

Community Services Committee

Report Title:	Banking Hub
Meeting Date:	11 November 2025
Contact Officer:	Cassie Pinnells, Community Services Manager

Purpose of the Report

1. To provide a written update on the Independent Assessors final report assessing the complaint from Thame Town Council about LINK's Assessment of Thame about the need of a Banking Hub for Thame.

Update

2. The Independent Assessors Report was received following a visit to Thame on 5 July 2025. The Independent Assessor reviewed whether LINK correctly applied national criteria (set under FCA PS24/8) when assessing Thame's eligibility for a Banking Hub. She could not change those criteria to confirm whether they were applied properly.

Key Findings

- **Urban classification:** LINK correctly classed Thame as *urban* (population >10,000).
- **Population data:** LINK used a single national dataset (CACI). Nearby villages like Haddenham and Chinnor are classed separately, explaining lower population figures used.
- **Retailers:** 73–86 relevant retailers within 1 mile. Thame is a “**large**” centre; needs 100+ retailers and 30,000+ residents to move up to “very large.”
- **Bank distance:** Nearest full-service bank (Santander, Aylesbury) = 6.5 miles. Straight-line distance method used nationally; correctly red-flagged for access.
- **Age profile:** 23% aged over 65 – correctly red-flagged.
- **Existing services:**
 - Nationwide (personal banking only, 5.5 days/week)
 - Post Office (3 secure tills, but often short-staffed)
 - ATMs (3–5 around town; sometimes short of cash)
 - ADS machine at Boots providing cash deposits and withdrawals for businesses.

Conclusion

LINK's decision **not to award Thame a Banking Hub** was made correctly and in line with national criteria. Thame's cash and deposit needs are considered met through existing facilities and the new ADS.

Outcome:

Complaint **not upheld**.

LINK's process was found to be accurate, fair, and consistent with national standards.

3. The Head of Banking from LINK, has been in contact to state they had already acted based on the Independent Assessment findings. They had discussed with their Stake Holder at the Post Office and asked them to review their resourcing to better the needs at Thame. They state they have the necessary facilities in place. This is now under review at the Post Office. Further analysis of the ATM availability in Thame, with particular focus on cash-out incidents. As a follow up, LINK will be providing targeted feedback to operators if cash-out remains a recurring issue. This is something LINK can do directly as they have access to the relevant available data.
4. Despite the robustness of the Town Council, Thame will not be getting a banking hub – the banking industry’s solution to the provision of a range of banking services from several banks within one building.
5. A press release was sent out on Monday 8 September to MP’s and journalists of the disappointing findings.
6. Recognition should go to Helen Johns and Cllr Mike Dyer and special thanks to both for their commitment and hard work investigating information/data to help with the complaint and pursuing the Banking Hub in Thame.

Action

- i) To note this report.*