

Key Messages from Thame 2050 Community Strategy Workshops

- Thame starts from a position of strength: a distinctive, successful market town with strong identity, active community life and high quality of life.
- The town is not facing a single crisis, but a series of smaller, unconnected changes that could gradually erode its character if not guided by a clear, long-term direction.
- People want confidence that decisions on housing, transport, the town centre, wellbeing and youth provision are joined up, not simply more activity or isolated projects.
- Community is seen as Thame's greatest asset: neighbours, volunteers, events and shared spaces all contribute to feeling safe, supported and proud of the town.
- Growth risks weakening that sense of community if new neighbourhoods lack shared spaces, local facilities and good connections to the rest of Thame.
- Protecting and investing in social connection (spaces, events, participation) is as important as investing in physical infrastructure.
- Movement around the town is increasingly dependent on cars, particularly in newer housing areas where services can be hard to reach without driving.
- Bus, walking and cycling options exist but often feel disjointed, with poor alignment between modes and routes that are not always continuous or intuitive.
- People are asking for a connected movement system planned alongside housing and the town centre, supporting independence for older residents, young people and workers.
- Housing growth is accepted as inevitable; the concern is how it is designed and integrated, not whether it happens.
- Residents want new developments that are resilient (e.g. flood/drainage aware), well connected, and include shared spaces and local facilities so they feel like real neighbourhoods.
- Decisions on housing made over the next decade will lock in traffic patterns, energy use, school places, affordability and community cohesion for generations.
- The town centre and local economy are understood in terms of identity, not just retail performance and foot-fall.

- Thame's markets, historic character, independent shops and cafés, food culture and key buildings (such as the Spread Eagle) together create a unique sense of place that must be protected and strengthened.
- The high street's future will depend increasingly on experience and social life (places to meet, eat, gather and celebrate) and on its links to housing, transport and affordability for workers.
- Wellbeing is seen broadly: everyday independence, feeling safe, being able to get around, access services, and stay connected at all ages.
- An ageing population and the needs of younger families highlight the importance of housing design, local amenities, accessible transport, green and social spaces.
- Wellbeing should act as a test across the whole 2050 Strategy: judging proposals by whether they make daily life better, safer and more connected.
- Young people are viewed as central to Thame's future, not as a problem to manage.
- There is concern about the lack of visible, positive, youth friendly spaces and broader opportunities for teenagers to gather, create and contribute.
- Youth and cultural life (music, arts, sport, volunteering, inter-generational activities) are seen as part of the town's social foundations, not optional extras.
- Overall, participants are asking for a clear sense of direction, built on:
 1. A joined up approach linking housing, transport, town centre, wellbeing and youth.
 2. Growth that strengthens identity and neighbourhood connection rather than stretching the town.
 3. Use of wellbeing and everyday lived experience as the main measures of success.
 4. Open communication, trust and ongoing community involvement in shaping and reviewing the plan.

Next, the Town Council will use these themes to draft the Thame Strategy, test it with the wider community, set clear priorities for the next 5–10 years, and maintain regular communication and review so that Thame shapes change deliberately rather than letting it happen by default.

If you have any comments about a strategy for Thame, please scan the below QR code or leave your comments in the Strategy Comments Box by the door.