



## THANET DISTRICT COUNCIL

### LOCAL PLAN AND STRATEGY REVIEW

District priorities for nature and the wider environment from the local plan and other strategies

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To note: The Environmental Improvement Plan 2023, Environmental goals, have been used to categorize the district's environmental targets in this review.



## SECTION 1: THREATS AND PRESSURES ON THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

### 1.1 Development pressures (Thanet Local Plan, 2020)

Thanet's open countryside is particularly vulnerable to development because of its limited extent, the openness and flatness of the rural landscape and the proximity of the towns. Thanet's countryside provides important landscapes that contribute to its sense of place, as well as making Thanet an attractive place that people want to come to. Much of the countryside is classified as 'best and most versatile agricultural land'. The countryside also supports a variety of habitats and species, particularly a number of important species of farmland birds which have declined in numbers over the last few decades.

### 1.2 Recreational Pressures (Thanet Local Plan, 2020)

Recreational pressure at the European sites, particularly the SPA, has given cause for concern from Natural England and the Kent Wildlife Trust regarding the impact of disturbance to over-wintering birds. There is further concern regarding the impact of increased recreational pressure as a result of population increases.

Evidence suggests that any new housing development in Thanet has the potential to increase the recreational impacts on the SPA resulting from the increase in population. This may have an adverse impact on the species for which the SPA has been designated. The actual level of impact from individual developments may not be significant, however the in-combination effect of all housing developments proposed in the district cannot rule out a significant impact.

As a result of this impact the Council appointed specialist consultants to produce a Strategic Access Management and Monitoring Plan (SAMM) (2016) to address any potential impact. The Thanet Coast and Sandwich Bay SPA is used by a large number of migratory birds particularly over-wintering Turnstones and European Golden Plover. Much of the coast is accessible for walking and cycling and the large stretch of promenade along the coast bring the Turnstones very close to users and potential disturbance. Recent surveys have revealed a decline in their population eg a 50% drop in Turnstone numbers in 2013, subsequent years also show a decline in numbers. Evidence shows that recreational activity causes disturbance to birds, particularly dog walking. This type of recreational activity is most likely to increase with increased housing and it is this activity that the mitigation strategy seeks to address.



## SECTION 2: TARGETS AND PRIORITIES FOR NATURE RECOVERY (GOAL 1)

Unless otherwise stated, the following information in section 2 came from the Thanet Local Plan, 2020.

### 2.1 PROTECTING HABITATS

#### 2.1.1 Internationally Designated Sites

Thanet Coast Special Area of Conservation (SAC) Sandwich Bay  
Special Area of Conservation (SAC)  
Thanet Coast and Sandwich Bay Special Protection Area (SPA) Ramsar site  
Margate and Long Sands Special Area of Conservation (SAC)  
Outer Thames Estuary Marine Special Protection Area (SPA)

#### 2.1.2 Nationally Designated Sites

Sandwich Bay & Hacklinge Marshes Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)  
Thanet Coast SSSI  
Thanet Coast Marine Conservation Zone Pegwell Bay (MCZ)  
National Nature Reserve (NNR)

#### Policy GI01- Protection of Nationally Designated Sites

*(SSSI) and Marine Conservation Zones (MCZ)*

*Development which would materially harm either directly, indirectly or cumulatively, or detract from the scientific or nature conservation interest of a Site of Special Scientific Interest, National Nature Reserve or Marine Conservation Zone will not be permitted.*

*Exceptionally, where it can be demonstrated that the need for the proposed development is compelling and overrides the national importance of the site, and it has been demonstrated that no suitable alternative site exists, mitigating measures will be required to maintain the integrity of the site, to the satisfaction of the appropriate authority.*

*The proposed development will, wherever possible and appropriate, include measures to enhance and improve connectivity to designated sites*

#### 2.1.3 Locally Designated Sites

Local Wildlife Sites (LWS): Monkton Chalk Pit; St Peters Churchyard; Golf Course Roughts Kingsgate; Woods and grassland Minster Marshes; Ash Level & South Richborough Pasture; Churchyard St Nicholas at Wade; Churchyard St Mary Magdalene Monkton; Ramsgate Cemetery; Cliftonville Grassland, Foreness Point.

Monkton Local Nature Reserve (LNR)

Roadside Nature Reserves (RNR): Cliff Promenade North Foreland,



Stonelees A256, Monkton Chalk Pit, Chalkhole Farm Flete

### Policy GI02 - Locally Designated Wildlife Sites

*Development which would have a detrimental impact on locally designated wildlife sites will not be permitted unless suitable mitigation can be provided either on or off site within Thanet. Exceptionally, where a strategic need for a proposed development is identified which outweighs the importance of the locally designated sites and cannot be located elsewhere, an equivalent area of habitat will be created elsewhere at a suitable location well related to other existing habitats.*

*Wherever possible and appropriate, new developments will provide a net environmental gain in accordance with Policy SP30, and include measures to enhance and improve wildlife connectivity to designated wildlife sites.*

## **2.1.4 Green Infrastructure Network**

### Strategic Priority 4, objective 6:

Protect, maintain and enhance the district's biodiversity and natural environment, including open and recreational space to create a coherent network of Green Infrastructure that can better support wildlife and human health.

### Policy SP27

*All development proposals should, where possible, safeguard Thanet's Green Infrastructure network and enhance it by integrating new multifunctional Green Infrastructure provision in the design of developments. Opportunities to improve Thanet's Green Infrastructure network by protecting and enhancing existing Green Infrastructure assets and the connections between and providing new Green Infrastructure assets should be identified early in the design process for major developments, together with consideration of how they will be managed and maintained in the long term. Development should make a positive contribution to Thanet's Green Infrastructure network wherever possible and appropriate, by the incorporation, provision or fulfilment 72 of those matters and objectives set out in paragraph 4.39 (pg 69-71)*

### Trees:

Thanet has relatively few trees. The Council will therefore seek to retain existing trees as part of any proposed developments through the making of Tree Preservation Orders and through use of planning conditions where appropriate. British Standard BS5837: 2012 (Guide for Trees in Relation to Design, Demolition and Construction) gives guidance regarding the best approach to new site development in relation to existing trees.



### Semi-natural habitat:

The Council seeks to retain hedges and other semi-natural habitat, such as ponds and species-rich grassland, together with new planting, as they lend maturity to a development and can enhance biodiversity and wildlife habitats.

### Countryside:

The Council considers that it is essential to protect the countryside through planning policy in view of its vulnerability to sporadic forms of development and will locate all but essentially rural development in the Thanet towns. The only exception to this will be proposals for development that meet the criteria set out in paragraph 55 of the NPPF.

Councils aspirations: The open countryside between the towns and villages remains essentially undeveloped, with a varied landscape, tranquillity and distinctive views. Opportunity has been taken to increase public access and there is a diverse agricultural economic base, including green tourism. (Councils aspirations for 3031)

### Agricultural Land:

Strategic priority 1, part 8: Support a sustainable rural economy, recognising the importance of best and most versatile agricultural land.

### Green Wedges:

The Green Wedges are significant in shaping the character of Thanet which has historically been a 'horseshoe' of built development wrapping around the coast. The Green Wedges are distinct from other types of open space as they provide a link between the open countryside and land which penetrates into the urban areas. The Green Wedges also make a valuable contribution to green infrastructure for the District.

Council's Vision: The villages retain their separate physical identity, historic character and have vibrant communities with local facilities and services. (Councils aspirations for 3031)

### Green Spaces:

#### Policy SP34

*The Council will require suitably and conveniently located areas of usable amenity space, adequate to accommodate the demands for passive recreation generated by residential development. New greenspace provision*



*should, where possible, be linked to existing greenspace, Green Wedges and/or the wider countryside and public rights of way network, away from the coast, to maximise its value. Such provision should seek to enhance the opportunities for biodiversity. Natural and Semi-natural green space will be expected to improve the biodiversity potential of the area.*

## **2.1.5 Protection from the negative impacts of development and infrastructure**

### Policy SP26

*Development should generally be directed away from the Stour Marshes (E1), Wade Marshes (E2) and Pegwell Bay (F1) character areas (as detailed in the LCA), as these are largely undeveloped and key to retaining the island character of Thanet. The undeveloped character of Landscape Character Type F: Undeveloped Coast should also be maintained.*

### Policy SP30

*Development proposals will, where appropriate, be required to make a positive contribution to the conservation, enhancement and management of biodiversity and geodiversity assets resulting in a net gain for biodiversity assets through the following measures:*

- 1) the restoration / enhancement of existing habitats,*
- 2) the creation of wildlife habitats where appropriate, by including opportunities for increasing biodiversity in the design of new development*
- 3) the creation of linkages between sites to create local and regional ecological networks,*
- 4) the enhancement of significant features of nature conservation value on development sites,*
- 5) protect and enhance valued soils,*
- 6) mitigating against the loss of farmland bird habitats.*

### Policy QD02-

*5) Existing features including trees, natural habitats, boundary treatments and historic street furniture and/or surfaces that positively contribute to the quality and character of an area are should be retained, enhanced and protected where appropriate. 6) An integrated approach is taken to surface water management as part of the overall design.*

*8) Trees and other planting is incorporated appropriate to both the scale of buildings and the space available, to provide opportunities for increasing biodiversity interest and improving connectivity between nature conservation sites where appropriate.*



## **2.2 RESTORING AND ENHANCING HABITATS**

### **2.2.1 Green Infrastructure**

#### Green wedges:

The aesthetics of the Green Wedges are varied, and they are not always accessible to the public. There is an opportunity to enhance the Green Wedges by creating and enhancing wildlife habitats, for example working with landowners to encourage farmland birds, and to make the areas more accessible, potentially for recreation use. This may require changing farming activities. Funding may be available for environmental land management through Natural England's Stewardship Schemes.

As well as these identified sites, there is potential for habitat creation and enhancement in the Green Wedges, and sites designated for nature conservation. The Council will work with landowners, developers and other appropriate organisations to improve the opportunity for biodiversity. Developments should take into account their contribution to wildlife and seek to improve habitat connectivity in the wider area where appropriate through suitable landscaping schemes and new provision which can help to address the issues associated with the impact of climate change.

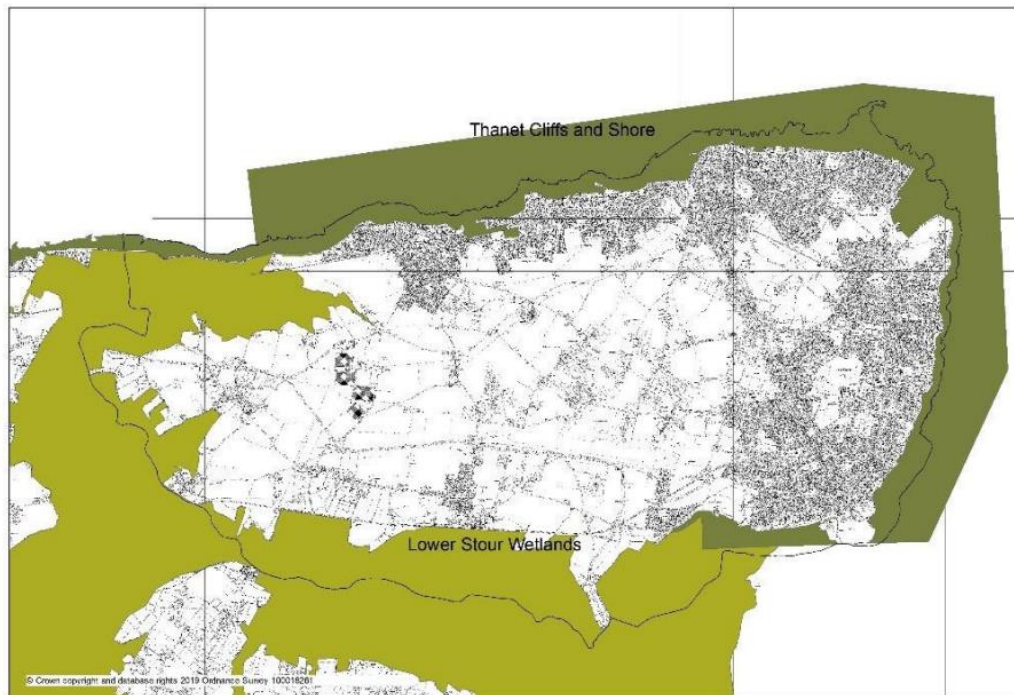
### **2.2.2 Biodiversity Opportunity Areas (BOAs)**

Thanet has two BOAs:

- Thanet Cliffs and Shore - covers the majority of the internationally and nationally designated coastal habitats, extending through Thanet as far as Whitstable.
- Lower Stour Wetlands - The Lower Stour wetlands extend from the mouth of the old Wantsum channel across reclaimed marshland to the former mouth of the river Stour, and then continue around the coast to the Sandwich mudflats and sand dunes and the Lydden Valley.



### Map 3: Biodiversity Opportunity Areas Map



## 2.3 HABITAT CREATION

### 2.3.1 Woodland

The Pocket Woodland Project (Pocket Woodland Project):

Tree Planting Opportunity Mapping and the Carbon Sequestration Potential of Pocket Woodlands - A Report Into Potential Locations for Pocket Forests on Council Land, and Consultation on Woodland Creation for the Purpose of Offsetting Carbon Emissions.

Opportunity mapping uses multiple parameters to identify potentially suitable sites for the creation of pocket forests. As this project focuses on planting on council owned land, everything not owned by the council was removed from the potential space. Things such as hard landscapes (roads, buildings, etc.) and existing tree canopy cover, were also removed, and the pocket forest parameters were applied to identify spaces >200m<sup>2</sup>.

The requirements for pocket forests in Thanet, 5 suitable sites have been identified and ground truthed with a sixth site; (Memorial Recreation Ground) showing potential for pocket forest creation.





Figure 2: Map of Thanet With Potential Pocket Forest Locations Identified.

(Pocket Woodland Project)

The Net Zero strategy (2023) shares ambitions for sequestering/offsetting left over emissions through woodland creation (see Section 3, Goal 7)

Explore opportunities for hedgerow and woodland creation -St Nicholas-at-Wade farmland, The Central Thanet Undulating Chalk Farmland and St. Peters Undulating Chalk Farmland. (Landscape Character Assessment, 2017)

### 2.3.2 Within development and infrastructure

#### Policy SP30

*Development proposals will, where appropriate, be required to make a positive contribution to the conservation, enhancement and management of biodiversity and geodiversity assets resulting in a net gain for biodiversity assets through the following measures:*



- 1) *the restoration / enhancement of existing habitats,*
- 2) *the creation of wildlife habitats where appropriate, by including opportunities for increasing biodiversity in the design of new development*
- 3) *the creation of linkages between sites to create local and regional ecological networks,*
- 4) *the enhancement of significant features of nature conservation value on development sites,*
- 5) *protect and enhance valued soils,*
- 6) *mitigating against the loss of farmland bird habitats.*

***Policy GI06*** - *The landscape survey should describe the current landscape features on the application site for major development proposals, and demonstrate how the proposed development will provide landscaping and Green Infrastructure to enhance the setting of the development, where possible and appropriate, to:*

- *Retain historic features including boundaries and layouts*
- *Create new wildlife corridors and stepping stones*
- *Soften hard building lines and the impact of new buildings*
- *Create an attractive environment for users and occupiers*
- *Establish a sense of enclosure with hedges and trees*
- *Provide screening from noise and sun*
- *Create new wildlife habitats and improve biodiversity including the integration with surface water management*
- *Improve connectivity between new and existing features*

Development proposals should consider the example list below which is not exhaustive, when considering the inclusion of green infrastructure within their proposals. Not all of these measures may be appropriate in all cases as they need to be applicable to the conditions of the site:

- create new wildlife and biodiversity habitats;
- integrate Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDs);
- plant hedgerows and trees;
- provide green roofs;
- create ponds;
- create urban green corridors;
- create roadside verges;
- provide and manage new accessible open space including linear routes, for informal recreation/walking and dog walking and provide linkages between areas of open space;
- provide private gardens and play space;
- conserve and enhance the character of historic green spaces;



- provision of off-site enhancements;
- contribute to the enhancement of Thanet's Biodiversity Opportunity Areas or the enhancement of the Green Wedges including the introduction of linear features such as native hedgerows and water bodies where appropriate;
- reinforce and/or restore landscape character in line with the relevant landscape character assessment guidelines;
- Planning new Green Infrastructure assets to maximise their provision of ecosystem services including, but not limited to, improved air quality, natural flood management and climate change adaptation where appropriate;
- Other suitable planting schemes to provide biodiversity opportunities

The Thanet District Local Plan was adopted in July 2020 and therefore predates the mandatory BNG requirement, however, the council is committed to delivering the mandatory requirement of 10%BNG for qualifying developments. The Council is at an early stage of reviewing the local plan and as part of this process will investigate a range of options in relation to BNG which may include the potential of delivering more than 10% on either all or certain types of sites subject to viability and soundness testing. (Thanet District Council)

There are two other important studies that are being undertaken which will feed into this process. The first is a Biodiversity Baseline Study to identify the biodiversity priorities for the District by identifying the distribution of habitat types and their relative importance across the District; identifying the existing and potential areas that are/could be important for biodiversity; and identifying areas to improve habitat connectivity across the District. The second study is the Biodiversity and Green Infrastructure Strategy which is currently being drafted. (Thanet District Council)

## **2.4 SPECIES SPECIFIC**

### **2.4.1 Farmland Birds**

The open countryside within Thanet is known to support a number of important species as is recognised in the international and national designations. In addition, Thanet is also important for farmland birds due to its large areas of farmed countryside. Farmland birds have declined over the last few decades and so it is important to ensure that remaining populations are protected and allowed to increase. The Green Wedges which are a largely arable landscape, provide a dispersal route for migratory bird species which are present on the coast, especially during the winter season. Changing farming practices within the Green Wedges would help to increase populations of farmland and migratory birds by enabling more ecologically diverse habitat to be created.

### **2.4.2 Protected Species**



Species protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act, the Protection of Badgers Act, the Habitats Directive or listed in the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act (Section 41) may be present on sites and would be a material consideration in the assessment of development proposals. Natural England have produced Standing Advice for protected species in relation to planning applications which provide details of the potential existence of protected species, advice on whether survey reports are required, guidance on the survey requirements for protected species and advice on mitigation proposals. Developers should have regard to this advice as appropriate.

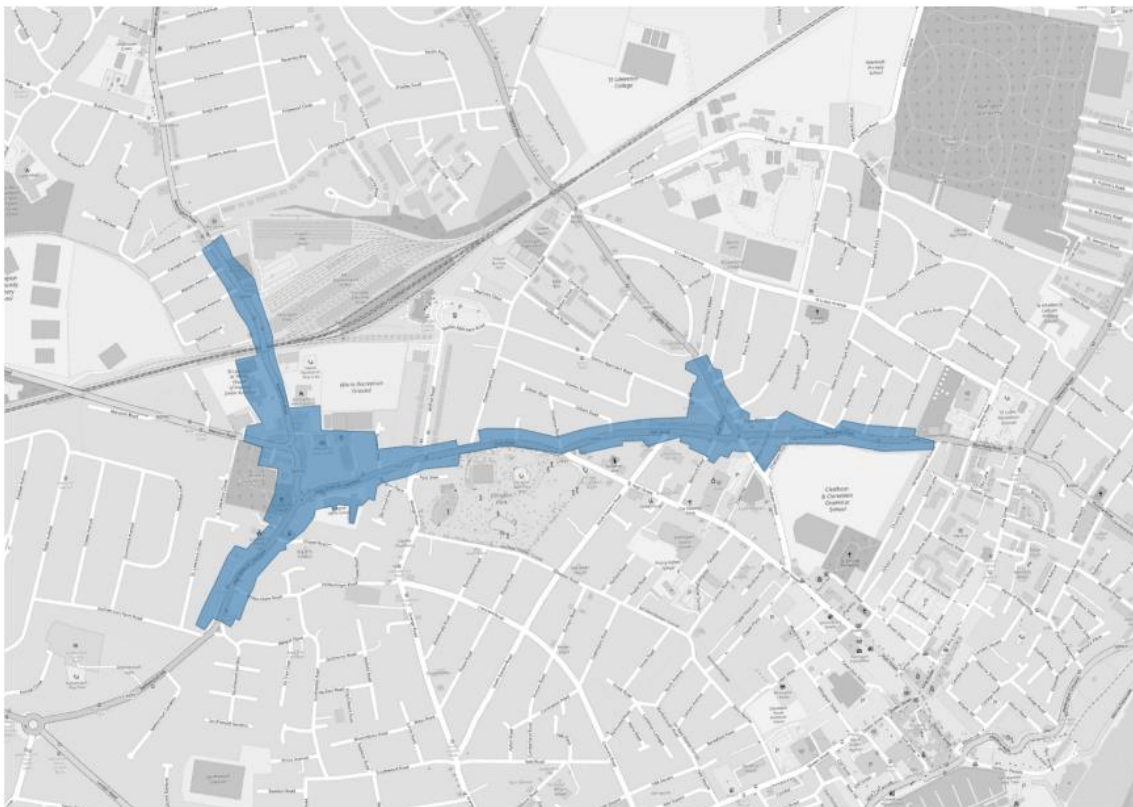
## SECTION 3: WIDER ENVIRONMENTAL BENEFITS

### 3.1 GOAL 2: AIR QUALITY

Thanet generally has good air quality; however there are areas at The Square in Birchington, the junction of Hereson Road/Boundary Road and High Street St Lawrence, Ramsgate where air quality is poor due to pollution from road transport. (Thanet Local Plan, 2020)

The Air Quality Management Area identified in the adopted Local Plan has been revoked on 25th June 2023 and a new smaller area has been declared in Ramsgate. Therefore Map 7 in the Thanet Local Plan has been superseded. (Amendment to AQMA, 2023)

#### **Air Quality Management Area: St Lawrence, Ramsgate**



(Amendment to AQMA, 2023)

Planting (around developments in landscaping) can also help mitigate against poor air quality by presenting a large surface area for filtering air. (Thanet Local Plan, 2020)

Well-designed tree planting can improve air quality, removing particulates, nitrogen dioxide and ozone (Open Space Strategy, 2018)





### **3.2 GOAL 3: CLEAN AND PLENTIFUL WATER**

Good Green Infrastructure can have additional benefits to the wider ecosystem services including healthy water and nutrient cycles, improved air quality, managing flood risk and water pollution and minimising the effects of climate change. (Thanet Local Plan, 2020)

### **3.3 GOAL 4: MANAGING EXPOSURE TO CHEMICALS AND PESTICIDES**

Under the Water Framework Directive (WFD), the Kent Isle of Thanet Groundwater Body has been classified as poor status for the groundwater quality and quantity. The groundwater is impacted by nitrates, pesticides, solvents and hydrocarbons at levels that are of concern. (Thanet Local Plan, 2020)

### **3.4 GOAL 5: MAXIMISE OUR RESOURCES, MINIMISE OUR WASTE**

Policy QD01 - Sustainable Design (Thanet Local Plan, 2020)

*All new buildings and conversions of existing buildings must be designed to reduce emissions of greenhouse gases and have resilience to function in a changing climate. All developments will be required to:*

*1) Achieve a high standard of energy efficiency to the equivalent of Level 4 of the Code for Sustainable Homes (subject to HE05 where applicable). Where viability is an issue, it will be incumbent on an applicant to demonstrate to the satisfaction of the Council why this standard cannot be achieved.*

*2) Make the best use of solar energy passive heating and cooling, natural light, natural ventilation and landscaping.*

*3) Provide safe and attractive cycling and walking opportunities to reduce the need to travel by car.*

*All new buildings and conversions of existing buildings must be designed to use resources sustainably. This includes, but is not limited to:*

*4) Re-using existing buildings and vacant floors wherever possible;*

*5) Designing buildings flexibly from the outset to allow a wide variety of possible uses;*

*6) Using sustainable materials wherever possible and making the most sustainable use of other materials;*

*7) Minimising waste and promoting recycling, during both construction and occupation.*

### **3.5 GOAL 6: USING RESOURCES FROM NATURE SUSTAINABLY**





Strategic priority 4, objective 8: Use natural resources more efficiently, increase energy efficiency, the use of renewable and low carbon energy sources, to reduce the district's carbon footprint. (Thanet Local Plan, 2020)

### **3.6 GOAL 7: MITIGATING AND ADAPTING TO CLIMATE CHANGE**

Strategic priority 4, objective 7: Mitigate and adapt to the forecast impacts of climate change (including the water environment, air quality, biodiversity and flooding). (Thanet Local Plan, 2020)

Policy SP37 (Thanet Local Plan, 2020):

*New development must take account of the need to respond to climate change:*

*3) realise and make best use of available opportunities to reduce the impact of climate change on biodiversity and the natural environment by providing space for habitats and species to move through the landscape and for the operation of natural processes, particularly at the coast.*

*Landscaping can be particularly beneficial as it can provide stepping stones, wildlife corridors or new habitats, and contribute to Thanet's Green Infrastructure network. In terms of adapting to climate change, integrating vegetation (i.e. planting on building walls and roofs) can help to reduce solar gain as vegetation has a much higher reflective capacity than masonry, as well as providing a cooling effect through evapo-transpiration. Planting can also help mitigate against poor air quality by presenting a large surface area for filtering air. A large tree can deliver the same cooling capacity as five large air conditioning units running for 20 hours a day during hot weather. New planting can help provide more comfortable, cooler spaces via summer shading.*

Policy QD01 (Thanet Local Plan, 2020):

*All new buildings and conversions of existing buildings must be designed to reduce emissions of greenhouse gases and have resilience to function in a changing climate. All developments will be required to:*

*2) Make the best use of solar energy passive heating and cooling, natural light, natural ventilation and landscaping.*

*3) Provide safe and attractive cycling and walking opportunities to reduce the need to travel by car.*



*Sustainable design can make an important contribution to sustainable development and aid a reduction in carbon emissions. The Government's approach to reducing carbon emissions is evolving. There are a number of measures that can be considered in the design of new development that will help reduce energy consumption and provide resilience to increased temperatures.*

Sustainable design can make an important contribution to sustainable development and aid a reduction in carbon emissions. The Government's approach to reducing carbon emissions is evolving. There are a number of measures that can be considered in the design of new development that will help reduce energy consumption and provide resilience to increased temperatures. (Thanet Local Plan, 2020)

Net Zero Priorities (Net Zero Strategy, 2023):

Priority 10 –Addressing emissions from new housing and development: Local planning (Net Zero Strategy, 2023)

The local plan can also be used to encourage active transport across the district and this will be reviewed as part of the Thanet Transport Strategy and Cycling and Walking Strategy review.

As water use also creates some greenhouse gas emissions, as well as putting demand on our drought prone area, we will also investigate if we can introduce a policy which stipulates 100L per person per day in all new builds.

- Investigate the viability of including a 100L of water per person per day policy
- Review the Thanet Transport Strategy alongside the local plan.
- Create a high-level cycling and walking strategy alongside the local plan using the Sustrans audit report
- Work with KCC transport on embedding sustainable transport into new developments e.g. cycle paths, connectivity to train stations to ensure that new developments add as little transport emissions as possible

Priority 3 - Sequestering/offsetting left over emissions e.g. Woodland Creation (Net Zero Strategy, 2023)

There is a minimum size of woodland that can be used in the official offsetting scheme. TDC could either create its own woodland if there is appropriate land or pay into a gold standard scheme for carbon sequestration. This may be through the new Wilder Carbon Scheme which is being created by Kent Wildlife Trust.

<https://www.kentwildlifetrust.org.uk/wilder-carbon> .



122 hectares of woodland would need to be planted to offset average annual emissions of 1100 tonnes each year for 30 years. Given the fact that the Isle of Thanet is predominantly farmland, most of which is the best and most versatile agricultural land and not appropriate for woodland creation, it is very unlikely that this level of woodland creation could be achieved. Offsetting schemes will therefore need to be considered.

TDC would produce 1100 tonne each year for 30 years = 33,000 tonnes.  $33,000 / 270 = 122$  hectares

Main short term actions:

- Investigate land owned by TDC for possible woodland creation.
- If sites are identified, investigate funding to establish woodland to offset TDC's residual emissions
- Investigate offsetting projects and the cost of these.

Priority 11 - Stimulating renewable energy production and Thanet wide carbon sequestration (Net Zero Strategy, 2023)

- Land in Thanet will therefore need to be considered for the installation of renewable energy production where appropriate. The planning team can carry out a call for sites to ask landowners if they are intending to create renewable energy projects, such as solar farms. This will enable a map of future installations to be drawn up.
- TDC is currently writing a Tree and Biodiversity Strategy and Action plan which will lay out how it can assist KCC in its aims and objectives within its powers and resources.
- The land in Thanet may also assist with carbon sequestration through woodland creation, hedgerow planting and wetland restoration. Levels of woodland creation will be limited as it is often inappropriate to turn highly productive farmland into woodland.

2024 Actions (Net Zero Strategy, 2023):

- Carry out a call for sites for renewable energy production e.g. solar farms.
- Work with KCC on Local area energy planning to devise a plan for renewable energy across the district where resources allow.
- Support KCC with the Local Nature Recovery Strategy and Kent Tree Strategy within our powers and resources.
- Finalise the TDC Tree and Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan.



### 3.7 GOAL 8: REDUCE RISK OF HARM FROM ENVIRONMENTAL HAZARDS

### 3.8 GOAL 9: ENHANCE BIOSECURITY

### 3.9 GOAL 10: ENHANCE BEAUTY, HERITAGE AND ENGAGEMENT WITH THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

#### 3.9.1 Enhance Beauty (Thanet Local Plan, 2020)

##### Policy SP26

*The Council will identify and support opportunities to conserve and enhance Thanet's landscape character and local distinctiveness.*

*Development proposals should demonstrate how their location, scale, design and materials will conserve and enhance Thanet's local distinctiveness, in particular:*

- 1) Its island quality surrounded by the silted marshes of the former Wantsum Channel and the sea;*
- 2) A sense of openness and 'big skies', particularly in the central part of the District;*
- 3) Its long, low chalk cliffs and the sense of 'wildness' experienced at the coast and on the marshes;*
- 4) Gaps between Thanet's towns and villages, particularly those areas designated as Green Wedges;*
- 5) Long-distance, open views, particularly across the Dover Strait and English Channel, North Sea and across adjacent lowland landscapes; and*
- 6) Subtle skylines and ridges which are prominent from lower lying landscape both within and beyond the District*

##### Strategic Priority 1:

- Take advantage of the area's unique coast, countryside, its townscape and cultural heritage and potential of the coastal towns, while safeguarding the natural environment
- Safeguard local distinctiveness and promote awareness, responsible enjoyment, protection and enhancement of Thanet's environment, including the coast, countryside, rich seaside heritage, historic environment, diverse townscapes and landscape, biodiversity and water environment.
- Conserve and enhance the character of Thanet's landscapes, while meeting the area's social and economic needs
- Retain the separation between Thanet's towns and villages as well as their physical identity and character.



### 3.9.2 Heritage (Thanet Local Plan, 2020)

#### Strategic Priority 4:

- Preserve and enhance Thanet's exceptional built historic environment and ancient monuments and their settings, and historic and designed landscapes.

Thanet's heritage assets including the significant historic building stock and archaeological resource, are irreplaceable and require careful management as the area evolves and undergoes significant growth and regeneration.

A Heritage Strategy is being prepared for Thanet. It is proposed that the strategy will be developed alongside the Local Plan and we have started to develop an evidence base to support this strategy and the Local Plan. The evidence includes assessing the significance of heritage assets in the area, including their settings, and the contribution they make to their environment. It also involves assessing the potential of finding new sites of archaeological or historic interest.

The preservation of Thanet's heritage is considered to be an economic asset, and its maintenance and protection plays an important role in the district's economy and aids in regeneration and investment.

### 3.9.3 Health and wellbeing

#### Policy SP38 - Healthy and Inclusive Communities (Thanet Local Plan, 2020)

*The Council will work with relevant organisations, communities and developers to promote, protect and improve the health of Thanet's residents, and reduce health inequalities.*

*Proposals will be supported that:*

- 1)bring forward accessible community services and facilities, including new health facilities;*
- 2)safeguard existing community services and facilities;*
- 3)safeguard or provide open space, sport and recreation;*
- 4)promote healthier options for transport including cycling and walking;*
- 5)improve or increase access to a healthy food supply such as allotments, farmers' markets and farm shops;*
- 6)create social interaction and safe environments through mixed uses and the design and layout of development;*
- 7)create greener neighbourhoods and improve biodiversity and access to nature.*



Active Thanet (Active Thanet, 2018):

Priority 2- Increase opportunities to develop Public Health initiatives for all ages and target audiences to empower and support communities to reduce health inequalities.

Actions:

- Deliver physical activity interventions to address wider health issues that reduce health inequalities in Thanet.
- Develop initiatives that address mental health issues to reduce the level of mental health related illnesses
- Work with partners from NHS Health and wellbeing board, PHE, leisure trusts, commissioners, voluntary and community sector to support local approaches to improve health and reduce health inequalities in Thanet
- Provide frontline information and improved awareness around key public health issues.
- Combined outcomes: Increased physical activity projects that enhance health and wellbeing

### **3.9.4 Access to nature**

Strategic Priority 4 (Thanet Local Plan, 2020):

- Safeguard and enhance the geological and scenic value of the coast and countryside, and facilitate its responsible enjoyment as a recreational and educational resource.
- Protect, maintain and enhance the district's biodiversity and natural environment, including open and recreational space to create a coherent network of Green Infrastructure that can better support wildlife and human health.

St Nicholas-at-Wade farmland & The Central Thanet Undulating Chalk Farmland (C2):

- Consider opportunities to enhance green infrastructure connections with footpaths linking the farmland to the marsh, urban and coastal landscapes

Pegwell Bay, The Stour Marshes, St. Peters Undulating Chalk Farmland :

- Enhance green infrastructure opportunities for recreation and green tourism
- Enhance opportunities for recreation via rights of way and connect with existing routes in the wider landscape and connectivity with the adjacent urban areas and coast and role of this area as a 'green lung'.

North Kent Coast, Ramsgate and Broadstairs Cliffs, Minnis Bay and Foreness Point/North Foreness:

- Provide wider connectivity to the Kent coast through coastal trails





- Continue to manage the coast to provide opportunities for access and recreation
- Manage recreational disturbance conflicts with wildlife (birds) in accordance with SAMM

(Landscape Character Assessment, 2017)

### **3.9.4 Open space and recreation**

#### Open space strategy, 2018:

- There is a shortage of Amenity Greenspace, in Manston, Minster, Monkton, St Nicholas at Wade and Sarre.
- There is a deficiency in Public Parks and Gardens, particularly at Westgate on Sea, Acol, St Nicholas at Wade, Sarre, Monkton, Minster and Cliffs End.



## SECTION 4: DISTRICT PROJECTS TO NOTE

### 4.1 Green Infrastructure Network (Thanet Local Plan 2020):

There are various Green Infrastructure projects being progressed by the Council and other organisations, and also a number of community projects. These include Dane Valley Woods, Westbrook Undercliffe Nature Park, Friends of Mocketts Wood, Montefiore Woodland and the Windmill Community Allotments. All large development sites will be expected to contribute to Thanet's Green Infrastructure in line with Policy SP27 which should include an appropriate mix, compatible with the surrounding landscape and habitats.

### 4.2 SAMM & The Thanet Coast Project (Thanet Local Plan 2020):

The Thanet Coast Project was established in 2001 and is tasked with much of the delivery of the North East Kent Marine Protected Area (NEKMPA) Action Plan and therefore delivery of the majority of the objectives of the Thanet Cliffs and Shore Biodiversity Opportunity Area (BOA) within Thanet. The main aims of the project are to:-

- Raise awareness of the important marine and bird life, and how to avoid damaging them.
- Work with local people to safeguard coastal wildlife and implement the Management Scheme Action Plan.
- Encourage and run wildlife related events and make links with wildlife, green tourism, coastscape and the arts.
- Be a focal point for enquiries and gathering information on coastal wildlife and environmental issues.
- Keep everyone informed with progress through various means, including newsletters, articles and stakeholder workshops.

[Thanet Coast – Working with local people to help safeguard the wildlife and the coastlines' unique features](#)

### 4.3 Plan Bee (Biodiversity Strategy)

TDC Open Space land -We are working on a Bee plan for Thanet which will include managing a percentage of open spaces land for pollinators. This will include creating semi natural habitats on some of our open spaces with an abundance of pollinator friendly native herbs and flowers such as clover, yarrow and bird's foot trefoil.

Town and Parish Councils-We want to encourage and facilitate Town and Parish Councils to make a bee and biodiversity plan for their town and encourage their residents to get involved in saving the bee and other pollinators.

KCC-We want to work with KCC on improving the biodiversity of roadside verges to assist with connectivity between fragmented open spaces. KCC has also recently

approved The Kent Biodiversity Strategy 2020 to 2045 and the Bee Plan which will further assist in the creation of the strategy for our district.

#### 4.4 Making A Buzz for the Coast (BBCT) (Site Management Plan: Westbrook Undercliff):

##### Site Management Plan: Westbrook Undercliff

Westbrook Undercliff has great potential for improvement in terms of its value for bumblebees, solitary bees and other pollinators. Our main priority for the site is to increase the floristic diversity and the abundance of wildflowers and forage for bees and other insects at the site. This work to restore the grasslands will help to provide essential 'stepping stone' habitat along the Thanet coast for pollinators, including rare bumblebees.



#### 4.5 No Mow May (Pollinators):

No mow May is put in place across the district- most parks will be included in No mow May but not ornamental areas / memorial parks / areas with high footfall.

#### 4.6 Tree projects (Biodiversity Strategy):

Thanet have started to prepare tree planting plans which include the number of trees that could be planted, the types of trees that would be suitable for the specific area and the costs involved in each park/green project. They are working with many community groups in their tree planting projects, facilitating action in the community and within schools e.g. Ramsgate Art School. They are also working with community groups who are planting trees on TDC land in an advisory capacity e.g. ITTWI and Friend of Mockett's Wood.



#### 4.7 Pocket Woodlands Project (Pocket Woodlands):

Tree Planting Opportunity Mapping and the Carbon Sequestration Potential of Pocket Woodlands - A Report Into Potential Locations for Pocket Forests on Council Land, and Consultation on Woodland Creation for the Purpose of Offsetting Carbon Emissions.

Opportunity mapping uses multiple parameters to identify potentially suitable sites for the creation of pocket forests. As this project focuses on planting on council owned land, everything not owned by the council was removed from the potential space. Things such as hard landscapes (roads, buildings, etc.) and existing tree canopy cover, were also removed, and the pocket forest parameters were applied to identify spaces >200m<sup>2</sup>.

The requirements for pocket forests in Thanet, 5 suitable sites have been identified and ground truthed with a sixth site; (Memorial Recreation Ground) showing potential for pocket forest creation.

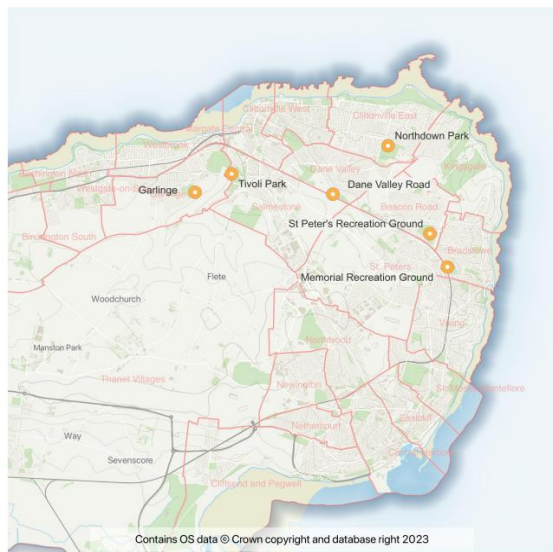


Figure 2: Map of Thanet With Potential Pocket Forest Locations Identified.

#### 4.8 Biodiversity friendly and conservation Farming (Biodiversity Strategy):

The new Agriculture Bill rewards farmers for practices that result in increased biodiversity, soil health and reduced carbon footprint under the new Environmental Land Management Scheme. We are eager to work with farmers in the area to promote biodiversity friendly and conservation farming methods in Thanet.

#### 4.9 Open Spaces (Climate Emergency):

The Open Spaces Team, Thanet Coast Project and Biodiversity and Horticultural Officer have been working with the Bumblebee Trust to create wildflower meadows in locations across Thanet. They have been using a new cut and collect method which helps increase flower diversity, providing more nectar to local bees and other insects. In addition, they have launched a project to transform flower bed planting from predominantly annual, to perennial species which are suitable for coastal locations and attractive to pollinators.

Open Spaces are also surveying all the trees on Thanet District Council land to help understand tree cover in Thanet and to devise a plan to TPO more trees. The Open Spaces team and biodiversity officer also work with many community groups and facilitate tree planting activities.



#### 4.10 Thanet Archaeological Landscape Mapping Project (Thanet Archaeological Project):

Historic England, in partnership with Kent County Council and Thanet District Council have embarked on the Thanet Archaeological Landscape Mapping Project which seeks to improve and update the archaeological information held for Thanet.



## SECTION 5: SPECIFIC PRIORITIES WITHIN NEIGHBOURHOOD PLANS

### 5.1 [Broadstairs and St Peters Neighbourhood plan](#)

The vision for Broadstairs and St. Peter's is: To preserve and enhance Broadstairs and St. Peter's natural beauty and its coastal and cultural heritage whilst at the same time maintaining and, where possible, improving the quality of life of all our residents.

To achieve this Vision, the NDP has the following objectives:

1. Protect important views and vistas, so they can continue to be enjoyed by the community for future generations.
2. Protect the character of the seven beaches and bays and their environs.
3. Ensure the protection of unique and important spaces.
4. Support the strict enforcement of the Thanet District Council's 'Green Wedge' policy, so the area retains its distinct character from other local towns.
6. Encourage good design of new developments, while protecting the area's special and unique character.

#### Policy & 5yr outcome

BSP1: The 'Green Wedge' - No built development in the Green Wedge

BSP2: Important Views and Vistas - No new built development to obscure any important view or vista  
BSP3: Protecting and Provision of Important Trees - No net loss of trees with TPOs or within a Conservation Area. Provision of new, suitable trees on all new large residential and commercial developments.

BSP5: Local Green Spaces - No net loss of designated Local Green Spaces during the NDP time period.

### 5.2 [Westgate-on-sea Neighbourhood Plan](#)

The overall vision for Westgate is as follows: Recognising Westgate-on-Sea is a special place to live in and visit, we aim to retain this status, by protecting our environment and communities, whilst seeking to encourage change which will enhance the appeal of the area, as well as its sustainability. Our vision is to conserve and enhance the heritage and sea scape of our town with its backing of quality agricultural heritage, to retain its uniqueness within the county and the area of Thanet in general. To improve and expand within a realistic and acceptable framework, to build for the future without impacting the environment negatively.

#### Objectives:

3. To protect the local heritage of the town, the conservation areas and the nearby Schedule Ancient Monuments. (Achieved by policy WSPN7, 8 and 9)
4. To protect and enhance our local community assets and local green spaces. (Achieved by policy WSPN12, 13 and 17)





6. To encourage low carbon developments with renewable energies and green innovation within the town. (Achieved by policy WSPN10)
7. To work with the developers of the potential 2000 houses allocated in Westgate-on-Sea locality (including Garlinge) to ensure that the development has the least negative and the most positive outcomes as possible. (Achieved by policy WSPN1, 19 and 20)

Policy & 5yr outcome:

WSNP12 Designation of Local Green Spaces (LGS) -No net loss of designated LGS.

WSNP13 The Green Wedge -No built development on the green wedge.

WSNP14 Building on the best and most versatile agricultural land -No increased number of houses on the best and most versatile land apart from that which is already allocated in the Local Plan.

WSNP15 Protecting and promoting trees -No net loss of trees with TPOs or within the conservation areas. Provision of new suitable trees within the new developments.

WSNP16 Protection of protected species and biodiversity Full wildlife assessment of relevant sites, mitigation strategies and plans produced.- No net loss of wildlife in Westgate-on-Sea and possible increase in biodiversity.



## SECTION 6: DOCUMENTS REVIEWED AND REFERENCED

Document reference	Link
Local Plan, 2020	<a href="#">LP-adjusted.pdf (thanet.gov.uk)</a>
Open Space Strategy, 2018	<a href="#">Open-Space-Strategy.pdf - Google Drive</a>
Local development scheme	<a href="#">Local Development Scheme (thanet.gov.uk)</a>
Landscape Character Assessment, 2017	<a href="#">Thanet Integrated Landscape Character Assessment and Sensitivity Evaluation</a>
Net Zero Strategy, 2023	<a href="#">Final net zero strategy - digital.pdf - Google Drive</a>
Climate Emergency	<a href="#">The Climate and Biodiversity Emergency - Thanet</a>
Active Thanet, 2018	<a href="#">FINAL-Draft-Active-Thanet-Framework-2018-2022-PRINTED-VERSION-1-Google-Docs.pdf</a>
Pocket Woodland Project	<a href="#">Thanet MiniForest Report PublicFacing.pdf</a>
Tree preservation orders	<a href="#">Check tree preservation order online - Thanet</a>
Pollinators	<a href="#">Pollinators - Thanet</a>
Site Management Plan: Westbrook Undercliff	<a href="#">Westbrook Undercliff management plan.pdf</a>
Biodiversity Strategy	<a href="#">Tree Strategy - Thanet</a>
Westgate on Sea Neighbourhood Plan	<a href="#">Neighbourhood Development Plan 2019 - 2031 (thanet.gov.uk)</a>
Broadstairs and St Peters Neighbourhood plan	<a href="#">NDP Made version (thanet.gov.uk)</a>
Amendment to AQMA, 2023	<a href="#">Decision - Amendment to Air Quality Management Area - Thanet</a>
Thanet Archaeological Project	<a href="#">Thanet Archaeological Landscape Mapping Project - Kent County Council</a>
Thanet District Council	Thanet District Council Officers