5.11a. District Dashboard Thanet

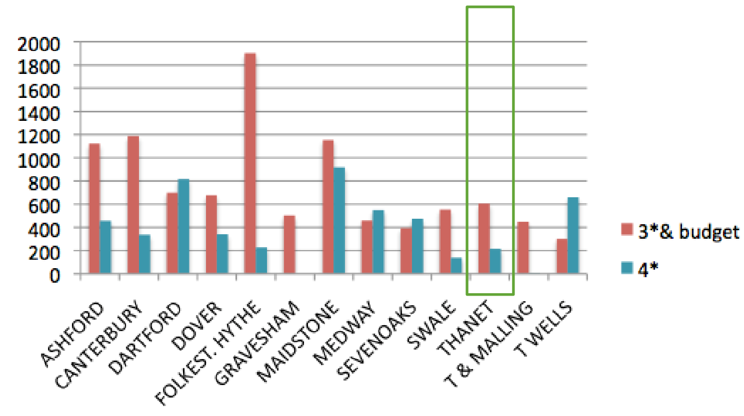
Thanet comes in the top third of Kent's districts for business and the mid third for holiday bed-nights. A relatively high proportion of trips to Thanet are to paid accommodation – at 66%, equal to Canterbury, but lower than Dover and Folkestone. Thanet has the highest number of MICE-ready establishments in the county, but its total MICE capacity is rather less – lower than that of Sevenoaks, Maidstone and Dover – and it also has fewer group-tour ready establishments than Maidstone, Medway, Dover, Folkestone & Hythe and Canterbury. A high proportion of Thanet's visitors stay in paid accommodation (66%), and Thanet comes in the mid-third of Kent's districts for 3*/budget accommodation, but in the bottom third for 4* accommodation. Airbnb provision is high, with moderate growth and a predominance of entire home rentals. Provision is focused in the coastal towns, but most notable is the low level of **rental demand** compared to the rest of the county.

3/13 for **BUSINESS NIGHTS**: 236,000 bed-nights = 9.4% of total for Kent
5/13 for **HOLIDAY NIGHTS**: 845,000 bed-nights = 10.5% of total for Kent

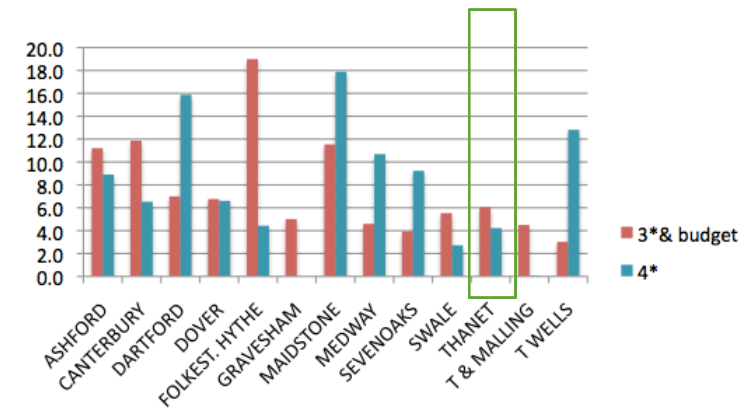
18 **MICE-ready** accommodation establishments = 16% of county total
Total **MICE capacity**: 1,383 = 8.5% of county capacity within accommodation establishments
Largest single MICE venue capacity: 130

Group tour-ready establishments: 7 = 7.6% of Kent total

Airbnb: 1,089 **ACTIVE RENTALS** with a **rental growth** of **373%** between 2016 (Q2) and 2019 (Q2). **Rental demand** 60 (13/13)



3* and 4* bed distribution by district



3* and 4* bed nos by district as percentage of county total

Sources of data for district dashboards: Extrapolated from Destination Research 2018, Visit Kent Business Barometers, CCCU Accommodation Database audit and Airdna webpages (subscription to district level data).

Visitor Offer

The Isle of Thanet offers the visitor beaches, villages, and the seaside towns of Margate, Ramsgate and Broadstairs, with their combination of heritage and contemporary arts and culture. Margate's Turner Contemporary gallery and vintage funfair Dreamland are flagship attractions in the district at the heart of a growing creative and events offer, which is extending the visitor season in the district.

Key Drivers for the Visitor Economy

Improvements in connectivity may give a significant boost to business accommodation in Thanet, with the recently granted development consent order for Manston Airport freight hub, and KCC plans for Parkway station between Ramsgate and Minster raising the possibility of a fast train service to London. Dreamland is planning to extend its out of season offer to encompass business tourism and MICE, and has planning permission for a seafront hotel in Margate. Thanet is also becoming increasingly popular as a film location.

Thanet needs to increase its accommodation scale and capacity to capture growing markets in the district:

- Larger scale events (planned by Dreamland)
- The cultural and creative market
- Accommodation for film crews – requires venues capable of accommodating an entire crew.

Although there is a need to increase capacity, this has to be to the right scale, and not create an oversupply which would reduce occupancy rates below viable levels.

Drivers

Main:

Visitor offer – Beaches, arts, culture and creativity, heritage, rural areas, flagship attractions.

Supplementary:

Connectivity – fast rail service to London.

Policy – Council plans for town centre regeneration – tourism at heart of economic development strategy.

Potential:

Connectivity – planned development of Manston Airport and Parkway station.

5.11b. Thanet (interview findings)

Gaps in Provision

In addition to the requirement for more high-end serviced accommodation, Thanet needs a mix of accommodation, to sustain what is a growing demand for out of season short-break coastal tourism, and a more experiential type of smaller business event, for businesses seeking an alternative from the normal London-based offer. Thanet currently lacks a glamping/camping offer near the sea to cater for these markets, and the Local Plan has earmarked particular beaches in Thanet for small-scale accommodation development.

Links to key planning and policy documents

Local Plan to 2031 – text as modified (not yet published) – Chapters 2 and 9 (*Town Centres* and *Tourism*)
https://democracy.thanet.gov.uk/documents/s69015/Annex%203%20-%20Thanet%20Local%20Plan%20with%20appendices%20March%202020.pdf
The Local Plan was adopted earlier in July, to be reviewed in six months, and that intervening time will be used to conduct studies and collect evidence including on the impact of the COVID pandemic, which will be reflected in the revised plan. The studies will include an update of the town centre retail and leisure assessment carried out in 2012, which will also involve collecting information on accommodation.

Economic Growth Strategy (November 2016) – currently being refreshed https://www.thanet.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/FINAL-Thanet-Economic-Growth-Strategy-060117.pdf

Thanet Destination Management Framework (January 2020)
https://www.visitthanetbusiness.co.uk/media/3147/thanet-dmf-january-2020.pdf

Priority gaps

High end serviced accommodation (coastal)

Coastal glamping

Small scale beach accommodation

Support for inward investment:

Enabling environment:
Thanet is keen to encourage inward investment in accommodation, and works in partnership with Visit Kent to offer free business support to investors with their planning.

Joint ventures:
Potential for joint venture-type partnerships to generate income from some key properties on the Council's asset disposal list.