

To: Communities Policy Overview Committee – 2nd June 2008

From: Mike Hill, Portfolio Holder, Amanda Honey, Managing Director, Communities

Subject: **Turner Contemporary – Regeneration Impact**

Classification: Unrestricted

Summary: This report outlines the expected regeneration impact of Turner Contemporary

FOR INFORMATION

1. Background

(1) Priority 2 of Kent Prospects 2007 – 2012, KCC's Economic Development Strategy, is to promote sustainable growth and regeneration. When employment levels and other deprivation indices are considered, it is not surprising that, within this, the coastal towns of East Kent feature prominently. Margate, in particular is identified as one of a number of towns where concerted public sector intervention is required. Similarly, within SEEDA's Regional Economic Strategy, the Coastal South East Framework identifies Margate as one of just four coastal regional priorities. Its framework for action places much emphasis in transforming these ailing economies on the establishment of a creative and inspirational coast offering high quality places to live, work, learn and invest.

(2) Thanet's need for public sector intervention has been recognised for many years and, having benefited from ERDF Objective 2 status, Assisted Area Status and several rounds of Single Regeneration Budget funding, major strides have been made. But Margate continues to be a priority for Thanet District Council. In particular, the wards of Margate Central and Cliftonville West continue to be highly deprived, the housing market there is unbalanced and, with 1000 jobs lost between 2003 and 2006, unemployment in those wards is three times the Thanet average.

2. Margate's regeneration

(3) A concerted public sector approach has been required to address Margate's ills and thus it was that in 2006 major public sector players (KCC, SEEDA, Thanet District Council, English Partnerships, English Heritage, The Arts Council, The Heritage Lottery Fund and the Government Office for the South East) came together as the Margate Regeneration Partnership (MRP) around an implementation plan to deliver its vision that:

“By 2015, Margate will become a dynamic, thriving and successful town. It will be a major hub and driving force for creativity and culture that excites and inspires

residents and visitors alike. It will embrace and celebrate its traditions as a place of relaxation, leisure and seaside fun.”

(4) The implementation plan recognised a variety of key drivers of Margate’s regeneration, all of which would need to be addressed. These included improved connectivity, housing improvements (involving Neighborhood Renewal and KCC’s No Use Empty initiative), improving the quality of life and social regeneration (particularly around the Government’s Safer, Stronger Communities Fund Programme), the need to address skills issues, and a reduction in the town’s reliance on public sector employment. A concentration on the creative and cultural sector based upon establishing a new creative quarter in the Old Town has been a key element in diversifying the economy and Turner Contemporary has been very much the inspiration and anchor of these developments.

3. Turner Contemporary

(5) Turner Contemporary’s vision *“is to celebrate JMW Turner’s association with Margate and to promote an understanding and enjoyment of his historical and contemporary art as a vital and accessible means of expression that enriches everyone’s lives. And by so doing, be a positive force in the social, economic and environmental regeneration of Thanet and East Kent.”*

(6) Although the build will not start until later this year, the Turner effect on investment and the property market is already being experienced. For example, in a recent survey, it has been shown that at least 25 businesses are operating either as a result of the original Turner initiative or the current one.

(7) There are a number of important ways in which Turner Contemporary is shaping and impacting on the regeneration of Margate. The main strands of this will be achieved through:

- major physical improvements to the Eastern Seafront of Margate, from the Harbour Arm, through the Rendezvous site to the Winter Gardens and Lido
- strengthening Margate’s (and East Kent and Kent’s) cultural and creative offer, and in particular supporting the planned future development of the Old Town as a Creative Quarter
- the creation of new jobs, businesses and generating confidence to invest
- strengthening education, community and civic pride
- its contribution to and alongside the development of other key sites in Margate

These are considered in more detail on the next page.

3.1 The Eastern Seafront Proposal

(8) Turner Contemporary is being designed by David Chipperfield Architects, the winner of the Stirling Prize for Architecture in 2007. The design of the new gallery has been widely applauded and the completed gallery is expected to achieve international recognition for both its artistic and architectural merits. As well as uplifting the cultural offer for Kent and the region, the impact of the initiative on Margate will be profound.

The greatest physical impact will be expressed through the transformation of the Eastern Seafront from the Harbour Arm to the Lido.

(9) Most significantly, the site immediately adjoining Turner Contemporary, is to be developed by KCC with its development partner Gleeson and is provisionally expected to include high quality residential accommodation, a four star hotel and commercial outlets. Along with Turner Contemporary, the scheme will create new linkages to the Old Town and will lead to the complete transformation of the Rendezvous site. Significant improvements are also currently being implemented to the Harbour Arm, which will improve its attractiveness and include a number of commercial outlets. Comprehensive plans are expected to come forward shortly from the owners of the Lido site with mixed use residential and leisure proposals. Thanet District Council is currently giving consideration as to how the Winter Gardens can be improved in light of these existing initiatives.

(10) Major enhancements to the public realm are a key feature of the Eastern Seafront proposals. The narrowing of Fort Hill to a single carriageway and linked improvements to King Street, The Parade and the harbour front, will not only improve the quality of the public realm but will ensure significantly improved connectivity between the seafront and Old Town.

3.2 Strengthening the cultural strategy

(11) Establishing Turner Contemporary will, alongside other cultural initiatives such as The Marlowe and The Beane Institute in Canterbury, The Creative Foundation in Folkestone and other developments like the Whitstable Biennial, ensure Kent and East Kent's cultural offer can compete with other major cultural destinations in the South East. Whilst the initiative is important for Kent and the region, it is crucial for Margate.

(12) A critically important feature of Margate's plans is to diversify its economy and to build on its developing reputation as a centre for the arts. Turner Contemporary underpins these plans. The Old Town, in particular, designated as Margate's Cultural Quarter, will be a major beneficiary as new visitors, art-related businesses and other support businesses become established. The gallery is expected to generate around 130,000 visitors a year.

(13) Margate now features in Sharpie's Index as one of the country's top twenty creative towns with potential to be one of the top ten (Future Laboratory for Sharpies Creative Index 2007). The Sharpie's analysis draws much from the contribution of Turner Contemporary.

3.3 New Jobs, businesses and confidence

(14) Although it is difficult to be precise about the number of jobs likely to be created, it is estimated there will be something in the order of 180 - 200 new or safeguarded permanent jobs as a result of Turner Contemporary. A number of these jobs arise directly from Turner Contemporary including jobs required to run the new gallery, jobs generated as a result of additional spend by visitors to the gallery, the twenty five existing businesses arising because of Turner and the eighteen new businesses that are

expected to be created in the next two or three years. Others will be generated by the new hotel, commercial outlets and the spend of residents new to the Rendezvous site. It should be noted the job figures quoted above conform to rigorous SEEDA conventions.

(15) A distinguishing feature of the Turner initiative is that it will attract higher spending tourists. It will also serve to enhance Margate's tourism offer by balancing its current more popular beach based and amusement focused offer. The new higher quality accommodation that will be offered on the Rendezvous site is similarly expected to help rebalance the resident demographic by attracting higher spending residents. This combination of a strong cultural and accommodation offer is expected to be positively influential in shaping the quality of other key development sites in Margate.

(16) There is already evidence that the planned creation of Turner Contemporary has had an impact on both confidence to invest in Margate and the area and on actual property prices (The Turner Effect). In Margate, there has been an increase of 116% in residential property prices since 2001. This coincides with the raised profile of Turner Contemporary and it is reasonable to infer a link between Turner Contemporary and the confidence in the local property market. This is supported by evidence that over the same period, whilst residential property prices have risen by 116% in Margate, they have only risen by 87.3% and 59.6% in Thanet and the rest of the South East respectively. Developers in Margate openly underscore the vital role Turner Contemporary and its associated developments played in their decision to invest in the town. Below is a typical statement from a local developer which is representative of key business opinion:

"I have been investing in Margate for just over 3 years and in that time over £15m has been allocated by my group of companies to a mixture of properties in the town. Substantial further investment may follow.

One of the principal reasons for investing in Margate over that period has been the much publicised Turner Centre which I see as the defining project for the regeneration of the town. It has encouraged the creation of many local businesses, anticipating tourist growth, and other investment in residential and commercial property". (Wade Barker, Thanet Development Group; May 2007)

3.4 Strengthening education, community and civic pride

(17) Margate and in particular the two wards of Cliftonville West and Margate Central, feature amongst the highest levels of social deprivation in Kent. Turner Contemporary will play a key role in contributing to mitigating the high level of social need not only through its broader economic contribution, but also through its commitment to providing education and outreach services, to social cohesion and to the enhancement of civic pride in Margate. The new gallery will have a strong education component and expand the number of existing programmes which focus on groups with high levels of social need. The gallery will have a strong community focus and attract local community support in addition to its regional, national and international ambitions. The gallery will continue to work closely with local artistic groups such as Crate and Limbo Arts as well as wider community interest groups.

3.5 Turner Contemporary and wider developments

(18) Turner Contemporary is central to the town's regeneration plans and complements development on other sites. These other key development sites include Dreamland, Arlington, the Marks and Spencer site, a variety of Old Town improvements and further a field the development of Manston airport.

(19) The developments to the transport infrastructure for Margate will also underpin future economic expansion. In the short term the Parking Access and Movement (PAM) proposals will improve local accessibility and redefine parking resources. New signage, walking routes and connections will enhance the quality of the visitor experience. The introduction of CTRL Domestic Services from London to Ramsgate in 2009 will see a reduction in travel time from London to Margate. The designation of Manston as a regional airport is also very significant. The improved access to Kent and East Kent is likely to lead to major additional numbers of tourists and visitors. With the improved cultural and tourist offers planned for East Kent it is anticipated Margate and Thanet will be important beneficiaries. Turner Contemporary will be a key element in a concerted programmed.

(20) Whilst the Turner effect has been shown to exist, the work of the team at Turner Contemporary to provide arts activities has already done much to support the regeneration. As a result of working with artists such as Mike Nelson, Jeremy Duller and Laura Ford, significant new audiences have been attracted to Margate and media attention is already contributing to overturning long held assumptions about the town. The team is currently programming a new project space on Margate High Street and in the first two months of operation there have been 7800 visitors.

4. Conclusion

(21) Turner Contemporary and the developments linked with it will clearly have a major catalytic effect to help change Margate and build confidence. The developments on the eastern seafront alone will have a huge impact on the Town's image and tourism offer and lead to significant jobs. However, the scale of change on the eastern seafront, when combined with the other key major projects planned for Margate, is anticipated to contribute to a 'tipping point' for Margate's future economic and social prosperity.

5. Recommendation

(22) The Policy Overview Committee are invited to note the contents of this report.

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