

Thame Town Council

Environmental Policy – Draft V5

1. Background / Principles

- 1.1. This environmental policy applies to all aspects of the work of Thame Town Council.
- 1.2. Thame Town Council is committed to doing all in and around Thame within its powers and resources to protect and enhance the well-being of local people and all that comprises the natural and built world (our environment.) We are also committed to the principle of sustainability. This means avoiding unnecessary energy use or waste and restricting our use of resources to avoid contributing to climate change or other ongoing damage to ourselves or our environment. Accordingly we will at all times seek maximum sustainability in all our dealings affecting the environment.
- 1.3. Thame Town Council recognises that these are times of extraordinary challenge for the environment, locally, nationally and globally. Meeting this challenge will involve all in the community recognising the need to adapt to radically changing circumstances to ensure the communal future well-being of ourselves and our environment and as an example that can be followed elsewhere.
- 1.4. Environmental wellbeing is critical and will be taken into account alongside all other factors such as social wellbeing, public safety, prevention of crime and disorder, equality provision etc. in all that the Town Council does.
- 1.5. It is recognised that the adoption of and conformance to this policy will require expeditious changes to other policies and procedures regulating the actions of Thame Town Council, reflecting the urgency of the changes necessary.

2. Objectives / Commitments

Thame Town Council has the following objectives / makes the following commitments relating to the following topics:

- 2.1. **Green Living Plan** – Completing, adopting and implementing a Green Living Plan for Thame (GLP) (as currently being developed in conjunction with the RSA Thame Group / Thame Green Living), in a time frame appropriate to the challenges faced, including the review and continued development of the GLP on an ongoing basis.
- 2.2. **Decision-making** – Ensuring all Thame Town Council decisions take into account environmental impact and wellbeing, from the adoption of this Policy.
- 2.3. **Procurement** – Ensuring all procurement decisions implement sustainability, consider embodied energy, eventual disposal by recycling and avoid (or, where impracticable, seek to reduce) use of any unsustainable materials. A premium of up to 25% in price may be considered in order to “go green”.
- 2.4. **Development / Planning** – Taking such action as is within our power and resources to support and encourage sustainability in all forms of development and in our planning recommendations, where necessary seeking environmental assurances beyond the requirements of the Thame Neighbourhood Plan and other relevant legislation.
- 2.5. **Council estate and facilities** – Managing our land and activities using environmentally-friendly practices that promote biodiversity and enhance habitats, in line with already documented policies and procedures. Those policies and procedures to be amended to

reflect this Environmental Policy as soon as practically possible.

2.6. **Council Investments** –

Either:

To divest as soon as possible, from all investments including fossil fuels, and other investments that negatively affect bio-diversity and the environment generally.

Or:

Manage our investments in an agreed sustainable way and seek investment opportunities that promote sustainability.

2.7. **Energy generally** – Minimising energy use in all activities and buildings. Maximising the use of renewable energy and minimising waste, pollution and use of fossil fuels and other non-renewable resources in line with procurement policy.

2.8. **Climate Change and carbon neutrality:**

2.8.1. Working with relevant stakeholders to develop and maintain a practicable and financially achievable action plan to measure the environmental impact and achieve 'Carbon Neutrality' in the actions of Thame Town Council by 2040 (with progress reviews at 2021, 2025, 2030 and 2035) or such date as may be determined by the government or otherwise be practicable locally. Quick actions to be taken in the short term to be followed as soon as possible by medium and then longer-term / more challenging changes as per the list of actions drawn up Councilors and officers.

2.8.2. Working with other relevant Thame based organisations, and particularly Thame Green Living and the GLP to encourage 'Carbon Neutrality' within the Thame/ Moreton area by no later than 2040 or such date as may be determined by the government or otherwise be practicable locally.

2.9. **Biodiversity net gain** – using its available powers (including persuasion) to secure a quantifiable net gain in biodiversity in Thame as a whole.

2.10. **Awareness and information** – Working in conjunction with relevant partners (including Thame Green Living and the GLP) to promote and provide environmental information across the community and training to Council staff and contractors, responding appropriately to feedback and utilising the process as an aid to an evolving consensus.

2.11. **Monitoring and reviewing** – Establishing (including where necessary via an independent third party consultancy) and implementing suitable practices and checks to monitor compliance with these objectives / commitments and improving our environmental performance.

2.12. **Resources** – Making available reasonable budget (including an Environmental Reserve) and staffing resources to facilitate local environmental initiatives and support relevant volunteer community groups and local organisations furthering those initiatives.

2.13. **Other authorities** – Promoting Thame's environmental awareness and initiatives with the district and county councils, nearby parish councils and other official and unofficial bodies. Plus sharing of best practice with (and learning from) other Town and Parish Councils and relevant national bodies. Plus following of any specific guidance issued by Central Government for Town and Parish Councils, following Central Government's declaration of a Climate Emergency.

- 2.14. **Setting the example** – informing and encouraging all Councillors and Officers to promote these practices and to lead by example in supporting environmentally friendly activities.
- 2.15. **Supporting** - Creating and supporting a culture of participation, and supporting learning and initiative for residents of Thame, towards these ends.