

REGENERATION OF EAST KENT COASTAL TOWNS

**A REVIEW BY A SELECT
COMMITTEE APPOINTED BY THE
STRATEGIC PLANNING POLICY
OVERVIEW COMMITTEE**

PARTS I AND II

CHAIRMAN: MR C CAPON

**FINAL REPORT
02/08/04**



FOREWORD TO THE SELECT COMMITTEE REPORT ON REGENERATION OF EAST KENT COASTAL TOWNS

On behalf of the Select Committee I am pleased to present the final report focussing on issues surrounding the regeneration of East Kent coastal towns. Through meeting stakeholders from the strategic planning, social services and education directorates, and the public and private sector it was apparent that there was a high degree of consensus over the perceived problems and gaps to be addressed. Key overarching issues were

- the need to have a diverse economy
- the importance of Kent connectivity
- the need to increase attainment and skills as education and skills underpin future regeneration
- regeneration is a complex jigsaw with health, economy, education, social services, environment, transport and infrastructure all forming part of the picture vital for successful long term regeneration
- image and perception are fundamental to change and future regeneration and the often underestimated importance of 'talking up not down'.
- the need for KCC and the Districts to work together as complements rather than as competitors, whilst maintaining individuality and pursuing differing solutions.

The complexity of regeneration mean there is no single recipe for success and issues often require an integrated solution. Tourism is a strong economic driver and provides one strand of economic activity within the Kent mosaic and makes an important contribution. This report shows that the coastal towns need to regenerate themselves as year round places, balancing needs of visitors and residents and encourage a more diverse economy. Within this it is important to look at connecting areas to live, culture and business as if the towns are great places to live they are generally a great place to visit. The reliance on external funding helps emphasise the negative and it is very clear that coastal towns need to talk themselves up and project the positive.

The regeneration report received unanimous cross party agreement. Finally, I would like to thank my colleagues on the committee, the staff who supported the work, and all those who gave up their time to give evidence.

Chris Capon, Chairman of the Select Committee

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Abbreviations

AIF – Area Investment Framework
ASP – Area Strategic Partnerships
BLK – Business Link Kent
CRESR – CRESR - Centre for Regional Economic and Social Research, Sheffield Hallam University.
CTRL(DS) – Channel Tunnel Rail Link Domestic Services
DCMS – Department of Culture Media and Sport
DDC – Dover District Council
DETR – Department for Environment, Transport and the Regions
EKCT – East Kent Coastal Towns
FRESA – Framework for Regional Employment and Skills Action
HE – Higher Education
ICT – Information Communications Technology
KCC – Kent County Council
KTA – Kent Tourism Alliance
LAC - Looked After Children
LIK – Locate in Kent
LSC – Learning and Skills Council
LSCKM – Learning and Skills Council for Kent and Medway
LSP – Local Strategic Partnership
ODPM – Office of the Deputy Prime Minister
PAER – Priority Area for Economic Regeneration
PFL – Profit From Learning Initiative
RPG9 – Regional Planning Guidance
RES – Regional Economic Strategy
SEEDA – South East England Economic Development Agency
SPD – Strategic Planning Directorate, Kent County Council
SRB – Single Regeneration Budget
TIC – Tourist Information Centre
TSE – Tourism South East

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In 2003, a seven Member Select Committee was set up to carry out a review of regeneration of East Kent Coastal towns. The Members of this Select Committee were Mr C Capon (Chairman); Mr W A Hayton; Mr M Harrison; Mr B Cope; Mr R Ford; Mr A Poole; and Mrs L W Cufley. The Select Committee heard evidence from a number of witnesses involved in regeneration. These included officers from the strategic planning, social services and education directorate; District Councils and the public and private sector. A complete list of the witnesses who gave evidence to the Select Committee is shown in Appendix 1.

The Terms of Reference for the Select Committee were:

“ To consider how the coastal towns of Kent can be regenerated in economic, social, and environmental terms.”

The review was conducted in two phases, the first considered how tourism could support regeneration and the second considered regeneration in the broader context. The aims were to:

- Identify the assets and potential assets of Kent's Coastal towns and how their appeal can be broadened
- Taking evidence from Key stakeholders about the specific needs of coastal towns and their aspirations for the future.
- Determine the likely economic, social and environmental benefits of current coastal regeneration activities in Kent, such as Turner Contemporary and development of the Port of Dover, assessing how similar benefits can be stimulated in other coastal towns in Kent.
- Consider what has been achieved in securing external funding and to identify any new opportunities
- Consider national and or international coastal regeneration projects and how these experiences could be applied to Kent coastal towns
- To report on the findings of the review and make recommendations as to how the regeneration of coastal towns could be progressed in Kent."
- Seek a balanced range of views from key Kent bodies, experts, service users, Districts and pressure groups.

There are several reasons for carrying out a review of regeneration of East Kent Coastal towns. East Kent coastal towns have an ageing and transient population, are affected by their remoteness, changing demands and balancing the needs of day-trippers and residents. Specific issues can be summarised as above average levels of unemployment, employment typified by low paid or part-time/seasonal jobs, an ageing population, net outflow of skilled workers, a large influx of long term unemployed, and large numbers of people claiming welfare benefit. There has also been a reduction in investor confidence.

The regeneration of coastal towns is a complex topic as it reflects the complexity of social, structural, economic and environmental factors that shape communities. Within Kent there are significant differences in economic performance with pockets of deprivation. The coastal towns in East Kent have seen significant economic and

social decline/change, from buoyant local economies to areas with high deprivation and socio-economic decay. The coastal towns need to change to new or more diverse economies and suffer from a lack of skills, innovation and enterprise. Key priorities are infrastructure and skills and building up a belief in the area. There is a need to keep the momentum of looking forward and continuing to develop a vision with new ideas and imagination rather than relying on security of the past.

Coastal towns need integrated solutions that foster a more diverse economy, raise economic activity and increase capacity knowledge and skills. Preventative services and increasing attainment through education and skills has potentially a huge contribution to make to the quality of life and future life chances. The raising of attainment and levels of skills underpins the future long-term regeneration of the coastal towns. A skilled workforce will be essential to attract the inward investment and to develop the knowledge economy of the future.

The main body of the report is divided in to nine chapters. The recommendations to the Council are:

Economic Regeneration - (Chapter Three)

1. KCC Strategic Planning Directorate (SPD) to lead, support and encourage Districts and key stakeholders to develop a long term (for example 30 years) vision or strategy to improve the overall long term prosperity of the coastal towns. (3.9)
2. KCC and SPD to continue to lobby for and support the establishment of a new enterprise gateway/hub in East Kent. (3.19)
3. KCC SPD in partnership need to proactively consider the issue of availability of business space and to develop a joint strategy and action plan to target this issue with appropriate stakeholders or partners. (3.21)
4. KCC members and SPD to continue to lobby for and encourage Kent archives and the government agencies needing to move out of London to relocate to the coastal towns. (3.26)
5. There is a need for both Members and Officers of the Council to lead and raise the profile of EK coastal towns, promoting the positive and the successes, and develop a strategy to raise the profile of EK as part of the regeneration initiatives (3.27)
6. KCC and SPD to consider the development of the entrances and approaches, and to consider the option of holding a national design competition to raise the profile and image of EK coastal towns (3.28)
7. KCC SPD, in partnership with Highways, to review signage within Kent with a view to promoting a vision of connectivity and the coastal towns, linking to London, Paris, Brussels etc. (3.30)

8. KCC and partners need to consider the issues raised in relation to Partnerships (Area, Local and economic/regeneration). (3.44) SPD need to
 - highlight the importance of building stronger links between the LSP and the AIF/ASP
 - support the development of these partnerships to reflect best practice
 - monitor/challenge the partnerships on outcomes and value added to ensure they are delivery focussed – Filleting, merging or refocusing where necessary.
 - produce information document detailing the partnerships, their roles and responsibilities, membership etc.
9. KCC to lobby government to support and in consultation with Districts for the retention of monies arising from the changes to the 2nd home incentives for reinvestment. (3.45)
10. KCC should encourage and support the wider use of section 106 in promoting the regeneration of EK coastal towns. (3.46)

Chapter Four: Regeneration – Tourism.

The key points highlighted in the Tourism phase of the review are listed below and are reflected within recommendation 11 as a whole.

- All towns should seek to involve local partners in developing a vision.
- Tourism should have an independent voice at LSP level.
- Statutory agencies should take a lead role in working with train operating companies to identify priorities.
- The potential for tourism as a vehicle for community development, as well as structural social change, should be explored.
- Opportunities for product development should consider the involvement of local people.
- Statutory agencies and businesses should, at the earliest opportunity, identify a marketing strategy that meets the aspirations, and finds the support, of all partners.
- All parties with a stake in the future of the Dreamland site at Margate should seek to resolve the uncertainty over its future in the best interests of local people.
- Where there are concerns over brown tourist information signs these should first be addressed to Babtie as the responsible agency.
- Whitstable's success in developing a niche market has come at a cost to the local environment in terms of congestion and overcrowding. TSE and the County need to work with the Harbour Board and the Area Members Panel, and District Tourism team to develop strategies to manage the growth of tourism potential and ensure that this potential can be optimised rather than dissipated with the support of nearby towns, in particular Herne Bay.
- Following concerns that privatised tourist information centres (TICs) are promoting accommodation not included within star-rating quality schemes the Committee strongly recommends that the County and

KTA establish a dialogue with privatised TICs to ensure that this situation is remedied.

- To maximise the benefit to the County of the Channel Tunnel, districts and KTA will need to work together to develop products that attract visitors from mainland Europe.
- The Committee found some evidence that small businesses and local agencies experienced some difficulty in keeping up to date with developments the range of grants that are available to support projects. The Committee hopes that through the mechanism of the “Tourism House” any information regarding financial support will be readily available.

11. KCC should seek to explore with key stakeholders/partners the best way to deliver a cohesive approach to tourism in relation to regeneration of the coastal towns and consider the key points highlighted. (4.55)

Chapter Five: Transport and Infrastructure

12. The Select Committee welcomes and supports the proposed development of Kent International Airport. KCC (Officers and Members) should continue to lobby government for investment in the infrastructure to support this growth and consider promoting and encouraging the development of an express bus service to the airport (in partnership) to link with CTRL development. (5.7)

13. The Select Committee endorses and supports the response to the SRA especially improvements to the reliability and punctuality of services and the provision of CTRL domestic services to the Kent coastal towns including Dover, and supports the continued lobbying from KCC SPD to this aim. (5.10)

Chapter Six: Learning and Skills

Skills and learning are vital for successful regeneration and business development. There is a need within EK to create a high value and skilled workforce for existing business, to support potential growth and to attract inward investment and attain the economic potential of the area. It is necessary to ensure that with the development of an appropriately skilled workforce, better paid, sustainable jobs are created. Early Years education, Schools, and higher and further education facilities in EK are vital to tackle the perception of a low skills base within EK, change the opinion of inward investors and underpin the development of an entrepreneurial culture in Kent.

Although there are no recommendations in this section of the report this is a key area that impacts significantly on potential regeneration, and as such the Committee feels this area warrants a more in depth consideration of the issues and raising attainment levels and improving the skills base.

Chapter Seven:

14. The Committee recognise the significant achievements of the PSA partners (Police, Fire, Social services, Education). KCC to promote success of PSA 1, and highlight the benefits through the reinvestment of reward monies and development of more multi-agency working as part of PSA 2. (7.10)

15. KCC SSD/SPD and Members should lobby government to maintain future funding for Sure Start (and similar schemes) and that future savings to other services are reflected, providing successive funding enabling these schemes to continue and evolve. (7.13)
16. KCC and SPD need to lobby Government and other authorities to tackle issues of placements of looked after Children in coastal towns and promote preventative strategies and share practice with other authorities. (7.18)

Chapter Eight Environment

17. KCC SPD to ensure the benefits of the environmental asset (both historic and natural) are promoted in support of regeneration of East Kent and attracting a broader socio – economic group. (8.7)
18. KCC to lobby government for exclusion of VAT to repairs on historic buildings. (8.13)

Chapter Nine: Funding

19. KCC in partnership with Districts should actively seek to identify the low - high risk level of SRB schemes, provide a strategic overview and provide appropriate support and identify possible sources of alternative funding where appropriate. (9.12)

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION TO THE STRATEGIC PLANNING POLICY OVERVIEW COMMITTEE AND THE POLICY OVERVIEW PROCESS

1.1 Kent County Council is the democratically elected strategic authority for Kent. It has the broad power to promote and improve the social, economic and environmental well being of the area and has the statutory responsibility for the provision of a range of services. The Local Government Act 2000 laid out new procedures for the reform and modernising of local government. One of its main aims was to increase openness and accountability within local government, with local people playing a greater part in shaping and receiving better services. On 1st September 2001 Kent County Council adopted a new Constitution introducing a new political structure with a Leader and a single-party Cabinet taking most of the decisions previously taken by all-party service committees.

1.2 Under the new Constitution elected Members outside the Cabinet can contribute to the development of policy through the appointment of Policy Overview Committees, which focus on different services provided by the County Council. The three Policy Overview Committees help and advise the Council, the Leader and the Cabinet on the development of the Council's policies and review the Council's performance compared with objectives and targets.

1.3 The Policy Overview Committees have the power to set up smaller Select Committees to look in depth and review particular policy issues by way of topic reviews. The all party Select Committees are made up of Members from the different political parties proportional to the number of Council seats held by each party.

1.4 The Strategic Planning Policy Overview Committee (SP POC), considers various functions related to those managed by the Strategic Director of the Strategic Planning Directorate. These may be issues relating to the introduction of new legislation, policies, or specific services that the SP POC consider need to be looked into at depth. In 2003, a seven Member Select Committee was set up to carry out a review of regeneration of East Kent Coastal towns. The Members of this Select Committee were Mr C Capon (Chairman); Mr W A Hayton; Mr M Harrison; Mr B Cope; Mr R Ford; Mr A Poole; and Mrs L W Cufley.

1.5 The Terms of Reference for the Select Committee were:

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development of the Port of Dover, assessing how similar benefits can be stimulated in other coastal towns in Kent.

- Consider what has been achieved in securing external funding and to identify any new opportunities
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- To report on the findings of the review and make recommendations as to how the regeneration of coastal towns could be progressed in Kent."
- Seek a balanced range of views from key Kent bodies, experts, service users,

1.6 The review was conducted in two phases, the first considered how tourism could support regeneration and the second considered regeneration in the broader context. There are several reasons for carrying out a review of regeneration of East Kent Coastal towns. East Kent coastal towns are affected by their remoteness, changing demands and balancing the needs of day-trippers and residents. Specific issues can be summarised as above average levels of unemployment, employment typified by low paid or part-time/seasonal jobs, an ageing and transient population, net outflow of skilled workers, a large influx of long term unemployed, and large numbers of people claiming welfare benefit. There has also been a reduction in investor confidence.

1.7 The regeneration of coastal towns is a complex topic as it reflects the complexity of social, structural, economic and environmental factors that shape communities. The coastal towns in East Kent have seen significant economic and social decline/change, from buoyant local economies to areas with high deprivation and socio-economic decay. The coastal towns need to change to new or more diverse economies. Key priorities are inward investment, infrastructure and skills and building up a belief in the area. There is a need to keep the momentum of looking forward and continuing to develop a vision with new ideas and imagination rather than relying on security of the past. Coastal towns need integrated solutions that foster a more diverse economy, raise economic activity and increase capacity knowledge and skills. Preventative services and increasing attainment through education and skills has potentially a huge contribution to make to the quality of life and future life chances and supporting the future prosperity of the region.

1.8 The Select Committee heard evidence from a number of witnesses involved in regeneration. These included officers from the strategic planning, social services and education directorate; District Councils and the public and private sector. A complete list of the witnesses who gave evidence to the Select Committee is shown in Appendix 1. The Select Committee took evidence during October - November 2003 and April 2004.

CHAPTER 2: BACKGROUND TO REGENERATION

2.1 Regeneration is a complex topic because it reflects the complexity of social, structural, economic and environmental factors that shape communities. Coastal towns share many similarities with other inland towns but they also have fundamental differences in climate, remoteness, ageing and transient population, changing demands and balancing needs of day-trippers and residents. By the end of the century many coastal towns were viewed as in decline, suffering from low – wage economy, high claimant unemployment and poor private housing.¹

2.2 This report will look at regeneration issues in the East Kent coastal towns; from Lydd, New Romney and Hythe through Folkestone, Dover, Deal and Sandwich, around the Isle of Thanet and the towns of Broadstairs, Ramsgate and Margate to Whitstable and Herne Bay. Despite shared issues there are marked differences between each of the towns under consideration. This section of the report will look briefly at some of the key documents that comment on East Kent and the problems of coastal towns.

2.3 Many of the towns under consideration were designated as Priority Areas for Economic Regeneration (PAER) in the 2001 **Regional Planning Guidance (RPG9)**. This provides a framework for the development of local authority and regional development plans. RPG 9 recognises that there are significant imbalances between economic opportunities in the East and west of the region, and specific sub regional areas have been identified as PAER. The areas given PAER status in the South East Regional Assembly region are: South Hampshire and the Isle of Wight, Sussex Coast and Towns (Brighton & Hove, Eastbourne, Bexhill and Hastings) and Kent Coastal Towns (Hythe, Folkestone, Dover, Deal, Ramsgate, Broadstairs, Margate, Herne Bay, and Whitstable).

2.4 These areas were identified using a number of indicators that demonstrated regionally, and in some cases nationally, significant levels of economic and social difficulty,

“The criteria for designation include above average unemployment rates, high levels of social deprivation, low skill levels, dependence on declining industries, derelict urban fabric, peripherality and insularity. These areas need tailored regeneration strategies backed up by appropriate resources to address their problems and maximise their contribution to the social and economic well being of the region.”²

2.5 Inclusion in RPG 9 has proved helpful in recognising need³ but does not include detailed plans for implementation but rather identifies the priorities for regional partners to develop policy around. The strategy identifies three key priorities for the East Kent PAERs

¹ “*Shifting Sands*” English Heritage/Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment 2003

² RPG 9 4.16 p16 March 2001

³ KCC Regeneration Select Committee 2003, County Planning Officer

“Joint working is required to develop and implement complementary strategies through development plans, local transport plans and other local strategies, which;

- Maximise the current and future locational advantages of the area;
- Encourage capital investment through environmental improvements and improved infrastructure, particularly for communications; and
- Assist people entering or re-entering the job market”⁴

2.6 The Audit Commission report ‘**A life’s work: Local Authorities, economic development and regeneration**’⁵ summarised the development of government – led regeneration initiatives. It detailed that since 1997 critical developments have included the

- launch of the ‘New Commitment to Regeneration’, a Local Government Association (LGA) initiative, recognising regeneration as a complex process involving a range of partners. This promoted the partnership approach to regeneration, which encouraged a more strategic approach and fostered longer-term thinking.⁶
- New Deal for Communities initiative
- launch of the national Strategy for Neighbourhood renewal
- rolling of the Single Regeneration Budget (SRB) into a single funded pot, administered by the RDA.

2.7 The South East England Development Agency (SEEDA, also referred to as the Regional Development Agency or RDA) is responsible at a regional level for co-ordinating inward investment, raising people’s skills, improving the competitiveness of business, promoting sustainable and economic development, and social and physical regeneration. The RDA has promoted the advantage of more integrated strategies by reflecting key local priorities and objectives (including infrastructure) through their ‘**Regional Economic Strategy (RES)**’. As a result coastal economic development issues are now given a higher profile through the SEEDA RES and South East Area investment Framework.

2.8 Through the nineties the Single Regeneration Budget (SRB) was a key tool for funding local regeneration activities in deprived areas. This funding has now ended with existing projects finishing in 2006. The Regional Economic Strategy says that SEEDA is now working on new delivery arrangements. Local Strategic Partnerships will be the key to identifying priorities and engaging the local community⁷; regeneration in the coastal towns will depend heavily on locally developed and locally owned responses.

⁴ RPG 9 12.27 p 90 March 2001

⁵ Audit Commission: *A life’s work: Local Authorities, economic development and regeneration as in LGA Sept 2002 Urban Affairs Select Committee – inquiry into the effectiveness of Government regeneration initiatives.*

⁶ Local Government Association Sept 2002 Urban Affairs Select Committee – inquiry into the effectiveness of Government regeneration initiatives.

⁷ Regional Economic Strategy p49 SEEDA 2002.

2.9 Deprivation in many of the region's coastal areas is further recognised in strategies developed by the Regional Assembly. Following the Regional Tourism Strategy (2002) the Assembly identified new priorities for regional planning guidance on tourism,

“The traditional coastal seaside resorts have been hit hardest by the decline in long stay holidays by domestic tourists in the UK. Most will need to diversify and some will need to move away from tourism altogether. This will involve identifying and developing new markets alongside their traditional holiday base and strengthening the product to attract these. This could include a diversity of product offers in relation to arts, entertainment, health, sport, or fitness. It will also include the diversification of the local economy in to other non tourism related activities.”⁸

2.10 **Growing the economy - the local dimension**⁹ states that the wealth of the nation is not reflected in the wealth of our communities and that there are significant differences in economic performance between and within UK regions. It reiterates that some communities are struggling to change to new economies and suffer from a lack of skills, innovation and enterprise. This is illustrated in East Kent where often deprived communities with disinvestment in housing and job creation are close to prosperous areas. The report recognises the lead role of local authorities in helping to quicken the pace of change.

2.11 In 2000 the Local Government Association's Coastal Special Interest Group prepared a report titled “**On the edge – the coastal strategy**”¹⁰, which sets out the vision and priorities for the coast. It acknowledged the problems experienced by coastal areas, the report says

“The coast is the most dynamic, sensitive and perhaps least understood of our natural environments. It is also an area with its own special economic and social problems and risks, problems and risks that are exacerbated by inadequate and often outdated infrastructure.”¹⁰

2.12 The report summarised the specific problems faced by coastal towns and communities within the UK, most of which are evident in the East Kent coastal towns. These include

- Above average levels of unemployment in coastal communities
- The traditional dominant sectors, particularly tourism, are typified by low paid jobs and disproportionately high numbers in part-time and seasonal employment.
- A higher proportion of residents above pensionable age.
- Net outflow of high 'education attainers' and skilled workers.
- Large influx of long term unemployed to coastal areas.
- Large numbers of single person households claiming benefits in former holiday accommodation.¹⁰

⁸ *Proposed alterations to RPG, South East Tourism and Related Sport and Recreation 1.18 p13 SEERA May 2003*

⁹ *Smith Institute 2003. Growing the local economy – the local dimension.*

¹⁰ *On the edge – the coastal strategy. Local Government Association June 2000*

2.13 The objectives of the strategy were to

“ ... establish a framework for promoting the environmental wellbeing of the coast, and the sustainable and economic regeneration of its communities ... and provide the basis for development of stronger partnerships between local authorities, national government, the regional agencies and the private and voluntary sectors...”¹¹ to enable the future of the coast to be

- a vibrant coast - home to viable and healthy communities, where social exclusion and poverty have been tackled
- a dynamic coast – where activities and development work in harmony with natural processes
- a sustainable coast – where economic activity is supported in balance with social and environmental interests, and coastal resources are managed and protected in a sustainable manner
- a thriving coast – where the environmental and cultural heritage is protected, enhanced and celebrated.
- an equitable coast – where local people have a strong voice in resolving conflicts where they occur.

The report set out six guiding principles as the basis for planning and management of the coastal areas in the future, including the need for integrated solutions that increase capacity knowledge and skills.

2.14 The report recognised the underlying popularity and strengths of coastal areas and also the importance of tackling the issue of peripherality.

“The natural assets of the coastal zone include its scenic beauty and recreational potential. In 1996 over 50% of the population took a day trip to the coast. The total number of day trips in that year is estimated to be 170 million and cars were the main form of transport. Coastal tourism is important for the economy of these areas: in 1996, 45% (£6.2 billion) of domestic spend on tourism was spent on the coast. Sustainable transport issues need to be addressed to take account of the peripherality of the coast.”¹¹

2.15 The issue of peripherality has a particular relevance to East Kent. Whilst there is an attractiveness to being by the sea this is compromised in East Kent by poor rail links to London, and in some cases by road links that facilitate movement on the coastal routes to the continent and London but do not encourage movement off of the M20 and A2. These factors conspire to make it easier to travel through the County than to move around it. It is apparent that seaside towns with good road and rail access to larger centres of population, such as Brighton, are able to compete strongly in the day visitor market.

2.16 The LGA report identifies the particular relevance of government policies on community to the needs of coastal areas that typically host a high proportion of inward migration of people.

¹¹ “On the edge – the coastal strategy” Local Government Association June 2000

“The government’s desire for balanced communities is increasingly relevant to the coast and the net influx of economically inactive and dependent population. Consideration needs to be given to developing practical measures to attract a broader range of socio-economic groups to the coast and counteract out-migration of the more skilled workforce...”¹²

The Committee found some evidence of regeneration projects with a tourism aspect that recognise the need to affect the socio-economic balance of inner urban areas; notably at the Old Town in Margate and the Old High Street in Folkestone.

2.17 The **Economic and community regeneration – learning from inspection**¹³ report states that the complexity of regeneration means there can be no single recipe for success, and that the most successful make good use of community involvement. The report findings underline the crucial role local authorities play in developing and delivering regeneration initiatives, working through partnerships to bring about improvement.

2.18 The 2003 ‘**The Seaside Economy**’ report by the Centre for Regional Economic Studies and Regeneration (CRESCR)¹⁴ identifies the continued survival in apparently adverse circumstances of the tourism sector in coastal towns.

“What seems to have happened is that although the rising popularity of foreign holidays has eaten in to what was once the core business of the towns, they proved successful at tapping in to other sources of income – day trippers, short breaks, second holidays, conferences and so on.”¹⁵

2.19 In many instances nationally the quality of the urban and natural environment of coastal towns has declined leaving an increasingly jaded tourism product. However the CRESCR report is clear that the problems experienced in coastal towns are complex and can not be explained simply by the decline in the traditional seaside holiday.

2.20 The tourism industry has adapted and employment levels have remained stable since the seventies. Unemployment and increasing deprivation in the seaside towns is identified in the study as a result of net in-migration to coastal areas beyond the levels sustainable in limited local labour markets. This is due to the decline of, or failure to establish, a viable industrial sector and the availability of low price, low quality housing which can lead to concentrations of people on low incomes, often dependent on state benefits for their support. These factors then contribute to a spiral of decline and deprivation that, without intervention, is reinforced at each turn.

2.21 This picture is probably truest in parts of the larger towns of the region such as Margate, Ramsgate, Dover and Folkestone; the smaller towns are also affected by geographical isolation, lack of local job opportunities and difficulty in accessing more

¹² *Local Government Association, June 2000. On the edge – the coastal strategy*

¹³ *Audit Commission. 25 September 2003. Economic and community regeneration – learning from inspection.*

¹⁴ *The Seaside Economy Christina Beatty, Stephen Fothergill CRESCR, Sheffield Hallam University 2003*

¹⁵ *The Seaside Economy p106 Christina Beatty and Stephen Fothergill CRESCR, Sheffield Hallam University 2003*

distant opportunities in, or around, the larger towns. Lydd, for example, may share more common issues with small, inland, rural towns than it does with the larger coastal towns. What it does share, if anything, is the potential for tourism, led by proximity to the coast, to create opportunities in the local economy and to stimulate improvements to the local environment.

2.22 In 2001 the English Tourism Council published its report on coastal towns **“Sea Changes: Creating World Class Resorts in England”**¹⁶. The report highlighted that many coastal resorts are facing a range of social problems, including high levels of unemployment, low income levels, poor levels of education skills and training and housing problems. It identified several factors that were key to the success or failure of a coastal town such as the built and natural environment, infrastructure, public facilities, accommodation and entertainment. This report also recognised the historical context that has contributed to some of the current issues faced in East Kent

“the problems facing resorts stem from the fact that they were developed more than a century ago, exacerbated, particularly in recent decades, by a failure to reinvest in their product. As a consequence, they have the constraints of decaying infrastructure, designed for one era and not evolving, or not physically able to evolve, to accommodate the demands of another.”¹⁷

2.23 The CABE **Shifting Sands** report considers ways coastal towns are developing, changing or reinventing themselves and the role of new high quality buildings and open spaces make to these changes. Many of the towns in East Kent were developed in the Victorian and Edwardian eras and the architecture of those periods that remains is both an asset and a problem. The heritage of these periods is a quintessential part of the attractiveness of the towns but it is ageing and requires maintenance and does not necessarily meet modern demands. This creates a dilemma

“For those resorts that wish to maintain their seaside holiday persona the trick is in getting the balance right and in raising the quality without losing the capricious charm that has long characterised the English seaside.”¹⁸

2.24 In many of the East Kent towns wartime bombing and subsequent redevelopment in the sixties and seventies has led to some uneasy juxtapositions. In Margate for example the Committee were told how the development of the new town centre in the seventies effectively isolated the Old Town area, businesses drained away and the area declined. Efforts are now focused on reinvigorating the Old Town and reconnecting it with the seafront, the town centre. Tourism South East told the Committee that the relative success of Eastbourne in tourism terms is based, at least in part on the fact that it has been able to retain much of its architectural heritage.

2.25 The smaller towns of the area face different challenges. Whitstable has developed a reputation as a popular place to visit because of its harbour, character and dining opportunities. Its proximity to London has made it an attractive

¹⁶ *English Tourism Council 2001*

¹⁷ *Sea Changes – Creating world-class resorts in England. Foreword p5 English Tourism Council 2001*

¹⁸ *“Shifting Sands” English Heritage/Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment 2003*

destination. But this popularity has been achieved at some cost and there are concerns over access, parking, and that the sheer number of visitors may overwhelm the town's charm. There are concerns at other small towns that tourism needs to be managed to ensure that the character is not lost.

2.26 This section has raised some of the issues that set the context for regeneration in East Kent. Of the larger towns, some have histories of traditional resort based tourism, others have a different appeal based on heritage, or their role in cross-channel transport links. For a combination of reasons including peripherality, the decline of resort based tourism, lack of an industrial or manufacturing sector, and imbalances in migration there are pockets of nationally significant levels of deprivation. In the smaller towns growth and employment opportunities can be inhibited by poor access to services and facilities. While tourism is welcomed there are concerns that it may come at a cost and that development needs to be managed to optimise niche market appeal.

CHAPTER THREE: ECONOMIC REGENERATION

3.1 The Challenges

Coastal towns within Kent have seen significant economic and social decline/change, from buoyant local economies to areas with high deprivation and socio-economic decay. The challenges can be summarised as the out-migration of business, a reduction in investor confidence, a more dilapidated built environment, high unemployment and deprivation rates, low economic activity (-8% national average) and high levels of part time employment (+25%)¹⁹. A key economic change has been the decline in Tourism (which is discussed in more detail in Chapter 4). For instance Margate relied on tourism and has not yet successfully diversified and continues to have high unemployment and socio – economic deprivation.

3.2 Many regeneration initiatives have tackled the problems of deprivation but have not been effective in tackling the causes and hence reversing the spiral of decline. Sea Changes, The English Tourism Council report 2001, identified key factors for success or failure as the built and natural environment, infrastructure and public facilities as well as accommodation and entertainment. Regeneration is complex, with no single route to success with the economy, infrastructure, environment, and learning and skills all playing a part. One aspect alone can not deliver regeneration but each forms a key piece to the jigsaw or strand to the web that is regeneration.

“Raising growth rates, tackling the causes of unemployment and poverty, securing long-term environmental regeneration and social inclusion all require a new approach where we invest in the forces of local economic renewal – education, training, jobs, enterprise and business development”²⁰

3.3 SEEDA through the Regional Economic Strategy have promoted the advantages of a more integrated approach and reflect key local priorities and objectives, and coastal economic development issues through the SE Area Investment Framework. Local and regional agencies need to plan and work together and with the private sector to encourage growth and development and unlock the sustainable economic potential of the coast.

3.4 The Economy

Economic activity in East Kent tends to be low compared to UK average, with 7.5-10% of the population unemployed. Deprivation in many of the region’s coastal areas is recognised in strategies developed by the Regional Assembly. Following the Regional Tourism Strategy (2002) the Assembly identified new priorities for regional planning guidance on tourism,

¹⁹ LGA, *Coastal Special Interest Group Report: Coastal economic Development*.

²⁰ *Growing the economy: the local dimension*. Edited by Ed Balls, John Healey MP and Cathy Koester. The Smith Institute 2003.

“The traditional coastal seaside resorts have been hit hardest by the decline in long stay holidays by domestic tourists in the UK. Most will need to diversify and some will need to move away from tourism altogether. This will involve identifying and developing new markets alongside their traditional holiday base and strengthening the product to attract these. This could include a diversity of product offers in relation to arts, entertainment, health, sport, or fitness. It will also include the diversification of the local economy in to other non tourism related activities.”²¹

3.5 The Committee found no evidence during its consideration of this issue that any of the coastal towns in East Kent are seeking to “move away from tourism altogether”; developing the vibrancy and attractiveness of the towns is vital for visitors, residents and investors. However, based on the evidence taken by the Committee, it is clear that the breadth of activities and attractions that encourage people to visit coastal towns now extends beyond the traditional seaside holiday and all of the associations which that has. Improved retail centres, cultural venues and events, sport and leisure activities are all recognised as new and vital elements that complement the existing strengths of the region: heritage, traditional seaside resort attractions and the natural coastal environment. These developments recognise the existing locational advantage of the coastal towns; however our understanding and expectations of coastal towns change there will be a residual attraction to being by the sea. This alone is not enough to sustain the coastal towns, but it is a basis around which complementary projects with regenerative potential can be developed.

3.6 ‘Shifting Sands’ reported that it is important to recreate the spirit of confidence and ambition that once made coastal resorts so successful. It stated

“ ... successful regeneration depends on a package of measures including transport and infrastructure, mix of visitor attractions, development of a night time economy, coupled with safe night time environment, clean beaches, clean water, new businesses, real jobs and affordable local housing. “, and that

“there is now a widespread acknowledgement that the future of seaside towns depends upon a sustainable 12 month economy, providing better paid employment”²²

3.7 Delivering new opportunities for employment and tackling long term unemployment are central to renewing economic activity in the coastal areas. It was emphasised consistently to the committee that the future for the EK coastal towns is moving towards a 12 month and increasingly diverse economy or ‘mosaic economy’. Further potential economy development was highlighted as the need for this to be an 18 hour economy with for example cafes and shops open into the evening. The Committee heard that KCC has a fundamental role, as emphasised by the LGA,

‘Councils contribute to economic regeneration through the full range of their service delivery and are in a unique position to offer co-ordination

²¹ *Proposed alterations to RPG, South East – Tourism and Related Sport and Recreation 1.18 p13 SEERA May 2003*

²² *“Shifting Sands” English Heritage/Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment 2003*

and leadership in bringing about change and continuing economic benefits for their communities.²³

3.8 'Kent Prospects' is the economic strategy document for Kent, linking together the different areas, themes and issues of the future diverse or 'mosaic economy' and sets out the principal targets for economic success, identifying three priorities to

- assist Kent firms to become more competitive
- develop the skills of the workforce
- create the right conditions for new economic activities

3.9 There are several ways in which the prosperity of the EK area could be improved, for instance by widening the industrial base by business start-up; creating new wealth and jobs by inward investment, and increasing the spend of visitors and residents. This needs to be supported by clearer working relationships with districts and a continued focus on the wider area. It was highlighted that Towns often have speculative short term development. The need for a District long term vision was emphasised to the Committee, for example a 30 year vision /strategic plan. For instance Maidstone has established a clear retail and nighttime economy for the future of the town. It is important to ensure that there is long term planning for growth and that it is sustainable to achieve vision for the coastal area and future changes within the global economy. It was expressed that short and medium term decision making may not achieve long term aims. It was therefore seen as important to have a '30 year' plan so the type of employment trying to attract to the area could be anticipated and skills of the workforce aligned accordingly. The Dover Pride initiative (discussed further in 3.37) has recently commissioned a piece of work to look at developing a strategy for the future of Dover to improve long term prosperity and create a 30 year vision. This piece of work is welcomed by the Committee and eagerly anticipated. A similar long-term strategy for future development to improve prosperity would be of benefit to the other coastal towns in Kent.

Recommendation 1: KCC SPD to lead, support and encourage Districts and key stakeholders to develop a long term vision/strategy (for example 30 years) to improve the overall long term prosperity of the coastal towns.

3.10 The Knowledge Based Economy

The development of the new knowledge-based economy (e.g. creative, hi tech companies) is of great significance to the coastal towns. This has the potential to attract a broader range of skilled people and better paid jobs, and provide an economy base for the future, which is changing with increased global competitiveness and service industries moving overseas for a cheaper skilled workforce and lower overheads. The 'knowledge economy' is the main policy framework for economic growth and employment in the UK, with intellectual capital (knowledge, skills etc) becoming central to future economic development.

3.11 One of the key regeneration initiatives in Kent is the proposed establishment of a creative quarter in Folkestone, around the Old High Street and Old Tontine

²³ LGA November 2003, *economic regeneration: documenting best practice*.

Street. The attraction of knowledge based firms and cultural and creative industries is key to the regeneration plans. Fundamental to this is the need to offer the right environment and build on the asset of being on the coast, offering investors not just a place for business but also a 'quality of lifestyle and a pleasant and creative environment'. Partnership with the private sector has been critical as an enabler and in moving this vision forward, unlocking key funding from government and moving towards the reality of providing a new arts college and revitalising the surrounding area. In this instance business was able to take 'the risk' (once ensured backing of partnerships to vision) rather than waiting for funding stream approval e.g. purchase of sites for renovation prior to renovation grant approval.

3.12 ADSL Broadband Technology

ICT connectivity is increasingly important for businesses and the economy. Broadband technology is an asset that can assist the move towards greater economic competitiveness and a more diverse economy within the EK coastal towns and potentially reduce pressures on the transport infrastructure. The Committee acknowledged the work of the Kent Spatial Development Company in attaining wider access to broadband for Kent. The RES²⁴ however states that

“ despite the potential of ICT and broad band to allow flexible and home working there is no sign yet of a reduction in the demand for public or private transport. ... Broadband might provide a spur to new patterns of remote and home working that ease peak time congestion.”

3.13 ADSL broadband availability now encompasses the coastal towns and the majority of Kent. Several initiatives in East Kent have raised IT skill levels and have encouraged the use of IT and e-business. The focus now, from a business development perspective is to raise awareness of the benefits this offers to increase competitiveness and growth. It is argued that suppliers within the supply chains of larger firms and authorities will be increasingly excluded without the capacity to deal electronically with their customers. There is a role for KCC to encourage and support their supply chain to adapt to these needs. A critical point is that the future provision of higher band-width connectivity needs to be ensured, as this will be essential to attract and retain the knowledge-based industries currently sought.

3.14 Business development

There are three main business development priorities in Kent, namely providing support for small businesses, encouraging businesses in the 'Knowledge economy' sector and attracting and supporting inward investment. Business Link Kent and Locate in Kent are key partners in achieving this.

3.15 Business Link Kent (BLK) is a private company that has a contract with UK Government to provide business support, advice, consultancy and training for both new and existing businesses. The LGA report, 'economic regeneration' stated that

²⁴ SEEDA , *Regional Economic Strategy for South East England 2002-2012*

“Despite the large number of small businesses, many good ideas still fail to be commercialised and many fail to reach their potential. The quality of support for business in their formative years is vital”

3.16 The Committee was informed that there was generally a higher survival rate for businesses that accessed support and training.²⁵ BLK’s role is to support and develop enterprise over the long term to help grow the economy, by encouraging new business start ups, the growth of existing businesses and making Kent an attractive place for inward investment. In 2004/5 BLK are targeting to interact with 15500 existing businesses and 300 pre-starts, about 34% of the registered business community. Within a regeneration context BLK work with partners to build an enterprise culture for Kent’s future economic growth and work within the education framework to promote ‘starting a business’ as a career option. The services provided broadly help business raise finance, support innovation and adopt best practice. For example pre-start and early stage business support; financial, sales or marketing advice and initiatives including the ‘virtual company’ which attracts the services of external directors for an exchange of shares and provides support to the person with the business idea.

3.17 The Committee noted several points and tangible benefits in relation to EK coastal towns. A significant change for 2004/05 is the realignment of BLK teams contiguous with the Area Investment Framework areas, which should improve links to the local networks and enable BLK to respond more effectively to local needs and emphasis; and increase ‘brokerage’ potential. In 2003/4 BLK grant advisors assisted EK businesses to apply for grants totalling £3.25m in value. Currently £794,000 has been approved with £2.25m pending. These could create 697 new jobs in EKCT and the surrounding area. The ‘Thanet Business Support Scheme’ is a £5.3m European funded business regeneration project from April 2003 – March 2006. Since it started it has facilitated 54 start-ups, provided free business support to 260 companies and 50 companies attended training events, also £145,000 of the £1.1m research and development grants facilitated by BLK were for businesses within the East Kent coastal town area.

3.18 Business incubators provide serviced units and more intensive sources of support for companies. Technology Enterprise Kent (TEK), a local enterprise agency is based at the University of Kent and manages 92 workshop/incubator units and offices for new business start ups, with over 300 tenants. TEK runs easy in/easy out workshops in Deal, Thanet and Whitstable, achieving on average 97% occupancy. A recent survey also showed that 67% of businesses started with TEK in 2001-2002 are still in business.

3.19 The enterprise gateways (e.g. Folkestone) will play a key role in future regeneration, providing intensive support to pre-start and start –ups. In the desire to create a knowledge-based economy, spaces in these schemes could provide accommodation and support to early stage knowledge based companies. The enterprise hubs can assist with promoting an areas intellectual capital and innovation capacity, thus encouraging investment potential. The proposal of the consideration of establishing a new enterprise gateway in East Kent to complement the new Canterbury Enterprise Hub (under evaluation) was seen as an exciting and positive

²⁵ *Select Committee on regeneration of EKCT, 8 April 2004 - Technology Enterprise Kent*

opportunity for East Kent. BLK stated that this gateway would probably have a broader target market than the creative industries gateway currently in final planning stages for Folkestone. If this is approved it will be supported by an Enterprise Gateway Director, funded by SEEDA for 3 years. TEK are considering the feasibility of Deal Barracks as an enterprise village.

Recommendation 2: KCC and SPD to continue to lobby for and support the establishment of a new enterprise gateway/hub in East Kent.

3.20 Availability of business space

BLK expressed to the committee that the encouragement of new start ups in the health, information and communication technologies will in turn foster the start up of second and third tier hi-tech companies and support the development of the desired knowledge economy. It is therefore important that employment space and business support infrastructure to enable this are available. Concern supported by the findings of the EK and Channel corridor AIF consultant reports and recent research evidence was raised that there is a shortage of both 'easy-in/easy-out managed hatchery' and incubation space as well as grow –on space across EK.²⁶ Space is required for the sought knowledge –based companies (needing hi-tech space, which is not readily available), but also affordable craft workshop space. Space available for inward investors to occupy is also often of poor quality or unsuitable and hence investors are attracted to locate elsewhere.

3.21 The lack of hatchery/incubator space or grow on space has several detrimental impacts. These will:

- inhibit business start-ups
- encourage the re-location of businesses outside of the area
- restrict the sustainable business growth of existing businesses

It was highlighted to the Committee that in designing new or refurbished centres consideration needed to be given to the substantial benefits gained from peer support when infant businesses shared workspace with more mature companies, and that there was also often a need for common space (coffee shop, hot desking). It is important for the private sector to have buildings available to move into and that speculative development needs to be encouraged alongside the appropriate marketing and necessary infrastructure. The Committee was informed that the lack of speculative build is partly due to confidence levels in the area and the limited availability of 'easy to develop' land. There are also difficulties with the access to sites and provision of utilities (often with the first company to move into a building facing the full cost of connection), which is beginning to be addressed. In Thanet for instance most sites have poor access to the necessary infrastructure. The Spatial Development Company is tackling these issues which should enable more rapid development of sites. Increased confidence has been gained through the development of the Westwood site, Christchurch outpost and innovation centres.

²⁶ As in KCC Regeneration Select Committee - from BLK (April 04), TEK (8 April 04) and LIK (April04)

Recommendation 3: KCC SPD in partnership need to proactively consider the issue of availability of business space and to develop a joint strategy and action plan to target this issue with appropriate stakeholders or partners.

3.22 Inward Investment

Inward Investment is a major issue for East Kent. Locate in Kent (LIK) is Kent's inward investment agency, working in partnership with public and private sector organisations to promote Kent within the domestic and international business sector, working with companies that are expanding or looking to relocate from within Kent or investing from parent companies overseas. LIK assists potential investors to find the appropriate accommodation and proactively look for potential investors, and have had 23 successes in area of 4 districts resulting in 1900 jobs. The Committee was informed that since 1998/99 there had been a net reduction in companies locating to the EKCT.

3.23 The evidence gathered by the Select Committee outlined the barriers to prosperity and the key factors that influence potential inward investment in East Kent as

- the lack of availability of a skilled workforce. Companies need to be assured that if they invest that the workforce is there. Companies follow workforce availability so won't invest until the necessary skills are being delivered or belief that it can be.
- connectivity – improved connectivity would make a big difference to attracting inward investment e.g. through better road and rail links (CTRL); and development of Manston Airport.
- availability of sites and suitable properties (as discussed above)
- the image or perceived image of the area, (discussed in more detail below). LIK reported that within the business sector East Kent had the worst image in Kent and had limited 'familiarity or favourability' within the sector.
- perceptions of community safety and aesthetics of the local environment.
- lack of confidence in the area

3.24 Location can be an obstacle for towns aiming to diversify their economies as they face issues of peripherality, inadequate infrastructure and visible signs of economic decay. This can make it difficult to compete effectively especially as the main focus for development in the South East is in the main conurbations and along main transport corridors, namely Thames Gateway and Ashford. 'What Price Growth' responds to the government proposals for significant housing growth in Kent and highlights the need for government investment in the necessary infrastructure to support this. The planned growth can be perceived as a threat to the coastal towns as it both focuses attention on and targets considerable investment and resources to two distinct non-coastal priorities (reducing the opportunities to do something specific for East Kent).

3.25 There are also opportunities presented by this growth from which the coastal towns could draw benefit. The growth is a magnet for construction. Within Kent there is however a question as to whether there is enough skilled labour to benefit. There is an opportunity to increase provision of knowledge based learning, focusing on lean

construction, SMART buildings and design excellence to link into this. It was expressed that training electricians, plumbers etc in Kent will mean this growth will hopefully not be built by mostly imported labour. It was reported that it takes approximately 18 months to train, so there is a need to focus now in order to benefit from this locally. It was also highlighted that there is a need for fast track housing and an increase in 'off-site' construction within the sector, the coastal towns could potentially offer a suitable factory site. Ashford is also in reasonable proximity to offer training or employment possibilities to coastal communities from inward investment in Ashford and the growth and/or location of second tier companies and it is predicted that 900 jobs will be created. The coastal towns could begin to attract the broader socio-economic groups desired and bring incomes from better paid jobs into the local economy. To ensure the benefits are 'rolled out' to coastal towns there is a need to work with SEEDA and LIK. The improvements to the infrastructure would also be of benefit to the coastal towns, increasing connectivity and competitive attractiveness to investors. Consideration needs to be given as to how and where investment from the 2nd tier companies could be attracted to the coastal towns. The coastal towns also have an opportunity to provide quality leisure, water sports or evening activity to attract a new and support developing community in Ashford.

3.26 In order to attract future inward investment the coastal towns need to continue to work together as a whole and build upon what has already been achieved. East Kent is often perceived as an expensive option by investors, but compared to Leeds, Manchester or Bristol it is very competitive and with improved connectivity and infrastructure will be in a much stronger all round position to attract inward investment. Opportunities for the future include

- Relocation of government agencies - many Government departments are under pressure to relocate out of London. These departments could be encouraged to relocate to EK coastal towns. (estimated 20,000 jobs)
- Research and Development - inward investment could also include attracting more research and development organisations, which in turn will attract more technology based firms, especially as connectivity to East Kent improves
- Supply chains could be used more actively to stimulate local business e.g. if business be supported competitively within a 20 mile radius.
- Kent Archives relocation – there is a case that these could also be relocated to an East Kent coastal town e.g. Whitstable, Folkestone, Margate. KCC has an opportunity to support its own objective to regenerate the coastal towns. This would also contribute to raising the profile of the town.

Recommendation 4: KCC members and SPD to continue to lobby for and encourage Kent archives and the government agencies needing to move out of London to relocate to the coastal towns.
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3.27 Image and Perception

The image or perceived image of the coastal towns is a critical factor in their successful regeneration. The current

”perceived image of run-down coastal towns having lost their trade is not synonymous with enterprise location and business development and

remain seriously disadvantaged in competing for non-cost related development”²⁷

The Committee heard that the perception of East Kent is not as good as it could be and is a barrier to prosperity. Within East Kent coastal towns a development and regeneration need exists, leading to the necessity to capitalise on funding opportunities. The Committee were advised that although funding is needed, seeking it can also impact on image and perceptions as making a case emphasises the negatives (such as ‘high levels of deprivation, in need of regeneration, high unemployment or low levels of attainment’) and can dissuade potential investors. The evidence was unanimous in the opinion of the need and necessity to ‘talk up and not down’. It was also expressed that a high percentage of regeneration is marketing and public relations. There is a clear need within Kent coastal towns rather than highlighting the negative, to promote the ‘positive aspects’ and the successes and to create the belief that things can change, fostering an appetite/environment for positive change and development within the local community and business sector. There is a need to raise perception that East Kent is somewhere worth investing in.

Recommendation 5: There is a need for both Members and Officers of the Council to lead and raise the profile of coastal towns, promoting the positive and the successes, and develop a strategy to raise the profile of EK as part of the regeneration initiatives.

3.28 The Committee shared the opinion expressed to them that enhancements to the landscape or schemes to raise the profile could have a considerable impact on perceptions of image of the coastal towns. These could also provide an opportunity to include working with local communities and encourage greater ownership and pride in the locality. The committee discussed the positive suggestion of introducing tree lined avenues, public artwork and developing the entrances and gateways ‘heralding’ into the coastal towns. This could present an exciting opportunity to have an immediate impact and could possibly be initiated through a national competition for design of public art, raising both the profile and image. It was also stated that to achieve this it would be necessary to find the capital and also to overcome any arising road safety issues.

Recommendation 6: KCC and SPD to consider the development of the entrances and approaches; and to consider the option of holding a national design competition to raise the profile and image of EK coastal towns.

3.29 The development of Chummy’s food stall (Folkestone) is an example where competition and design has been successful. With funding from the Arts Council’s ‘Arts 4 Everyone’ scheme an architectural competition led to the re-design of Chummy’s Seafood stall as part of a wider harbour-side regeneration programme. It is reported that this has already influenced other improvements by local businesses, and an increase in use of the space and local economic activity. This initiative illustrates that sometimes smaller initiatives can have the desired impact, by changing the image and raising the profile.

²⁷ “On the edge – the coastal strategy” Local Government Association June 2000

3.30 'Branding' is a core component of marketing/PR, and can raise profile and image. The coastal towns need to keep their own differences but also to brand together as an area. For example it was suggested to the Committee that there is an opportunity to market the coastal towns as the 'East Coast Riviera' and that this had an international identity. The Select Committee also noted the importance of reflecting the coastal towns within the broader picture of Kent. East Kent needs to be seen as one of the most strategic regions in Europe and not as a backwater. Signage along transport link has a role to play in this. Signage could be used more proactively to promote the image and perceptions of East Kent with a vision of connectivity with close links to Paris, Brussels, Hastings, Brighton.

Recommendation 7: KCC SPD, in partnership with Highways, to review signage within Kent with a view to promoting a vision of connectivity and the coastal towns, linking to London, Paris, Brussels etc.

High profile events can also be used as a way to draw attention and raise the profile of an area. It was proposed to the committee that one such opportunity to raise the profile and bring some investment could be holding a major conference 'with a difference'. For example a major political party conference, 'Margate 2008', or hosted in a cruise liner for a week at one of the coastal towns.

3.31 Role of Icons to stimulate investment

Kent are implementing many imaginative initiatives in the support of EKCT regeneration – including improvements to sea fronts and promenade; recreation of seafront public gardens, establishing a creative quarter, creation of new homes and gallery at 'cutting edge' of contemporary architecture/design. All share a desire and commitment to create a new coastal destination that is attractive to investors and business and a season extending beyond the peak summer months. Development such as new shopping centres (attracting the big name stores), promotion articles (e.g. in Property Week) all go towards changing the perceptions, raising the profile of an area and increasing confidence that something is happening. 'Iconic developments' show imagination and demonstrate an ability to adapt to changes in fortune and fashions, create a memorable destination and can be a catalyst for regeneration. The Committee heard that there is an opportunity through innovation to develop unique projects/products within the coastal towns and that icons can help establish an identity for the area. For example Turner Contemporary is expected to become a stimulus for economic growth in East Kent.

3.32 The Committee heard the view that although Turner Contemporary will be of enormous benefit the Kent coastal towns could benefit from a few more iconic developments as catalysts for regeneration. It was noted that it was critical for these to be well planned and thought through, considering both their nature and ideal location to bring maximum benefit to the coastal towns. Without the ideas for the future, potential development opportunities could be overlooked or areas developed in such a way that an 'icon' is no longer a feasible option. The Committee supported the suggestion that one such icon development should be focused on the youth sector.

3.33 The Regional development agencies (i.e. in Kent this is SEEDA) can be instrumental in facilitating, funding and supporting iconic development. One of the well known successes is the Eden project in Cornwall by encouraging more visitors. Key to the development of both the regional and Kent economy is regenerating the coastal areas. SEEDA therefore has a fundamental part in supporting and helping Kent achieve and build upon success. LGA CISIG

3.34 Sports Culture

Sports can also be used as a tool to achieve regeneration. This has been successfully illustrated with the 'Extreme Academy' in Cornwall. Leisure and recreation are important to our social well-being and the coast is home to a wide range of both water and land-based leisure activities. 'On the Edge' states

"For the future the coastal zone offers further untapped economic potential and challenges...and is one of the keys to our economic future...The panel established by the DTI identified ... Further coastal and marine leisure opportunities, including tourism and new water based sports and activities".

3.35 Within Kent for example there are areas that are very popular with windsurfers but no facilities are provided for them. There are also other water sports such as sailing and water skiing. This is an area that could be developed, but in doing so it will be necessary and essential to involve the sport enthusiasts to ensure that what is developed reflects their needs. There is an opportunity to develop a leisure and sports theme and possibly a health spa (sea pursuits) in Thanet.

3.36 Kent Ports.

Ports and their development remains a vital economic asset ²⁸ and are often at the heart of many communities, including Kent coastal towns with Dover, Folkestone having a role as a marina, and Ramsgate. The Dover port operates in a competitive climate with growth in airfreight and the need to accommodate increasingly larger containerships and have a need to balance their own commercial needs. It was recognised that the Port alone could not resolve the issues in Dover. Dover is a conundrum with a very successful port adjacent to a less successful town and why these have not grown in parallel to each other.

3.37 The Port of Dover Project (KCC, DDC, SEEDA and Port of Dover) aims to achieve a co-ordinated and strategic approach to the port's evolution to enhance the operation of a major regional and national gateway, maintain growth and prosperity, sustain employment and support regeneration of East Kent. The Dover Pride Initiative comprises of a board of senior representatives of the public, private and voluntary sectors including Dover Harbour Board, Kent and Medway Learning and Skills council, KCC, Dover District Council and Business Link Kent. The main aims are to co-ordinate and manage the preparation of a development strategy for Dover and to champion the broad economic regeneration of Dover. Dover Pride has commissioned a piece of work- 'Developing Dover's Future' - to consider the disparity between Port and Town and how Dover can diversify and to create a 30 year vision

²⁸ LGA, *Coastal Special Interest Group Report: Coastal economic Development. 2003*

for development to identify how long-term prosperity might be improved. The commitment of the Dover Harbour Board Trust to support the 'Pride initiative' was acknowledged and an understanding of the restrictions for the Trust on contributing funds unless the Port draws direct benefit. The long term prosperity of Dover will partly be dependent upon industries that grow from the Port and enable the economy to diversify, but there is also need for opportunities that are independent from the Port.

3.38 The expansion of Manston International Airport will bring new jobs and opportunities. The current job-share of security staff between Dover Port and Manston International is still feasible but this would need to be replanned as a result of the growth and ensuing changes however, if a new terminal is built this will probably need to be serviced differently. Dover CTRL connections would also be of great benefit for onward freight transport.

3.39 Ramsgate New Port was referred to as one of the 'jewels in the crown of Kent', the other being Manston.²⁹ The key point arising was that Ramsgate harbour is not 'exploited' in the way that it could be in relation to leisure and tourism, and is an untapped asset. The Committee welcomed the new two and a half year freight agreement and recent development of a new passenger service, running up to four times daily from July 2004, providing a gateway to Belgium, Holland, Germany and Denmark. It was also raised that the expansion of activities at Manston International Airport and Ramsgate synergy could offer an opportunity for Ramsgate Port for fruit transport to the continent. This market could expand and encourage Port related activities if appropriate land for development was available and cold storage facilities were developed at Manston.

3.40 Partnerships

As regeneration can not be delivered by one agency alone, the role of partnership is a vital one.³⁰ The area and local partnerships contribute to setting the strategic priorities. There is a key role to be played by KCC, the area and local strategic partnerships and economic partnerships to raise the profile of coastal economic development. The LSP and AIF give the opportunity to focus resources and reduce duplication and fragmentation.³¹ These also enabled the bringing together of public, voluntary and private sector to tackle issues jointly.

3.41 Changes within future funding increase the importance of these partnership links. The Head of External Funding KCC, told the Committee that because of the entry of eastern European countries in to the EU from 2006 there is likely to be less recognition for deprivation in the UK from Europe, through mechanisms such as Objective 2 status. There is an added danger that recognition and funding from the UK central government has, in the past, tended to follow EU designation. However Kent has been pro-active in establishing Area Investment Frameworks (AIF) and the County is well positioned to take advantage of whatever funding will be available. The AIFs will identify priorities at an area level and it is hoped that their introduction

²⁹ *Select Committee on Regeneration of coastal towns 15 April 2004, Head of Economic development.*

³⁰ *Urban Affairs Select Committee inquiry into effectiveness of government Regeneration initiatives Sept 2002 LGA submission.*

³¹ *LGA, Coastal Special Interest Group Report: Coastal economic Development. 2003*

will lessen competitive bidding and introduce a more priority driven process.³² AIF partnerships have no funding other than existing local authority budgets. The ASP and AIF will however be critical and increasingly important links to access funding through the SEEDA devolved delivery budget. The need for LSP's to build stronger links with the ASP and AIF and their importance needs to be recognised. It was stated to the Committee that these had the potential to become parochial, but that EK with its emphasis on infrastructure was driving its regeneration forward in the broader sense and has the beginning of a vibrant organisation that should develop district partnerships.

3.42 Key issues raised consistently in relation to partnerships were that

- although LSP's are successful at identifying local issues and aspirations it is too early to see how this translates into local and sub regional strategy and delivery
- Connectivity – although LSP's are normally represented on the AIF boards not all of the LSP issues are brought forward, also need to sit on all boards to ensure know what is happening and that messages are transferred.
- the large number of bodies causes confusion for the business community and individuals, as to the role of some partnerships, the mechanics and knowing which partnership to engage with.
- need to encourage clearer and closer working with Districts and partners
- there is a clear need for different levels of partnerships and linkages but too many dilute their impact and can create 'partnership fatigue'. Partnerships need to be monitored/challenged regularly on outcomes and the value added to ensure are delivery focussed and worthwhile – Filleting, merging or refocusing where necessary.
- needs to be consistency of focus between LSP and AIF – current links were not strong and need to ensure links are strengthened
- some LSPs are more advanced and successful than others
- Needs to be mechanism to bring partnerships together to discuss issues collectively e.g. partnerships working together on CTRL through the rail forum.
- There needs to be clear understanding of role of local delivery boards and how this relates with ASP.
- limited feedback from strategic partnerships to those implementing initiatives on the ground

Recommendation 8: KCC and partners need to consider the issues raised in relation to the Partnerships (Area, Local and economic/regeneration). SPD need to

- highlight the importance of building stronger links between the LSP and the ASP,
- support the development of these partnerships to reflect best practice
- monitor/challenge the partnerships on outcomes and value added to ensure they are delivery focussed – Filleting, merging or refocusing where necessary.
- produce information document detailing the partnerships, their roles and responsibilities, membership etc.

³² KCC Regeneration Select Committee Hearing 23/10/03 - Head of External Funding KCC

3.45 Tax Incentives on 2nd homes

Recently the incentive of lower council tax on 2nd homes has been reduced. Consultation is to be undertaken as to how the increase in funds could be spent within the County on one off schemes, e.g. for Shepway there is approximately £300k. The Committee heard several ideas that envisaged this being used to support regeneration and used to for example:

- contribute to environmental schemes
- carry out town centre improvements
- reinvested to tackle derelict builds

In the future there is the potential that the additional monies will be administered centrally by Government. There is a clear need for this to be retained by the local authorities to be reinvested in agreement with and in the Districts, to support one off schemes, for example to contribute to the overall regeneration of the area.

Recommendation 9: KCC to lobby government to support and in consultation with Districts for the retention of monies arising from the changes to the 2nd home incentives for reinvestment.

3.46 Section 106 Agreements

The Committee heard that section 106 agreements could be used more widely to support local regeneration. Section 106 agreements within the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 enable local authorities to negotiate planning obligations when granting planning consent. For instance 106 agreements could be used to improve skills in the area and encourage improvement to local companies if the development sought would effect local business by increasing skills shortages. The LGA report 'economic regeneration' states that in Eastleigh the council successfully obtained funding through Section 106 to provide training services for small local companies and training for unemployed people with the development of the Southampton International Business Park. Currently,

"For all new development in Eastleigh, either section 106 has to be agreed or employment compensation is sought elsewhere in the borough. For example if land is sold for housing, there has to be an employment contribution. 13% of local authorities in England and Wales are using section 106 to tackle employment and skills issues."³³

Section 106 could also be used to support regeneration through environmental improvement, providing an enjoyable and more attractive location for both current and new investors and residents.

Recommendation 10: KCC should encourage and support the wider use of section 106 in promoting the regeneration of EK coastal towns.

³³ *Local Government Association Nov 2003, Economic regeneration – documenting best practice.*

CHAPTER FOUR: REGENERATION – TOURISM

4.0 The focus in this section of the review is to consider how tourism can support and stimulate regeneration, not how regeneration can support tourism. As a starting point the Committee recognised that these towns have more to offer than just being places to visit. Equally the Committee also recognised that tourism will only be a factor in regeneration. Increasing tourism is not an end in itself; the Committee was seeking to identify how tourism can benefit local communities. Although arguably this is a false premise, businesses, particularly small businesses as are common in the tourism sector, may have little scope for broader social concerns. However at a strategic level the Local Authorities (County, District, Town and Parish Councils) have a responsibility, identified in the 2001 Local Government Act, to actively promote the wellbeing of their area. This responsibility may manifest itself in any number of ways but at its core is the need to optimise the benefits for local people of economic activity, social investment and environmental development. Tourism alone can not finance the redevelopment of town centres, or new transport links, although tourism expenditure does make a significant contribution to local economies, but tourism has far greater potential as a catalyst for improvements which if managed properly could improve conditions for local people and stimulate further growth.

4.1 Regional and Local structure (tourism)

Tourism South East (TSE) is the statutory tourist board for the south East region, and performs a variety of roles at the strategic level including marketing, training and development, co-ordination and lobbying. The structure of statutory support and the public/private partnerships that exist was a matter of some debate during the review. Some witnesses made the point that people in the industry, particularly small businesses, often found it difficult to understand which agency performed which function.

4.2 The Committee recognised that TSE should have a role in picking up strategic themes and in particular in making the case for tourism to other regional agencies, private investors and Government. The Committee welcomed plans, led by KCC's Tourism Unit, to rationalise the structure within Kent to ensure that there is one point of contact for the tourism industry. The "Kent Tourism House", a one-stop-shop for the tourism industry in Kent, is intended to be operational from April 2004. This will establish a local framework including TSE, KCC, and Kent Tourism Alliance (KTA) to ensure that the statutory agencies at a Regional, County and District level and marketing partnerships work better with one another and with the industry.

4.3 Overarching local district marketing partnerships is the Kent Tourism Alliance, set up in 2001 to "accelerate the sustainable growth of tourism in Kent for the long term social and economic benefit of the county by creating effective partnerships to deliver outstanding marketing."³⁴ Some industry representatives were uncertain about the impact of KTA's marketing; the Committee hopes that the Tourism House concept will help to bring all parts of the industry together.

³⁴ KCC Select Committee 30 October 2003. Chief Executive Kent Tourism Alliance - Ross MacCulloch.

4.4 The County's Tourism team has a strategic role in all aspects of tourism: marketing, training, research, development, and investment. District councils have a vital role in facilitating the whole structure of support for tourism development locally. This includes marketing, maintaining local networks, and determining local priorities.

4.5 Partnerships are important to the development of tourism in the area. All Districts are members of the Kent Tourism Alliance. In addition to this Tourism South East (boundaries are co-terminus with the South East Region) supports the development of tourism through research and development, and training and currently acts as the conduit for funding from SEEDA.

4.6 It is the role of the strategic bodies to identify new and untapped markets and to give a lead to the providers in the area. To achieve this there needs to be a meaningful forum for dialogue. Currently only Dover and Thanet have a district-wide tourism association. Huw Jarvis from Shepway told the Committee that there had been a forum there but this had lapsed; he recognised the need to reinvigorate this process. Ian Fell, a hotelier and Vice Chairman of Folkestone Hythe and District Hotel and Catering Association, told the Committee that it is important to have a voice and to be able to inform the planning and development of the sector.

4.7 Resources and the urban environment

Tourism South East's (TSE) Assistant Director of Development for Regeneration recognised the potential of the East Kent resorts

"The resorts in East Kent are a major asset for the region and the county; they still offer considerable potential in a changing market place. They have a very strong architectural and cultural legacy. There is an incredible backdrop there and often I think we tend to take that for granted and overlook it."³⁵

This theme of not recognising or optimising the existing potential was often referred to during the review. The manifest problems of the East Kent towns should not overshadow the positive things that are already there and the potential for better.

4.8 The Committee heard differing views on how the development of tourism should be taken forward. Broadly there were two sets of opinions, although neither is exclusive. The first view recognises the huge structural challenges that face East Kent regeneration and compares the problems experienced in East Kent with other deprived parts of the UK. Some towns and cities that have experienced urban decline have benefited from significant public investment as the basis for regeneration. This view was most clearly expressed by Tourism South East's Assistant Director for Regeneration

"If we are going to sort these places out they need massive amounts of money pumped in to them, professionally managed, with professional regeneration teams rather than messing around with smaller amounts of money."³⁶

³⁵ KCC Select Committee 30th October 2003, Assistant Director of Development for Regeneration TSE

³⁶ KCC Select Committee 30th October 2003, Assistant Director of Development for Regeneration TSE

4.9 There are clearly problems here; a point that was recognised by TSE's representative. Central government's priorities for expenditure on regeneration appear to be elsewhere, and the EU's focus will shift to eastern Europe with the admission of new member states. Therefore there is likely to be less, not more, public money available to support regeneration in the south East. This places a greater emphasis on private investment. TSE argues that the statutory bodies and the industry have to do more to maximise the potential for private investment by making planning decisions that are more responsive to the needs of the sector and through working harder to identify and attract private investors in tourism.

4.10 Currently the Districts' scant resources for maintaining and developing the infrastructure of the coastal towns are already stretched and in this context such a view can appear to be a counsel of despair. The point was made that there is a higher burden of expectation on councils' expenditure in coastal areas to provide services and facilities to support the image of the town as a tourist area. This expectation is not reflected in the governments financial settlement with the districts. KCC and SEEDA need to continue to make the case for the most deprived parts of the south East.

4.11 Balancing priorities

It is clear that tourism will be a significant factor in regeneration across the area, but this can not be viewed in isolation; it will take more than attractions and accommodation to bring people in to the coastal towns. There is a need for an overall strategy identifying key themes for development both in terms of marketing and product development but it is also clear that the direction and tone of development in Dover, for example, may be quite different to the approach in Margate. Fran Warrington, Economic Development Manager (Tourism) KCC, made this point

"It's a matter of looking at all aspects of the town in terms of things to do, places to go, places to shop, eat, drink, the infrastructure, whether its kept clean, litter, car parking sign-posting. All need to be viewed together but each town individually will have its own solutions and you have to look for those solutions in the town's culture and industry."³⁷

The declining infrastructure of the towns is still a key asset. If private investors are to be persuaded to look favourably at the coastal towns as areas for investment there needs to be evidence that the district is capable of providing the right support for their product.

4.12 Inevitably there is a circularity to this debate. The districts and the County Council already expend considerable resources on addressing social, economic, and environmental problems in these areas, and in many cases further resources may simply not be available. This point was recognised in the 2001 "Sea Changes" report

"Local authorities are a key partner in resort regeneration. They are strategically placed to bring all the partners together at a local level into a meaningful partnership and are responsible for much of the key infrastructure

³⁷ KCC Regeneration Select Committee 30th October 2003, Economic Development Manager KCC

and support services on which resorts depend. The scale of the challenge, however, means that improved measures are needed to equip local authorities with the capacity to deliver.”³⁸

There are increased costs in the coastal towns in maintaining or putting in place the basic infrastructure of everyday life for local people (e.g. play areas, street-lighting, improved disabled access to civic amenities etc.). In central public areas, such as a seafront or high street, enhancing the environment is likely to benefit local people and visitors. The benefits of such expenditure will need to be balanced against the needs of deprived residential areas off of the tourist trail and other priorities. This may be particularly difficult to quantify where the infrastructure in question is not something that generates revenue but is simply a part of the backdrop to the seafront environment. Which will ultimately benefit an area more: a new roof for a community centre or freshly painted railings on the seafront?

4.13 The experience in many coastal towns who recognise the need to stem the tide of decline of the town as tourism “product” has been that one-off expenditure on public facilities such as public toilets or seafront shelters can become recurrent or, even worse, simply be wiped out by vandalism. Vandalism and lack of ownership by the local community of civic amenities can be seen as a factor of social deprivation.

4.14 Tourism and the economic and social benefit it brings cannot stand alone and needs to be viewed in terms of the value it can add to regeneration and the wellbeing of local people. These wider social concerns may not always uppermost in the priorities of businesses and potential investors who need to create a viable business in challenging circumstances. However Local Strategic Partnerships should provide a forum where priorities can be identified, local people can be engaged, and the sector itself can make its case at a local level. This increases the need for the sector to have a coherent vision developed through local tourism forums and championed at Local Strategic Partnership level.

4.15 This may not make the difficult decisions like the hypothetical example above any less intractable, but it will ensure; firstly that the role of tourism is properly recognised within community strategies and secondly that opportunities for mutually affective and beneficial projects are maximised. Ross MacCulloch from Kent Tourism Alliance alluded to this point when he told the Committee

“In Thanet you’ve got someone doing a tremendous amount with cultural education with kids and so on. Well that for me has tremendous potential for linking in with tourism. If you’re going to have street art lets do something that tourists would like to visit. I’m not suggesting that we’re going to attract people, believe me it’s very hard to turn on people immediately; what I’m suggesting is that we’re adding value.”³⁹

These kinds of decisions will have to be taken at a local level but the point being made here is that the regenerative potential for tourism should not just be recognised but also actively included in community strategies. This could be an avenue for communities to be outward-looking and focused on complementing local strengths

³⁸ “*Sea Changes – Creating world-class resorts in England*” p55 English Tourism Council 2001

³⁹ *Select Committee 30th October 2003, Chief Executive Kent Tourism Alliance*

and may also develop an awareness of the relationship between tourism and local people.

4.16 Tourism and arts based projects

In Folkestone there are plans to redevelop the harbour area to support the development of a “creative quarter” around the Old High Street and Tontine Street. In Margate there are plans to build the Turner Centre art gallery on the harbour wall and to encourage the development of a similar creative area in Margate Old Town. Both of these projects intend to reinvigorate run down inner urban areas. Nick Ewbank from the Creative Foundation in Folkestone described to the Committee some of the changes that the Foundation is trying to bring about

“What we’re talking about is the high street being reborn full of shops, cafes bars, vibrant and interesting. The sort of place you can go and get things you can’t get in any other high street. Equally you’ve got a beautiful natural setting and we’re talking about enhancing that. So that it’s a complex and interesting offer to the visitor.”⁴⁰

The Audit Commission recognised the importance of this project in their 2003 review

“The Council is also involved in a project to develop a ‘Creative Quarter’ in Folkestone Old Town. The project is an important part of the wider agenda for the economic, physical and social regeneration of the town.”⁴¹

4.17 The Creative Foundation is working to provide the conditions for artists to live and work in central Folkestone. In addition to this it is hoped that there will be a new arts campus in the area offering higher, further and community education courses. Nick Ewbank told the Committee that the project in Folkestone could provide as many as 1000 jobs and 400 new businesses, particularly in new, high-tech services

“There’s a huge section of the arts that’s about business, that’s about job creation and economic growth whether that’s web designers or graphic designers and we need to encourage those.”

Both of these projects are based on core principles that challenge some perceptions of community development and regeneration. Although the areas themselves are old and established these projects are predicated on establishing new communities where the residents have either left or are in many instances in poorly maintained rented accommodation. By creating some of the right conditions for take off, by establishing core opportunities and a theme for development (creative arts), it is hoped that new residents will enter the area and “own” it in way that has not previously been possible.

4.18 Both of these areas, in common with many of the coastal towns, have suffered the effects of economic and structural decline, which has led to a fall in property values. This has made it feasible for landlords to buy in to these areas and divide up the, typically larger Victorian and Edwardian houses, for multiple occupation. This in

⁴⁰ *Select Committee on Regeneration of Coastal towns, Oct/Nov 2003 Creative Foundation*

⁴¹ *Audit Commission March 2003. Shepway District Council – Opportunity and Regeneration. p27*

turn has led to social imbalances in the local population and in some instances an increased threat from a range of social problems as a result, such as, crime, anti-social behaviour, and addiction.

4.19 The main threat to either of these projects will be speculative investors who do not have a stake in the area but seek to buy up properties ahead of any boom. Or recalcitrant landlords who hope to profit by “sitting on” their properties and waiting for the area to be improved around them. There is a fragile balance to be maintained between trying to provide the right conditions for these areas to develop the best mix of residential, retail and recreational opportunities and the potential for rising property prices to stifle change.

4.20 While both projects need to establish viable local communities, tourism also plays an important role.

“At the moment we’re trying to look at the Turner Centre as a catalyst for regenerating the Old Town ... We’re looking at trying to get people living back in the Old Town. To develop [old] shops into flats and houses and with specialist retail: antiques shops, jewellers, cafes bistros to generate some interest and get people moving through the Old Town and over to the Turner Centre. This will take people from the traditional glitzy Margate seafront and move them along towards the harbour ... With the Turner Centre and activity in the Old Town it will draw people along the seafront and benefit the retailers that are further along the seafront.”⁴²

The Turner Centre and the creative quarter have the potential to make Margate Thanet’s tourism flagship. The project will potentially take the lions-share of any money available for development in Thanet over the next few years. Although it is likely that subsequent funding for regeneration will be available from SEEDA via the East Kent AIF, it is unclear what the future funding arrangements will be at this stage.

4.21 Arts based initiatives not only provide attractions for people to visit (Turner Centre, Leas Cliff Sculpture Park) but also aim to inject new energy and enthusiasm in to run down areas. The common strand of creativity and the arts gives a focus for new businesses, services, education, leisure and accommodation development. They are in this sense a more complete package for regeneration than some projects which may focus just on a single aspect. The potential benefits for tourism in this approach is that developments are integrated in to the daily life of a community that isn’t dependent on it for its survival. However these projects still need to be viewed in the context of their potential to act as catalysts for additional growth rather than the jobs and opportunities they create directly.

4.22 Marketing

Despite the traditional popularity of the East Kent towns as tourist destinations the industry cannot grow and prosper without attracting more people to visit; to do this the product needs to be marketed. This is a commonplace observation but it is clear that to compete in national and international markets the industry is increasingly

⁴² KCC Select Committee 30th October 2003. Neil McCollum – Tourism Manager Thanet District Council (now Canterbury)

dependent on coherent marketing. While individual businesses can and do market their own facilities there is a need to make the whole of the offer accessible to potential customers: where to stay, where to visit, where to eat etc. For this reason the next section will look briefly at how the sector is marketed and what implications this has for regeneration.

4.23 The first point that should be made is that the marketing of tourism in Kent is a somewhat layered process; a process that is still evolving. At a local level a number of partnerships have developed in recent years to pool marketing resources and optimise the range of attractions and facilities that can be included in the same package. During the review the point was frequently made that local government boundaries have very little relevance to consumers. At the local level there are two marketing partnerships that cover the East Kent area: Canterbury and Coastal Kent (which covers the districts of Canterbury, Thanet and Shepway) and Dover White Cliffs Country.

4.24 These two brands are headings used in promotional literature and on the Tourism South East web-site to give an identity to the areas of East Kent. Marketing under each brand refers to the range of East Kent attractions, and both are included on the TSE web-site. The decision made by Dover to maintain a distinct marketing identity is a matter for some debate. Officers in Dover feel that the White Cliffs brand is long established and achieves good levels of recognition, and has a particular resonance with the industry locally.

“We don’t think that Coastal Kent does us any justice whatsoever and it doesn’t sell the area in the way that we’ve marketed it. Although we’re on the coast we’re a lot more than that.”⁴³

Other agencies and districts were more ambivalent about this policy, some indicated that the strength of the White Cliffs brand is over-estimated.

“We need to establish whether these resorts can market themselves independently or whether they need to be embraced in to some sort of consortia. What makes sense to the consumer? Are we pushing some of these brands uphill? For example White Cliffs Country doesn’t really make any sense to people.”⁴⁴

4.25 Although this distinction appears anomalous on a map it is unclear how significant any impact might be on visitor numbers. It may be that rather than focusing on the current distinctions the whole issue of how East Kent is marketed needs a re-examination. It is not the Committee’s role in this instance to suggest how improvements might be made but it would seem that the prime deciding factor in determining a marketing strategy should be its effectiveness in attracting consumers. Whether or not this is best achieved by unifying each of the four districts in to an East Kent brand or some other arrangement is a matter for further consideration by the industry and statutory agencies. The best solution should aim to clearly establish

⁴³ Cheryl Gilling Tourism Manager Dover District Council

⁴⁴ KCC Select Committee 30th October 2003. Mark Dowling Assistant Director of Development for Regeneration TSE

what East Kent has to offer and make this information as accessible as possible regardless of local boundaries and sensitivities.

4.26 A complicating factor here is the range of activities that are or could be available. There are many significant heritage sites in the area, with Canterbury Cathedral at the pinnacle and many castles, churches and historic houses combining to make heritage an important reason for people to visit the area. There are also many festivals that occur around the heritage theme including the Dickens Festival in Broadstairs, Oyster Festival in Whitstable, Shepway Air Show and Dover Regatta. There is the coast itself in all its variety from the north to the south that includes sandy beaches, the White Cliffs, and internationally significant marshland areas, all made accessible by a comprehensive network of themed footpaths. There are the coastal towns themselves, which at their best can embody a sense of tradition and character unique to English seaside resorts.

4.27 This market is now being complemented by arts based attractions in Folkestone and Thanet and their related emphasis on the night-time economy. Coastal sports and activities is another potential area for further development such as speed-boat competitions at Herne Bay and water-sports at Lydd and other plans to increase recreational opportunities around the coast. Whitstable has demonstrated the potential to tap in to new markets for gastronomic tourism and has successfully developed this niche. New developments widen the variety of potential visitors to the area and are likely to imply discrete marketing strategies that are differentiated not by area but by their target audiences.

4.28 Ross MacCulloch (Chief Executive KTA) told the Committee

“What I’d like to do rather than have one centralised product, is theme things and create product.”⁴⁵

The 2002 SEEDA report on rural tourism highlighted some of the concerns raised by KTA’s Chief Executive when it said

“[The region] lacks branded ‘products’ and its marketing is fragmented.”⁴⁶

It is unclear whether or not one brand can meaningfully evoke the multiplicity of opportunities that are available, or what value there might be in establishing an identity for the whole of East Kent within which these activities can be promoted more widely and constructively than they could be singly.

Neil McCollum referred to this point when he said

“That diversity is a difficulty to some extent because you’re trying to market a lot of things to a lot of people and that goes against the principles of marketing”⁴⁷

⁴⁵ KCC Select Committee 30th October 2003. Chief Executive Kent Tourism Alliance. Ross MacCulloch

⁴⁶ Rural Tourism in the South East: A Strategy for Future Action p7. The Countryside Agency/SEEDA 2002

⁴⁷ KCC Select Committee 30th October 2003. Neil McCollum Tourism Manager Thanet District Council (now Canterbury)

Each of the districts that the Committee spoke to made the point that their marketing budgets are restricted, which places an increased emphasis on getting as much value as possible from the money spent.

4.29 Product development

Some evidence received by the Committee indicated that more could be done without massive capital expenditure to improve the current situation in the industry. KTA's Chief Executive told the Committee that the industry and statutory agencies in Kent need to have a better understanding of the demands of the consumer. There is still considerable potential to add value to tourist attractions by focusing on the visitor experience and developing a package of measures to support and encourage visitors.

4.30 The Committee spoke to Frank Thorley of Thorley Taverns, an employer in East Kent; he illustrated this point

“We’ve put cycle racks outside of some of our pubs and they are being used. Its another market that’s there, and we’ve really got so much opportunity that we’re only scratching it at the moment.”⁴⁸

Huw Jarvis, Tourism Manager at Shepway District Council made the same point; accommodation providers and attractions need to think far more about the types of visitor and their likely needs and adapt their offer accordingly. This will particularly apply when tapping in to new markets.

4.31 Ross MacCulloch from KTA told the Committee that there is more that can be done in partnerships between the industry and statutory agencies to create tourism products from the existing assets. This is about developing a product around the existing assets. So, for example, the area has many churches and other religious architecture that could be the basis for a niche market in religious tourism. If put in to a context of a themed walk, cycle ride or car tour with relevant activities and information and highlighted options for refreshment, the whole becomes a more tangible package that can be marketed to potential visitors.

4.32 The significance of Canterbury in East Kent tourism

From discussions with local tourism officers there is general, but not complete, agreement about the crucial role of Canterbury in attracting tourists to East Kent. Canterbury is described as the “honey-pot” that attracts overseas tourism in to the area. Canterbury has international status and levels of recognition in Europe and the U.S. far beyond that of any of the surrounding towns, or of the county of Kent as a whole. Tourism strategies in the coastal towns recognise the potential for tapping in to the pool of overseas visitors in Canterbury and encouraging them to visit other attractions in East Kent as part of their stay in the area. Huw Jarvis from Shepway told the Committee that he estimates 85% of people who stay in Shepway visit

⁴⁸ *KCCSelect Committee on Regeneration of Coastal towns Oct/Nov 2003 Frank Thorley – Thorley Taverns*

Canterbury during their stay. Equally visitors to Canterbury can also access the range of opportunities in the surrounding area.

4.33 There are downsides arising from the proximity of Canterbury for the surrounding towns. Andy Jarrat from Shepway told the Committee that Shepway leaked between 50-70% of local retail expenditure to Canterbury, Ashford, and Bluewater.

4.34 However many of the people that the Committee spoke to recognised the significance of Canterbury in overall East Kent tourism. This is particularly important for longer staying visitors who may visit other towns during their stay. In tourism terms the relationship between the coastal towns and Canterbury is two-way: staying visitors to Canterbury can and do venture out to the coastal towns during their stay, and *visa-versa*.

4.35 Closure of traditional tourist attractions

Much of the potential for new development in Thanet is in Margate where there are some of the most deprived wards in the County. It is hoped that the Turner Centre will lead the regeneration of Margate. This will add a new dimension to tourism in East Kent. Margate has been a traditional seaside resort with the familiar “kiss-me-quick” image. The proposed Turner Centre and the development of the creative quarter in the Old Town identifies a new direction for Margate. This is allied to the decline of the “Dreamland” attraction. According to the District’s tourism officer the traditional base of Margate’s tourism will remain and is sustainable and will be complemented, rather than replaced, by the Turner Centre and the creative quarter.

4.36 The decline of “Dreamland” is a potential threat to the overall quality of the tourism offer. The current owner wants to re-develop the site for housing, retail and leisure. This would not appear to be in keeping with the image of the rest of the seafront area. The Dreamland site has declined and has not had the investment in new attractions that other amusement parks have had. With Dreamland’s imminent closure there is a danger that there will be an impasse over the immediate future of the site to the detriment of the seafront’s appeal. The Committee would strongly support moves to identify a future role for the Dreamland site that does not further compromise the seafront area.

4.37 In Folkestone the Rotunda Amusement Park has also closed recently, however this may prove to be an opportunity to raise the quality of the attractions through integrated development of the harbour and seafront area.

4.38 Peripherality

In Dover there is scope for considerable tourist trade based on people using the town as a staging post on their way to or from the continent. Though it is less likely that people would come to Dover for an extended stay of a week or more it is likely that people will stop off for a night before or after their journey. This is some compensation for the large volume of traffic that goes directly from the port to the main access routes across Kent without either visiting the town or staying overnight. Indications are that currently there is an adequate supply of bed and breakfast facilities to meet the demand for this trade.

4.39 However the slowness of rail services to the town from London is an ongoing problem for the development of tourism. It seems unlikely that CTRL(D) services will run directly to the area, a factor that may increase the area's relative disadvantage. There is a particular need for an extension of public transport links in to the rural areas in order to capitalise on the potential for rural tourism that is inaccessible by car and would be harmed by increasing car use.

4.40 As with Dover, Shepway has a large number of visitors passing through or near to the town on the Eurotunnel, or on their way to/from Dover. Although there is some potential for overnight stays here Shepway do not see this as a main target area. Visitors in transit to the continent or other parts of the UK generally have their itinerary planned around their ultimate destination and so are less likely to stop off on the way. The Committee was told that roughly 95% of trade associated with the tunnel is UK based travellers from the midlands or north who are staging their journey rather than visitors from the mainland Europe.⁴⁹

4.41 There remains some concern that insufficient benefit to the County and the coastal towns in particular accrues from the Channel Tunnel

“There is scope to expand tourist expenditure in Kent as a result of the tunnel so long as appropriate funding mechanisms are in place. This will require high quality attractions and accommodation in well selected locations that are easily accessible from the motorway.”⁵⁰

Although as the recent job losses at Dover indicate there is some tension between the potential of the tunnel and surface links from Dover. Districts and KTA need to work in partnership to develop products that appeal to the European market.

4.42 The poor quality of rail links has a significant impact on the tourism industry in Thanet. Without fast services to the area Thanet is less attractive for day visitors from London who can reach towns like Brighton far quicker by train than Thanet. Recent announcements on the CTRL (D) services to East Kent appear to offer grounds for optimism that Thanet will have an increased potential to capitalise on the day-visitor market.

4.43 However as a general point it was agreed that train operating companies could do more to support the development of tourism through their marketing and in the way that they schedule services. The Committee was told that despite efforts on the part of local tourism operators Connex had failed to adapt their ticketing to reflect the needs of visitors who were unable to stay in the area as long as they would like because their return tickets did not allow sufficient flexibility. The Committee would welcome constructive dialogue between sector representatives and existing or future train operating companies.

⁴⁹ *KCC Select Committee on Regeneration of Coastal Towns Oct/Nov 2003 Ian Fell Vice Chairman Folkestone, Hythe and District Hotel and Catering Association*

⁵⁰ *SEAPORTS – South East, London, and East of England Regional Ports Study: Regeneration Analysis Report” p47 South East and Anglian Ports Local Authority Group (SEAPLAG) WSP Transportation 2002.*

4.44 Small towns and balanced development

Many, although not all, of the smaller towns indicated concerns about how a growth in tourism might impact on the town's character. Some towns such as Broadstairs and Whitstable are already popular tourist destinations. This creates difficulties with traffic congestion and over-crowding, particularly during peak periods. Hythe fares slightly better in this respect, although it is popular with day visitors traffic flow is generally good. It was noted that in each of these towns there is a local body that focuses on the development of tourism at the town level and co-ordinates annual events such as festivals. This level of co-ordination appears to be vital and may serve to contribute to the town's identity.

4.45 The Committee found that other smaller towns, like Herne Bay and Deal, still had further potential for growth as tourist destinations. In Herne Bay the current market is predominantly made up of day visitors who come to the town for its seaside appeal. There are plans to consider the development of the pier but currently the town does not rely on any single, main-draw, attraction. The proximity of Canterbury is possibly a factor that overshadows the town. Although many hotels have closed the Committee felt that there could be potential for hotel accommodation to serve Canterbury and the wider East Kent area. Gastronomic tourism could be another area, which could be exploited, as at the town's near neighbour Whitstable. Some local representatives identified the potential threat to this and other towns of retail units being taken over by businesses that add little to the town's appeal.

4.46 In Deal there is some concern about the scale of development potential. Deal was likened to Whitstable in size, but there is concern within the local community about the way in which a growth in tourism could threaten the character of the town. There is a view that the potential for growth will be to attract older visitors without children. Deal Town Council told the Committee that although the town is limited in what it can realistically cope with without losing its inherent character. The town would be greatly diminished without tourism and there is a need to develop broaden the horizons.

4.47 The smaller towns of the area (Sandwich, New Romney and Lydd) are less likely to sustain longer visits but it is important that tourism facilities in outlying areas are included in efforts to develop the tourism product. Although none of these small towns are directly on the coastline their proximity to significant areas of natural beauty and interest (Sandwich Bay, Romney Marsh) creates potential for "green" tourism such as walking, cycling, and bird-watching as a complement to their heritage appeal.

4.48 Town centre development

Town centre development, a growth in retail facilities and a greater variety of dining and leisure opportunities to support the evening economy are important in the context of tourism. Although town centres may be the backdrop or a secondary reason for visits the quality and appearance of the town centres is significant.

One hotelier from Folkestone, told the Committee that

“People come back to my hotel and say that the Old Town looks awful and is a disgrace. Until that area is sorted out, that is what people’s impression of town are.”⁵¹

In Folkestone tourism in its widest sense (i.e. including visitors coming to the town for shopping) is important to the redevelopment of the town. Because the emphasis is placed on an overall uplift in the quality of the urban environment, the kind of changes that are planned to take place in Folkestone are likely to benefit local people more than would discrete tourism facilities.

4.49 Dover, with the significant exception of the transit visitors passing through on journeys elsewhere by ferry, conforms more closely to the model of an inland town than it does to the seaside resort model. Its seaside location is incidental to the reasons why people may choose to visit the town and it has few of the traditional seaside attractions.

4.50 The development of Dover has been shaped by its significance as the world’s busiest passenger ferry terminal. The seafront area is owned by the Harbour Board and dominated by the port. Townwall Street, that links the new A20 extension with the port, effectively divides the town from the harbour area. The district tourism officers are working with the Harbour Board to improve signage and access to the harbour area from the town centre.

4.51 Dover’s image has suffered in recent years because it became associated with asylum seekers; this perception did little for the towns overall image but also gave the impression that there were no hotels or B&Bs available because of the demand for these facilities from asylum seekers. Dover’s District Tourism Officer said that this perception was always out of all proportion with reality, and now that the flow of asylum seekers have lessened the town can begin put right some of the misconceptions.

4.52 The main tourist attraction in the town of Dover is Dover Castle, this attracts a significant number of visitors. The heritage theme is consistent with many of the other attractions in East Kent and may complement popular sites such as Canterbury Cathedral. In addition to the Castle the town also has a museum with its archeologically significant Bronze Age boat. Each of these attractions is of high quality, however the concern is the overall context of the town.

4.53 The town’s retail facilities and evening attractions may lack the appeal necessary to pull in larger numbers. The District council has little to invest in supporting further growth, and the recent announcement of redundancies will do little to support investor confidence in the area.

4.54 In Margate and Ramsgate both towns have established town centre management partnerships to co-ordinate the development of their town centres. The Committee was told that the town centres need to be made more appealing to encourage businesses to be set up there but without tourism as the main driver the

⁵¹ *KCC Select Committee on Regeneration of Coastal Towns Oct/Nov 2003. Ian Fell Vice Chairman Folkestone, Hythe and District Hotel and Catering Association.*

incentive would be lost. In Margate the Turner Centre is already having an impact on other attractions in the area. Whilst it takes a long time the momentum needs to be kept going to bring in private sector to investment.

4. 56 Tourism to support regeneration

The Committee found evidence to indicate that tourism will be a key driver for regeneration in some of the most deprived parts of East Kent. Moreover even in areas where tourism is likely to contribute to a lesser proportion of economic growth it is still an integral component of local economies. It is also apparent that where the pre-conditions for growth in tourism are not in place, or require improvement, the actions necessary to support growth are likely to be costly and long term. There is an uncertain future for sustained support from the EU and the East Kent coastal towns suffer a double disadvantage because they experience nationally significant levels of deprivation in the country's second wealthiest region.

4.57 The potential for tourism in East Kent is interwoven with the fabric of the everyday needs of local people. No tourist attraction operates in a vacuum, but attractions like large themes parks, or the Eden Centre have their own identity that is only partly dependent on their locality. In East Kent the towns where local people live and work *are* the attraction. Public spaces, and in many instances private properties, are the "product" in tourism terms. This can be problematic; maintaining and developing such a diverse and intangible factor as character can be costly, subjective, and may highlight contradictory priorities. Alternatively in many areas the demands of visitors can be seen as complementary to the needs of local people. It is in this sense perhaps that tourism is most valuable.

4.58 There is a clear benefit for local people in having a well-maintained public environment, job opportunities, effective transport links, and high quality retail and leisure areas. None of these come without a cost; it may be asked whether any money and resources might be more profitably used elsewhere in supporting manufacturing, high-tech industries, or freight and passenger transport for example. The Committee recognises that while tourism creates a significant number of jobs (tourism is the second largest sector in Thanet for instance, accounting for approximately 13% of jobs, second only to manufacturing 16%) they are often poorly paid, and in some cases seasonal or low skilled.

4.59 In the past tourism has been central to the identity of coastal towns, their dependence on the sector prepared the conditions for decline as tastes changed. The Committee's findings would suggest that tourism has some potential to lead growth in other sectors. The core of this argument is that the vibrancy and image of a thriving tourist town/area will in turn attract investors, businesses, and just as importantly their employees, to create a more balanced social, economic and demographic picture. The Department for Environment also made this point by in PPG21

"Tourism makes a major contribution to the national economy and to the prosperity of many cities, towns and rural areas. Its continuing growth generates a range of economic activity and new job opportunities. Because it depends on

high quality environment, it can act as a positive force for environmental protection and enhancement.”⁵²

This connection is difficult to prove; arguably there are precedents such as the growth of Brighton. Equally it may be said that Brighton already has locational and social advantages that the East Kent towns do not enjoy: proximity to London and large H.E. student population. But if the coastal towns are to maximise their locational advantage there would appear to be little logic in ignoring the potential presented by the natural coastal environment and the built environment that has developed around it; these are assets that need to be valued and utilised.

4.60 The fact remains that the image of the coastal towns cannot be changed without resources, either for “massive” single projects or more gradual, integrated developments. The Committee heard arguments for both. The first said that all the stakeholders in Kent need to be better at accessing funds from the public and private sectors and that large amounts need to be spent if the coastal towns are to optimise their potential. The second argument said that East Kent already has resources that could be better exploited at the small scale by product development, marketing, and co-ordination. Both points are inevitably valid, but whether or not significant funding is available efforts should be continued to improve the competitiveness of the tourism sector. The Committee was given confidence by the constructive partnerships developed at a local and County level to develop support for tourism.

4.61 The Committee spoke to local industry representatives and stakeholders. It is clear that in many areas partners are working together to sustain and develop the sector. It was also apparent that the industry needs champions at a local level. Not all towns have a tourism association; not all have a town council. Those that do have a local group (whatever its format) to coherently take up the cause for tourism within the district are in a better position. This point was also made in the Sea Changes report, which said that vision and leadership are crucial for resort regeneration.

4.62 There are difficult debates ahead for areas that need to determine their priorities. Although some feel that tourism already gets more attention than it warrants there is another view that the more outward looking concerns that are so important for tourism are the first to be overlooked when budgets tighten. Tourism projects need to be embedded in the local economy and community to ensure the support and understanding of all; because tourism in the coastal towns does not happen at a physical remove from local people, but in their midst. This point was also made in the 1999 DCMS report “Tomorrow’s Tourism” in their guidance for spreading the benefits of sustainable tourism

“encourage tourism businesses to source and promote the use of local goods(e.g. regional beers, and speciality foods) and services, employ local people and offer discounts to encourage local people to use facilities provided for tourists, encourage tourism management partnerships between local authorities tourism operators and local

⁵² *Planning Policy Guidance (PPG21) Tourism 1.1 Department of Environment November 1992.*

communities so that tourism strategies are developed to benefit both residents and visitors”⁵³

Tourism is an issue of strategic significance and the sector should not only have an independent voice, but that voice should be heard at the Local Strategic Partnership level.

4.63 The smaller towns in the region may generate smaller visitor numbers than their larger neighbours but the rural hinterlands and smaller towns are a vital component in the overall attractiveness of their district’s popularity. Their importance should not be underplayed in district’s tourism strategies. The Committee supports the recommendation made in the 1999 SEEDA report on rural tourism

“Although funding support may come from a variety of sources, the links between market towns and countryside, and seaside towns and their surrounding coast and countryside, are particularly strong and should be reflected in co-ordinated regeneration initiatives.”⁵⁴

4.64 While heritage and character continue to be important aspects of tourism in East Kent the sector needs to innovate and to explore new markets. During the review reference was made to the poor image of the south coast resorts; tradition has negative as well as positive associations. It is not possible to be prescriptive about which markets individual towns should exploit, but it is apparent that the interests of local people will be better served by developments that emphasise quality and aim to encourage sustainable tourism that values the natural and built environment rather than conflicts with it.

4.65 **Tourism to support regeneration - Key Points**

The key points highlighted in the Tourism phase of the review are listed below and are reflected within recommendation 11 as a whole.

- All towns should seek to involve local partners in developing a vision.
- Tourism should have an independent voice at LSP level.
- Statutory agencies should take a lead role in working with train operating companies to identify priorities.
- The potential for tourism as a vehicle for community development, as well as structural social change, should be explored.
- Opportunities for product development should consider the involvement of local people.
- Statutory agencies and businesses should, at the earliest opportunity, identify a marketing strategy that meets the aspirations, and finds the support, of all partners.
- All parties with a stake in the future of the Dreamland site at Margate should seek to resolve the uncertainty over its future in the best interests of local people.

⁵³ “*Tomorrows Tourism – A Growth Industry for the New Millennium*” p67 DCMS 1999

⁵⁴ “*Rural Tourism in the South East – A Strategy for Future Action* p19. *The Countryside Agency/SEEDA 2002*

- Where there are concerns over brown tourist information signs these should first be addressed to Babtie as the responsible agency.
- Whitstable's success in developing a niche market has come at a cost to the local environment in terms of congestion and overcrowding. TSE and the County need to work with the Harbour Board and the Area Members Panel, and District Tourism team to develop strategies to manage the growth of tourism potential and ensure that this potential can be optimised rather than dissipated with the support of nearby towns, in particular Herne Bay.
- Following concerns that privatised tourist information centres (TICs) are promoting accommodation not included within star-rating quality schemes the Committee strongly recommends that the County and KTA establish a dialogue with privatised TICs to ensure that this situation is remedied.
- To maximise the benefit to the County of the Channel Tunnel, districts and KTA will need to work together to develop products that attract visitors from mainland Europe.
- The Committee found some evidence that small businesses and local agencies experienced some difficulty in keeping up to date with developments the range of grants that are available to support projects. The Committee hopes that through the mechanism of the "Tourism House" any information regarding financial support will be readily available.

Recommendation 11: KCC should seek to explore with key stakeholders/partners the best way to deliver a cohesive approach to tourism in relation to regeneration of the coastal towns and consider the key points highlighted.

CHAPTER FIVE: TRANSPORT AND INFRASTRUCTURE

5.0 As outlined earlier in the report, successful regeneration depends on several factors, including transport and infrastructure. The Regional Economic Strategy (RES) outlines four strategic transport actions relevant to SMART growth. These include to

- ensure transport system supports national and international priorities
- improve cross regional movements
- support economic development and regeneration

5.1 For Kent as a whole and East Kent there is need to improve both transport and infrastructure as an effective transport system (roads and public transport) is fundamental for continuing competitiveness, to attract private-sector investment and increase economic benefits to the coastal towns. Increasing connectivity in Kent and the region as a whole is paramount. Although there is good road access to London, travel around East Kent is less satisfactory. Current rail links are also poor with estimated journey time for 70 miles taking 90 minutes. The Transport plan reflects a substantial planned increase in transport investment in the region;

“the south East has a transport system which is failing to deliver. We must move towards a transport system that supports business securely and reliably. We also need to enable mobility for all in society, recognising that this means much more than simply access to a car.”

and given

“the strong links between transport infrastructure and economic regeneration and growth, the increased funding for local authorities under the Transport Ten-year Plan is essential to enable authorities to provide local solutions to local issues.” Smith institute.

5.2 The Regional Transport Strategy (RTS) provides a framework to ensure that

“investment programmes of local authorities, transport providers and stakeholders in the transport sector complement and support the wider regional objective of delivering a more sustainable pattern of development ... and link transport planning to the economic development and social and other goals of the region.”⁵⁵

For example the draft RTS outlined priorities given to investment in the transport system that supports delivery of the spatial strategy by developing the network of regional hubs and gateways (e.g. Folkestone and Dover) – Policy T1, inclusion of proposals for infrastructure to maintain and enhance the role of gateway ports (Dover, Ramsgate and Channel Tunnel) and niche markets. Policy T8 and to support economic development in East Kent through investment in improved accessibility.⁵⁶ It outlines a region where there are areas currently poorly connected (East Kent) and

⁵⁵ *South East England Regional Assembly – www.southeast-ra.gov.uk 02/02/04*

⁵⁶ *SEERA Jan 2003 – From Crisis to Cutting Edge – Draft Regional Transport Strategy.*

also conversely areas affected by success with severe congestion causing unreliable and protracted journeys, reducing business performance and productivity for the region as a whole. The vision is

“ a high quality transport system to act as a catalyst for continued economic growth and provide for an improved quality of life for all in a sustainable and socially inclusive manner...”(draft Regional Transport Strategy 2003)

5.3 Transport and peripherality

East Kent requires considerable investment to re-vitalise their local economy. Peripherality as discussed in Chapter Four is an influential factor on the economy of coastal towns. In considering issues of peripherality there is a need to look at communication (ICT), rail and road links to the coastal centres. A major infrastructure enhancement, such as the extension of CTRL fast rail services into EK are seen as a catalyst to economic revival by reducing the relative geographical peripherality of its coastal communities.

“Via EK AIF the area has sought to influence the central govt and SRA by presenting an integrated strategy that justified and strengthened the case for these major resources from central govt and to demonstrate how the improved infrastructure fits with the wider economic objectives.” (LGA CSIG)

5.4 Kent International Airport

One of the key weaknesses for coastal towns is accessibility. The Committee heard that it is important to think of creative and innovative ways to provide transport. A great opportunity for East Kent is air travel from Kent International Airport at Manston, especially coupled with the growth of Ashford. There is a renewed focus and vigour at Kent International Airport, with Planestation Group focusing on airport development. There has already been considerable investment in the airport (approximately £25 million) to aid its development and future expected returns of profit. Initially there had been a focus on the cargo market (now 44 - 45,000 tonnes of freight) whilst the initial development was underway as the passenger market has the greatest volatility.

5.5 The airport has several strands to its future business, these are passenger travel, cargo with a possibility to expand the transport of fresh produce, and ‘wide bodied’ flights into the US in the next 3 years. It is hoped that this would coincide with the celebration of the 400th anniversary of settlers in the US in 2007 and promote economic links with the State of Virginia. An asset and key benefit of air travel from Manston will be the shorter check in times than at Gatwick or Heathrow, estimated to be approximately 45 minutes offering a quick transfer, and savings to local business on connections to London Heathrow/Gatwick for example Pfizers. The proposed expansion of air travel at Manston would improve transport connections (with 29 route destinations) and also act as a driver within EK as has the potential to create jobs with the opening of EU jet business. It is estimated that 200 new jobs will be created and lead to an opportunity for development around the airport. Currently expansion has been allowed for up to 6 million passengers by 2021 in KCC structure

plan policies. If expansion forecasts were met, employment would also need to increase to meet increased demand. Some of these jobs will be low value added jobs, but it is envisaged that this expansion would also increase the number of hi-tech businesses clustered near to the airport and hi tech higher wage jobs. This is an excellent prospect for Thanet and the other coastal towns, creating jobs and promoting the area as a regional centre. There is also a commitment within Planestation Group to employ and train people from the local population. The Committee heard that future development would need to consider the extension of the current terminal and providing more car parking.

5.6 Manston currently has poor infrastructure links to London, however the future development of domestic CTRL services will combat some of this. It was also stated that it was not necessary to have direct rail links to Manston initially, but that an express bus lane from Manston to the coastal towns and the CTRL domestic services/train network would also work, as it has for instance at Gatwick. It was however highlighted that the successful and continued development of charter flights to the US and other long haul destinations would be dependent on CTRL domestic and travel times to London. A concern was also raised that as Manston Cargo transport develops this could lead to increased transport pressures on the roads, therefore rail connections will become increasingly important. The Committee were informed that the SRA and Highways Agency want to see a growth in scheduled services before investing in transport links, rather than pre-investing and waiting for services to follow. As Kent International Airport develops it will be necessary to look at its potential impact (especially to the north). The expansion will hopefully open up opportunities for development and therefore contributions to the necessary infrastructure (roads/rail) that will be needed.

5.7 A current issue is the distribution of freight from Manston. At the moment freight is moved to a distribution centre in Hemel Hempstead, where a majority then returns to Kent. It was noted that East Kent Partnership and KMEB had supported a survey to consider the possibility of establishing or relocating a regional distribution centre in Kent to distribute directly to certain markets and reduce transport needs.

Recommendation 12: The Select Committee welcomes and supports the proposed development of Kent International Airport. KCC (Officers and Members) should continue to lobby government for investment in the infrastructure to support this growth and consider promoting and encouraging the development of an express bus service to the airport (in partnership) to link with CTRL development.

5.8 Integrated Kent Franchise (IKF) and the Channel Tunnel Rail Link (CTRL)

The Integrated Kent Franchise (IKF) will provide the rail services to Kent, SE London and parts of Sussex and aims to integrate high speed services using CTRL with existing services. The potential of new CTRL domestic services will provide a 'major boost' to the East Kent towns, and will add to the promotion of the area. It was emphasised that 2007 is a 'key trigger' with the proposed completion of the CTRL link, adding to the attractiveness of Folkestone and Margate and raising interest from inward investors. This is a key issue to convince investors that coastal towns in East Kent are close to London and not 'peripheral and at the end of the line' but have good access and are well connected.

5.9 The Strategic Rail Authority (SRA) has recently announced that CTRL trains will run from Ebsfleet and Ashford in 2007 and extend to the rest of the network in 2008. This delay, due to the tight building programme for CTRL domestic service (CTRL DS) trains has been disappointing but the benefit of CTRL even if one year delayed is very welcome. The increased rail service would make a major difference in Thanet where it is estimated that one in three of the population do not have a car. At the time of collecting evidence the new trains had not yet been ordered by the SRA, pending a future decision on services to Dover. The view was expressed that the trains for the rest of the network could be ordered ahead of this decision as trains for the Dover section would not add to economies of scale. Concern was raised that the delay could see people combining a drive to Ashford/Ebsfleet during the first year of CTRL service or possible coach service, followed by their possible reluctance to change to rail from the coastal towns in 2008. The CTRL domestic service link is key to the future regeneration of Dover. A decision regarding Dover and the future possibility of CTRL services and resultant works to the Shakespeare Tunnel is imminent. The Committee would like to encourage and support the promotion of CTRL services to Dover.

5.10 It was highlighted to the Committee that both CTRL DS and the standard rail network are key to the connectivity and prosperity of Kent coastal towns and that there is a need to secure a better future service. The Kent response to the SRA Integrated Kent Franchise (IKF)⁵⁷ consultation raised several issues apart from the importance of CTRL services to Dover, including the need to balance meeting capacity and ability to meet growth and improve reliability of service. This reflects the need for 'enhancements' rather than replacements of existing (somewhat antiquated) stock, signalling etc. Some of the key concerns were the lack of account of significant growth agenda planned for Kent and London; impact of restrictions to London Termini operations reducing choice of train service destination; ineffective dispersal of passengers arriving at St. Pancras and need for improvements in standards of punctuality and reliability.

Recommendation 13: The Select Committee endorse and support the response to the SRA especially improvements to the reliability and punctuality of services and the provision of CTRL domestic services to the Kent coastal towns including Dover, and support the continued lobbying from KCC SPD to this aim.

5.11 Currently there are four bidders considering the IKF, with final tenders documents being issued in the Summer 2004. When the choice of the successful operator is finalised there is an opportunity to link with local bus operators in order that services can work more complementarily, as to promote connectivity it is essential to maintain good links with the towns as well as to London.

5.12 Both the CTRL domestic service and Manston International Airport development will be important for retaining current investors (for example importance of fast connections to London and Europe for Pfizers), attracting new inward investment and the future economic prosperity of the EK coastal Towns.

⁵⁷ KCC April 2004, *Integrated Kent Rail Franchise – a Response to the SRA consultation paper*.

“With the coming of high speed access to London through CTRL, and the development of Manston both as an airport and as the nucleus for high tech business growth, and the intrinsic coastal attractiveness of EKCT, it should be possible to encourage the inward relocation of new commuters from the higher paid sector so as to increase the spend within the area. This will again require investment in up-market housing and the quality of education/healthcare/lifestyle provision necessary to attract this segment.”⁵⁸

5.13 Transport Schemes and the Local Transport Plan (LTP)

A key barrier to prosperity of the EK coastal towns is their physical location. There is reasonable road access but cross connections are poor. The Thanet way is an asset and has improved transport across north Kent. Three schemes highlighted to be important that impact on the EK coastal town regeneration and continued prosperity in particular are

- East Kent Access scheme (phase 1 and phase 2) – detailed in the LTP
- A2 Lydden/Dover A20 – to upgrade road access to the port
- and also the A28.

KCC are promoting these schemes as a high priority for Kent and the coastal towns, but it was reported to the Committee that they are a relative low priority for the Highways Agency, despite emphasis from key business in the community of the importance of these schemes. The recent focus and emphasis on the growth areas (Thames Gateway and Ashford) impacts on the priority of these schemes. This increases the difficulty of obtaining the necessary funds for transport/infrastructure improvements unless they are attracted through regeneration even though the draft Regional Transport Strategy highlighted the priority to support economic development in East Kent through investment in improved accessibility. Local business has therefore supported improvements to the infrastructure through financial contributions, e.g. Pfizer and Dover Harbour Board.

5.14 The East Kent Access scheme has three aims – to improve strategic transport links between East Kent, the rest of the country and Europe; improve transport movements and assist the re-development of the area.⁵⁹ This involves improvements to rail services; local integrated transport networks to improve facilities for public transport, cycling, walking, and major road improvement schemes. The scheme is key for the redevelopment of the Thanet-Sandwich corridor and should aid regeneration of EK by providing a transport system to encourage investment and support existing strengths of the area. The expansion of Pfizer and realising future development opportunities along the A256 and A299/A253 corridors rely partly on the improvements to both the strategic and local transport networks. The Committee acknowledged the importance of the improvements to the A256 and cycle route 15 (EK Access phase1) to Pfizer business, improving access to Pfizer and new development sites. The importance of this to Pfizer is illustrated by their significant contribution of land and finances to the scheme alongside SEEDA and GOSE.

⁵⁸ KCC 15 April 2004, *Regeneration of East Kent Coastal Towns Select Committee, Business Link Kent.*

⁵⁹ KCC July 2000, *Local Transport Plan for Kent 2001/02 to 2005/2006.*

5.15 Phase 2 encompasses the remaining improvements to the A299/A253 and A256 is a remaining priority for business and improving access. It is important that this scheme proceeds and completes in the near future. Following public consultation detail of phase 2 has recently been amended. Continued business growth is important for East Kent. A principal driver is the growth of Pfizer and the potential increase in jobs over the next ten years. There is a need to facilitate this growth and enable the positive impact to spread more broadly. A key aspect of this is the completion of phase 1 and phase 2 of EK access infrastructure plans. KCC are in the process of submitting a bid (by end of July 2004) for the funds (£61 million) needed to complete phase 2. The Committee emphasise the importance of this scheme and support the bid submission.

5.16 In 2003 KCC also delivered a programme of integrated transport schemes, including providing for the mobility impaired and reducing social exclusion, developing pedestrian corridors in Folkestone and Deal Area Responsive Transport (DART).⁶⁰

5.17 Whitstable rather than needing improved transport to attract regeneration and investors is the opposite and needs improvements as a result of its success. It was highlighted that Whitstable needs the corresponding infrastructure to tackle parking and road issues aggravated by the success of the town.

5.18 Public Transport by Bus

Bus services are of particular importance in the EK coastal towns as car ownership is generally lower than in the rest of Kent. The need for evening and Sunday services was highlighted but also that these were affected by low usage due to previous unavailability, fear of vandalism and higher costs of running off-peak and evening services. These services are important for EKCT as much of the local industry operates a shift pattern.

5.19 The introduction of 'Real Time Information (RTI)' systems in Thanet was as a result of an initial public perception survey carried out in Margate. This highlighted issues regarding punctuality and reliability, and also frequency and information on late or cancelled services or information within bus stops as key to future improvement and successful promotion of public transport.⁶¹ The annual plan states that RTI could address these issues and in Maidstone had increased the number of bus users satisfied. RTI displays 'real time' and gives priority to buses at major traffic signal junctions. This improves availability of information, punctuality and perception of good links and connectivity.

5.20 Kent County Council are promoting 'Quality Partnership' with the local bus operators. Stagecoach have a 95% target to run within 5 minutes of their published times. This has had a 98% success rate (except in Canterbury where its 80%). The partnerships promote

- easy access to vehicles
- positive ticketing
- joint marketing initiatives

⁶⁰ KCC July 2003, *Local Transport Plan for Kent 2001-2006 Annual Progress Report 2003*.

For example the Thanet Quality Bus Partnership Project should bring benefit to the EKCT by securing investment for new buses with low floor, easy access. The committee was informed that a specific benefit to the coastal towns will be the introduction of the Thanet Urban Bus Challenge Scheme in October 2004. This will provide 18 new low floor buses for Ramsgate, Margate and Broadstairs with a direct linkage to the Queen Elizabeth Queen Mother Hospital (QEQM) every 10 minutes.

5.21 The provision of emergency replacement bus services, for example to support the rail network if unexpected closure was also difficult compared to establishing an alternative service if the closure is pre- planned, as a result emergency substitute services are adhoc in response.

5.22 In conclusion as regeneration is successful there will be continuing increase of demand for transport, so there is a need to invest in transport infrastructure but also a corresponding need to tackle demand for road transport. There are viable alternatives such as air travel, rail, bus, bike and the use of Information Communication Technology (ICT) to change travel and work behaviour through flexible and home working.

CHAPTER SIX: SKILLS AND LEARNING

6.1 Skills and learning are vital for successful regeneration and business development, as if the skills are available investment and jobs should follow. The Learning Skills Council refers to Skills as ‘the nation’s competitive edge’.⁶¹ Education therefore has a vital role to play in the EK coastal towns. The steady long-term decline of seaside resorts and tourism has had a serious impact on the coastal economies in Kent. Although the seaside towns have maintained employment in the tourism sector, in-migration is out stripping local employment growth, leading to an imbalance in the coastal labour markets. In-migration tends to be by people who are economically inactive or ‘winding down’ economically. There are high levels of unemployment in the coastal towns, also the employment available is often seasonal and low-paid and low skilled. The migration or absence of high skill jobs in the coastal community economies compounds the spiral of decline, with the ‘brain drain effect’, or failure to attract or retain graduates. Young people graduate elsewhere and do not return or move to the coastal towns or they graduate locally and then move to where the jobs are available.

6.2 The challenge of the low wage economy and the ‘brain drain effect’ are clearly evident in East Kent, with a shortage of people with qualifications at level 3 or above and companies unable to find people with the necessary skills base. It was reported that Kent and Medway have more people with no qualifications and fewer level 3 or level 4 than either the SE or England average; and 6 out of 10 the lowest ranked districts in the SE.⁶² Thanet is particularly affected with over a third of the workforce with no qualifications.⁶³ With the future prospect of global change to the labour market with service and manufacturing industries increasingly moving overseas for cheap educated labour force, it is not sufficient to prepare the workforce of tomorrow for the current economy. There is a clear need to prepare for the future, focusing on creativity and problem solving to stimulate and meet needs of the future creative industries. The attraction and retention of graduates will be important for the future development of the coastal towns as they reportedly spawn many of the new creative industries and bring a strong community element. Currently within EK there is an unskilled low wage labour force and a need to aspire to establishing a high value and skilled workforce. The perception that there is not a strong skill base acts as a barrier to attracting investment and attaining the economic potential of the area. There is a need to create a skilled workforce for existing business and to support potential growth; and also to anticipate what the requirements will be in 20 years time. How the workforce becomes increasingly skilled to participate in the workplace is a key issue for all of the coastal towns in Kent. It will be necessary to ensure that with the development of an appropriately skilled workforce, better paid, sustainable jobs are created. ‘On the edge’ stated that the Government desire for balanced communities, is important as coastal towns have a net influx of economically inactive and dependent population and therefore need to consider

⁶¹ Jan 2004 LSC, *Learning and Skills Council Annual Report and Accounts 2002-2003*

⁶² 7 April 2004 – *Kent and Medway Overview document, tabled at Select Committee on regeneration of EKCT.*

⁶³ March 2004, *LSC for Kent and Medway Annual Plan 2004-2005*

“... developing measures to attract broader socio-economic groups to the coast and counteract out migration of the more skilled workforce, through diversification and the exploration of opportunities for further education, training and employment”.

6.3 Intellectual capital is central to future economic development and the establishment of a knowledge economy within Kent. There is a clear link between the need to foster the knowledge economy and building skills in the local workforce. Key to developing a greater intellectual and innovation capacity within the EK coastal towns is the provision and attainment of higher and further education and strong links between business and the local intellectual pot. Traditionally these towns have had a low skills base, which in turn does not attract inward investment or new jobs. Without the creation of new jobs the LGA states that it is also likely that most regeneration initiatives will be unsuccessful.⁶⁴

6.4 The response to the agenda for developing new economies is key and the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) and the Kent Learning Partnership have a fundamental role in this. The Framework for Regional Employment and Skills Action (FRESA) develops and delivers an agreed plan to address the skills and employment needs of employers and individuals within the region. It reflects regional productivity growth, identifies ways to engage employers and people in workforce development and ensures the supply of high quality training provision. The regional arrangements enable response to particular characteristics of communities and neighbourhoods e.g. coastal towns.⁶⁵ The Action SouthEast Partnership is responsible for achieving these actions. Within this framework there is a need for KCC, business, universities, the LSC and FE sector to work together to meet basic and employer skills issues and retain graduates within the locality.

6.5 The LSC has a clear goal to improve skills of young people and adults and is key to the Government's skill strategy. Their core aim is to raise the number of people learning new skills and gaining qualifications, raising skill levels to improve national competitiveness.⁶⁶ The aim of the LSC for Kent and Medway (LSCKM) is that

“by working with our partners, by 2010, young people and adults in Kent and Medway will have the knowledge and productive skills matching the best in England.”

Steps to achieve this have included Centres of Vocational Excellence, Profit from Learning initiative (detailed below) and joint ventures between schools and colleges.⁶⁷ The Annual plan outlines the priorities for Government and the LSC, and details the priorities for action with partners or individuals, such as raising skill levels. Business Link Kent and Locate in Kent both work with the LSC, FE and HE providers to help develop the well trained, skilled workforce vital to attract inward investors.

⁶⁴ Sept 2002, LGA response to Urban Affairs Select Committee Inquiry into the effectiveness of Government Regeneration Initiatives.

⁶⁵ 2003 Smith Institute, *Growing the economy: the local dimension*. Edited by Ed Balls, John Healey MP and Cathy Koester

⁶⁶ Jan 2004, LSC - Learning and Skills Council Annual Report and Accounts 2002-2003

⁶⁷ LSC March 2004, LSC for Kent and Medway Annual Plan 2004-2005

Within Kent there are several skills and learning priorities for developing Kent's economy. These are (as detailed in Kent Prospects) to

- promote programmes that support take – up of basic ICT skills
- encourage lifelong learning
- promote workforce development programmes
- improve links between business and education
- improve job readiness of school leavers entering employment
- improve basic skills

6.6 Building the Skills

As detailed earlier in this chapter there is a serious issue of skill levels within Kent and Medway, as well as the coastal towns. To achieve the higher wage higher skill jobs within EK, schools need to have people attaining better/higher skills. The Committee was informed that there is a need to improve attainment levels across the board and that in Kent 18% are underachieving. The coastal towns in Kent have social issues of a community in decline, for example low self-esteem, vandalism and high levels of 'churn' in school attendance. The development of creative industries should through the arts raise self esteem and foster a new way of looking at things, and increase problem solving ability for the future.

6.7 It was explained that if there is no demand from local jobs for education, it was perceived there was little need to try to attain it. It was stated to the Committee that it is important to give the right signals to pupils that School is important, raise aspirations, self esteem, expectations and ambitions and increase attainment and future prospects. The involvement of parents, particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds, in raising expectations of their children is key to raising achievement levels. It is essential that children are encouraged to achieve and early years learning is key to this. Arts developments in East Kent present opportunities for regeneration, for example iconic development such as Turner Contemporary have the potential to raise the profile and to stimulate an entrepreneurial element and raise confidence and expectations in the community. The opening of Ramsgate School over the holidays to support pupils (who otherwise would not be supported) with homework, materials and monitoring was commended by the Committee.

6.8 The agenda to raise intellectual capital and building local skills is being supported through several major development initiatives. Funding contributions from the private sector unlocked £25 million from central Government for the Ramsgate School and should hopefully unlock a similar amount for the Channel School, Folkestone. The funding and changes implemented should help these schools to improve and set a positive trend to work through the education system and prepare pupils for the future.

6.9 The new Folkestone/Channel academy funded by central government, local business and KCC will provide a Further Education/Higher Education facility in Folkestone. This will link with the creative quarter being developed in Folkestone, with education and life-long learning at the core of the vision, linking deprived areas/groups with the new opportunities in the future knowledge economy. This presents a huge driver for Shepway and has important strategic impact for the whole

area. It is hoped that the new academy and the creation of a creative quarter in Folkestone will be a catalyst for the regeneration of the town, encourage a café culture and as the market changes also encourage investment in property development. The Academy will implement an innovative approach to the provision of pupil support and guidance. The focus will be on enabling students to make progress in learning, developing skills and increasing knowledge. A sophisticated 'pastoral system' will be central to the Academy, providing individual support across all areas of learning and development. It is envisaged that people will graduate with hi-tech skills but be able to use these locally.

6.10 The development of the new Marlowe Academy in Ramsgate will deliver an innovative curriculum, providing a range of learning opportunities and teaching approaches and provide facilities and expertise for pupils to excel in the performing arts and business. The Academy will work with other local schools, community organisations, local residents; and involve the local business community and further and higher education colleges in the daily life and curriculum of the Academy. The site will incorporate provision of performing arts space and facilities, community library, Children's centre, adult education and Business Incubator Units. The incubator units will link with the local economy and act as a curriculum resource, providing a range of specialist expertise.⁶⁸

6.11 Schools, and higher and further education facilities in EK are vital to tackle the perception of a low skills base within EK, and change the opinion of inward investors that EK is not so peripheral that it lacks the skills needed. They are also very important as underpin the development of an entrepreneurial culture in Kent. Business also has a role to play in building skills and the knowledge economy at the local level.

6.12 Profit from learning (PFL) is a training initiative, backed by Government to up skill the workforce to NVQ2 in basic or occupational skills in Kent and Medway. Business Link Kent explained that the initiative is open to employers with staff aged between 19 and 65 with fewer than 5 GCSE A-C grades and those who would benefit from improving their written and verbal communication skills, numeracy skills and English as a second language.⁶⁹ The scheme will run until the end of August 2005. Since it was set up in September 2003, PFL has provided training for 498 learners in EK with 500 more identified for training. The predominate area of occupational training across the whole of the country has been within the healthcare sector. The Learning skills Council has obtained funding to extend this project to include NVQ 3 and 4 training to enhance skills of the workforce.

6.13 Building an Enterprise culture

Schools and business are important in helping to build an enterprise culture, by persuading young people that establishing a business can be a career. Business Link Kent are running 'look before you leap' workshops to give skills for basic business start up and promoting business as a career option. The Select Committee was informed that to encourage/develop innovative capacity it is important to create strong links between schools and the business community to foster an entrepreneur

⁶⁸ KCC - Marlowe Academy briefing note 24 June 2004

⁶⁹ Business Link Kent.com – www.helpkent.net, accessed on 06/04/04

culture. Schools with start up units are a good starting point for building links with businesses. As business start-ups in the Folkestone Creative Quarter grow it is hoped that they will work with the new Academy, and that development would enable some of these to be incorporated on the same site. This provides the opportunity for pupils to gain a realistic work–experience, helps develop a work ethic and entrepreneurship and also a greater understanding of issues for business locally. There is a desire to encourage people to remain in the area and set up their own companies.

6.14 Technology Enterprise Kent (TEK) manages the New Entrepreneurial Scholarships (NES) in the SouthEast region. The NES has been specifically funded for the deprived wards including those in Thanet, Dover and Shepway. NES assists people to set up business in deprived wards, offering flexible support and finance and enables people to undertake business courses whilst claiming benefit. There are many barriers to work and training so funds were also made available to remove some of the obstacles, including the provision of child-care and transport. This was started as a one-year pilot, and it is hoped that will be extended to a 3-year scheme.

6.15 Construction Skills in Kent

The availability of construction skills is recognised as being inadequate to meet the growth agenda within the SE. Local development needs to support local jobs, however unless training is provided in a time frame corresponding to the demand/pressures for rapid growth Kent people will not benefit and much of the labour will be imported. This also offers the opportunity to develop skills for SMART build and off-site construction. The Kent Partnership is working towards having construction trainees on all major contracts to promote construction training within the area.

6.16 A construction centre of excellence has been established at the South Kent College in Folkestone. The Dover District Delta Fund has meant that training for the 'Step into Construction Course' has been free, widening its accessibility and giving future prospects within the construction industry.⁷⁰ The Lydd brick-laying scheme is the first scheme of its kind in the county set up by with a grant from the Rural Revival Fund. It has taught the art of bricklaying to children between the ages of 14-16, who then undertake projects in the community. It was initiated after complaints from the children that they were bored and put this suggestion forward.⁷¹ This has given useful life skills, helped promote the contribution made by the younger generation and built links within the community and is commended by the Committee. A KCC Select Committee has been established to look at the issue of construction skill availability and the growth agenda in more depth and is due to report to the Full County Council in November 2004.

6.17 Expansion of Manston International Airport and CTRL services

It was detailed to the Committee that a broad range of skills were needed for an airport, but across the whole workforce was a need for people with innate intelligence

⁷⁰ 6 May 2004, *Mercury (DM)*, *Building construction skills*.

⁷¹ 30 April 2004, *Folkestone Herald* – K. Tye *Rural revival grant funds Lydd, building life skills*. KM *Extra- Youngsters build on solid foundations*.

as the high priority is safety, an aptitude for work and a sense of responsibility. The Planestation Group is working with the Learning Skills Council, via the East Kent Partnership to raise awareness and identify the skills required to ensure this is translated into education programmes.

6.18 As detailed in Chapter five 2007 is a 'key trigger' with the proposed completion of the CTRL domestic service link to the coastal towns therefore it is necessary to build up skills now in preparation for the opportunities this should bring through inward investment and business growth.

6.19 Housing and the Labour Market

The availability of Housing also impacts on the availability of the labour force. The Regional Economic Strategy (SEEDA) stated the lack of decent affordable housing in coastal towns contributes to social exclusion, impacts on labour supply and economic prosperity, and generates longer distance commuting. This contributes to transport problems and effects the ability of both the public and private sector to recruit and retain staff.

CHAPTER SEVEN: SOCIAL COMMUNITY

7.1 Poverty and deprivation are rooted in low levels of economic activity - Poverty due to lack of jobs and skills, low earnings and poor health. Regeneration is a shared priority tackling both the symptoms and the underlying causes. The skewed demography of the coastal towns (higher than average number of elderly people and higher than average number of younger people, often with low skills and low employment prospects) puts a strain on services provided by local authorities and agencies, e.g. hospitals, social services and education. Social inclusion is a priority for much of the SE region and is reflected in the regeneration agenda of SEEDA, GOSE and KCC.

7.2 The Kent picture - Unemployment and benefit claimants

Pockets of deprivation exist in the west and of prosperity in the East of Kent. Deprived areas are more dependent on public services. Both Thanet and Shepway have a dependency on benefits above the national average at @ £1000 per head. Table One below illustrates the comparatively high levels of unemployment and benefit claimants in East Kent.

Table 1: deprivation and benefit dependency in Thanet and Shepway

Indicator	Thanet	Shepway	Kent (average)
Level of benefit spend	£1,459 per capita	£1,172 per capita	£878 per capita
Income Support Claimants	893 per 10,000	710 per 10,000	536 per 10,000
Unemployment rate	6% (Dec 2000)	4.2% (Dec 2000)	2.7 % (Dec 2000)
Position on Index of Multiple Deprivation 2000	64 ^{th*}	108 ^{th*}	189 ^{th**}
* Rank of average of ward scores (out of 354 districts in England) ** Average of rank of average ward scores for all districts in Kent (out of 354 districts in England) (Source: KCC, The Kent Agreement April 2001)			
Income Support Claimants 2002	907 per 10,000	764 per 10,000	541 per 10,000
Unemployment rate	3.5% (May 2004)	2.5% (May 2004)	1.9% (May 2004)
Position on Index of Multiple Deprivation 2004 (revised)	85 th	131 st	
(Source: KCC IMD Summary June 2004, and data based on Oxford Monitoring work, as provided by KCC 2004.)			

In the 2000 income domain rankings (part of the Indices of Deprivation) Thanet Pier ranked 16th out of 8414 wards in England, and data shows that many of the wards in the EK coastal towns have consistently low levels of spend.⁷² The Census 2001 data showed that in comparison to Kent as a whole the most significant areas of

⁷² KCC, Presentation Supplement– Supporting Independence Programme – making sense of the data.

deprivation are in the coastal towns in East Kent and that they had higher percentages of

- lone parents on income support as a percentage of all households with dependent children,
- people aged 16 – 24 with no qualifications and not in education, employment or training,
- people aged 50 –59 with no qualifications, who are out of work (either actively seeking work or suffering an incapacity
- percentage of the population aged 16-59 in receipt of a benefit with a disability element (Source: KCC Coastal Towns Data analysis SIP, 6 April 2004)

The 2004 Indices of multiple deprivation (revised) show that Thanet remains the most deprived local authority district area within the KCC area, but that all districts (except Dartford Borough and Tunbridge Wells Borough) have seen a decline in levels of deprivation.⁷³

7.3 Socio-economic groups and poverty

The links between poverty and poor health are clearly apparent, demonstrated globally with disease and infant mortality rising and life expectancy falling in relation to hardship and environmental factors, and also on a more local scale with health inequality.⁷⁴

“... people in higher socio-economic groups enjoy better health and live longer than poorer members of society. These differences in health and life expectancy get steadily worse as income and social circumstances get worse.... The report shows that a principal explanation for persistence and worsening of inequalities is the ways in which health (good and bad) is transmitted from generation to generation through economic, social and developmental processes. ... With every step up the social hierarchy, social circumstances improve and so too does health.”

(Health Development Agency (HAD) 2004)⁷⁵

At the time of publishing this report a NHS Policy Overview Select Committee is established to consider health equality within Kent.

7.4 Public Service Agreement (PSA) & Supporting Independence Programme (SIP)

The levels of dependency, with high levels of unemployment and benefit claimants is an important issue for EK, as in 2001 £4.4 billion of public money was spent in the county, with approximately 46% on Social Security payments (over £2 billion). This is reportedly more than the total expenditure on health and education combined (KCC Whose benefit?).

⁷³ KCC June 2004, *Indices of Deprivation 2004, Kent District Summary, Strategic Planning Resources Division Analysis and Information Team.*

⁷⁴ www.groundwork.org.uk - Article : *Regeneration and Public Health* accessed on 03/11/03, (article first appeared in *Groundwork Today* issue 33)

⁷⁵ NHS Health Development Agency 2004, *Childhood disadvantage and adult health: a lifecourse framework, Hilary Graham and Chris Power.*

7.5 The Kent Agreement aimed to deliver a reduction in expenditure on welfare and benefits and through partnership and action lift people out of welfare/benefit dependency, reinvesting part of the savings made back into public services. The Kent agreement (PSA) initially focussed on improving service outcomes in Thanet and parts of Shepway (including Folkestone), both areas of deprivation, reducing dependency – increasing employment and fulfilment. The targets set reflect the priority issues for each area, acknowledging that causes and solutions to dependency and deprivation differ from area to area. The PSA focus on East Kent has brought about fundamental change in the area. In 2004 a key success was reducing the number of Looked After Children by 25 %, which had previously increased year on year, with staff empowered to find solutions within a framework.

7.6 The Supporting Independence Programme (SIP), established in 2002 is a philosophy about increasing well being and is a crosscutting initiative, and builds upon the PSA. It focuses on nine groups of people who need targeted assistance to help them back to more fulfilling lives and reducing spend on maintaining dependence, aiming to help people out of a dependency culture. The SIP programme focuses on how better services interact to help create better-educated, healthier and safer communities and the use of preventative services. It encourages new thinking and new approaches to tackling dependency and is trying to build community responsibility and encourages the joint preparation of bids.

7.7 Data on levels of benefits being paid in Kent has been collected by a joint KCC/Government initiative. This included jobseekers allowance, Income Support, Incapacity Benefit and Severe Disablement Allowance. During a week of the study the cost of benefits in Kent was approximately £6.8 million. The Oxford benefits data provides detailed information on levels of welfare benefits and how benefit spend changes over time.⁷⁶ This data indicates the top 20% of benefit spend as a total or per head is predominantly in the EK coastal towns. The data collected has also shown evidence of a reduction in benefit claimants in East Kent since the introduction of PSA and SIP activities. This information assists with the targeting of resources at the areas most in need and it is hoped that this data work will continue as part of PSA 2 (which is currently under discussion with ODPM) and encourage a further reduction in claimants.

7.8 PSA 1 has been an overall success with 75% success over the 12 targets. Anticipated reimbursement for achieving the targets is approximately £20 million, for reinvestment in services and support agencies to do something different to achieve results, such as through investment in community based preventative services. It was acknowledged that there is a need to recognise the contribution of staff towards improving service and achieving PSA 1 targets. The initiative of staff already demonstrated in PSA 1 should be encouraged with their involvement in establishing the community services they would like to see developed within the PSA framework.

7.9 The continued reduction of claimants is influenced by many factors including the need to improve the level of wages earned in local jobs as currently many pay the same level as the dole. Transport and Childcare can also be an issue especially for loan parents. For example a job and childcare are often in different places coupled with time pressures from employers make it a less attractive and affordable option

⁷⁶ KCC, *Presentation Supplement. Supporting Independence Programme – making sense of the data.*

compared to the dole. It was reported that PSA 2 will focus differently and be more multi-agency based and cross-cutting, linking education, health and social services building on the emphasis on employability, health improvement and access to transport. For example broader targets on social disorder encompassing community safety and aesthetics to aid attraction of inward investment, showing Kent is a better place to live.

7.10 The representative officers of the Districts stated that information on the achievements of the PSA was limited if at all. It was also reported that there is a tendency not to promote successes within the service. There is a need to promote the successes and recognise achievements, emphasising what can be done what is achieved and a belief in the community.

Recommendation 14: The Committee recognise the significant achievements of the PSA partners (Police, Fire, Social Services Directorate and Education). KCC to promote success of PSA 1, and highlight the benefits through the reinvestment of reward monies and development of more multi-agency working as part of PSA 2.

7.11 Childhood development and preventative services

Policies that tackle socio-economic deprivation are a fundamental aspect of the successful long-term regeneration of an area, and social issues are clearly interlinked with the economic prosperity of the region, education and health. The HDA report states that childhood is a key point in a persons development as it is when physical, emotional and cognitive development patterns are established, with poor childhood social circumstances predicting poor adult circumstances and that disadvantage in childhood adversely affects both socio-economic circumstances and health.

“For example, education is still a major route out of disadvantage, but poorer children perform educationally less well than better-off children. Children not staying on in education, or not entering employment or training at 18, are a particularly high-risk group. Children from poorer backgrounds are much more likely to get into trouble with the police, to be excluded from school, or to become a teenage parent, all of which make moving up the social hierarchy more difficult.”

7.12 Preventative services therefore have a vital role to play in developing better life chances. There is a need for preventative services for both children and adults. These services include

- Sure Start local programmes
- Primary Intervention project
- Wave Project
- Development of Children’s Centres e.g. Folkestone Children’s centre
- Thanet Early Years Project
- Homestart
- Kent Supported Employment Services,
- Independent Living Services
- Enhanced Sheltered Housing
- Recuperative Care and Rapid Response

7.13 Sure Start

The Sure Start initiative is beneficial for parents and their children and is based on the idea that social capital can be repaid in the longer term. It encourages community interaction, a better start - providing the foundation for the future for a better lifestyle and building the skills needed. Savings made from successful Sure Start schemes are very long term i.e. through the life of the child. It was explained that early intervention might prevent criminality and therefore save money on the prison service in 15 years time, or reduce teenage pregnancies or mental illness. There is a need to acknowledge benefits that will occur in the long term. For example, the opinion was held that as funding is phased out for Sure Start there is a need for Government to realign funding from other areas (e.g. prison service) to social services in order that Sure Start services can be mainstreamed in the longer term. Schemes like Sure Start need to evolve alongside changes to the community it serves, and changes to them should be seen as a measure of success.

Recommendation 15: KCC SSD/SPD and Members should lobby government to maintain future funding for Sure Start (and similar schemes) and that future savings to other services are reflected, providing successive funding enabling these schemes to continue and evolve.

7.14 Children's centre

Skills and learning can also be inhibited by social obstacles. The development of children's centres aims to support families and enable children to have a good start in education. As part of a national programme to target areas of social and economic deprivation within East Folkestone a children's centre and community facility has been built on the grounds of George Spurgeon School to support local families. It provides 79 day care places, computer facilities, training rooms, community café, kitchen and sensory room with access to parenting courses, counselling, family groups, children's liaison officers, social services and health staff. This offers new opportunities and enables parents more flexibility to work or train and helps to remove some of the obstacles to improving skills.⁷⁷

7.15 Looked After Children Placements

The Kent Agreement (KCC 2001) states

"It is generally accepted that concentrations of high dependency groups can cause problems for host communities and the high dependency groups themselves...and include looked after children and the elderly in care. For a variety of reasons districts in EK have received a large number of high-dependency groups placed there ...In Thanet for example the number of looked after children is about twice the incidence arising of local origin, which is itself amongst the highest in the country at 114 per 10,000."

⁷⁷ *Around Kent January – March 2004. Building Better Futures.*

7.16 East Kent has a highly disproportionate number of looked after children. The placement of Looked after children in EK by Local authorities in London and the SouthEast is a major issue for Kent, with 1,500 placed in Thanet by other authorities. It was reported to the Committee that for children's services there is an abundance of Independent Fostering Agencies (IFA's) and residential children's homes (35 in Thanet). The market for which relies mainly on the placements by other authorities. Placements are made in Kent by other authorities as it enables them to procure accommodation more economically. It was raised that although these placements are often in deprived communities, the economy based on the placements is thriving with people employed as foster carers and residential home owners/workers. The impact however is that some of the most damaged or vulnerable children are placed in East Kent, some distance away from family and home community networks. It was reported that these children tend to have high needs with limited support from their placing authority and placements away from their networks often creates more problems and increases the difficulty in returning the children to their home environment. The Committee heard that these placements have a cumulative effect on the host communities and can lead to difficulties for monitoring and that the scale of placements of Looked after children creates pressures on services (including health, police, district councils, schools and social services) and the local community.

7.17 In May 2004 Community Care News reported that Kent SSD pledged to fund appeals against councils which refuse planning permission for residential care homes as the situation is so acute. Placements in EK are within residential homes and also with Foster Care. The scale of placements has meant that fostering has become a staple employer within East Kent, and often pays more than many local jobs. It was highlighted that in trying to reduce the number of outer area placements ways need to be found to enable foster carers working in residential homes to diversify into providing services for local people and to support people living in the community.

7.18 The Committee agrees with the opinion that this is an issue that needs to be tackled by looking at preventative strategies and reducing the pressure on Kent resources. The resources saved by successful preventative schemes and reducing the number of looked after children enable more support to be given to families to give these children a better start in life and should be encouraged and where possible promoted. SSD have recently commissioned a piece of independent research to look at the effects of the number of looked after children in Thanet and placements from other authorities in Kent. This is welcomed by the Committee.

Recommendation 16: KCC and SPD need to lobby Government and other authorities to tackle issues of placements of looked after Children in coastal towns and promote preventative strategies and share practice with other authorities.

7.19 Other vulnerable groups also gravitate towards the coast, including the elderly and high proportion of residential care. The ageing population and imbalance in the demography of coastal towns will have a large impact on services. PSA2 will look at how older people can be supported to live at home within the community.

7.20 Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO)

HMOs is an issue shared by most coastal towns and EK coastal towns are no exception. The availability of cheap property is one reason why East Kent attracts high dependency groups. Many Hotels, guesthouse etc no longer have a role in tourism, but have been bought by landlords, often absentee, and has led to a concentration of deprivation in certain wards, with sub standard accommodation/stock. HMOs cause issues for public services – police, fire, education and health. Many social problems occur in HMOs with absentee landlords and an unstable population, for example antisocial behaviour and drug abuse. Landlords need to be encouraged to invest in their stock and improve conditions and their contribution to regeneration of the area. HMO's are currently viewed as a business (with little need for investment), so there needs to be a viable alternative for the current landlords to encourage positive change. New HMO's can be restricted through planning but there is limited influence over those already in existence. The Kent Agreement (KCC 2001) states that policies to restrain demand for HMO accommodation are unlikely to be successful unless supported by measures to restrict supply and improve the quality. For long term regeneration this needs to be tackled. It was shared with the Committee that HMO's could be converted to family accommodation, with parks and slides and create a nice living environment and attract broader socio-economic groups.

7.21 Despite Hotels being converted into HMO's there is a need for good quality accommodation in EKCT – to support conference market and future growth...companies like Pfizer said accommodation is a serious limitation in the area. If developing the towns as somewhere to visit, sea pursuits, arts and culture, good eating, also need modern hotels, need to provide a quality product, making places more attractive and somewhere people want to be.

CHAPTER EIGHT: ENVIRONMENT

8.1 The Environment Asset

The 2001 'Sea Changes' report highlighted that

"... research and admission figures show that England's architectural and historic heritage is a major factor in making England an attractive destination...and that seaside resorts made an enormous contribution to our cultural identity and contain some of the finest examples of our built heritage."⁷⁸

Similarly, as mentioned in Chapter 2, 'On the Edge' recognised the underlying popularity and strengths of coastal areas, including recreational potential, and that the special character of the coast must be recognised.⁷⁹ It stated that our coast is

"a wonderful natural asset ... of outstanding environmental quality, ... renowned for their scenic, geological and natural interest, and their cultural heritage."

8.2 Within East Kent the assets are the environmental quality, the geology and the cultural heritage. The environmental quality is reflected by for example

- 40 sites of Special Scientific Interest in EK area, 10% of area as opposed to 6.8% nationally.
- 10 National Nature reserves
- 5 Special protection areas for vulnerable and migratory birds.
- 10 special areas of conservation for rare and vulnerable species.
- 4 internationally important wetland sites protected under the RAMSAR Convention.
- Historic assets e.g. Canterbury (World heritage site), Dover, Sandwich.
- 285 scheduled Ancient Monuments - greater density than national average.
- 253 Conservation areas - greater density than national average.
- over 8,000 listed buildings - greater density than national average.

8.3 Environment and the needs of Society

Within the coastal areas it is acknowledged, as explained in 'On the Edge', that

"the government's desire for balanced communities is increasingly relevant to the coast and the net influx of an economically inactive and dependent population."

The development pressures from the need to increase prosperity and to develop

"... practical measures to attract a broader socio-economic group and counteract out-migration of the more skilled workforce, through

⁷⁸ *Sea Changes – Creating world-class resorts in England. Foreword p5 English Tourism Council 2001*

⁷⁹ *"On the edge – the coastal strategy" Local Government Association June 2000*

diversification and exploration of opportunities for further education, training and employment ... threaten the long term well-being of the coastal environment ... and maintaining an increasingly complex balance between sustaining the environmental quality and the needs of society.”

(On the Edge, LGA June 2000)

8.4 The physical attributes of coastal areas offer economic opportunities other than tourism. The Regional Economic Strategy (RES) states that to achieve SMART growth it is fundamental that economic activity is not accompanied with environmental degradation, and that it is

“ ... mistaken to view the environment simply as a constraint on growth, or as something in need of protection from the consequences of growth. Instead, must recognise that investment in our environmental assets (natural, landscape and historic) is part and parcel of the infrastructure on which prosperity depends, including

- Provision of green spaces to support urban regeneration
- Reinforcement of character to support the sense of place
- Landscape enhancement to promote tourism ...
- ... to provide renewable energy” (woodland management, wind farms)⁸⁰

8.5 The Committee heard that the environment of East Kent is an asset to be both cherished and utilized, and so there are indeed tensions between the environment and economy. There is however an opportunity to use the natural and built environment to support the development and growth of the economy within East Kent and as such should not be overlooked. This view is supported by the LGA report, which states that

“a major under utilised attribute of the built infrastructure in coastal centres is the historic environment, ... and that capitalising upon these historic townscapes can make a significant contribution to conserving and regenerating the coastal economy, but is often overlooked”.⁸¹

8.6 The coastal towns in East Kent have buildings of considerable heritage value, but often in poor condition or no longer suited to their original use. It was highlighted that there is a need to find beneficial economic reuse of buildings, which has the additional benefit of less impact than the development of new industrial estates, however the high cost of repairs to these historic buildings and planning restrictions can make economic development difficult. It was also stated, to the Committee, that there is a conflict of interest in so much as the opportunity to use brownfield sites will diminish and as a result greenfield sites will become more pressured for development. There is room for inventive use of historic buildings within the coastal towns of East Kent. ‘Shifting Sands’ reported an apparent

“lack of confidence of coastal towns in using their heritage as part of a regeneration strategy. While they appreciate the contribution made by the historic environment, they falter... if there is a hint of conflict with a more

⁸⁰ SEEDA Regional Economic Strategy 2002

⁸¹ LGA Coastal Special Interest Group 2003, Coastal Economic Development

pressing social or economic agenda, even if the care and conservation of the historic environment might contribute to this outcome.”⁸²

8.7 It was noted, by the Committee that despite the wealth of environmental assets, many people did not stop in the area and viewed it merely as a transport hub to the continent (e.g. Dover). The natural and historic environment of coastal towns is a key asset and the benefits should be promoted and celebrated further as both a place where one would want to live and also for visitors. Image and perceptions as discussed earlier in the report are a contributory factor to successful regeneration. It was suggested to the Committee that the establishment of an East Kent Regional Park could enable the profile of the local environment to be raised, projects an attractive image and highlights the positive aspects. It was also noted that the development of a Regional Park could impact on regeneration initiatives and had a variety of definitions or interpretations.

Recommendation 17: KCC SPD to ensure the benefits of the environmental asset (both historic and natural) are promoted in support of regeneration of East Kent and attracting a broader socio – economic group.

8.8 Environment and Heritage Schemes:

The concerns of Local communities include various environmental issues, including issues of litter, vandalism, safety, children’s activities and improving public parks and spaces.⁸³ Research has shown a relationship between

“local environmental quality, peoples health, fear of crime and social and economic vibrancy. The quality of public space, real or perceived, plays a vital role in the cycles which characterise communities on the up, in decline or in recovery. Degraded public spaces are not a sign of a vibrant community”.⁸⁴

8.9 Environmental regeneration initiatives can bring several advantages as improvements are visible and tangible, and ‘quick wins’ can encourage belief within the community that change is possible and develop a sense of ownership/pride within the local area. These initiatives can also be aimed at delivering social and economic benefits to neighbourhoods in need. The results of a recent study demonstrated that

“local environmental action can transform the social and economic prospects of run-down areas through engaging local communities and marginalised individuals... and play a key role in neighbourhood renewal”.⁸⁵

8.10 The Committee were advised that there was no longer a budget for heritage grants within KCC and that KCC SPD were only able to give limited assistance to the Districts. Similarly, resources and funding for ‘environmental taskforce’ in Thanet,

⁸² *English Heritage/CABE 2003, Shifting Sands.*

⁸³ *Mori Survey, March – April 2000, Consumer focus for Public Services – People’s Panel wave 5, as in Living places: cleaner, safer, greener Oct 2002 ODPM*

⁸⁴ *ODPM, Oct 2002 - Living places: cleaner, safer, greener.*

⁸⁵ *Groundwork- delivering effective neighbourhood renewal JRF www.groundwork.org.uk/policy/reports*

Dover and Folkestone, has continually reduced over recent years due to budgetary pressures. Currently KCC can no longer contribute to such schemes, even though 'aesthetics and liveability' are both important factors in attracting investment and people to an area e.g. for regeneration of East Kent.

8.11 Although funding from, for example English Heritage, lottery townscapes and environmental improvement grants continue to be available, the greatest difficulty of realising these funds is finding the local match funding. Although KCC can not provide match funding and has limited SPD resources there is a key role to play by providing advice of what pots are potentially applicable for groups undertaking environmental improvements.

8.12 A key issue regarding environmental schemes is that once the funding (often time limited or one off grants) for a particular scheme stops the site often reverts to its original state. Without the benefit of sustainable funding, or funding invested in a sustainable way it is important that citizenship is promoted. The people within the local area are key to the success of schemes, and even more so when funding ceases to be available. If the environment is worth valuing it can be argued that people will value it more.

8.13 Kent has a high concentration of historic and listed buildings and although this is not reflected in higher mainstream funds, Kent does receive several grants. In this context it is important to note that repairs to Church building do not attract VAT. The opinion was held that this exemption would also be of great benefit and give substantial help to historic buildings, where VAT is currently applied. Districts have the powers to compulsory purchase but do not have the funds to carry out the necessary repairs, so historic buildings are often a low priority.

Recommendation 18: KCC to lobby government for exclusion of VAT to repairs on historic buildings.

8.14 The importance of image and promoting the environment has been detailed. Beach and litter cleaning is an important service to maintain the quality of the environment for both visitors and the local community.

8.15 Parks and green spaces

The ODPM Living Places October 2002, set out the 'vision for the future of public space. Parks and open spaces are valuable economic, social and environmental resources.'⁸⁶ It argues that to both retain and attract new business investment and residents there needs to be a recognition of the need to enhance the overall environmental quality and the importance of a parks and green spaces strategy to support economic regeneration.

'Green spaces, Better places' supports this view stating that

"Parks and green spaces are a popular and precious resource, which can make a valuable contribution to the attractiveness of a neighbourhood, to health and

⁸⁶ ODPM, Oct 2002, *Living places: cleaner, safer, greener, as in LGA Economic regeneration: documenting best practice Nov 2003.*

well being of local people and expand the educational opportunities for children and adults. ... They make an important contribution to wide, long-term social, economic and environmental progress”⁸⁷

8.16 The attractiveness of an area is a factor that influences location decisions of both business and people, and hence the regeneration of East Kent coastal towns. This is reflected in the Kent and Medway Structure Plan. This details the importance of upgrading the quality of the environment to support the improvement of the East Kent economy and that

‘prospective environmental enhancements include a new Regional Conservation Park (Stour Valley and Wantsum Channel), a network of green open spaces, and improvements to degraded landscapes on the urban fringe of towns such as Whitstable and Hernebay’. (KMSP 2003)

8.17 The Folkestone Coastal Park benefited from a £1.2 million investment from SEEDA, Shepway Council and the European Union. Phase one included an adventure playground (with free admission), a 300 seat amphitheatre and landscaping. It is estimated that there are 500,000 visitors a year and phase 2 will complete the parks’ revitalisation. The improvements will complement other schemes (Leas Cliff Hall, Creative quarter) and enhance perceptions of the area. The recent improvements have been very popular with families.

8.18 Residents often contribute to the environment by donating benches or trees for planting in the Country Park. The benches, unlike trees can be identified with a name plate and gives recognition of the donation. The individual labelling of trees is discouraged due to potential vandalism and issues relating to their upkeep and maintenance. The Committee held the view that the donation of trees should be encouraged and perhaps a way to give more global recognition sought.

⁸⁷ *Green spaces, Better places – summary of the Final Report of the Urban Green Spaces Taskforce*

CHAPTER 9: FUNDING

9.1 As the concept of regeneration is of a complex and multifaceted nature there are many public/private funds available with relevance to regeneration. In 1989 the Audit Commission criticised the 'patchwork quilt' of regeneration schemes for deprived communities and in 2003 it was referred to as the 'bowl of spaghetti'⁸⁸. The criticism by the Audit Commission led to the establishment of the single regeneration budget (SRB). A summary of schemes in 1989 and 2003 can be seen in Appendix 2. The Regional Co-ordination Unit (RCU), was established to operate as a clearing house to ensure new initiatives and funding schemes are not duplicated. In October 2002, the Unit recognized that communities were struggling to cope with the plethora of initiatives and extra bureaucracy leading to mounting costs for councils (e.g. bidding, auditing and transaction of budgets), and recommended that 28 initiatives should be merged or ended.⁸⁹

9.2 It was noted, by the Committee that there are several potential funding opportunities available to the coastal areas. The Committee heard that the trend for funding opportunities is now moving away from competitive reactive bidding (e.g. SRB) to strategy/priority –led plans to focus investment, such as Area Investment Frameworks and Community Plans. The prioritisation and allocation of resources is primarily dependent on the body responsible for managing the programme, regional structures and priorities, sub regional priorities and the targeting of resources to areas of highest need by using the Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) e.g. The Community Fund targeting Thanet. (A table of some of the funds for which East Kent is eligible can be referred to in Appendix 3. It should be noted that this is not an exhaustive list.) Highlighting the existence of different pots and the co-ordination of bids can be problematic. It was also commented on that it is becoming harder to obtain funds from existing funding streams, with KCC recently bidding for in excess of 10 million to successfully gain 4.9 million pounds.

9.3 Levels of funding and Area Investment Frameworks (AIF)

On a per capita basis the South East region has the lowest levels of funding even though there are areas of high deprivation. This is clearly shown in the comparative table (Table 2) of individual RDA budgets (allocated on 9 weighted indicators, including unemployment, deprivation and GDP) and that

- 53% of South East wards are in the worst 10% nationally. The majority of which are coastal towns.⁹⁰

⁸⁸ *Maze of initiatives like spaghetti – Jan 2003. Matt Weaver . The Guardian.*

⁸⁹ *Maze of initiatives like spaghetti – Jan 2003. Matt Weaver . The Guardian*

⁹⁰ *Select Committee on Regeneration of EKCT. Head of External Funding 8/4/04.*

Table 2: Individual Regional Development Agency Budgets for 2002 – 2003

RDA	£ per Capita	£ Allocation (gross)	Regional Population Census 2001
1. North East	76.47	192,360,000	2,515, 479
2. Yorkshire Forward	44.35	220,220,000	4,964,838
3. North West Development Agency	42.31	284,740,000	6,729,800
4. London Development Agency	41.24	295,820,000	7,172,036
5. Advantage West Midlands	36.95	194,640,000	5,267,337
6. East Midlands Development Agency	23.96	99,980,000	4,172,179
7. South West England RDA	18.64	91,880,000	4,928,458
8. East of England Development Agency	13.91	75,000,000	5,388,154
9. SEEDA	12.66	101,360,000	8,000,550

Source: ODPM, May 2002

9.4 It was also reported to the Committee that for funds allocated on the basis of 10% most deprived areas the South East, on a per capita basis, were also at the bottom in terms of receipt of grants from Lottery Distributors (1995-2002, the Lottery Monitor 2003); the Fair Share Trust, which now includes Thanet as an ineligible area; Neighbourhood renewal; the Children's Fund; and Security for small retailers scheme. The exceptions highlighted were Round 5 ISB, which are determined by innovation/cost saving rather than deprivation indexes. If the allocation of funds is viewed on basis of deprivation there is some correlation.

9.5 The Area Investment Frameworks have a key role to play by providing an inter-agency approach to tackle the issues, such as regeneration and skills development, facing an area from a social and economic perspective, bringing together public, private and voluntary sector partners. Three of the seven south East AIF's are within Kent. The East Kent Area Investment Framework provides the basis for an integrated approach to the pursuit and use of resources to achieve regeneration. It was reported to the Committee that the Single Pot monies from SEEDA via the AIF's act as a catalyst and stimulus for further funding from other Government departments.

9.6 It is important to note that there has been a steady decline in the total funding available to support regeneration schemes. The Single Regeneration Fund, for which all of East Kent was eligible and had 18 projects approved, has been subsumed by the RDA's Single programme and AIF's but not directly replaced. It was recognised that the total of resources available under the Area Investment Frameworks does not match the levels of SRB funds previously allocated to East Kent, so there is less money available. It was brought to the attention of the Committee that the AIF's were however in a position to target the money more effectively, as highlight key issues and can influence funders and how they operate.

9.7 The Committee also heard that the AIF is more valuable than it is perhaps currently perceived to be, and that in the future this type of arrangement could incorporate all government agencies and other agencies such as lottery distributors.

The AIFs currently reflect Government priorities but there is a need to build upon these links so that local priorities influence and set the parameters alongside Government. The East Kent AIF has a key role to play and interprets and monitors policy from government to the local arena, therefore need to work with the AIF to plan for change and the end of SRB funds. This is discussed in more detail later in the chapter.

9.9 EU Enlargement and EU Programmes

The decline of funds is also reflected within EU programmes, and indeed lottery distributors. The European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) Objective 2 or 'Objective' status has supported economic and social change of areas of the UK with structural difficulties. Within Thanet and Dover the programme has focused on spatial development and infrastructure; business support, training and innovation; heritage, culture and the environment; and community economic development. The Committee heard that there is concern that this source of funding could be threatened due to the accession of new EU member states. Future funding and support mechanisms could alter from 2007, re-allocating resources to the new poorer states and "effects on the economy and changes to business will impact for many years"⁹¹. This could also influence EU regional policy funding budgets (e.g. INTERREG – for which all of East Kent are currently eligible; European Social Fund – All parts of East Kent can apply, but possibly opportunities only up to end of September 2004). It is argued by the LGA that if changes are based on a territorial approach it is more likely that resources will be targeted at coastal communities as peripherality is a permanent physical barrier to economic growth.⁹² The change to the EU could also be viewed as an opportunity by working with partners in the markets to create strategic or specific partnerships with international companies/organisations.⁹³

9.10 Single Regeneration Budget (SRB)

In order to simplify and streamline the assistance for regeneration a number of programmes from several government departments were brought together by the establishment of the SRB in 1994. The Committee heard that there is a current need to mitigate national policy changes and their impacts. A key issue for future funding of regeneration schemes within Kent, and the rest of the UK is the end of the SRB funding, and future opportunities for funding from the RDA's Single Programme. It is therefore necessary to look at the implications of changing resources for current initiatives and identify the schemes at risk across Kent, including the coastal towns, and whether alternative streams of funding have been identified and 'exit strategies' developed. Schemes that have no future funding identified will need to consider linking with similar local schemes that underpin the voluntary/public sector and co-ordinate bids for community funds.

9.11 With the ending of SRB funding, coastal areas are "being actively encouraged to apply for lottery funding for projects that complement local attractions, generate leisure opportunities (e.g. festivals) and maximise the coastal assets". LGA CSIG.

⁹¹ *Bradley Dunbar Associates Ltd for SEEDA. Opportunities and challenges of EU enlargement. April*

⁹² *LGA – Coastal Issues Special Interest Group: Report: Coastal Economic development – June 17 2003.*

⁹³ *Bradley Dunbar Associates Ltd for SEEDA. Opportunities and challenges of EU enlargement. April*

The Committee heard that this may not provide the necessary alternative funding, as considerable funds already allocated.

9.12 There is a role for Kent County Council to offer advice, give support, provide a strategic overview, and monitor the low-high risk level factor of schemes. The ending of the SRB funds is imminent and needs to be given higher priority with the focus on work to identify the risks and issues, and preparation for exit strategies, alternative funding or co-ordinated bids prior to the cut off of funding and end of SRB in 2006.

Recommendation 19: KCC in partnership with Districts should actively seek to identify the low - high risk level of SRB schemes, provide a strategic overview and provide appropriate support and identify possible sources of alternative funding where appropriate.

9.13 Other Funding Streams

The Committee were advised that there are further implications for revenue schemes for initiatives such as Sure Start, for which the critical issue is that business plans need to stand up on both revenue and capital assets.

9.14 The committee heard the view that the funding streams for the iconic development of 'Turner Contemporary' were not clear to the members of the public, and that many believed this was to be funded from Council Tax. It was highlighted that it is necessary to make it clear where funding streams are from to promote public buy in to the scheme and avoid confusion.

9.15 KCC are in a position to influence through innovation such as through the Public Service Agreement (PSA) and Supporting Independence Programme (SIP). Parallel to this there is an opportunity to develop cross-partner working for example, with the Voluntary sector, and become more robust in lobbying for funding.

Appendix One: List of Witnesses, Regeneration of East Kent Coastal towns Select Committee

Meeting Date	Witnesses Attending	Representing
2 October 2003	Cheryl Gilling	Tourism Manager, Dover District Council
23 October 2003	Richard Spoerry,	County Manager Public Service Agreement, KCC
	Eamonn Dillon	Policy Manager, Social Services, KCC
	Leigh Herrington	Divisional Director, Strategic Planning, KCC
	Colin Maclean	Head of External Funding, KCC
	Mike Evans	Turner Centre Project Manager, KCC
30 October 2003	Andy Jarrett	Head of Partnership and Regeneration Services, Shepway DC
	Mark Dowling	SE Tourism
	Chris Inwood	Regeneration Officer, Dover District Council, (Written response only)
	Neil McCollum	Tourism Manager, Canterbury CC
	Jane Lovell	Tourism Development Officer, Canterbury CC
	Fran Warrington	Head of Tourism, KCC
	Ross Mac Culloch	Kent Tourism Alliance
	Ms Jill Franks	Tourism Officer – Thanet District Council
	Mr Sam Thomas	Regeneration Officer – Thanet District Council
7 November 2003	Cllr Michael Walsh	Lydd Town Council
	Cllr Rook	Sandwich Town Council
	Ms Judith McCormick	Town Clerk, Hythe Town Council
	John Schoner	Chairman, Hythe Tourism Forum
	Michelle Cooper	Town Clerk, Dover Town Council
	Mike Wier	Port Manager and Harbour Master, Whitstable
	Cllr Wratten	Harbour Committee, (Canterbury CC)
	Pym Brewer	Ramsgate Town Centre Manager, Chair of Kent Town Centre Management Group and Chair of SE Area Association of Town Centre Management
	Jan Ives	Regeneration Officer, Thanet D C
13 November 2003	Mr Ian Fell	Vice Chairman, Folkestone Hythe and District Hotel and Catering Association
	Cllr Ron Flaherty	Heron Ward
	Ann Smith	Chair of Thanet Tourism Association & Local Hoteliers
	Frank Thornley	Thornley Taverns
	Nick Ewbank	Creative Foundation (Folkestone Creative Quarter)

24 March 2004	Roger De Haan	Chairman of the Creative Foundation, Saga Ltd
	Nick Ewbank	Chief Executive of the Creative Foundation
	David Hall	Regeneration and Projects Manager, KCC
	Mick Sutch	Head of Planning and Transport Strategy, KCC
6 April 2004	Richard Spoerry	County Manager Public Service Agreement, KCC
	Eamonn Dillon	Policy Manager, KCC
	John Williams	Acting Head of Countryside, Heritage and Environment, KCC
	Mark Bilsborough	Kent Team Director, GOSE
	R Samuel	Chief Executive, Thanet DC
7 April 2004	Graham Badman	Strategic Director Education and Libraries, KCC
8 April 2004	Alex King	Cabinet Member for Regeneration, KCC
	Colin Maclean	Head of External Funding, KCC
	Peter Parsons	Chief Executive, Technology Enterprise Kent (TEK)
	Paul Hudson	South East England development Agency SEEDA
15 April 2004	Bryan Raine	Head of Economic Development, KCC
	Tony Bartlett	Business Link Kent (BLK)
	Bill Anderson	East Kent Area Director, Social Services, KCC
19 April 2004	Stephen Hagues	Strategic Director, Shepway DC
	Howard Holt	Head of Corporate Affairs, Port of Dover
21 April 2004	Caroline Lwin	Divisional Director for Regeneration and Projects, KCC
	Trevor Minter	Kent Partnership Director, KCC
	Paul Tipple	Chairman of East Kent Partnership and Director of Corporate Affairs, Planestation PLC
29 April 2004	Leigh Herington	Divisional Director, Strategic Planning, KCC
	Ian Brown	Head of Regeneration and Economic Development, Canterbury DC
	Megan McKibben	Kent and Medway Economic Board, Executive Director
30 April 2004	Simon Greenstreet	Director of Communications , Pfizer Ltd
	Amanda Bearne	Director of Research and Strategy , Locate in Kent (LIK)
	Roger Madge	Strategic Director Regeneration , Dover District Council
	Cllr Paul Watkins	Dover District Council

Appendix 2: Table of Regeneration schemes 1989 and 2003 as reported in Guardian 2003.

Regeneration schemes 1989 and 2003

'Patchwork quilt' criticised by the audit commission in 1989	'Bowl of spaghetti' 2003
City grant	Action team for jobs
Derelict land grant	Active community programme
English estates	Capital modernisation fund (small retailers)
Enterprise allowance	Children's fund
Enterprise zones	City growth strategies
Estate action	Coalfields
Regional selective assistance	Community champions
Section 11	Community chest
Task forces and CATs	Community empowerment fund
Technical and vocational education initiative	Community legal partnerships
Urban development corporations	Creative partnerships
Urban programme	Crime reduction programme
Welsh development agency	Drug action teams
Work related NAFE	Early excellence centres
	Early years development and childcare partnerships
	Education action zones
	Employment zones
	European regional development fund
	Excellence challenge
	Excellence in cities
	Fair share
	Frameworks for regional employment and skills action
	Health action zones
	Healthy living centres
	Healthy schools programme
	Neighbourhood management
	Neighbourhood nursery centres
	Neighbourhood renewal fund
	Neighbourhood support fund
	Neighbourhood wardens
	New deal for communities
	New entrepreneur scholarships
	Playing fields and community green spaces
	Positive futures
	Regional centres for manufacturing excellence
	Safer communities initiative
	Single regeneration budget
	Spaces for sport and arts
	Sport action zones
	StepUp
	Street wardens
	Sure Start
	Sure Start plus
	Urban regeneration companies
	Youth inclusion programme
	Youth music action zones

Source: Centre for urban and regional studies

Appendix 3: Table of Regeneration Grants/Funds

Scheme	Focus	Coverage	Open to Applications
Neighbourhood Renewal Fund	The largest single government regeneration fund targeted at the 88 most deprived wards Kent does not qualify for mainstream NRF monies. However, some of the smaller related programmes such as Neighbourhood Management and Neighbourhood wardens schemes have been awarded to the County (see below)	East Kent not eligible	No
Neighbourhood Management *	Funding to help deprived communities and local service providers work together at the neighbourhood level to improve and 'join up' local services.	Only Hawkinge	No
Neighbourhood Wardens *	Assistance to support warden schemes in deprived residential neighbourhoods whose main aim is crime prevention.	Street Wardens (Thanet) and Neighbourhood Wardens (Canterbury)	No
European Regional Development Fund Objective 2	EU funding for areas suffering structural difficulties. Thanet/Dover programme focuses on Spatial Development and Infrastructure; Business Support, Training and Innovation; Heritage, Culture and the Environment & Community Economic Development	Eligible wards of Dover and Thanet	Yes, until 31 December 2006
INTERREG IIIa	EU funding to support the development of cross-border projects with Northern France. Has been used to support projects linked to culture, heritage, economic development and environment	All parts of East Kent could apply	Yes, until 31 December 2006
European Social Fund	This programme can be used to tackle labour market gaps/inequalities projects e.g training. Funding is distributed via LSCs, GOSE and Jobcentre Plus	All parts of East Kent could apply	Yes, but bidding their may be no bidding opportunities after September 2004
Single Regeneration Fund (now known as "Single Pot")	The programme was set up to promote regeneration via local partnerships improving local areas and enhance quality of life. Projects supported included those enhancing employment prospects, addressing social exclusion, promoting sustainable regeneration.	All parts of East Kent could apply focus on disadvantaged areas. Under 6 SRB Rounds 18 projects in the EK area approved.	No new bids, some projects will continue until 2007-08. The scheme has not been directly replaced but some of its functions have superseded by the AIF (see below)
East Kent Area Investment Framework (AIF)	This is an instrument to provide an integrated approach to the pursuit and use of resources to achieve regeneration. Focus of the East Kent AIF: Investing in Infrastructure; Building a Strong Economy; Investing in Education, Skills and Lifelong Learning; Improving the Quality of Life & Developing Vibrant and Successful Communities	Specific activities and projects throughout East Kent	Yes

English Heritage's Heritage Economic Regeneration Scheme	The scheme was designed to regenerate most deprived urban and rural areas, targeting small commercial and industrial premises in conservation areas where repair and refurbishment would make a significant contribution to economic and social regeneration.	All parts of East Kent could apply	No, scheme is currently closed to bids
South East Growth Fund	A Regional Venture Capital Fund providing risk capital to small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) looking to achieve significant growth.	All parts of East Kent could apply	Yes
Liveability Fund *	Programme to support projects aimed at public space and local liveability around improvements to parks and public spaces	All East Kent Districts	No
Coalfields Regeneration Trust	Funding for projects that provide resources for former coalfield communities eg. work and training, Community enterprise, welfare advice or support credit unions.	Specific wards of Dover and Canterbury	Yes
Heritage Lottery Fund – Heritage Projects	Funding for projects relating to the national, regional or local heritage which aim to conserve and enhance diverse heritage and/or encourage more people to be involved in their heritage Grants usually between £50,000-£5m	All parts of East Kent could apply	Yes
Heritage Lottery Fund – Public Parks Initiative	Supports the regeneration and conservation of public parks. Funding is provided for whole-park projects, the conservation of park features or park activities. Grants usually between £50,000-£5m – grants of over £5m are possible	All parts of East Kent could apply	Yes
Heritage Lottery Fund – Townscape Heritage	Grants for schemes, led by partnerships of local, regional and national interests, that aim to regenerate the historic environment in towns and cities. Eligible activities include structural and external repair of historic buildings that are still being used, and the repair/conversion for new uses of empty historic buildings. Grants offered between £250,000-£2m.	All parts of East Kent could apply	Yes
Heritage Lottery Fund – Landscape Partnerships	Grants for schemes, led by partnerships of local, regional and national interests, that aim to regenerate the conserve landscape areas of district local character. Grants offered between £250,000-£2m.	All parts of East Kent could apply	Yes
Community Fund – Medium/Large Projects	Finance for projects which help disadvantaged people and improve quality of life in the community. Capital/ revenue expenditure supported.	All parts of East Kent could apply	Yes
Community Fund – Countryside Communities	Specific allocation to support projects in disadvantaged rural areas with low lottery take-up	Shepway and Dover	Yes

English Partnerships	EH runs a number of programmes and initiatives on behalf of the ODPM. These include: Land Sales Programme; Land Stabilisation Programme; National Coalfields Programme; Register of Surplus Public Sector Land; Strategic Joint Ventures.	At specific locations across East Kent	Yes
Sure Start	Provides support for projects working with parents and children to promote the physical, intellectual and social development of disadvantaged children from conception through to age 14, and up to age 16 for those with special educational needs and disabilities.	Local Sure Start programmes in operation in Programme Round Millmead, Dover, Sure Start Folkestone, Margate and Canterbury	Yes, further funding has been secured until 2007-08
Living Spaces	Grants for the improvement of open spaces in England for the benefit of the whole community. Eligible projects include: play areas; community gardens and local parks	All parts of East Kent could apply	Yes
NOF – Transforming Your Space	Funding for projects which improve the local environment; to improve the appearance and amenities of local environments by transforming public and green spaces.	Thanet	No, closed to new bidders but funding available until 2007
NOF - Building Neighbourhood Nurseries	The focus of this scheme was supporting the construction and renovation of nurseries in deprived areas.	Deprived areas of East Kent	No, closed to new bidders
NOF - Out of School Childcare	Supported the creation of out of school hours childcare places for children attending any school either full-time or part-time, aged between 3-14, but including 15- 16 year olds where appropriate, before and/or during school holidays.	All parts of East Kent could apply	No, closed to new bidders
Out of School Hours Learning	Supported programmes of learning activities outside normal school hours which are linked to particular schools' overall provision and aims.	All parts of East Kent could apply	No, closed to new bidders
Enterprise Areas	These areas a range of fiscal or other options have been made available i.e. stamp duty exemption on property transfers up to £150,000. New Business Premises Renovation Allowance scheme will provide 100% capital allowances.	Dover, Thanet and Shepway	Not, this is not at the moment a funding scheme
Children's Fund	Funding provided for increased and co-ordinated preventive services for children and young people at risk of social exclusion, supporting children and their families and carers in breaking the cycle of poverty and disadvantage.	All parts of East Kent covered but targeted at specific areas	No, all funds have been allocated but existing projects have some degree of short term funding

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