

Future Oswestry Meeting

Notes of meeting held on Thursday 1st of July 2021 at 2pm at Wynnstay Hotel (following site visit at 1pm)

Attendance:

Adele Nightingale, Ian Follington, BID (via Zoom) and Tim Morris, BID Board Member
Cllr Duncan Kerr, Cllr Mike Isherwood, OTC
Cllr Steve Charmley, Cllr Rob Macey, SC

Officers:

OTC: Arren Roberts,

SC: Joe Bubb, Andy Wigley, Samantha Jones, Philip Lloyd, Kevin Aitken, Hayley Owen,

Apologies: James Willocks, Andy Evans Corrie Davies, Sarah Jones, Steve Brown, Andy Morris,

1. Welcome and apologies

Introductions of Future Oswestry Members and officers supporting the group on specific activities and agenda items.

2. Notes of the last meeting

Notes of the meeting held on 24/03/21 were agreed.

Matters arising and key actions from the last FOG meeting to be picked up in main agenda items.

3. Declarations of interest

None received.

4. Priority Projects

a) Traffic Regulations Review update

Site visit prior to the meeting had been undertaken to discuss the lifting of social distancing measures and interim proposals that could be undertaken. There remains an urgency to remove the social distancing measures asap for safety reasons.

Following a full discussion, the suggested measures were put forward to continue with the one-way flow of the section of Church Street covered by the Experimental Traffic Regulation Order, including:

- alignment of the proposed one way running lane on Church Street, including the proposal for additional footway space in the area of the loading bay proposed to be revoked.
- proposed amendments to parking arrangements, which includes a full 18 metre long 24 hour disabled bay outside Boots, a 24 hour loading bay from the disabled bay all the way through to the boundary with the Fox Inn and the revocation of the existing

loading bay at the southern end on the east side, which will become no waiting and no loading at any time along with all other areas of Church Street.

MI asked if the 20pmh area for this stretch of Church Street through on to Willow Street and including Cross Street could be considered. The suggestion for 20mph limit was discussed and supported in principle by members. This would need to be progressed through a Speed Regulation Order which would need to be advertised and consulted on separately.

AN confirmed that the BID can contribute to any enhancing works to support these proposals, however the BID can't financially contribute to these proposals.

Actions:

- AN to raise proposals with the properties on Church Street regarding the proposed disabled bay, loading bay proposals and restrictions.
- KA will request cost estimates on all the various elements and consult further with highway maintenance colleagues regarding use of colour surfacing to differentiate the disabled and loading bays.
- KA to update the design and provide costs and share with FOG to discuss and identify funding for the interim work.
- The scope of a project brief for future public realm works will still need to be prepared and shared with the Future Oswestry group. JB/KA

b) High Street Heritage Action Zone

Update from Sam Jones, HSHAZ Project Officer

4 grant applications are to be considered at the next HAZ Board meeting (2 Repurposing and 2 Shop Front grants). A further 5 applications for properties currently being considered (the grant schemes are currently closed to new applications as oversubscribed for both schemes)

Consultants Purcells have been appointed to carry out a feasibility study on some empty properties in the town as well as test the vision for start-up business space. Consultation with stakeholders and online survey to be promoted. This work will inform the development of a business case for any preferred proposal. Valuations and conditions surveys are underway to inform any decisions.

Environmental Associates (EA) have been contracted to look at the 4 alleyways and create designs to look at how to make them welcoming spaces. These designs will be shared with stakeholders and costed up.

Historic England will be reviewing the HSHAZ schemes and could be looking to re-allocate underspend between the HSHAZ schemes. Oswestry HSHAZ spend is on target and the HAZ Board will seek the opportunity for additional HSHAZ to be utilised for grants, the flagship and public realm improvements.

Cultural Consortium has been established and has received an award of £90,000 from Historic England. The Consortium is interviewing for a facilitator and has submitted an EOI to Historic England to work with 5 other HSHAZ schemes on an outdoor event in 2023.

Actions:

- SamJ to put the EA consultants in touch with DK.

- HSHAZ budget to be reviewed to consider match availability and prepare case for additional HSHAZ monies if available.

AR suggested that OTC could re-consider match against the HSHAZ budget.

c) Indicative masterplan and movement / access strategy

Update provided by Sarah Jones, SC

Feedback from the online workshops has been sent out to stakeholders and included on the webpage. The third online workshop is to be held next week.

The masterplan is being promoted within Marches School to students, teachers and parents by the school's Student Champion.

Comments received from the Library display and school events are being analysed and will be added.

The use of Market stalls to highlight the work so far and encourage further comments will be employed (subject to social distancing restrictions) over the summer.

All comments will be fed back to Allies and Morrisons to update the vision document prior to undertaking consultation.

Future Oswestry Project Facebook page is being set up for the masterplan vision and Twitter account.

RM asked if those who contributed to the online survey could be contacted regarding the next steps.

Action

- SarahJ to check if contacting participants for the online survey could be undertaken.

d) Wayfinding including signage for the industrial estate

Update from Adele Nightingale, BID

BID working on wayfinding on the Industrial estate. The locations originally identified for signage are controlled by Highways England. Alternative locations are being looked at and permissions for signs discussed with SC Highways. Use of existing lampposts for colour coded sleeves and banners being discussed with SC Street Lighting.

Directory for Industrial estate for BID members and non-members is being produced with over 70 submissions so far.

AN has initiated discussions with SC Highways regarding the gateways into the town.

Ongoing discussions on the suggested Lorry park are being held with the Livestock market.

Action

- Conditions of Whittington and Gobowen roundabouts on A5 to be raised with Highways England – AR/AN
- AN to bring back any options discussed for gateways to the group.

e) Review of the Oswestry Town Bus Service

JB fed back updated provided by Andy Evans regarding the Government's long-term National Bus Strategy for England announced in March. Details of the National Bus

Strategy and Shropshire Council's response will be shared to the group. A dedicated meeting with Future Oswestry members is suggested to discuss the review.

Action:

- Dedicated meeting with Future Oswestry members to be arranged.

f) Capital Infrastructure Projects

Update from Joe Bubb, SC

An updated newsletter for the Mile End road improvements has been added to the Future Oswestry web pages.

North Shropshire Planning Committee will be considering the Hybrid planning application for the Oswestry Innovation Park at its July meeting.

Proposals for the Levelling Up Fund (LUF) for the Shropshire North Constituency were submitted by Shropshire Council in June. This fund focuses on capital investment in local infrastructure that is deliverable within the next three to four years, and bids will be appraised on merits of targeted place characteristics, deliverability including spend within 2021/22, value for money and strategic fit.

The LUF bid for Oswestry focussed on the need for investment to support:

- Town centre regeneration and recovery, through proposals to increase footfall supported by public realm improvements and enhanced access to services and through measures to support businesses to stimulate economic growth. Projects included future public realm improvements on Church Street and Cross Street, extending capital grants available to re-purpose underused buildings in the town, support new activities and facilities at the Library, and develop new co-working business spaces within Council owned assets. These proposals complemented existing activities and schemes such as the High Street Heritage Action Zone scheme.
- Investment to support planned housing developments around Mile End, including site preparation of the Oswestry Innovation Park to kickstart the provision of serviced employment land and the development of wheeled sports facilities.

5. Governance

Approved minutes of FOG are now available on Shropshire Council's Future Oswestry web page, BID web pages and included on the OTC web site under the OTC minutes for the meeting they are presented to.

A report to Shropshire Council Cabinet was presented in March to ratify the governance arrangements for the HSHAZ Board, as a sub-group reporting to the Future Oswestry group.

It was agreed that Cllr Duncan Kerr be appointed as the Town Council representative on the HAZ Board.

Opportunities for community representation as part of the Future Oswestry activities were discussed. The suggestion for advertising and appointing a community representative was supported. Proposals for the role, appointment and engagement with a wider community forum to be worked up and shared with the group.

The Marches School has appointed a Student Champion to led on the masterplan engagement. The Town Council is looking to set up a Youth Forum. Opportunities for broader youth engagement as part of the Future Oswestry activities to be explored.

Actions:

- HAZ Board arrangements and details of the Cultural Consortium to be added to the Shropshire Council web pages SamJ
- Proposals for community representation / forum to be drafted for comment JB/HO
- Future Oswestry Partnership arrangements to be reviewed at a later meeting to consider HSHAZ reporting and proposal for community representative reporting to a wider community forum.

6. Communications and Engagement Plan

Future Oswestry Project web pages have been set up. Future Oswestry Group Facebook and Twitter pages @futureoswestry on Twitter and facebook.com/Futureoswestry are being set up.

Oswestry Masterplan sessions with students from The Marches School to be promoted.

Social media will continue around the HAZ project both on its social media accounts and with further promotion on the corporate accounts around the alleyways.

Action:

- Agreed that key Comms messages and opportunities to be discussed as part of this agenda item for future FOG meetings - All

7. Any other business

An offer of assistance by the High Street Task Force has been received to assess the baseline data provided in the Expression of Interest submitted in 2019 for the Future High Street Fund.

Study received on Central Car Park and will be discussed at the next Town Council meeting.

Recreation activities on land adjacent to the Sustainable Urban Extension had been included within the Levelling Up Fund bid. The Town Council would like to make a formal request to Shropshire Council regarding options for the land.

The lease for the old Edinburgh Woollen Mill has now been agreed.

Actions:

- Officers to consider High Street Task Force report and respond to Task Force.
- AN to follow up on IT infrastructure timescales.

8. Date of next meeting and key topics

Monthly meetings to be arranged with a separate meeting to discuss the Town Centre Bus Service Review.