLIANCE WITH POLICY EP5, TO DEMONSTRATE THAT THE DEVELOPMENT WILL NOT LEAD TO A HARMFUL DETERIORATION IN AIR QUALITY. PERMISSION WILL NOT BE GIVEN FOR DEVELOPMENT THAT WOULD RESULT IN NATIONAL AIR QUALITY OBJECTIVES BEING EXCEEDED;
6. DEVELOPMENT WILL NOT BE PERMITTED WITHIN THE AIRPORT COMPLEX TO THE SOUTH OF THE AIRSIDE DEVELOPMENT SITE IDENTIFIED IN POLICY EC4, UNLESS IT HAS BEEN DEMONSTRATED THAT THE DEVELOPMENT IS NECESSARY FOR THE PURPOSE OF AIR TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT;
7. ANY NEW DEVELOPMENT WHICH WOULD GENERATE SIGNIFICANT SURFACE TRAFFIC MUST MEET REQUIREMENTS FOR SURFACE TRAVEL DEMAND IN COMPLIANCE WITH POLICY EC3.
8. IT MUST BE DEMONSTRATED THAT NEW DEVELOPMENT CANNOT CONTAMINATE GROUNDWATER SOURCES OR THAT APPROPRIATE MITIGATION MEASURES WILL BE INCORPORATED IN THE DEVELOPMENT TO PREVENT CONTAMINATION.

- Given the prime role of Kent International Airport in the strategy of this Plan, the District Council will carefully consider the potential adverse impacts of landscaping and nature conservation enhancements in the vicinity of the airport, given, for example, the potential to increase the risk of bird strike.

POLICY EC4 - AIRSIDE DEVELOPMENT AREA

LAND AT THE AIRPORT, AS IDENTIFIED ON THE PROPOSALS MAP, IS RESERVED FOR AIRSIDE DEVELOPMENT. DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS WILL REQUIRE SPECIFIC JUSTIFICATION TO DEMONSTRATE THAT AN AIRSIDE LOCATION IS ESSENTIAL TO THE DEVELOPMENT PROPOSED. DEVELOPMENT WILL BE REQUIRED TO RETAIN SUFFICIENT LAND TO PERMIT ACCESS BY AIRCRAFT OF UP TO 65M (217FT) WINGSPAN TO ALL PARTS OF THE SITE.

POLICY EC5 - LAND AT, AND EAST OF, THE AIRPORT TERMINAL

UNTIL SUCH TIME AS A NEW AIRPORT TERMINAL IS BUILT, LAND AT, AND EAST OF, THE EXISTING AIRPORT TERMINAL IS IDENTIFIED ON THE PROPOSALS MAP FOR AIRPORT TERMINAL-RELATED PURPOSES. USES WILL BE RESTRICTED TO THOSE WHICH DIRECTLY SUPPORT OR COMPLEMENT THE OPERATIONAL REQUIREMENTS OF THE EXISTING AIRPORT TERMINAL. SHOULD A NEW TERMINAL BE BUILT, OTHER AIRPORT-RELATED DEVELOPMENT WILL BE PERMITTED ON THIS ALLOCATED SITE. PLANNING CONDITIONS OR PLANNING AGREEMENTS WILL BE APPLIED TO LIMIT ANY DEVELOPMENT GRANTED PLANNING CONSENT TO USES CONFORMING TO THIS POLICY.

Annex A2 - Current 'saved' policy from Thanet Local Plan 2006 - Port

POLICY EC9 - RAMSGATE NEW PORT

FURTHER DEVELOPMENT WILL BE PERMITTED AT THE RAMSGATE NEW PORT, AS SHOWN ON THE PROPOSALS MAP, IF IT FACILITATES THE IMPROVEMENT OF RAMSGATE AS A PORT FOR SHIPPING, TRAFFIC THROUGH THE PORT, NEW ROUTES AND COMPLEMENTARY LAND-BASED FACILITIES, SUBJECT TO THE FOLLOWING CRITERIA:

1. A DEMONSTRABLE PORT-RELATED NEED FOR ANY PROPOSED LAND-BASED FACILITIES TO BE LOCATED IN THE AREA OF THE NEW PORT, AND ALSO A DEMONSTRABLE LACK OF SUITABLE ALTERNATIVE INLAND LOCATIONS; AND
2. COMPATIBILITY WITH THE CHARACTER AND FUNCTION OF RAMSGATE SEAFRONT AND THE ROYAL HARBOUR AS A COMMERCIAL AND LEISURE FACILITY; AND
3. AN ACCEPTABLE ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT OF THE IMPACT OF THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT UPON THE HARBOUR, ITS SETTING AND SURROUNDING PROPERTY, AND THE IMPACT OF ANY PROPOSED LAND RECLAMATION UPON NATURE CONSERVATION, CONSERVATION OF THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT, THE COAST AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL HERITAGE, TOGETHER WITH ANY PROPOSALS TO MITIGATE THE IMPACT.

LAND RECLAMATION WILL NOT BE PERMITTED BEYOND THE WESTERN EXTREMITY OF THE EXISTING LIMIT OF RECLAIMED LAND.

Annex B1

Westwood Industrial Estate	(26ha)
Pysons Road Industrial Estate	(22.8ha)
Dane Valley Industrial Estate, St. Peters	(8.5ha)
Haine Road Industrial Estate	(6.52ha)
Laundry Road (Telegraph Hill) Industrial Estate	(3.68ha)
All Saints Industrial Estate	(2.45ha)
Manston Road Depot	(2.97ha)
Tivoli Road Industrial Estate	(2.45ha)
Cromptons Site	(2.26ha)
Jentex	(2ha)
140-144 Newington Road	(1.12ha)
Princes Road Depot	(0.98ha)
Whitehall Road Industrial Estate	(0.95ha)
Northdown Industrial Estate	(0.89ha)
Pioneer Business Park	(0.64ha)
Suffolk Avenue Factories	(0.45ha)
Manston Green	(0.38ha)
Magnet and Southern	(0.29ha)
St Lawrence Industrial Estate	(0.19ha)
Fuller’s Yard	(0.17ha)

Annex B2

The table below shows the gains and losses in employment land between April 2011 to March 2012

GAINS (sq.m)		LOSSES (sq.m)	
Total Commercial Floorspace (A1-B8 & D1-D2	72,055	Total Commercial Floorspace (A1-B8 & D1-D2	25,146
Complete 2011/2012	13,838	Complete 2011/2012	6,771
Under Construction 2011/2012	11,001		
Not Started 2011/2012	47,216	Not Started 2011/2012	18,375
Total Floospace (B1-B8)	9,617	Total Floospace (B1-B8)	13,536
Complete 2011/2012	3,628	Complete 2011/2012	912
Under Construction 2011/2012	525		
Not Started 2011/2012	5,464	Not Started 2011/2012	12,624
Total Floorspace (A1-A5)	31,979	Total Floorspace (A1-A5)	8,906
Complete 2011/2012	10,081	Complete 2011/2012	5,067
Under Construction 2011/2012	8,760		
Not Started 2011/2012	13,138	Not Started 2011/2012	3,839
Total Floorspace (D1-D2)	30,459	Total Floorspace (D1-D2)	2,704
Complete 2011/2012	129	Complete 2011/2012	792
Under Construction 2011/2012	1,716		
Not Started 2011/2012	18,614	Not Started 2011/2012	1,912

Source: KCC Commercial Information Audit data 2011/12

Annex B3

The A Use Classes	
Class A1 (Shops)	Shops, retail warehouses, hairdressers, undertakers, travel and ticket agencies, post offices (but not sorting offices), pet shops, sandwich bars, showrooms, domestic hire shops, dry cleaners, funeral directors and internet cafes
Class A2 (Financial & Professional Services)	Financial services such as banks and building societies, professional services (other than health and medical services) including estate and employment agencies and betting offices
Class A3 (Restaurants & Cafes)	For the sale of food and drink for consumption on the premises - restaurants, snack bars and cafes
Class A4 (Drinking Establishments)	Public houses, wine bars or other drinking establishments (but not night clubs)
Class A5 (Hot Food Takeaways)	For the sale of hot food for consumption off the premises
The B Use Classes	
Class B1: (Business)	a) Offices, other than financial services) a) Research and development of products and processes b) Light industry
Class B2: (General Industrial)	General industry: use for the carrying out of an industrial process other than one falling in Class B1
Class B8: (Storage & Distribution)	Use for storage or distribution centre
The D Use Classes	
Class D1 (Non-Residential Institutions)	Clinics, health centres, crèches, day nurseries, day centres, schools, art galleries (other than for sale or hire), museums, libraries, halls, places of worship, church halls, law court. Non residential education and training centres
Class D2	Cinemas, music and concert halls, bingo and dance halls (but not night clubs), swimming baths, skating rinks, gymnasiums or area for indoor or outdoor sports and recreations (except for motor sports, or where firearms are used)

Source: Use Classes Order

Annex B4

Sector	Sub-Sector	Occupation
Primary Green Sector	Green Infrastructure	Silviculture and other forestry activities; Logging; Support services to forestry; Landscape service activities; Urban planning and landscape architectural activities; Botanical and zoological gardens and nature reserve activities.
	Waste Management, Recycling and Reuse	Collection of non-hazardous waste; Collection of hazardous waste; Treatment and disposal of non-hazardous waste; Treatment and disposal of hazardous waste; Recovery of sorted materials; remedial activities and other waste management services; Wholesale of waste and scrap; Retail sale of second-hand goods (other than antiques and antique books) in stores; The care and cultivation of forest trees.
Secondary Green Sector	Electricity	Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing; Production of electricity; Transmission of electricity; Distribution of electricity; Manufacture of electricity distribution and control apparatus; Manufacture of wiring devises; Manufacture of other electronic and electric wires and cables.
	Energy Equipment Manufacture	Manufacture of central heating radiators and boilers; Manufacture of electric motors, generators and transformers; Manufacture of electric lighting equipment; Manufacture of electric domestic lighting equipment; Manufacture of electric non-domestic appliances; Manufacture of engines and turbines, except aircraft, vehicle and cycle engines; Manufacture of ovens, furnaces and furnace burners; Manufacture of non-domestic cooling and ventilation equipment; Manufacture of other electrical equipment.
	Architects and Quantity Surveyors	Architectural activities; Quantity surveying activities.
	Buildings	Development of building projects; Construction of commercial buildings; Construction of domestic buildings.
	Plumbing, Heating and Electrical Installation	Electrical installation; Plumbing, heat and air-conditioning installation.
	Professional, Scientific and Technical Activities	Environmental consulting activities; Other professional, scientific and technical activities.
	Sustainable Transport	Passenger rail transport, interurban; Freight rail transport; Passenger transportation by underground, metro and similar systems; Passenger transport other than by underground including trams; Other passenger land transport.

Source: Thanet Economic and Employment Assessment: Experian 2012

Annex B5

Broad Sector Classification	
Agriculture	Agriculture, Forestry & Fishing
Mining and Quarrying	Extraction and Mining
Manufacturing	Food, Drink & Tobacco
	Textiles & Clothing
	Wood & Paper
	Printing and Reproduction of Recorded media
	Fuel Refining
	Chemicals
	Pharmaceuticals
	Rubber, Plastic & Other Non-Metallic Mineral Products
	Metal Products
	Computer & Electronic Products
	Machinery & Equipment
	Transport Equipment
	Other Manufacturing
Utilities	Utilities
Construction	Construction of Buildings
	Civil Engineering
	Specialised Construction Activities
Distribution, Hotels and Catering	Wholesale
	Retail
	Accommodation & Food Services
	Recreation
Transport and Communications	Land Transport, Storage & Post
	Air & Water Transport
	Media Activities
	Telecoms
	Computing & Information Services
Financial and Business Services	Finance
	Insurance & Pensions
	Real Estate
	Professional Services
	Administrative & Supportive Service Activities
	Other Private Services
Government and Other Services	Public Administration & Defence
	Education
	Health
	Residential Care & Social Work

Source: Thanet Economic and Employment Assessment: Experian 2012

Annex C1 Thanet Local Plan 2006 Policies

Policy T1 Tourist Facilities

Planning permission will be granted for development which would extend or upgrade the range of tourist facilities, increase the attraction of tourists to the area or extend the season.

Policy T2 Serviced Accommodation

In the Thanet towns and villages, proposals for development of serviced tourist accommodation, including extensions to and conversions of existing buildings, will be approved. Such proposals will be judged on their individual merits in relation to scale, design, impact on the locality and normal development control criteria.

Policy T3 Self-catering Accommodation

1. Except at or near the coast and taking into account of the criteria provided in policy CC2, in relation to landscape, proposals for the development of new touring and static caravan sites, and suitable extensions to existing sites, will be permitted, subject to siting, design and access considerations, and providing there is no overriding conflict with other planning policies. All new sites and suitable extensions must be well related to the primary or secondary road network. In all new cases, the caravan site must be capable of being extensively landscaped such that its impact on the character of the area is minimised.

2. Proposals to diversify, upgrade or improve facilities relating to self-catering accommodation will be permitted subject to scale, siting, design, access and landscaping considerations.

3. Proposals to redevelop self-catering facilities for other uses, will not be permitted where it is considered that such proposals would seriously affect the maintenance of a reasonable choice of tourist accommodation in Thanet.

Policy T4 - Hoverport site Pegwell Bay

Planning permission will be granted to proposals for the development of the hoverport within its existing boundaries, provided:

1. There is no material harm to the SSSI-SPA-Ramsar site and there is no significant effect on the nature conservation interests of the SSSI, SPA, Ramsar site or sacs.
2. Any proposed built development would not result in unacceptable harm to the special landscape area;
3. The maximum height of built development does not exceed the height of the cliff face
4. Public views from the a256 of the chalk cliff line to the east of the hoverport are retained; and
5. Public access is retained to the rear of the site to facilitate inspection of the important cliff geology and to the Hugin beach to the east

Policy T5 - The Lido Site

The development of the lido complex for an appropriate mix of tourism, leisure and housing uses, will be permitted subject to consideration being given to the potential loss of sea views from Ethelbert Terrace and being sympathetic to the character of the area.

Policy T6 - Language Schools

Language schools will normally be permitted subject to:

1. The number of students to be accommodated, the hours of operation, the range of facilities provided and the relationship with adjoining properties not resulting in an unacceptable impact on the amenities of adjacent occupiers or on the character of an area as a whole through noise or general disturbance;
2. The use of the property as a language school not resulting in an over-concentration of such uses in a particular locality to a level where the character of that area is materially altered.

Policy T7 - Amusement Uses

1. Amusement ‘centres’, will be permitted in the town centres and at Westwood, as defined on the proposals map, subject to;
    - The limitation of use to amusements with prizes;
    - The provision of effective soundproofing including door design,
    - A high standard of shopfront design, with window display, especially in conservation areas., noise and disturbance
2. Amusement arcades will be permitted in Margate and Ramsgate only, within the area shown on the proposals map. Proposals for amusement uses will be expected to retain existing significant elements of seaside architecture.
3. Outside the defined areas proposals for new amusement arcades or the extension of such uses will be refused.
4. Outside town centres the acceptability of amusement centres will be judged against the scale of the centre in which they are located and compatibility with adjacent uses.

Policy T8 - Dreamland

1. Proposals that seek to extend, upgrade or improve the attractiveness of dreamland as an amusement park will be permitted. Development that would lead to a reduction in the attractiveness, leisure or tourist potential will be resisted.

   Exceptionally, development of a limited part of the site may be accepted as a part of a comprehensive scheme for the upgrading and improvement of the amusement park. The scheme will be required to demonstrate that the future viability of the amusement park can be assured and the council will negotiate a legal agreement to ensure that the proposed development and the agreed investment in the amusement park are carried out in parallel.

2. In the event that evidence, in the form of an independent professional assessment, is submitted (and accepted by the council) as demonstrating that it is not economically

viable to operate an amusement park on the whole or majority of the site in the foreseeable future, then proposals for redevelopment may be accepted subject to:

i. Proposals demonstrating that such redevelopment would sustainably contribute to the economic wellbeing and rejuvenation of margate, and being supported by a business plan demonstrating that such proposals are economically viable;
ii. The predominant use of the site being for leisure purposes. (an element of mixed residential would be appropriate but only of such a scale needed to support delivery of the comprehensive vision for the site);
iii. Compatibility with the context and proposals of the strategic urban design framework, and integration with appropriate proposals for redevelopment /refurbishment of neighbouring sites;
iv. Proposals delivering a new road along the southern site boundary to enable the diversion of vehicular traffic from marine terrace. (a legal agreement will be required to ensure that a proportionate contribution will be made towards the cost of providing the new road and to appropriate improvements to create a pedestrian priority environment along marine terrace);
v. Retention of the scenic railway in situ as an operating feature within a green park setting appropriate to its character as a listed building; and
vi. Proposals being accompanied by a traffic impact assessment.

Policy T9 - Rural Tourism

Proposals for the conversion of buildings in rural settlements to tourism-related uses will be permitted, subject to environmental and traffic considerations. The conversion of farm buildings will also be subject to policies r5 and he3.

Picnic areas, nature walks and other modest facilities promoting green tourism in these areas are considered desirale and will be encouraged.

Annex C2 Tourist Facilities in Thanet

(source: http://www.visitthanet.co.uk)

Margate Museum of Monstrosities: A collection of unworldly, unexpected and extraordinary exhibits. Margate media Centre

York Street Gallery: Displays fine art by Thanet and Kent based artists. Ramsgate

Shell Grotto: A series of underground passageways covered by 2000asft of shell mosaic. Grotto Hill, Margate

The Hornby Visitor Centre. A journey through the history of Britain's best loved toys. Hornby Hobbies Ltd. Margate

Margate Harbour Arm: Arts, cafes and bars

Broadstairs Leisure: Family entertainment Centre. Harbour Sreet, Broadstairs

Updown Gallery. Elms Avenue, Ramsgate

St Augustines Cross: St Augustine & 40 Benedictine monks came to the Isle of Thanet in 597AD to re-establish the Catholic faith. The Cross, erected in 1884, commemorates where St Augustine was said to have celebrated the 1st Mass. Cottington Road, Cliffsend, Ramsgate

Marine Studios: Gallery and meeting space. Albert Terrace, Margate

The Pinball Parlour: Selection of vintage games. Addington Street, Ramsgate

Tudor House: One of Margate's oldest buildings dating back to the first half of the sixteenth century. King Street, Margate

Limbo Arts: Substation Project Space. High Street, Margate

Beeping Bush Community Pharmacy Gallery: Pioneering (Industrial and Provident status) digital arts & media organisation and Screen South Community Network Film Delivery Partner for Kent & Medway, supported by The UK Film Council. Market Place, Margate

Quex Park: 250 acre country park set within acres of Birchington. Quex park, Birchington

St Augustines RC Church. St Augustines Road, Ramsgate

North Foreland Lighthouse: The last manned lighthouse in the country until its conversion to automatic operation in November 1998. Northforeland Road, Broadstairs

The Viking Ship "Hugin": Replica Viking Ship that sailed from Denmark to Thanet in 1949 to celebrate the 1500th anniversary of the landing of Hengist and Horsa. Sandwich Road, Ramsgate

Outside The Square Art Gallery: International Exhibits. Duke Street, Margate

RAF Spitfire & Hurricane Memorial Museum: WWII Museum displaying two complete Battle of Britain Fighter Planes- Spitfire and Hurricane and artifacts. The Airfield, Manston Road, Ramsgate

Turner Contemporary: Visual arts organisation, based in Margate that celebrates JMW Turner's association with the town and promotes the understanding and enjoyment of historical and contemporary art. The Rendezvous, Margate

Gadds – The Ramsgate Brewery: A family run craft brewery producing top quality real ale for the people of East Kent and beyond. Pysons Road Industrial Estate, Ramsgate

Alexander's Gallery: Primarily conceived as an exhibition space for the work of acclaimed artist Matthew Alexander the gallery is at present building an adventurous exhibition programme which will feature paintings of the artist's work throughout the year. Canterbury Road, Monkton

Margate Museum: Permanent displays that trace Margate's history from Iron Age man to the 1960s, including Archaeology, Maritime, Port Activities, Seaside, Civic, WWI, WWII, and Police Cells. Old Town Hall, Market Place, Margate

Crampton Tower Museum: Museum set in the old town waterworks celebrating Thomas Crampton, the famous Victorian engineer. Museum features railways, transport & local history. Exhibits include working models, an interactive display for children & miniature railway. The Broadway, High Street, Broadstairs

Lovelys Gallery and Art Shop: Gallery and family run business since 1891. Northdown Road, Margate

Draper's Windmill: Smock windmill built by John Holman of Canterbury in 1845. Restored to working order by Drapers Windmill Trust 1968-1974. Exhibits include 18th and 19th century artifacts. St Peters Footpath, Margate

Dreamland: Dreamland lies at the heart of Margate in Kent & for almost a century was one of the UK's best-loved amusement parks. Work is now underway to reinstate Dreamland as one of the UK's best-loved amusement parks with a heritage story to tell

Lillyputt Mini Golf: 12 hole mini golf with tea garden. Victoria Parade. Broadstairs

Ramsgate Sports Centre: Leisure Centre with gym, 2 aerobic studios, spa, sauna, steam room and sports hall. High Street, Ramsgate

Margate Gallery: Working with professional local, national & international artists. We will also be partnering with regional & national Higher Education establishments. Lombard Streetm Margate

The Boating Pool: Play ground, arcade amusements, boating pool, mini bikes, water walking balls. Royal Esplanade, Ramsgate

Helter Skelter Play Centre: Indoor Leisure Employee of the Year 2010. York Street, Ramsgate

Italianate Greenhouse: Italianate Greenhouse dates from pre 1810. Situated on land of East Cliff lodge former home of Sir Moses and Lady Judith Montefiore. King George V! memorial Park, Ramsgate

Joss bay Leisure: Childdrens entertainment. Joss Bay Beach, Broadstairs

Meltdowns: Craft Centre. St Lawrence Industrial Estate, Manston Road, Ramsgate.

Quench Artist Studio:Independent working studio space. Edith Road, Westgate-on-Sea

Crate Studio and Project Space: Runs a programme of visual art events. High Street, Margate

Skylight Studios Exhibition Gallery: 8 studios. Carroways Place, Margate

Walpole Bay Hotel and Museum: A 1920's hotel and museum with a restaurant, two bars, covered veranda and games room all open to the public, all year round. An art gallery, with regular exhibitions. A meeting room and ballroom for dances, weddings and conferences. Fifth Avenue, Cliftonville, Margate

Dickens House Museum & Information Point: Once the home of Mary Pearson Strong, upon whom Charles Dickens based the character of Betsey Trotwood in 'David Copperfield'. It contains Dickens memorabilia prints, costume and Victoriana. Guided tours available. Victoria Parade, Broadstairs

Sandwich and Pegwell Bay Nature Reserve: Particularly known for its orchids and wetland birds. With a bird viewing hide, picnic site, car park and toilets. Range of public guided walks throughout the year. Cliffsens, Ramsgate

Crafted Naturally: Making and selling hand made paper products, silk batiks, bags and cushions Plus Batik and Paper-Making workshops. High Street, Margate

Pie Factory Artist Studios: Studios, Pop-up Shop, Cafe and Galleries. Broad Street, Margate

Monkton Nature Reserve: A 16-acre nature reserve with woodland, cliffs, chalk grassland, pond water-life, bat cave. Chalk loving plants, small mammals and reptiles. Orchids, butterflies, birds, observatory. Exhibits in field studycentre. Canterbury Road, Monkton

Margate RNLI Lifeboat Station: Working Lifeboat station with offshore lifeboat 'Leonard Kent' and inshore lifeboat 'Tigger Three'. rescue records and photographs and gift shop. The Rendezvous, Margate

Minster Abbey: Possibly the oldest inhabited house in the country. The first English monastery was founded on the Abbey site in 670 AD by Ermenburga, granddaughter of St Ethelbert. Church Street, Minster

Jungle Jims: Soft play barn and children’s outdoor plan area. Quex Park Estate, Birchington

RAF Manston History Museum: Aircraft and exhibits illustrating the history of the airfield at Manston from 1916 to the present day. Manston Road, Ramsgate

Ramsgate Maritime Museum: Five galleries explore the Maritime Heritage of Thanet and East Kent from Ancient times to the present day: fishing and shipbuilding, Royal Navy, lifeboats, archaeology of the Goodwin Sands. Royal Harbour, Ramsgate

Hartsdown Leisure Centre: A 25 metre main swimming pool with 6 lanes and a small teaching pool. 10 courts multi use sports hall for football, table tennis, basketball. Hartsdown Road, Margate

Imperial Art Gallery: Arts, Crafts and Gifts. High Street, Margate

Addington Street Studio: Arts, Crafts and Gifts. Addingon Street, Ramsgate

Nice Things: Arts, Crafts and Gifts. Harbour Parade, Ramsgate

Powell Cotton Museum, House and Gardens: Collections of African/Asian Natural History and Ethnography, weaponry- fine art and archaeology, set in Victorian gardens with Regency House. Quex Park, Birchington

Pick ‘n Paint a Pot: Pottery. Northdown Road, Margate

The Grange: Grade I listed building that was designed & lived in by Augustus Pugin, the 19th century architect. It was recently restored by the Landmark Trust. St Augustines Road, Ramsgate

Art for All The Gallery: Art and craft workshops individually designed to suit all ages and abilities. Gallery space for holding exhibitions. Marine Drive, Margate

Flint House Art: Cultural Centre. Art courses. Harbour Street, Ramsgate

Bleak House: Built in 1801, it was the home of the local fort captain during the Napoleonic wars. It was here that Charles Dickens wrote several of his famous novels. Bleak House was leased by the author from 1837 to 1859. Fort Road, Broadstairs

Annex C3

What to See in Rural Thanet and Sandwich
Key Attractions (source: Visit Kent)

Children’s Play Areas
- Jungle Jim's & Quad Mania, Birchington

Heritage Sites
- Minster Abbey, Minster
- Richborough Roman Fort & Amphitheatre, Richborough
- Reculver Towers and Roman Fort
- Ebbsfleet Saxon Landing Site (open/free site)
- St Augustine’s Cross, Cliffsend (open/free site)
- Viking Ship, Cliffsend (open/free site)
- White Mill Rural Heritage Centre, Sandwich

Churches
- Acol – St Mildred
- Birchington – All Saints
- Chislet – St Mary the Virgin
- Hoath – Holy Cross
- St Nicholas at Wade – St Nicholas
- St Peters – St Peter in Thanet
- Monkton – St Mary Magdalene
- Minster – St Mary the Virgin
- Minster – Minster Abbey
- Manston – St Catherine
- Sandwich – St Peter
- Sandwich – United Reformed Church
- Sandwich – St Andrew
- Sandwich – St Clement
- Sandwich – St Mary

Gardens
- The Secret Garden at the Salutation, Sandwich
- Marsh Farm, Monkton

Golf
- Manston Golf Centre, Manston
- Stonelees Golf Centre, Ebbsfleet
- St Augustine’s Golf Club, Cliffsend

Museums
- The Powell-Cotton Museum at Quex Park, Birchington
- RAF Manston History Museum, Manston
- RAF Manston Spitfire and Hurricane Museum, Manston
- The Fire Museum at Manston – by appointment only
- The Guildhall and Guildhall Museum, Sandwich
- Crampton Tower, Broadstairs
- Dickens House, Broadstairs
- Sarre Windmill, Sarre

Natural Heritage Sites
- Monkton Nature Reserve & Study Centre, Monkton
- Pegwell Bay (Cliffsend Country Park), Pegwell Bay
- Reculver Country Park, Reculver

- Mockett's Wood, St Peter's
- Gazen Salts Nature Reserve, Sandwich
- Monks Wall Nature Reserve, Sandwich
- Sandwich Bay Nature Reserve
- Sandwich Bay Bird Observatory Field Centre
- North East Kent European marine site, Thanet Coast

Other Visitor Attractions

- Ramsgate Brewery, Broadstairs
- Sarre Windmill, Sarre
- Empire Cinema, Sandwich
- Rare Species Conservation Centre, Sandwich

What to do in Rural Thanet and Sandwich (source Visit Kent)

Coast/Water –based Activities

- Minnis Bay Windsurfing Club – wind surfing, kite surfing
- Kent Surf School
- Joss Bay Surf School
- Kent Kite Surfing School
- Ride Kite Surfing School
- Jet Ski World
- Broadstairs Sailing Club
- Royal Temple Yacht Club
- Margate Yacht Club
- Minnis Bay Sailing Club
- Ramsgate Royal Harbour and Marina
- Fish Tickler III
- Sea Searcher Boat Trips
- Horizon Sea Safaris
- Galleon Cruises
- Thanet Sub Aqua Club
- Kent Scuba
- Sandwich River Bus Tour – Seal spotting and trips to the Roman Fort at Richborough

Cycling – Bike Hire

- Bike Shed - 71 Canterbury Road, Margate, CT9 5AS Tel: 01843 228866
- The Bike Shop - 98-100 Albion Road, Broadstairs, CT10 2UT Tel: 01843 865769
- Cliftonville Cycles - 166 Northdown Road, Clifftonville, CT9 2PX Tel: 01843 291650
- Holyoak Cycles - 101 Margate Road, Ramsgate, CT11 7SU Tel: 01843 591684
- Ken's Bike Shop - 26 Eaton Road, Margate, CT9 1XA Tel: 01843 221422
- Viking Coastal Trail Cycle Hire - Minnis Bay Car Park, The Parade, Minnis Bay, Birchington, CT7 9LT Tel: 07772 037 609
- Atman Cycle Hire – Sandwich, CT13 9BG Tel: 01304 611621
- Sandwich Cycle Hire – Sandwich, CT13 9BT Tel: 01304 617161

Cycling routes

Thanet Cycle Routes

- The Viking Coastal Trail is a 27 mile (43.5km) route from Reculver extending around the Thanet coast to Ramsgate, Pegwell Bay and Cliffsend. It continues through the villages of Minster and Monkton to finish at St Nicholas at Wade. There are plans to extend the route from St Nicholas at Wade to Reculver, thus making it a fully circular route. The Trail links with the Saxon Shore Way and various off trail routes:
  - The Six Churches – 15.25km (9.5 miles)

- History, Art and Architecture – 7km (4.5 miles)
- Historic Broadstairs – 5km (3.25 miles)
- The Path of St Augustine – 7km (4.5 miles)
- Smugglers' Haunts – 6km (3.5 miles)
- Beaches & Bays – 8.5km (5.25 miles), optional extension Minnis Bay to Reculver 6.25km (3.75 miles)

Sandwich Cycle Routes

- Ride to Sandwich' – (35 miles/58 km) – across the water meadows to Fordwich, through Stodmarsh and Grove, passing Richborough Roman Fort.
- 'Cycle by the Shore' – (50 miles/80 km) – from Canterbury to Sandwich then on to Deal and Dover.
- Coast, Castles and Clifftops – (27 mile/43km) - from Sandwich to Dover then on to Dover and Folkestone. From Dover, you can return to Sandwich on Regional Cycle Route 15, or continue on Regional Route 16 to Canterbury.
- Sandwich to Rye route also follows National Cycle Routes 1 and 2 along the coast, passing through Deal, Walmer, Kingsdown and Dover. Explore Kent provides information on published cycling routes in Kent on their website where you can also download the brochure entitled Explore Kent by Bike.

Exploring Nature and Wildlife – Nature Reserves and Country Parks
Thanet's chalk coast along to Sandwich Bay has international recognition as one of the best wildlife sites in Europe. Due to their geology, the cliffs at Pegwell Bay are a Site of Special Scientific Interest and a landscape feature of great importance. Further inland you'll also find some interesting sites.

- The Sandwich and Pegwell Bay National Nature Reserve carries a number of national and international designations to protect this special landscape with its great variety of flora and fauna – in particular its waders and wildfowl. The main access point to the north section of the Reserve is through the Pegwell Bay Country Park. It is also on the Viking Coastal Trail, Regional Route 15 of the National Cycle Network, the Saxon Shore Way and Stour Valley Walk. The reserve has nature trails, picnic benches, a bird viewing hide and visitor information boards.

  Access to the southern section of the reserve is through the Sandwich Bay Estate, where you will need to pay a toll if arriving by car or motorbike. With its wide sandy beach and dunes this area is very popular.

- The Sandwich Bay Bird Observatory Trust was one of the first ringing stations in the country and now looks after six reserves in the area. Their field centre is based within the Sandwich Bay Estate. As well as conservation and recording work the SBBOT holds events and activities for all ages – club walks and talks, boat trips, photography workshops and more. Non members are welcome.

- Gazen Salts Nature Reserve offers around 1.5 miles of footpaths, winding through a variety of habitats, including lakes, reedbeds and a meadow area in this 15 - acre manmade nature reserve.

- Monks Wall Nature Reserve is a fiveminute walk across the bridge from the quay in Sandwich, opposite the entrance to Stonar Estate. It is ideal for seeing duck and other wildlife in a wetland habitat. This reserve has recreated, from arable fields, traditional wet grazing meadows once common to the flood plain of the River Stour.

Access is by permit only which can be collected free from the Sandwich Tourist Information Centre at the Guildhall.

- The Monkton Nature Reserve is set in 16 acres of abandoned chalk quarry which has been dramatically reclaimed by nature. It features many important habitats, fascinating geology and rare orchids. The Thanet Observatory is also based here and the reserve has built the first artificial bat cave in the UK. Facilities include a well equipped field centre with a large reference library, bookshop and picnic site.

  The South East Kent Astronomical Society's Thanet Observatory is based at the Monkton Nature Reserve. Since opening to the public in 1999, viewings through the 12" Newtonian Reflecting Telescope have included the moon, Saturn's rings, Mars, comets, eclipses and aurora. For details of viewing nights and astronomy courses contact the Field Study Centre on 01843 822666 or contact the South East Kent Astronomical Society (SEKAS).

- Reculver Country Park is situated three miles (5 km) east of Herne Bay and it is here that you will find the ruins of the Roman fort – the Reculver Towers – and medieval church, which have important historical and archaeological value. The park's open grassland, cliff and shoreline habitats support a wealth of important flower and grass species, and wildlife. The Kent Wildlife Trust has a visitor centre here, providing information on the area. Check opening times with the Trust.

Golf
This area is well known for its world - class links courses such as the Royal St Georges and Princes courses in Sandwich, the Royal Cinque Ports at Deal and the North Foreland Golf Course at Broadstairs – all of which have played host to major tournaments, including The Open. But there are a number of other excellent quality, friendly golf courses and centres in Thanet that welcome and provide facilities to visitors:

- Manston Golf Centre at Manston is a pay and play golf centre, and the newest in Thanet. The centre caters for all levels of golfers – beginners and improvers – with 24 floodlit bays and facilities to practice full shots off grass as well a short game area with bunkers.
- Stonelees Golf Centre at Ebbsfleet is a pay and play golf centre, no advance booking is required and clubs are available for hire.
- St. Augustine's Golf Club at Cliffsend is a private members club that welcomes visitors.

Horse Riding
The Isle of Thanet provides plenty of opportunities for horse riding, whether you are a novice or an accomplished rider. Take advantage of the range of good quality riding schools in the area; go hacking in the countryside and on the beach. Remember to book in advance.

- Nelson Park Riding Centre BHS & ABRS in Woodchurch is a family run riding school and the only riding centre in Thanet approved by the British Horse Society, The Association of British Riding Schools and The Pony Club. As a market leader in the area, it is also the only centre to have an indoor school for all weather riding as well as over ten acres of cross country course and two fully floodlit outdoor arenas. All ages, from four years old and above, can learn to ride here. Hacking on local beaches and in the countryside is available throughout the year. Children's' birthday parties are catered for with a choice of lessons, games or hacking, with a party in the clubroom/education centre.

- The Manston Riding Centre ABRS, located just outside the village of Manston, is a riding school and livery with two floodlit ménage, full set of show jumps and a cross country course. Lessons for all ages from four years upwards are available, for novice, intermediate and advanced levels, as well as private lessons in dressage and show jumping on either your own or the centre's horses. Pony days are held during school holidays, with their own pony to ride and learn how to look after for a whole day (9am – 5pm). Group activities can be accommodated and children's birthday parties arranged. Weekly courses in horse care are run during the summer holidays covering riding stable management, with quizzes and a children's gymkhana at the end of the week. Hacks into the countryside and to the local beaches are organised for more experienced riders.

- The Thanet Disabled Riding Centre at Broadstairs gives disabled people the chance to learn to ride. The centre, which is helped out by 20 volunteers, has six ponies and a sand school. Holiday riding is available during non - term time – during the Easter, summer and Christmas holidays. Requirements need to be discussed in advance and riding sessions pre booked.

- Queensdown Equestrian Centre in Woodchurch (between Birchington and Manston) – a riding school and livery, providing opportunities for hacking out in the surrounding countryside and at Quex Park's country course.

Walking – Guided Walks

- Marvellous Margate Walk 3.0 miles **-** Come along and enjoy a beautiful walk around Margate. The walk will cover areas of Margate's scenic seafront and parks. The walk pace is moderate and suitable for most fitness levels. There will be a stop halfway around the route for a comfort break. The walk is very social and new walkers are always welcome.

- Exploring the beautiful countryside of Broadstairs 2.0 miles - There are some beautiful views along this walk across farmland to the sea and highlights include going round the North Foreland lighthouse, watching the llamas and passing the 'Riding for the Disabled' stable. The walk takes place at a medium – brisk pace, but there is plenty of time to look at any interesting sights which turn up on the route.

- A scenic walk around Ramsgate's West Cliff 3.0 miles - This walk meets outside the cafe at the Ramsgate Boating Pool. It is a brisk paced, social walk that explores the beautiful coastline of Ramsgate. There are some wonderful views along the West Cliff looking out to sea and walkers end their walk back at the Boating Pool cafe for a much deserved cup of tea and a scone.

- A walk around Ramsgate's scenic East Cliff 1.5 miles - This walk meets in the practice waiting room. Its 45 minute duration means that most routes are centred on the East Cliff seafront area of Ramsgate, often exploring many hidden paths & walkways which would not be immediately apparent to the casual visitor. There are two walk speeds available depending on your fitness level.

- Millmead Meander - This is a gentle paced, pram friendly walk that is open to all ages. The route covers paths and parks around Millmead in Margate. This is a friendly, social walk and refreshments are available back at the Centre after the walk.

- The Thanet Coast Project leads walks enabling you to discover this unique coastline and the marine and bird life associated with the sandy beaches, rocky shores, chalk cliffs, reefs and sea caves.

- Walks with the Rock Doc teach the language of the rocks – chalk cliffs, flints and fossils. All walks are free and start at 11am and last for two hours. These walks are popular and booking in advance is advisable.

- The Thanet Walking Festival is a week of guided town and country walks along the coast and in Thanet's countryside.

Annex D1

Policy R5 - Conversion of Rural Buildings

The conversion of rural buildings to other uses will be permitted where:

1. Their form, bulk and general design are in keeping with the character of the surrounding countryside; and
2. The proposed use is acceptable in terms of its impact on the immediate locality and the local highway network.

Where the building currently holds protected species, the conversion should ensure the continued use of the building for that purpose, or a suitable alternative site should be provided in the immediate locality.

Policy CC10 - Farm Diversification

A proposal to diversify the range of economic activities on a farm will be permitted if all the following criteria are met:

1. The proposal is complementary to the agricultural operations on the farm, and is operated as part of the farm holding;
2. The proposal is acceptable in terms of its impact on its landscape setting and any known nature conservation interest;
3. There would be no loss of best and most versatile agricultural land;
4. The likely traffic generation could be safely accommodated on the local highway network;
5. The proposal should utilise available existing farm buildings;
6. If a new building can be justified, it should meet all the requirements of policy D10; and
7. The proposal would be compatible with the plan’s pollution control policies and would not be detrimental to the residential amenities of the local area.
8. The proposal is appropriate to the economic, social and environmental character of the surrounding area.

Policy R3 - Village Services

Proposals for the use of existing residential properties in the villages to provide shops or other appropriate commercial activities or services will be permitted, subject to environmental and traffic considerations, and minimum impact on residential amenity.

Proposals for the use of agricultural buildings in the villages for such purposes will also be subject to policies R5 and HE3.

Policy R4 - Village Shops

The Council will seek to use its planning powers to retain a reasonable level of shopping provision in Thanet's rural settlements.

CC9 Best and Most Versatile Farmland

Planning permission will not be granted for development which would use best and most versatile land unless it can be clearly demonstrated that the development is essential and there are no preferable sites.

CC11 Agricultural Related Development

Development related to the agricultural industry may be located on suitable sites on agricultural land, subject to landscape, traffic and other planning considerations, and the scale of the development being acceptable.

CC12 Farm Retail Units

Development of a retail unit associated with a farm, which involves the display and sale of goods which have not been produced within the agricultural unit, will be permitted but only if the district council can be satisfied that:

1. The use would not be detrimental either to existing local amenities or the continued viability of established shops within the immediate vicinity;
2. The scale of retailing activity would not exceed that which would normally be associated with a local small scale shopping facility and would not be detrimental to the rural character of the area;
3. Any associated building or structure would not be obtrusive in the landscape, or detrimental to the rural character

Annex D2

Strategic planning\Village Audits\summary of facilities	Acol	Cliffsend	Manston	Minster	Monkton	Sarre & St Nicholas
Shops and Commercial Services						
Convenience shop	0	1	0	2	0	0
Post Office	0	1	0	1	0	1
Other Shops	0	1	0	3	0	0
Public House	1	1	1	3	1	3
restaurants/cafes	0	1	0	11	0	0
Bank	0	0	0	0	0	0
Cashpoint	0	1	0	2	0	0
Other Shopping Area Services	0	0	0	13	0	0
Petrol Filling Station	0	1	0	1	0	0
health & Wellbeing						
Doctor surgery/health centre	0	0	0	1	0	0
Dentist surgery	0	0	0	1	0	0
Community halls	1	1	1	4	1	1
Leisure facilities	0	0	1		0	0
Cultural buildings	0	0	2	1	0	1
Community IT facilities	0	0	0	1	0	0
Indoor and outdoor sports facilities	1	0	1	3	1	1
Playing field	1	1	1	1	1	1
Playground	1	1	1	1	1	1
Pre school/nursery/crèche	0	1	1	3	1	1
Care home	0	0	0	0	0	0
Place of worship	1	1	2	2	2	1
Public Library/service	1	1	1	1	0	1
Museum	0	0	0	1	0	0
Visitor attraction	0	1	0	1	1	0
Other (please specify)						
Estimated population	250					

Key
- currently for sale
- mobile/fortnightly library
- community run

In addition to above Minster has vet, funeral directors, hotels, B & B, Annex E1 - Glossary

A1-A5 Uses:
Class a1 (shops);
Class a2 (financial and professional services);
Class a3 (restaurants and cafes);
Class a4 (drinking establishments);
Class a5 (hot food takeaways);

Comparison Goods are:
Clothing materials & garments
Shoes & other footwear
Materials for maintenance & repair of dwellings
Furniture & furnishings; carpets & other floorcoverings
Household textiles
Major household appliances, whether electric or not
Small electric household appliances
Tools & miscellaneous accessories
Glassware, tableware & household utensils
Medical goods & other pharmaceutical products
Therapeutic appliances & equipment
Bicycles
Recording media
Games, toys & hobbies; sport & camping equipment; musical instruments
Gardens, plants & flowers
Pets & related products
Books & stationery
Audio-visual, photographic and information processing equipment
Appliances for personal care
Jewellery, watches & clocks
Other personal effects

Convenience Goods are:
Food and non-alcoholic beverages
Tobacco
Alcoholic beverages (off-trade)
Newspapers and periodicals
Non-durable household goods

Edge of centre: For retail purposes, a location that is well connected and up to 300 metres of the primary shopping area. For all other main town centre uses, a location within 300 metres of a town centre boundary. For office development, this includes locations outside the town centre but within 500 metres of a public transport interchange. In determining whether a site falls within the definition of edge of centre, account should be taken of local circumstances.

Main town centre uses: Retail development (including warehouse clubs and factory outlet centres); leisure, entertainment facilities the more intensive sport and recreation uses (including cinemas, restaurants, drive-through restaurants, bars and pubs, night-clubs, casinos, health and fitness centres, indoor bowling centres, and bingo halls); offices; and arts, culture and tourism development (including theatres, museums, galleries and concert halls, hotels and conference facilities). Residential uses.

Primary shopping area: Defined area where retail development is concentrated (generally comprising the primary and those secondary frontages which are adjoining and closely related to the primary shopping frontage).

Primary and secondary frontages: Primary frontages are likely to include a high proportion of retail uses which may include food, drinks, clothing and household goods. Secondary frontages provide greater opportunities for a diversity of uses such as restaurants, cinemas and businesses.

Annex E2

Representations from Draft Core Strategy Consultation 2009

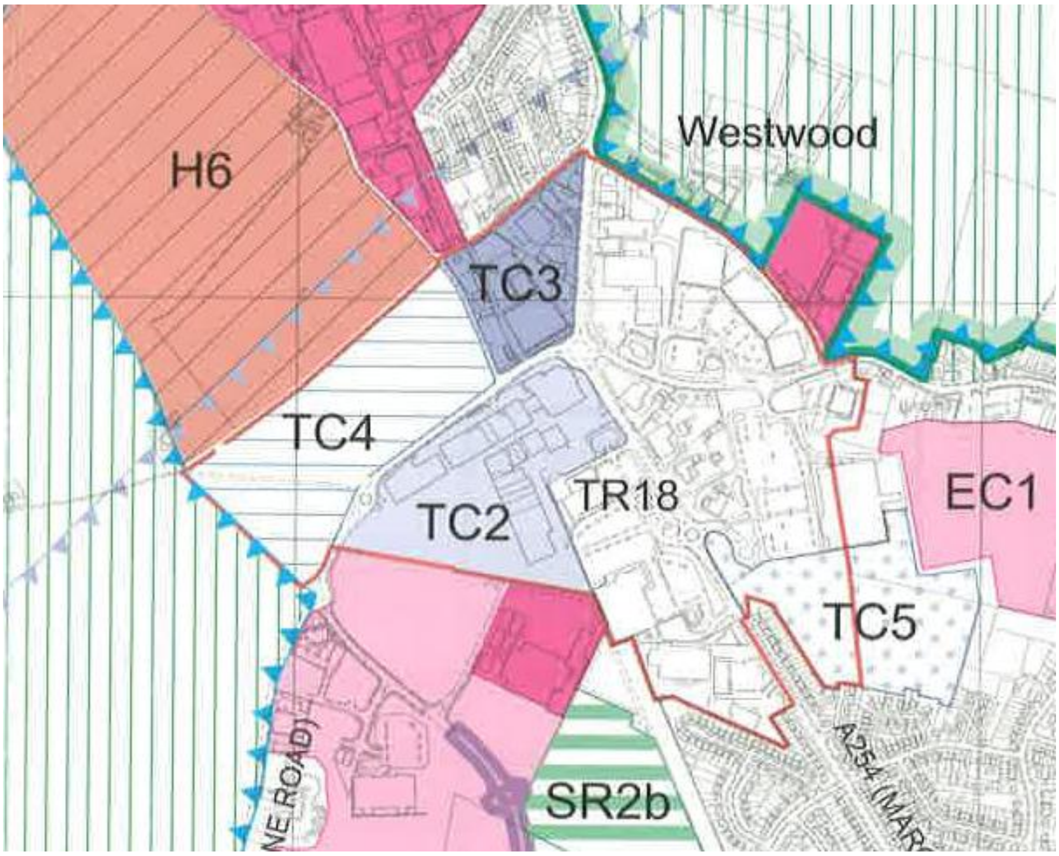
Under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act the Council began preparing a Core Strategy which was consulted on in 2009 in the document “Shaping Our Future”. The document proposed a larger town centre at Westwood Cross than currently identified in the Thanet Local Plan 2006 and a wider commercial area to consolidate the existing edge of town centre uses. This strategy attracted a range of responses.

There was some concern that more development at Westwood would undermine the retail function of the historic towns and would add to congestion at Westwood. Many believe that priority should be given to development at the coastal towns and that development at Westwood should cease until they are regenerated. A considerable number of representations said that Westwood should complement work in harmony with, and not compete with, other town centres. Representations included specific support for Westwood’s development and consolidation, in line with a land use plan. Comments included that the scale and location of retail development should be clarified/permitted at scale appropriate to a principal town centre. Expansion of the town centre also found support on the basis that it be designed to enhance the area/pedestrian linkages and facilitate improved transport links to Nash Road and Nash Lane.

More specific individual representations said that:

- all development at Westwood should be required to contribute to already inadequate highway infrastructure identified in Westwood Access Strategy, with indication as to how such highway improvements will be delivered.
- Need for a ring road/bypass for choke points like St Peters and better pedestrian access between parts of Westwood before further development.
- Policy for the wider commercial area needs greater flexibility.

Annex E3



Annex E4

Policy T5 - The Lido Site

The development of the lido complex for an appropriate mix of tourism, leisure and housing uses, will be permitted subject to consideration being given to the potential loss of sea views from Ethelbert Terrace and being sympathetic to the character of the area.

Policy T8 – Dreamland

1. Proposals that seek to extend, upgrade or improve the attractiveness of dreamland as an amusement park will be permitted. Development that would lead to a reduction in the attractiveness, leisure or tourist potential will be resisted.

Exceptionally, development of a limited part of the site may be accepted as a part of a comprehensive scheme for the upgrading and improvement of the amusement park. The scheme will be required to demonstrate that the future viability of the amusement park can be assured and the council will negotiate a legal agreement to ensure that the proposed development and the agreed investment in the amusement park are carried out in parallel.

2. In the event that evidence, in the form of an independent professional assessment, is submitted (and accepted by the council) as demonstrating that it is not economically viable to operate an amusement park on the whole or majority of the site in the foreseeable future, then proposals for redevelopment may be accepted subject to:

i) Proposals demonstrating that such redevelopment would sustainably contribute to the economic wellbeing and rejuvenation of margate, and being supported by a business plan demonstrating that such proposals are economically viable;

ii) The predominant use of the site being for leisure purposes. (an element of mixed residential would be appropriate but only of such a scale needed to support delivery of the comprehensive vision for the site);

iii) Compatibility with the context and proposals of the strategic urban design framework, and integration with appropriate proposals for redevelopment /refurbishment of neighbouring sites;

iv) Proposals delivering a new road along the southern site boundary to enable the diversion of vehicular traffic from marine terrace. (a legal agreement will be required to ensure that a proportionate contribution will be made towards the cost of providing the new road and to appropriate improvements to create a pedestrian priority environment along marine terrace);

v) Retention of the scenic railway in situ as an operating feature within a green park setting appropriate to its character as a listed building; and

vi) Proposals being accompanied by a traffic impact assessment.

Policy TC8

Policy TC8 – District and local centres

Proposals for additional shopping provision at traditional district and local centres will be permitted where the proposals meet a local need, widen the choice, quality or range of shopping facilities and are of a scale appropriate to the particular centre*.

In the council's view the appropriate scale of new retail development in existing traditional district and local centres is for stores of less than 1,000 square metres gross.