

Thanet District Council



Be a councillor

7th April 2022



Tonight's Programme

Introduction led by Madeline Homer, CEx

- Introduction and information regarding how to stand as a candidate.
- Some background information about the Council - how it works and what it does. Outlining some reasons why you may wish to become a Councillor
- We will hear from some Councillors about their experiences of being a Councillor, what they do and why they became a Councillor.
- An opportunity for you to speak with a variety of local political groups and officers from the Council to ask any questions you may have.

Introduction

- Democratic Services are hosting this event in order to encourage residents, particularly from under represented groups to consider standing in next year's local government elections and hopefully become district councillors.
- This is either as independent candidates or as a candidate for a political party.
- We want to get as many people as possible to consider becoming a Councillor, especially those people who may not traditionally consider themselves as "Councillor material".

What are the main areas of focus for the Council?

- The strain on funding of local government and the pressures to do more with less.
- The levelling up agenda including our two successful levelling up bids for Margate and Ramsgate.
- The increasing number of people needing housing in the district.
- The Local Plan and housing numbers

About Thanet District Council

- We were founded in 1972.
- Thanet has 56 Councillors (with a current composition of 26 Conservative; 16 Labour; 6 Thanet Independent Councillors; 4 Green Party and 4 Independents).
- Thanet is split in to 23 wards. A ward is a small area of a Thanet. Wards are represented by between 1 and 3 Councillors.
- We are based here at the Margate Offices and we have slightly over 400 members of staff - they are called officers.
- Generally speaking Councillors make high level decisions on policies guided and advised by Officers and Officers then carry those out those decisions.

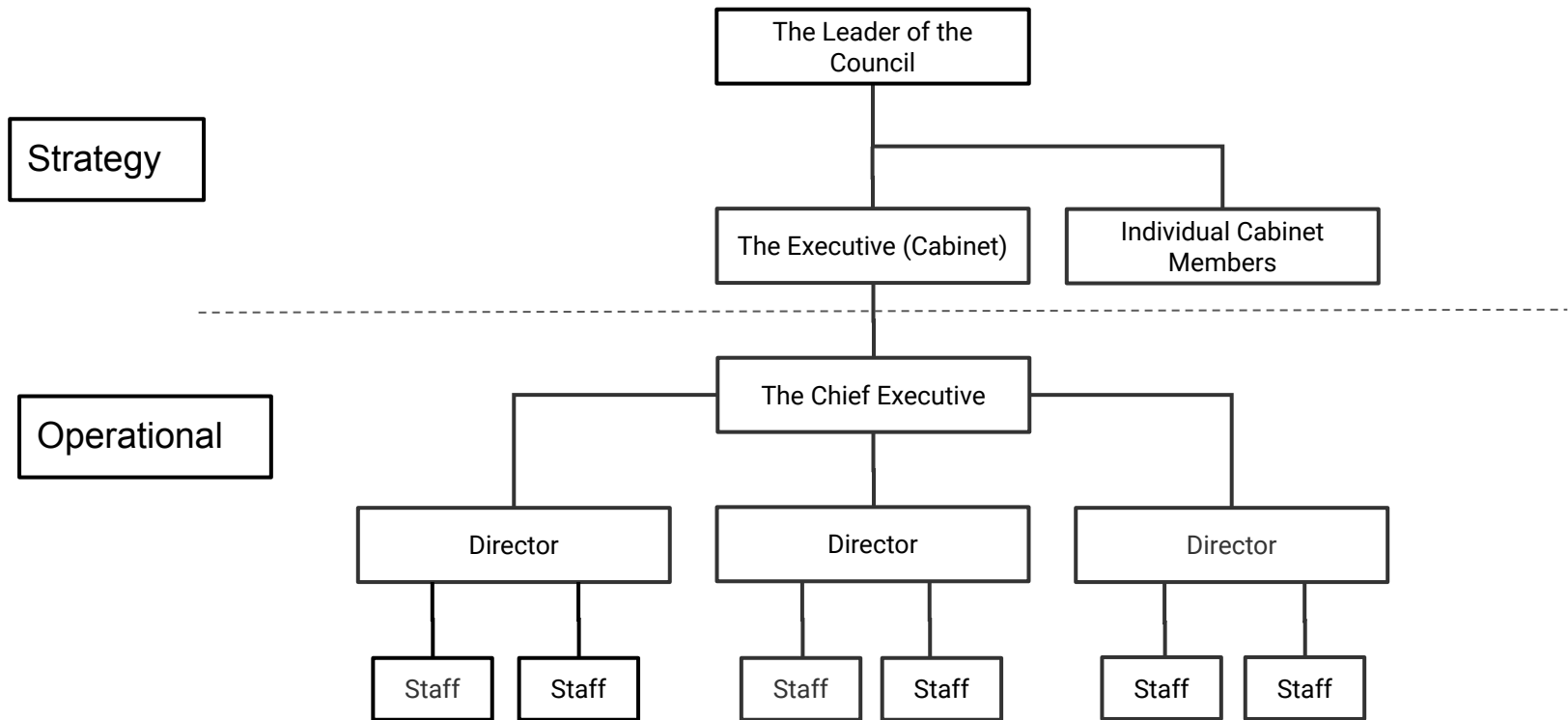
What does Thanet Council do?

Kent County Council	Thanet District Council	Parish Council
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Arts and Museums ● Education ● Footpaths ● Highways ● Libraries ● Recreation ● Social Services ● Strategic Planning ● Street Lighting ● Trading Standards ● Transport ● Waste Disposal ● Youth Services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Building Control ● Car parks ● Collection of Council Tax and Business Rates ● Elections ● Environmental protection ● Grounds Maintenance ● Housing Benefit and Council Tax support ● Housing ● Licensing ● Local Plans & Planning Applications ● Maritime & Harbour Operations ● Parks and playgrounds ● Public Conveniences ● Street cleansing ● Tourism ● Waste and recycling 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Allotments ● Open spaces ● Bus shelters ● Car parks ● Play areas

Council Decision Making Structure

- The Council operates a Cabinet system of governance
- The vast majority of decisions made by Members are made by the Cabinet
- The most important decisions - such as the Budget and items in the policy framework, such as the Local Plan or the agreeing the Corporate Priorities are taken by Full Council
- Regulatory decisions are taken by the Planning and Licensing Committees
- Officers can also take decisions - these are the decisions that are not reserved for Members as explained above - often referred to as delegations
- Councillors make policy decisions (as advised by officers) and officers make operational (daily) decisions and implement policies agreed by councillors.

Cabinet Decisions



Planning and Regulation

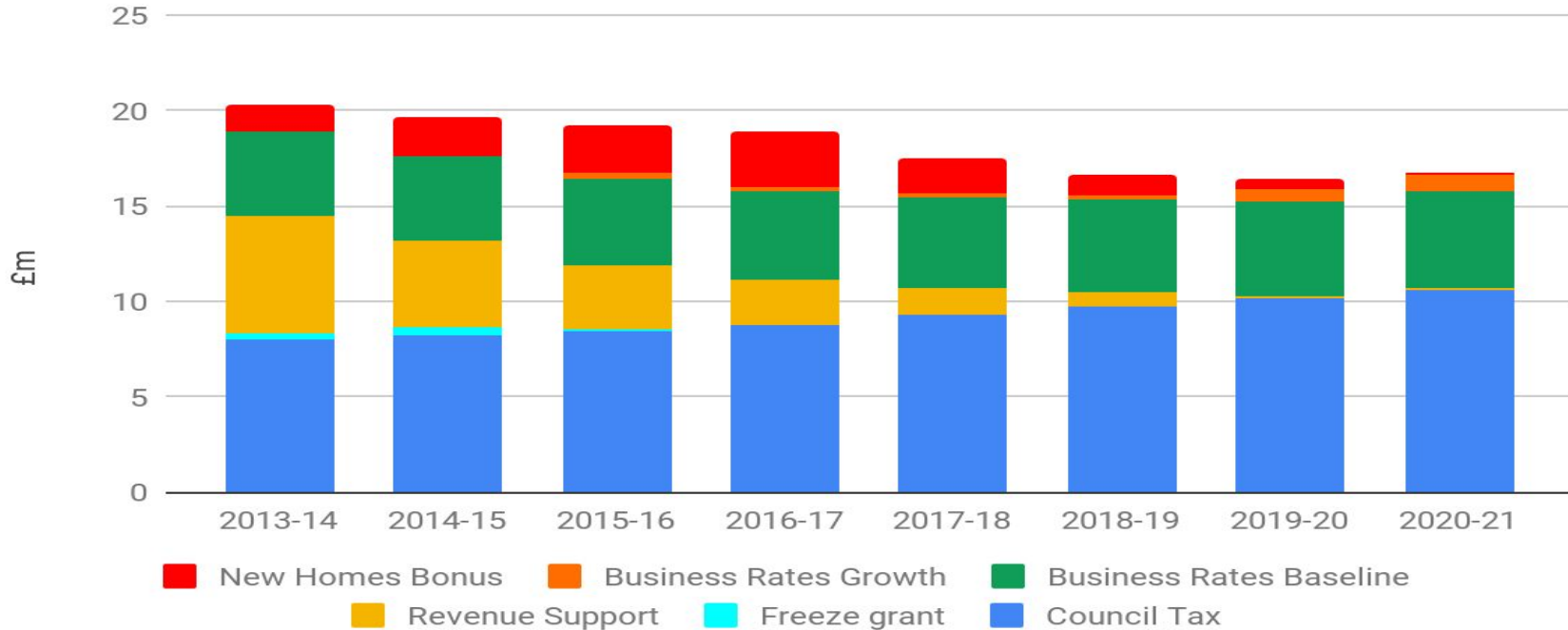
- Councils are not just service providers, they also act as regulators
- Planning Committee: - considers planning applications
- Licensing Committee: - issues licences for pubs, restaurants and taxi drivers
- Members of this committee will be required to be fair and only make up their minds after considering the facts presented before them; they can not have a predetermined view. This is because these decisions can be appealed against and such appeals are considered by a Court of law or the Secretary of State.
- No party politics in these roles: - Councillors act independently
- Specialist training is available and (compulsory for Members of those committees) as part of the induction programme

Council budget

- Full Council makes the final decision of the annual budget, usually at its meeting in February before the start of the financial year on 1 April;
- In drafting the budget, the Council has to anticipate various sources of income to fund its expenditure, including business rates, government grants and fees & charges.
- Remainder is met from council tax subject to capping limits
- Government spending cuts has led to significant financial pressures faced by the council.

Funding

TDC Core Funding

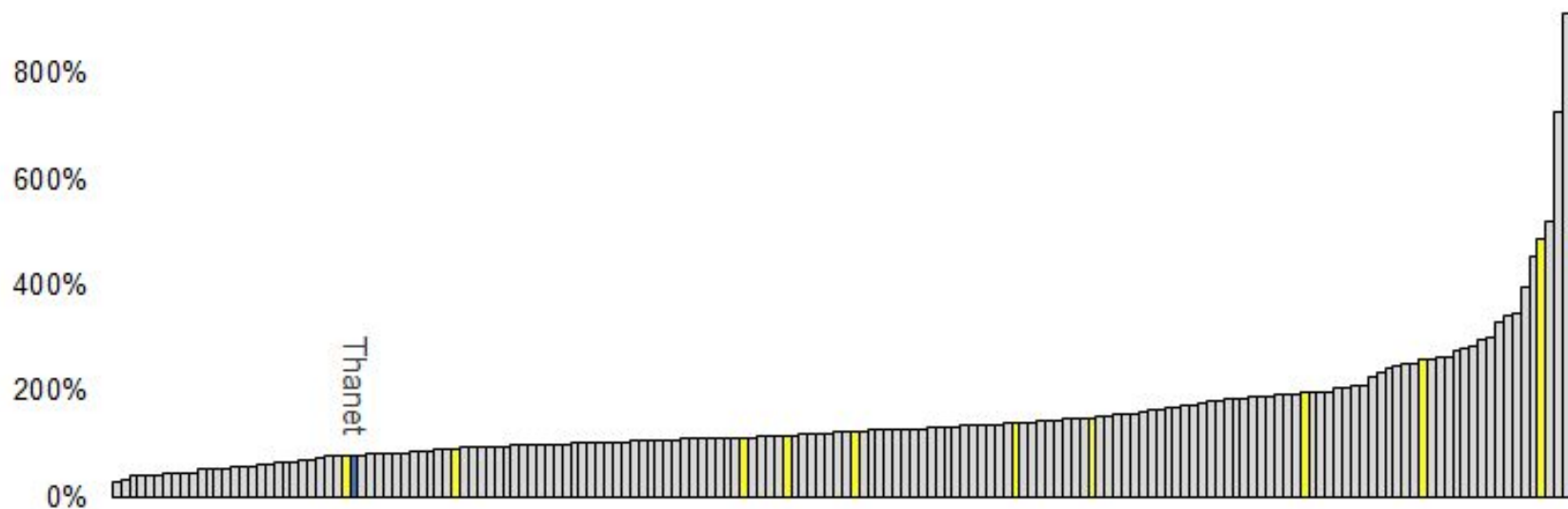


Funding Continued...

2022-23 NET GENERAL FUND REVENUE BUDGET		18,038
Funded by		
Government Grants	-1,227	
Retained Business Rates & Section 31 Grants	-6,119	
Business Rates Collection Fund Deficit	354	
Council Tax	-11,160	
Council Tax Collection Fund Deficit	114	
Total Funding		-18,038

How do we compare to other Districts?

Relative Reserve Holdings



Council Tax context

<u>Council Tax percentage breakdown 2022/23</u>					
Coin split					
	KENT COUNTY COUNCIL	THANET DISTRICT COUNCIL	THE POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER FOR KENT	KENT & MEDWAY FIRE & RESCUE AUTHORITY	Parish Precepts (Average)
	70.58%	11.98%	11.02%	3.98%	2.44%

What is involved in being a Councillor?

- Local elected ward representative
- Decision making at Council/Cabinet/Committee meetings
- Contribute to developing policies and strategies at the Council
- Part of a political group
- May be asked to provide scrutiny to decisions
- Community Leadership
- To act as a representative/ambassador of the whole Council.
- Not getting involved in the day to day provision of Council services.

Why become a councillor?

There are many reasons why someone may wish to become a Councillor including;

- They want to be involved in shaping the future of their community
- Making sure people get the right services
- Making sure people's views are heard and taken into account
- Using their business or professional skills in new ways
- They may be concerned about one particular issue in your area
- Some people are inspired by others to emulate other people
- They want to pursue their political beliefs, and see it as an extension of what they are already doing, such as work with a political party, trade union or community group

Councillors Experiences

- Councillor Reece Pugh
 - Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Economic Development
 - Been a Councillor since 2018
 - Conservative Councillor representing Thanet Villages ward

- Councillor Steve Albon
 - Shadow Cabinet Member for Environmental Services & Special Projects
 - Been a Councillor since 2019
 - Labour councillor representing Eastcliff ward

What can the Council offer you?

- We provide comprehensive training for members, tailored to your needs, regarding both how the Council works and soft skills such as speed reading, assertiveness and ICT skills.
- We can help with your childcare through dependents carers allowance.
- Councillors do receive a small allowance - £4,570. There are then additional allowances if you have an additional role such as chairman of a committee.
- We provide you with a Chromebook to access your Council email account and all our committee papers for meetings.
- We also pay mileage for car and cycle usage and train travel for activities outside of the district.
- The Council offices in Margate are adapted for use by individuals with disabilities.

What does the Council expect from you?

- You need to attend mostly evening meetings (and some day time ones).
- We expect you to be IT literate because we have gone paperless - although we will provide some training.
- You will be expected to commit between 12 and 15 hours a week (on average) on council business. This would include preparing for and attending council meetings and helping residents with queries and issues they may have.
- We expect you to be realistic. 'You cannot change the world overnight'! The council has to work within a restrictive set of rules and regulations, which can mean that things take a long time to do or might not be achievable.
- You will be expected to abide by the code of conduct.

What does the Council expect from you?

- The Council doesn't expect you:
 - To be contactable 24/7 - you are entitled to a private life
 - To solve everyone's problem - It is not a Councillors job to solve everyone's problems, it is to assess whether their issue has been dealt with in the correct way, if not then raising this with Officers.

Local Government Elections

- Local government Elections for district councils and parish/town councils are held on the first Thursday of May, every 4 years;
- County council elections are also every 4 years. However, the election cycle for the County means they are held two years after the district council ones;
- The district and parish council elections are going to be held on Thursday 4 May 2023;

How to become a candidate

To become a candidate you have to meet the following eligibility criteria:

You may stand as a candidate if:

- you are over 18 on both polling day and the day of nomination;
- you are a British, Commonwealth or European Union citizen and;
- you are either a registered local government elector in the Thanet district;
and/or
 - you have resided in the area for the whole 12 months preceding the day of nomination; and/or
 - you work in Thanet (and have for at least the past 12 months); and/or
 - you own a property in Thanet (and have for at least the past 12 months).

How to become a candidate ...cont

You could be disqualified as a candidate if:

- you are the subject of a bankruptcy restrictions order or interim order;
- you work for Thanet District Council, or hold a politically restricted post with another authority;
- you have been sentenced to prison for three months or more (including suspended sentences) during the five years before election day;
- you have been convicted of a corrupt or illegal practice by an election court.

For more information, please contact: **electoral.services@thanet.gov.uk**

How to become a candidate ...cont

To stand as a candidate you have to complete a nomination paper and consent to nomination. The form is fairly straightforward but all relevant parts need to be completed clearly and correctly.

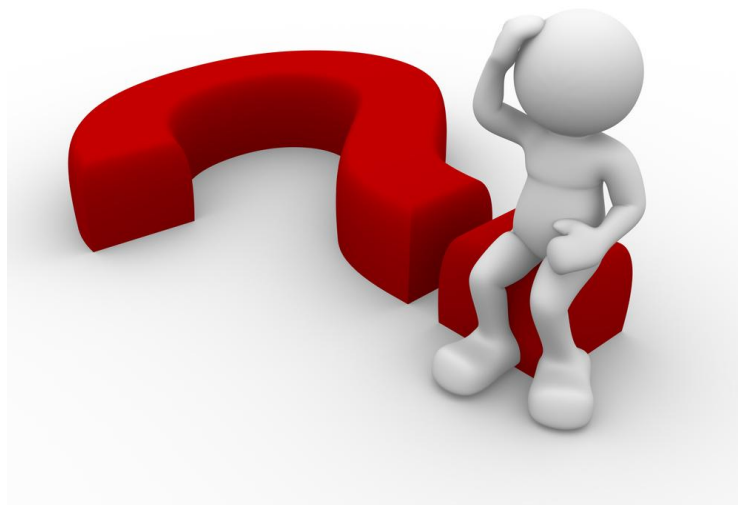
Information about deadlines applicable to the elections next year will be published on our website nearer the time.

Lots of information about being a candidate is available on the Electoral Commission website.

Electoral Services are here to assist with the whole process, you just need to ask.

Any Questions?

Please feel free to ask any questions or approach any of the officers during the breakout session.



Breakout session with political groups and officers

Political Party	Representatives
Conservatives	Cllr Reece Pugh, North Thanet Conservative Association. Daniel Friend and Harry Sampson, South Thanet Conservative Association
Labour	Jeanette Timmins, South Thanet Labour Party
Thanet Independent Councillors	Cllr Rev. Stuart Piper
Liberal Democrats	Martyn Pennington
Green Party	Cllr Mike Garner
Women's Equality Party	Kandiss Riley