



# OSWESTRY 2020 Town Plan



**OSWESTRY**  
**2020**  
CREATING TOMORROW TODAY

*Oswestry 2020 Town Plan - Written and produced on behalf of Oswestry 2020 Steering Group by Tim Morris Planning and David Parker Planning Associates with the support of Oswestry Town Council, Shropshire Council and the Department for Communities and Local Government.*



**OSWESTRY TOWN COUNCIL**



**Department for  
Communities and  
Local Government**

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DELIVERY FRAMEWORK & ACTION PLAN

# FOREWORD



*Every well built house started in the form of a definite purpose plus a definite plan in the nature of a set of blueprints.*

*Napoleon Hill (1883-1970)*

The Coalition Government has often declared that an important part of its programme is to allow local communities more influence over how their areas develop. As part of this aim it has created the concept of neighbourhood planning – but applied it to a narrow vision of bricks and mortar – how much physical building, homes, shops, work places, schools etc. should be allowed and where.

Oswestry was chosen to be one of the pilot areas where this concept of neighbourhood planning could be tried, but since Shropshire Council is already committed to working with local communities to resolve, as far as possible, those narrow questions about development, it was felt to be more appropriate to widen the scope beyond mere bricks and mortar, to capture the wider aspirations of the people of the town and area, to try to look at the “big picture” and create a vision of the kind of town we want Oswestry to be in the future.

*Each man should frame life so that at some future hour, fact and his dreaming meet.*

*Victor Hugo (1802-1885)*

The timing of this venture could not have been better. We are living in and through a time of unprecedented change. The economic climate has changed with a vengeance, and the nature and role of local government, not only in Shropshire, but throughout the country, has changed and is continuing to change. The old certainties are no longer there. So there are not only the questions around how Oswestry will, can and should change, but which groups can and should enable or deliver this change agenda.

We had the old Town Plan and an attempt was being made to refresh it, but the advent of what we like to think of as community led planning together with external funding has provided the opportunity for a fresh approach. We may not have got everything 100% right – but that is the nature of this kind of planning, there is no one size fits all, and each area is left to develop a methodology to suit itself.



***We must ask where we are and whither we are tending.***

***Abraham Lincoln (1809-1865)***

Oswestry 2020 is a snapshot of a moment in time, but it is also a narrative about what we feel about our town, what is good and what needs to be improved. A lot is already happening, more than perhaps some will realise. In other areas work will be needed. Together the narrative, the findings from our surveys and the list of indicative projects have enabled us to create a vision of the kind of town we want Oswestry to be and the outline of a road map to help us get there.

***To map out a course of action and follow it to an end requires some of the same courage that a soldier needs.***

***Ralph Waldo Emerson (1803-1882)***

Producing the plan has taken a considerable amount of time, money and energy, but creating the vision is not what the process has been about. It has been about creating not just an end – but also a means to an end. Over the coming year and years, the challenge will be to take the plan – and the vision – and turn it into actions and reality. This will be a challenge to Oswestry Town Council, and Shropshire Council – in fact all the providers of public services. But it will also be a challenge for our businesses, our community and voluntary sector and our residents. My hope for Oswestry 2020 is not just that it provides a vital strategic direction, shaping decisions on how and where time, money and effort shall be spent, but that it also engages with everyone in the community – as this is a community led plan everyone can have a part to play.

***It is a bad plan that admits of no modification.***

***Publius Syrus (1st Century BC)***

But as we try to turn the vision in actuality, we will have to accept that circumstances and expectations will change. Some actions will be easy to achieve, others will be more difficult, and while one part of the challenge will be delivery, another will be to keep the plan up to date to take account of successes, failures and the pace of change. We will not only have to deliver, but find ways of renewing, the vision.

***Now this is not the end. It is not even the beginning of the end. But it is, perhaps, the end of the beginning.***

***Sir Winston Churchill (1874 - 1965)***



**Councillor Martin Bennett**

*Town Mayor 2012 & Chair of the  
Oswestry 2020 Steering Group*

# 1 INTRODUCTION

## OSWESTRY 2020

### *Oswestry 2020 is a new community led Town Plan for Oswestry*

The Plan presents a positive and inspiring strategy for the future of the town, and a clear vision for the sort of place we want Oswestry to be in 2020. It is based on the aspirations and priorities of the local community, identified through discussion and consultation over the last 11 months.

The 2020 Plan will be a key reference point for Oswestry Town Council, Shropshire Council and other agencies and organisations working within the town. It will help guide and influence their future decision-making on:

- Where and when investment in local infrastructure takes place
- How services are delivered locally.

It will also be an informed and influential guide to developers, setting out what matters most to local people.

It is important to remember that the 2020 Plan has been prepared against a backdrop of economic recession, with continued pressure on public expenditure and implications for the way services are delivered locally. While the prospects for a sustained period of recovery remain uncertain, the need to plan positively for the future of Oswestry is perhaps more important than ever.

### The Oswestry 2020 Plan has the following key components:

#### 2020 Vision

A clear, deliberately aspirational vision which sums up the sort of place we want Oswestry to be in 2020.

#### Strategy

A strategy based around a series of twenty Objectives relating to five main Plan Themes. These Objectives have led to an initial set off Actions within the Delivery Framework. They will also guide any new actions which may come forward during the lifetime of the Plan.

#### Delivery Framework and Action Plan

A set of around 70 proposed Actions arranged under each Plan Theme. These actions will progress the Strategy and help to meet the 2020 Vision.

## Plan Timeframe

### *The timeframe for Oswestry 2020 spans the next seven years*

The Plan is intended to be a living, working document, one that is reviewed and developed to maintain progress and reflect changing circumstances and new opportunities as they emerge.

It provides a framework for discussions between partner organisations, community groups, businesses and residents and for the development of future projects in response to the town's needs and aspirations.

It is hoped that the 2020 Plan will lead to the development of projects and activities which deliver significant economic, community and environmental improvements for the town during the plan period, with sustainable longer term benefits for all those who live, work, invest and visit Oswestry.

## Plan Status

The Localism Act (2011) has introduced many changes in relation to community rights, including a 'Right to Plan'. This gives communities a far greater say in the future of the places where they live through the drawing up of a Neighbourhood Plan.

Shropshire Council has introduced an alternative to completing a full Neighbourhood Plan. Instead, it is promoting the preparation of Community Led Plans as part of its 'localised' approach to plan making. This offers local communities the same opportunity to influence planning policy and local decision making as the Neighbourhood Plan, but without the statutory requirements governing its preparation, including external independent examination and the need to hold a local referendum.

Taking into account the town's size, its role and function, both as a market town and as location for significant levels of future development, the decision was taken to produce a Community Led Plan for Oswestry, rather than a full blown Neighbourhood Plan.

As a result, decisions on the scale and growth where new housing and employment sites, should be allocated have been left to Shropshire Council's Site Allocations and Management of Development Plan (SAMDev). This 'lighter touch' approach was considered more appropriate at this point in time, representing a swifter, less complex and more cost effective way of plan making.

The option of preparing a Neighbourhood Plan for the town in the future remains open. Should a decision be taken to pursue this, the Oswestry 2020 Plan would provide a sound starting point for taking things forward.

Oswestry is one of five settlements in Shropshire to receive funding as part of the Government's Neighbourhood Planning Frontrunners Project, helping establish good working practice in neighbourhood planning. Funding for the 2020 Plan has also come from Oswestry Town Council and Shropshire Council via the Oswestry Local Joint Committee.

The Oswestry 2020 Plan replaces the last town plan published in 2006.



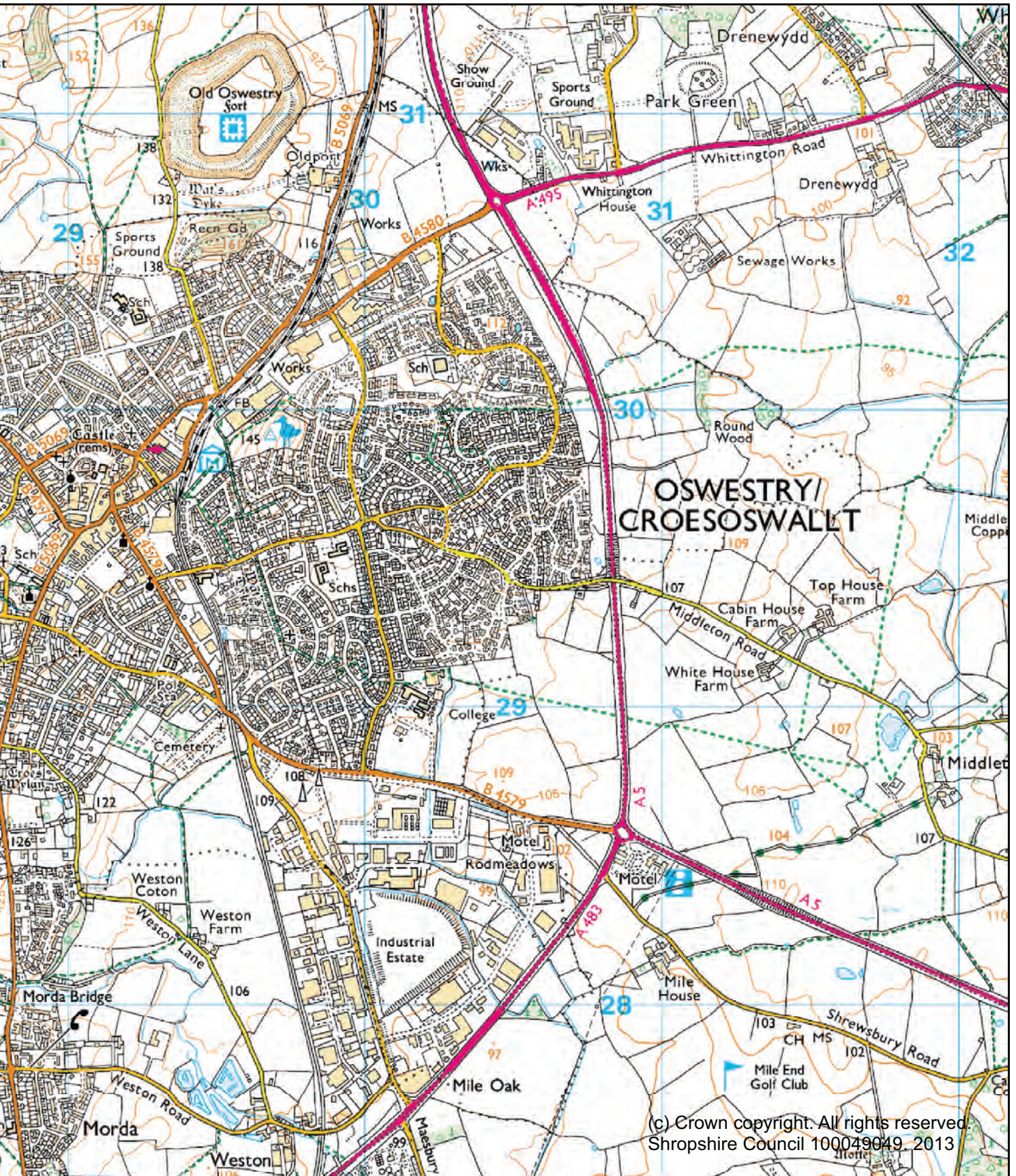
## Plan area

### *Oswestry 2020 is a town-wide plan*

It covers the urban area of Oswestry, including the town centre, industrial estates and surrounding residential areas – the administrative area of Oswestry Town Council. However, no plan is produced in isolation and reference is also made to adjoining areas on the periphery of the town and to its wider hinterland.







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 Shropshire Council 100049049, 2013



## Creating the 2020 Plan

The process of preparing the 2020 Plan has been overseen by a Steering Group comprising local residents, community representatives, established local groups and organisations, and Oswestry Town and Shropshire Councillors. The Steering Group was chaired by the Town Mayor and has been open to all. Theme Groups covering the Economy, Environment, Social and Community, and Children and Young People were formed to look at issues in more detail. Steering Group members are listed in Appendix 1.

Local independent planning consultants, Tim Morris and David Parker were commissioned by Oswestry Town Council to work with the Steering Group and Theme Groups and provide professional plan making support to create the Plan.

Resources for Change, another local consultancy, have led on public consultation and the community engagement strategy. Throughout the process, advice and support has been provided by Shropshire Council's Community Action Team. Oswestry Town Council has been the responsible body governing preparation of the Plan.



## Programme

Following the establishment and initial meetings of the Steering Group, The Oswestry 2020 Plan was officially launched in July 2012. The Plan has taken 11 months to complete. Its preparation has followed the programme set out below:

### July 2012 (Month 1)

- Oswestry 2020 Launch
- Awareness raising
- Public consultation – key issues, local priorities and community aspirations

### August /September 2012 (Month 2/3)

- Review community feedback from launch events
- Review local evidence base and identify gaps
- Resources for Change appointed to lead public consultation and community engagement

### October/November 2012 (Month 4/5)

- Planning for public consultation and community engagement

### December 2012 (Month 6)

- Main public consultation and community engagement – web survey questionnaires, street stalls, interviews

### January/February (Month 7/8)

- Collation and analysis of consultation responses
- Additional consultation activity to fill in gaps
- Presentation of key findings to Steering Group
- Draft Vision, Plan Themes & Objectives and suggested Actions
- Agreement of plan format and structure
- Discussions with Shropshire Council (Planning, Community Action, Economic Development, Tourism, Transport, Environment, Outdoor Recreation)

### March 2013 (Month 9)

- Public consultation - Draft Vision, Plan Themes, and Objectives and suggested Actions
- Develop Final Plan

### April 2013 (Month 10)

- Consider community feedback
- Draft Final Plan agreed by Steering Group
- Develop Final Plan
- Draft Final Plan endorsed by Town Council

### May 2013 (Month 11)

- Draft Final Plan circulated to stakeholders for comment
- Plan completed

The draft final Plan was agreed by the Steering Group on 17th April 2013 and endorsed by the Oswestry Town Council at a special meeting on 25th April 2013. Following a three week period for stakeholder comment, the Plan was completed at the end of May 2013.

## Consultation approach

### *Plan launch*

Launch events for the 2020 Plan were held in July 2012 and were aimed at raising awareness, encouraging community groups and volunteers to get involved in the plan making process and identifying key issues, aspirations and priorities in order to provide direction to the early stages of work on the Plan.

### *Main consultation and community engagement*

The overall approach to the main consultation and engagement element of the Plan was designed and led by Resources for Change, working with the Steering Group. The basis for their approach was:

- How to get the best result within the available consultation budget and personnel resources.
- The size of the resident population and number of households.
- The importance of hearing from across the different sections of Oswestry's community, including those regarded as 'hard to reach'.
- The experiences in Oswestry and elsewhere of what tends to work and not work in relation to consultation.
- The need to fit within overall Town Plan project deadlines.

Based on past experience, it was decided that a targeted proactive approach would be used. This focused on defined stakeholder groupings, rather than trying to achieve a statistically significant random sample response from Oswestry's population using a household survey delivered to every household.

Three web-based questionnaires were developed for residents, businesses and community groups. Street stalls aimed at residents were held at several locations across the town throughout December 2012 (including Morrisons, Sainsbury's, Iceland and three Co-op stores, the Leisure Centre, and the Indoor Market). The stalls were also present at key community events, including the Christmas Lights switch-on, the Christmas Parade, and Oswestry Christmas Live). Consultation sessions aimed at children and young people were held at 3 primary schools, The Marches, Oswestry School, Walford & North Shropshire College, The Centre and with the Youth Council. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with businesses, farmers and other stakeholder interests.

The consultation and engagement process was successful in hearing from all the target stakeholder groupings, although more responses from businesses and black and other minority ethnic (BME) people would have been desirable.

The number of responses by stakeholder grouping is shown below:

Stakeholder Grouping	Method	Response
Residents	Street Stalls	402
Residents	Web questionnaire	418
Businesses	Web questionnaire & semi-structured interviews	57
Community Groups	Web questionnaire & semi-structured interviews	42
Farmers	Semi-structured interviews	22
BME people	Semi-structured interviews	11
Other Stakeholders	Semi-structured interviews	13
Children and Young People	Group consultation sessions	8





The total number of residents' responses (820) represents 4.8% of the town's population (17,105) and 10.1% of the town's households (7,671). Whilst lower than the Steering Group would have liked, this compares very favourably with the likely response to a hard copy household questionnaire survey, and is supplemented by additional targeted stakeholder consultation responses.

The web questionnaires were conducted using SurveyMonkey, an online package from which a simple report for each question is generated. The data is stored within an Excel spreadsheet, available for further analysis if required. Street stall pinboard responses were recorded and analysed on an Excel spreadsheet. Additional qualitative comments were categorised manually.

Sessions with children and young people generated qualitative data for a single set of topics. These were collated into an Excel spreadsheet and summarised manually. Farmer questionnaire responses, street interviews with BME people and meetings and interviews with Other Stakeholders all generated qualitative data and were summarised manually.

## Our 2020 Vision - A distinctive and progressive borderland market town

*Oswestry is a town which...*



OUR  
VISION

*is looking forward* – continuing to develop, embracing change, building on its established strengths and responding to its economic challenging community aspirations

*is open for business* – where enterprise and innovation is encouraged, where businesses can thrive and grow, generating new and improved employment opportunities for local people

*has a vibrant town centre* – renowned for its independent shops, markets and attractive built environment

*has a unique spirit* – with a diverse borderland mix of people and cultures, where tradition and differences are recognised, accepted and valued

*cares about its community* – its health, well-being, creativity and learning

*is a great place to live* – with the housing, services and facilities to meet everyone's needs

*has lots going on* – offering a wide range of cultural, sporting and leisure activities for all ages

*is well-connected* – where public transport, cycling and walking are actively encouraged

*has breathing space* – where important open spaces are protected and enhanced for all to enjoy

*offers a warm welcome to visitors* – making the most of its cultural, heritage and countryside assets

*celebrates and promotes all that it has to offer* – as a place to live, work, invest and visit



Do you agree?  
Is there anything we've missed?

### *Vision, Plan Themes, Objectives and Proposed Actions - have we got it right ?*

To help complete the Plan, feedback was sought on the draft Vision for the town, the proposed Plan Themes and main Objectives, together with the suggested actions within the draft Delivery Framework. Two public 'drop-in' sessions were held in March 2013 to 'road test' the key components of the Plan and establish whether there were any gaps.

### *Final draft Plan*

With the agreement of the Steering Group and endorsement of the Town Council, the final draft Plan was circulated to stakeholders for comment before being finalised for publication.

## Oswestry 2020 in context

No plan is produced in isolation. It is important to view the 2020 Plan in context.

Any community led plan produced in Shropshire must have regard to and conform with both national and local planning policy in terms of any land use planning content. National planning policy is set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). Shropshire Council's planning policy is set out in its local Development Plan, comprising the Shropshire Core Strategy (2011) and the emerging SAMDev 'site allocations' Plan.

### *Shropshire Core Strategy and SAMDev Plan*

The Core Strategy includes a spatial vision and objectives for Shropshire. It sets out a development strategy, identifying the scale and proposed distribution of development expected to take place in Shropshire up until 2026.

**The strategy for Oswestry is:**

***Oswestry will provide a focus for major development and will act as the principal employment, commercial and administrative centre in the north west of the County (Core Strategy CS3).***

The SAMDev Plan will identify specific sites for housing and employment use. A series of Preferred Sites were consulted on in March 2012. Further consultation is expected to take place later in 2013 before the Final Plan is prepared.

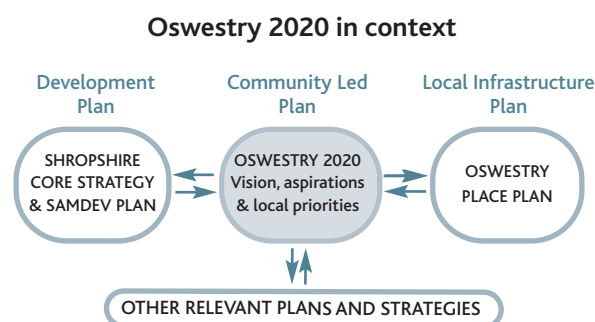
### *Oswestry Place Plan*

Linked to the Shropshire Core Strategy are a series of 18 Place Plans, each one based around one of Shropshire's market towns or key centres and their surrounding rural hinterlands. The Place Plan for Oswestry covers the town and its perceived area of influence.

Place Plans are intended to identify local priorities and infrastructure requirements for each of Shropshire's communities. The kinds of infrastructure and investment needs considered in the Place Plans include essential utilities such as water and electricity as well as access to transport, schools, open space, community, health and leisure services. The Place Plans provide a basis for negotiations with developers for their contributions towards meeting these infrastructure needs through the Community Infrastructure Levy.

The Place Plans are being developed by Shropshire Council in partnership with local communities, parish and town councils and local infrastructure and service providers. It is intended that the Oswestry Place Plan will reflect the priorities of the Oswestry 2020 Plan.

The relationship between the Core Strategy and SAMDev Plan, Oswestry 2020 and the Oswestry Place Plan is illustrated below.



### *Other relevant plans and strategies*

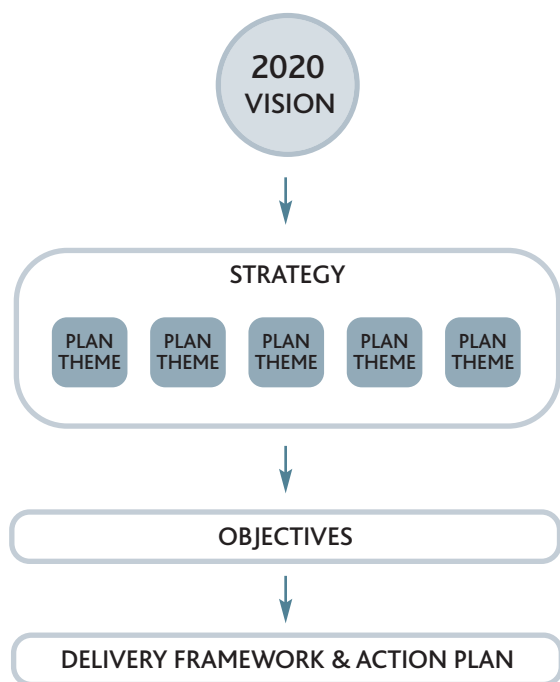
In addition to the land use planning context, a range of other plans and strategies have been taken into account in preparing the 2020 Plan. Of particular relevance are:

- North Shropshire and Oswestry Visitor Economy Strategy and Action Plans (2012 - 2017)
- Oswestry Tourism Action Plan (July 2012)
- Shropshire's Economic Growth Strategy (December 2012)
- Flourishing Shropshire – Health & Wellbeing Strategy (December 2012)
- Shropshire Local Transport Plan (2011 - 2026)
- Shropshire Community Strategy (2010 - 2020)

## Locality Commissioning

It is also important to note that Shropshire Council is in the process of becoming a 'commissioning' Council and in future will be working with partner organisations and local communities to shape services for each community, based on its particular needs and challenges. Following initial piloting of the approach in Church Stretton, it is intended that locality commissioning will be rolled out across the rest of Shropshire on a staged basis. The work undertaken in preparing the 2020 Plan can feed into and help inform the locality commissioning process in Oswestry when this takes place.

### Key components of the 2020 Plan



## Plan Structure

The 2020 Plan is set out according to the following structure:

### SECTION 1 - Introduction

### SECTION 2 - Understanding Oswestry

- Oswestry in 2013
- Development strategy – a growing town
- Key messages from the evidence base & community consultation – Strengths/weaknesses/opportunities/threats
- Key issues/challenges for the 2020 Plan

### SECTION 3 - 2020 Vision

- Vision
- Plan themes and objectives

### SECTION 4 - Strategy

#### Plan Themes

- A vibrant and welcoming town centre
- A strong and enterprising local economy
- A sustainable town with an attractive physical environment
- A caring, healthy and safe community
- A well-connected town

### SECTION 5 - Taking Things Forward

- Using the 2020 Plan
- Implementation - Town Team
- Funding opportunities

### SECTION 6 - Delivery Framework and Action Plan

- Actions by Plan Theme

## 2 UNDERSTANDING OSWESTRY

### Oswestry in 2013 – An Overview

The Oswestry 2020 Plan is based on a thorough understanding of Oswestry's unique characteristics, its relationship with its adjoining hinterland, knowledge of past trends and a view as to how things are likely to change in the future.

A comprehensive review of the available evidence base and all relevant Plans and Strategies has been undertaken and is available separately [www.oswestry2020.co.uk](http://www.oswestry2020.co.uk).

A brief overview, setting out the main 'headlines', is included here to provide a portrait of Oswestry as we know it today, in 2013.



### Location, the Town and its hinterland

Oswestry is a traditional borderland market town, situated in north west Shropshire, on the border between the lowlands of the Shropshire Plain and the uplands of Wales, to the far west of the West Midlands region.

The town is the second largest in Shropshire after Shrewsbury. It is the principal employment, commercial and administrative centre in the north of the County and serves a large rural hinterland extending into mid Wales. Over 60,000 people live within a 20 minute drive time.

Strategically located, Oswestry has good road links to Shrewsbury (18 miles), Wrexham (16 miles), Chester (27 miles) and beyond via the A5/A483 trunk roads, which link to the Welsh borders and wider national motorway network. The nearest mainline rail link is at Gobowen, 3 miles to the north east of the town. Direct lines from Cardiff and Birmingham pass through Shrewsbury to Wrexham and Chester connecting Gobowen (and Oswestry) to the rest of the UK.







The urban area of Oswestry extends to around 880 hectares. It has a mixed urban and suburban character. The town centre has a compact historic street pattern, the remains of a castle and connections to a former railway network and industries.

As the built up area has grown, new residential areas, industrial estates and a livestock market have been developed on the periphery. The A5/A483 Oswestry bypass currently serves as a physical limit to the town's development to the east.

Oswestry is flanked by more sensitive landscapes, including Old Oswestry Hill Fort to the north, Brogyntyn parkland to the north west, Broomhall and Llanforda parkland and the Oswestry uplands to the west and the Morda Valley to the south.

Just to the east of the town lies Park Hall, a former army camp, the legacy of which is a range of key facilities that serve the town including, Oswestry Showground, The Venue, Park Hall Countryside Experience, Oswestry Rugby Club, Oswestry Boys & Girls Football Club.

The Robert Jones & Agnes Hunt Orthopaedic Hospital, a leading orthopaedic centre of excellence is located to the north east.

## Recent Developments

Oswestry has benefitted from significant recent investment in a number of key new facilities within the town:

- **Oswestry Leisure Centre**  
(opened October 2011)  
Swimming pools, sports hall, fitness suite, work-out studio, cafe
- **Oswestry Health Centre**  
(opened July 2011)  
Multi-purpose outpatient healthcare centre with minor injuries unit
- **The Centre**  
(opened December 2012)  
Youth centre with hall, art room, recording studio and music room, cafe, training room and meeting rooms
- **New Fairholme**  
(completed March 2013)  
88 bedroom care home with day centre



Also in the pipeline, following the granting of outline planning permission in 2011 is the proposed regeneration of the Smithfield Livestock Market through a scheme that will see the development of a new foodstore (Morrison), multi screen cinema (Cineworld), fast food units (McDonalds, Frankie & Benny's) office space and a refurbished livestock market.

## Future development strategy – a growing town

Looking further ahead, the Shropshire Core Strategy and the emerging SAMDev Plan are promoting an ambitious growth strategy for Oswestry. The overall development targets for the town for the period 2006-2026 are for 2,600 dwellings and up to 35 hectares of new employment land.

(Source: SAMDev Preferred Options Consultation document - March 2012)

The Core Strategy also establishes the principle of a comprehensively planned and integrated Sustainable Urban Extension (SUE) to the south east of the town on land between Shrewsbury Road, Middleton Road, Walford and North Shropshire College and the A5/A483 Oswestry bypass. It is proposed that the SUE accommodate major housing development (750 dwellings), a business park (4-6 hectares), public open space, land for community facilities and new a link road between Middleton Road and Shrewsbury Road.

Planning for this level of growth should mean that the town is able to benefit in many ways. However, it is not without its challenges. The SAMDev Plan has some key decisions to make on which sites should be allocated for housing and employment use. Concern has been expressed through the 2020 plan making process about some of the proposed allocations, particularly proposed housing on Gobowen Road in the vicinity of the Hill Fort.

Shropshire Council need to draw on the Oswestry 2020 Plan to inform their decision making and ensure their proposed site allocations positively contribute to the Vision and Objectives of the 2020 Plan.

The following information has been collated from a range of sources and published reports, including Shropshire Council's Market Town Profile for Oswestry (2012). In some areas, the most reliable data at a local level is still the 2001 Census.

The first results from the 2011 Census were released in July 2012, providing some information on population, age structure and households for Shropshire as a whole. Subsequent releases have taken place. More detail about current and planned releases can be found at [www.ons.gov.uk](http://www.ons.gov.uk). The evidence base for the Oswestry 2020 Plan will need to be updated as more Census results at a local level become available.



### Town population

**17,105**

### Age Profile

0 - 15 yrs	17.6%
16 - 29 yrs	17.9%
30 - 44 yrs	20.6%
45 - 64 yrs	25%
65 yrs +	19%



### Number of households

**7,671**

## Community

### People and households

- Oswestry has a current population of 17,105 (2011 Census).
- Compared with other parts of Shropshire, Oswestry has a younger population profile. However, as with national trends the population is aging. An estimated 3,200 people (19% of the population) are of retirement age plus (65+). The town has an adult working age population (16-64) of 10,800 people. (Source: 2011 Census)
- Black, mixed and other ethnic minority groups make up a very small percentage (2.5%) of the town's population. (Source: 2011 Census)
- The town is home to over 7,600 households. Just under 5,000 households (64.6%) are owner occupiers. 1,300 households (17%) rent from Shropshire Council or a housing association. Just over 1,300 households (17% rent privately). (Source: 2011 Census)
- The average house price in Oswestry is £150,169, which is 3.6% lower than the average for Shropshire as a whole (£155,726). This compares to an average household income in the town of £27,818. (Source: Land Registry 2012 and Income X – using 2009 data). Housing affordability is therefore a significant issue. The ratio of average house prices to average earnings in Oswestry is 5.4 to 1. In the past it has been as high as 8 to 1.
- While parts of the town can be considered relatively affluent, the former Cambrian, Castle, Carreg Llwyd and Gatacre wards fall within the 20% most deprived wards in Shropshire and as such are seen as being some of the most disadvantaged areas in the county. In contrast, the old Maserfield ward is one of the 20% least deprived. (Source: Index of Multiple Deprivation)

## Key Employment Sectors

Health	9.2%
Education	10.8%
Retail	22.3%
Manufacturing	14.1%
Transport & Storage	7%



Resident workers  
living and working  
in Oswestry  
**58%**



Unemployment Rate  
**5.1%**  
(March 2013)

## Employment

- Oswestry supports a workforce of around 6,500 (BRES 2010, Office for National Statistics) and as such is the second largest employment centre in Shropshire, after Shrewsbury.
- Retail is the town's largest employment sector (22.3% of employees compared with a Shropshire average of 11.9%). Manufacturing is still an important sector, employing 14.1% of the workforce, slightly above the Shropshire average of 11.6%. Education, health and transport and storage sectors support significant levels of employment. The Land based sector is also important. (Source: BRES 2010, Office for National Statistics)
- Oswestry supports a predominantly low wage economy, with above average numbers employed in routine, low skilled and low paid jobs and lower numbers employed in high value sectors.
- Compared to other towns in Shropshire, Oswestry has a reasonably high level of economic self containment with just under 58% of resident workers living and working in the town. (Source: 2001 Census)
- In terms of travel to work patterns, 3,209 resident workers travel outside of the local area to work, the main commuting flows being to Shrewsbury and Wrexham. In contrast 4,507 travel into Oswestry to work from the surrounding rural area. (Source: 2001 Census)
- Just over 7% of people in employment (aged 16-74) work at or from home, compared with 13.4% for Shropshire as a whole. (Source: 2001 Census)
- In March 2013, the unemployment rate in Oswestry was 5.1%, with 555 people claiming Job Seekers Allowance (JSA). This is twice the rate for Shropshire as a whole (2.5%) and just above the regional average (4.6%).  
Of those seeking Job Seekers Allowance, 27% have been unemployed for more than 12 months. This is higher than the comparable rate for Shropshire as a whole (22%). 29% of claimants in Oswestry are aged 24 and under. This is broadly consistent with county and regional figures. (Source: JSA Claimant Count, Office for National Statistics)



## Health and Well-being

- In terms of general health, 34.8% of the population consider their health to be 'Good' and 14.2% 'Fairly Good' The equivalent Shropshire figures are 35% and 13.5%. (Source: 2011 Census)
- 6.5% of the population provide unpaid care, looking after, giving help or support to family members, friends, neighbours and others. This is below the Shropshire figure of 11.2%. (Source: 2011 Census)
- 20% of the population (3,413) have a long term health problem or disability, which limits their daily activities or work. This is slightly above the Shropshire wide figure of 18.6%. (Source: 2011 Census)



34.8%

of the town's  
population consider  
their health to be  
'GOOD'

## Community Safety

- Despite well publicised issues relating to drug misuse (in particular GHB), and anti social behaviour and alcohol related crime associated with the night-time economy, Oswestry is generally a low crime area and regarded as a safe place to live and work.



565

new dwellings  
were built in  
Oswestry between  
2006 and 2012

## Development Trends

- Since 2006, 565 dwellings have been built in Oswestry. With the economic recession, rates of new housing development have fallen significantly, from a peak of 197 completions in 2006/07 to just 25 completions in 2011/12. (Source: Development Trends Report December 2012)

## Business and Enterprise

- Overall, there are approaching 1000 businesses in Oswestry (Mint 2012). The town centre and Oswestry Industrial Estates are the town's main business locations. The majority of businesses (81.5%) are small, employing 10 or fewer staff. Only 3% employ over 50 staff.
- Some of Oswestry's main businesses and employers include: Elements Europe, Practice Plan, British Telecom, Robert Jones & Agnes Hunt Orthopaedic Hospital, Sainsbury's, Arla, Lindstrand.
- Oswestry's property market is considered to be relatively insular, with little inward investment. The industrial property sector dominates and substantially outweighs the office market. Demand for industrial property tends to be for starter units (0 - 200sqm) and grow on space for more established businesses (200sqm – 500sqm). (Source: Shropshire Employment Land Review)
- There is a lack of readily available employment land. At April 2012, there was 5.1ha of land with the benefit of planning permission and a further 14.4ha allocated for future employment use, including a 12ha site at Weston Farm (Source: Development Trends Report December 2012). The Weston Farm site has been allocated for 14 years but has still not come forward.



81.5%

of Oswestry  
businesses employ  
10 or less staff



## Communications

- From the middle of 2012, high speed fibre broadband has been available in Oswestry, benefitting both businesses and households with faster download speeds (up to 80 mbps) and upload speeds (up to 20 mbps). The strength of mobile phone signal varies, depending on location within the town and the network provider.

## Town Centre

- The town centre is ranked 30th out of 247 retail destinations in the West Midlands, in terms of its attractiveness as a retail destination. (Source: Skillsmart Retail – Location Model Oswestry Town Centre February 2010 – CACI Retail Footprint data)
- Oswestry's independent traders remain a key strength, providing a distinctive presence on the high street. A number have established strong reputations helping them become destination shops in their own right.
- The town's market offer is based around weekly indoor and outdoor markets in the Powys Hall and on the Bailey Head/Horsemarket and a monthly Farmers market. However, both the Wednesday and Saturday outdoor markets continues to struggle with fewer traders taking stalls than previously. In 2012/13 the Wednesday market had on average 22 traders per week and the Saturday market an average of 12 per week. (Source: Oswestry Town Council)
- Oswestry supports a relatively high level of retail expenditure retention in the convenience sector, with 86% of main food shopping and 80% of top-up shopping undertaken by Oswestry residents being retained in the town. Comparison goods expenditure retention is considerably lower, with expenditure attracted to Shrewsbury and Wrexham and also further afield. (Source: Oswestry Retail Study Update – Revised Report December 2008)
- More than 40% of the retail offer is orientated towards the value market, with fewer premium goods being sold. (Source: Skillsmart Retail – Location Model Oswestry Town Centre February 2010 - CACI Demographic Profile data)
- When Shropshire Council last surveyed the town centre in July 2012, there were 59 vacant shop units, equating to a vacancy rate of 15.1%. This was 18 more vacant units than the figure recorded for the same survey in 2009. While vacant units are found across the town centre, there is currently a noticeable concentration on Cross Street, where a number of large units formerly occupied by national chains are now empty. (Source: Shropshire Council Shop Survey)



## Tourism

- In 2005 (latest detailed figures), approximately 700,000 visitors came to the former Oswestry Borough – 600,000 as day trippers and 100,000 as overnight visitors. During their visit to Oswestry, tourists spent approximately £43 million. (Source: Oswestry Tourism Action Plan July 2012)

## Education

### Primary Education

- Shropshire Council maintains 4 primary schools within Oswestry. Woodside is the largest primary school in Shropshire (over 500 on roll). Holy Trinity is also considered to be above average in size (over 300 on roll). Given planned levels of future housing development within the town, consideration may need to be given to the provision of extra primary school places during the period to 2026. (Source: Oswestry Place Plan 2012)

### Secondary Education

- Secondary school education is provided at The Marches, situated on Morda Road. The school, which was originally a Shropshire Council run comprehensive school with Technology College status won its bid to become an Academy in 2012. It has a capacity of around 1400 pupils, in year groups 7-11 and plans to establish a Sixth Form providing 'A' Level courses from September 2013. Consideration may need to be given to the provision of extra secondary school places beyond 2015. (Source: Oswestry Place Plan 2012)

### Further Education

- At its Oswestry Campus on Shrewsbury Road, Walford & North Shropshire College provides a wide range of post-16 further education and training opportunities, including Sixth Form 'A' Level courses and vocational programmes. The College as a whole has over 1,300 full-time and 4,000 part-time enrolled learners.

### Independent Sector

- Oswestry School is an independent, co-educational day and boarding school for pupils between the ages of 4 and 18. It has over 400 pupils.







### Transport

- In 2011, 23.7% of households in Oswestry did not own a car, compared with a Shropshire figure of 15.8%. (Source 2011 Census)
- 12.4% of people walk to work on foot in Oswestry (There is potential to increase journeys to work by bicycle from the 2011 base of 1.9%) with improvements in infrastructure. Levels of bus usage for journeys to work are low at 1.3%. (Source: 2011 Census)
- The range of bus services is varied. It is possible to get into Oswestry and to an extent, get around the local area by bus. However, as with other rural areas, Oswestry continues to face the challenge of decreasing connections and frequency of services.

### Infrastructure

- To support future levels of growth, junction improvements will be required to the Mile End, Maesbury Road and Whittington Road junctions on the A5/A483 Oswestry bypass. Other significant infrastructure requirements identified as 'critical' in the Oswestry Place Plan include an upgrade to the Mile Oak Sewage Treatment Works, an additional 132kV electricity line between the National Grid and Oswestry and the refurbishment of the Oswestry Grid 132kv substation. (Source: Oswestry Place Plan 2012)



### Open Space

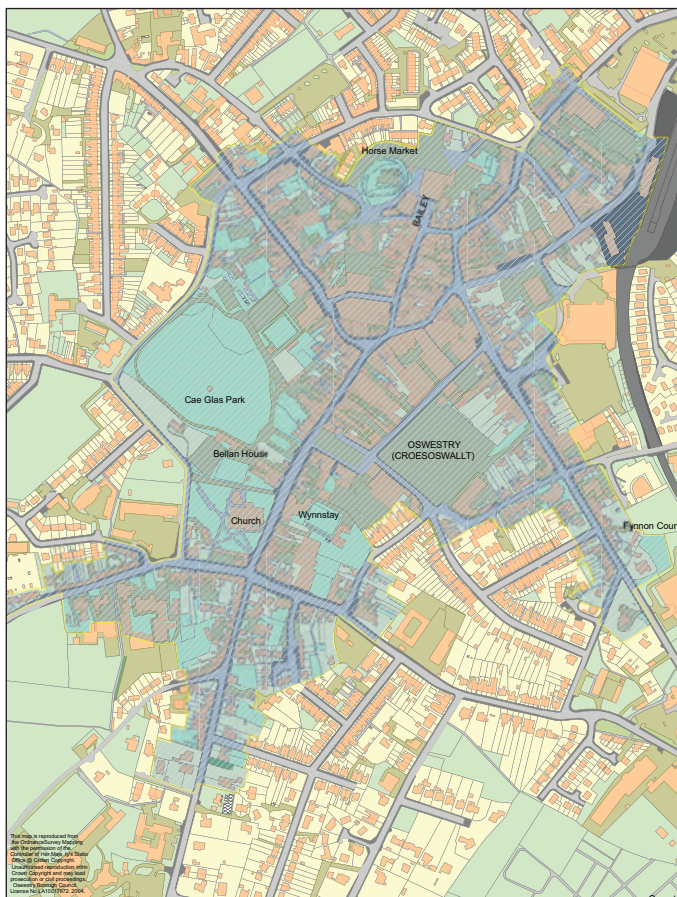
- There is an existing under-provision of the following types of open space in Oswestry:
  - Natural and Semi Natural Open Space (Undersupply of 1.88ha)
  - Open Space Facilities for Young People (Undersupply of 0.9ha)
  - Outdoor Sports (Undersupply of 5.21ha)
  - Allotments (Undersupply of 2.87ha)
- In contrast, Parks and Gardens, Amenity Green Space and Childrens Play Areas are well provided for. (Source: Shropshire Council/PPG17 Open Space, Sport & Recreation Study)
- Oswestry Town Council has identified that there is burial ground capacity at Oswestry Cemetery for around 15 years. Additional burial land will be required by 2026. (Source: Oswestry Place Plan 2012/Oswestry Town Council)

### Historic Environment

- In terms of designations, the town has two Conservation Areas (Town Centre; Pant Glas & Brogyntyn), 137 Listed Buildings (1 Grade I; 4 Grade II\*), five Ancient Monuments and one Registered Historic Park and Garden (Brogyntyn Park) (Source: Shropshire Council GIS Layers)

### Sport & Recreation

- Oswestry should have a minimum of one multi pitch site providing for competition and training, with good quality on-site changing and toilet provision appropriate for and accessible to all user types. The Playing Pitch Strategy has identified Gatacre Recreation Ground as a multi pitch site with community use which is in need of improvements to its quality. (Source: Playing Pitch Strategy/Oswestry Place Plan 2012)



Town Centre Conservation Area





## Key messages from the evidence base and community consultation

As well as consultation undertaken to inform the preparation of the 2020 Plan, regard has also been had to the feedback received from other relevant town based consultation activity, including:

- Shropshire Core Strategy (Issues & Options: January – March 2009; Policy Directions: August – October 2009)
- SAMDev Plan (Issues & Options: April – June 2010; Policy Directions: March - July 2012)
- Oswestry Community Toolkit event (November 2010)
- Oswestry Market Town Revitalisation Programme World Cafe event (April 2011)
- Oswestry Portas Pilot Bid (2012)
- Oswestry Town Team World Cafe event (January 2013)

The 2020 consultation events have generated a wide and varied range of comments on what's 'good' and 'bad' about the town and what needs improving. Some of points are not new and have been made before. Equally, some of the points made raise bigger issues that fall beyond the scope of what the 2020 Plan can address and influence. There are however some fairly consistent messages which can be drawn out as common threads.

The key messages from the evidence base and the main concerns of local people are summarised in terms of Oswestry's perceived strengths and weaknesses and its main opportunities and threats.

## Strengths

Oswestry's strengths can be said to include:

- A friendly, lively town with lots going on and a good range of things to see and do
- Border location and dual culture where 'England meets Wales'
- Countryside setting, surrounded by easily accessible attractions with opportunities for walking, cycling and outdoor activities
- A fairly well connected strategic location, particularly by road (A5 east/west A483 north/south)
- Good level of economic self containment, with a relatively high proportion of residents who both live and work in the town
- A market town with a good 'critical mass', large enough to retain/maintain a reasonable range of facilities and services
- A town small enough to retain a strong sense of community
- Good quality primary, secondary and further education offer
- A resilient and self-reliant community with a 'can do' spirit
- A strong social/voluntary/community network
- A distinctive and varied retail offer, underpinned by independent shops and a strong market tradition
- A diverse and growing cultural scene based around events, festivals and the arts
- The overall quality of life the town has to offer

## Weaknesses

Notwithstanding the town's recognised strengths, there are a number of weaknesses which undermine and detract from the positives and create a sense that Oswestry is failing to meet its true potential:

- Parts of Oswestry fall within the 20% most deprived areas in Shropshire
- The town's low profile as a business and tourism destination and lack of co-ordinated marketing and promotion
- The lack of readily available new employment land
- The shortage of better paid local job opportunities, particularly for young people
- Lack of direct Higher Education provision within Shropshire, forcing out-migration of young people
- The number of vacant units within the town centre and the particular concentration of large empty shops on Cross Street
- The overall quality of the retail offer and orientation towards the value end of the market (pound shops and charity shops)
- Some parts of the town centre look tired, run down and in need of investment
- Frequency of bus services to/from surrounding areas and outside normal working day
- Oswestry has no mainline rail link
- Some types of open space are under provided for
- Lack of local pride and failure to 'talk up' the town and what it has to offer
- Intimidating night-time atmosphere within town centre late at night, particularly at weekends
- The lack of a clear vision/strategy for the town

## Opportunities

In acknowledging the town's weaknesses, the main opportunities to improve things and make a difference are:

- Opportunity to promote the Oswestry as a business location, allocating new employment land
- Opportunity to rejuvenate the town centre as a place, to shop, visit, live, socialise and be entertained
- Potential of the town to develop as a tourism destination – Cambrian Railway, Oswestry hillfort, canals, countryside, walking and cycling
- Opportunity to deliver balanced and sustainable growth, with investment in new and improved infrastructure and increased levels of local expenditure in the town centre and town as a whole
- Opportunity to improve accessibility to the town centre and key facilities through the development of new and improved walking and cycling routes
- Potential to develop the town's growing cultural and creative arts scene

## Threats

There are a range of threats which could make the current situation worse during the next few years which need to be acknowledged:


- Continued economic recession and uncertainty as to when the economy is likely to recover and its effect on public confidence
- Further public spending cuts and implications for the range and quality of services delivered locally
- Level of commercial rents and business rates within the town centre and further loss of shops
- Increasing competition/attraction of other destinations actively pursuing and implementing regeneration strategies
- Without investment, the deterioration of the physical environment and key buildings within the town centre
- Community infrastructure demands generated by new housing and employment land development
- Delay in bringing forward much needed new employment land stifling prospects for economic growth
- SAMDev not fully addressing the need for growth and balanced development of the town as envisaged by the Vision and Objectives of the 2020 Plan



## Key issues and challenges for the 2020 Plan

Based on this analysis and our understanding of Oswestry, it is clear that the 2020 Plan needs to focus its strategy on addressing the following key issues/challenges:

- The need to raise the profile of Oswestry based on its existing strengths and assets in heritage, environment and culture.
- The vitality of Oswestry town centre and its rejuvenation as a retail destination and cultural and community focus
- The development of the local economy, the promotion of Oswestry as a business location and the creation of local job opportunities
- The promotion of Oswestry as a tourism destination and development of the town's tourism offer focusing on its key assets
- Improving the physical appearance of the town, in particular vacant buildings and key spaces within the town centre
- Improving accessibility by public transport, walking and cycling
- The protection and enhancement of existing open space and the provision of new open spaces where required
- Developing and supporting the growing role played by the voluntary sector
- The provision of new and improved community infrastructure to keep pace with a growing town



For Oswestry to make progress, there is a need to positively address these challenges and the opportunities facing the town.

To do so, we need a clear, strong and shared sense of direction – a vision for Oswestry.

The Oswestry 2020 Plan sets this vision.

# 3 2020 VISION

## Oswestry – A distinctive and progressive borderland market town

Oswestry is a unique place with many qualities.

Its uniqueness and qualities are something to be celebrated. However, like all towns, it faces tough conditions and there are particular challenges which need to be addressed. The town is changing and is going to continue to grow. Now is not the time to sit back and wait for things to happen. There are opportunities to improve the town which need to be embraced and taken forward.

To provide direction and something to work towards, a clear and aspirational vision has been set. It sums up the sort of place we want Oswestry to be in 2020.

### OUR 2020 VISION

#### *A distinctive and progressive borderland market town*

#### *Oswestry is a town which...*

*is looking forward* – continuing to develop, embracing change, building on its established strengths and responding to its economic challenges and community aspirations

*is open for business* – where enterprise and innovation is encouraged, where businesses can thrive and grow, generating new and improved employment opportunities for local people

*has a vibrant town centre* – renowned for its independent shops, markets and attractive built environment

*has a unique spirit* – with a diverse borderland mix of people and cultures, where tradition and differences are recognised, accepted and valued

*cares about its community* – its health, well-being, creativity and learning

*is a great place to live* – with the housing, services and facilities to meet everyone's needs

*has lots going on* – offering a wide range of cultural, sporting and leisure activities for all ages

*is well-connected* – where public transport, cycling and walking are actively encouraged

*has breathing space* – where important open spaces are protected and enhanced for all to enjoy

*offers a warm welcome to visitors* – making the most of its cultural, heritage and countryside assets

*celebrates and promotes all that it has to offer*  
– as a place to live, work, invest and visit

## Plan Themes & Objectives

To help deliver this Vision for the town and provide the basis for our approach and focus for the actions within the Delivery Framework, a series of 20 objectives have been set under five main plan themes:

- A vibrant and welcoming town centre
- A strong and enterprising local economy
- A sustainable town with an attractive physical environment
- A caring, healthy and safe community
- A well-connected town

### A vibrant and welcoming town centre

1. Tackle the number of vacant and underused buildings in the town centre and help bring them back into beneficial use with a focus on key premises in key locations.
2. Seek to improve the quality and diversity of Oswestry's retail offer. Support the town's independent retailers helping them to innovate, adapt and maintain a distinctive presence on the high street.
3. Support the continued development of Oswestry's Markets with a focus on encouraging enterprise and developing different types of markets operating in different town centre locations.
4. Secure investment in the town's public realm, ensuring Oswestry's town centre is accessible, attractive and safe. Explore opportunities for enhancing the role and function of key public spaces as focal points for civic, commercial and cultural activities to support town life.

### A strong and enterprising local economy

5. Ensure sufficient good quality new employment land is allocated and brought forward in the 'right location' to support local business development and attract new investment.
6. Ensure there is an adequate supply of premises available, providing work spaces to support enterprise - business start up, development and expansion.
7. Maintain high quality education provision and learning opportunities for all ages. Support the development of the town's further education offer, providing training & skills for a 'work ready' local workforce plus access to higher education.
8. Develop and co-ordinate Oswestry's tourism offer, focusing on its cultural, heritage and countryside assets to attract more visitors and encourage them to stay longer, using the town as a base to explore.

## A sustainable town with an attractive physical environment

9. Raise the profile of Oswestry as a distinctive and progressive borderland market town, developing its role as a business location, a retail and tourism destination, and a hub for cultural, sports and leisure activities.
10. Promote the balanced and sustainable growth of the town, with the 'right' quality and range of housing and the timely and co-ordinated provision of new community infrastructure, facilities and services to support the existing and future population.
11. Improve first impressions of the town, focusing on key gateways, approaches and main town centre arrival points and enhance Oswestry's public realm.
12. Protect, manage and enhance the town's network of open spaces, addressing shortfalls in existing provision and improving access and local biodiversity.

## A caring, healthy and safe community

13. Support the development of good quality sporting and recreation facilities and encourage active and healthy lifestyles.
14. Encourage continued investment in local health facilities and the delivery of as many services locally as possible.
15. Support the voluntary and community sector in the town and their growing role in providing education, training and activities for local people.
16. Support the development of Oswestry's growing cultural/creative arts scene.
17. Develop improved lines of communication/consultation between all sectors of the 'Oswestry Community.'

## A well-connected town

18. Improve accessibility by public transport, cycling and walking with a focus on improved links to the town centre, industrial estates, Schools & College and key facilities within/on the periphery of the town.
19. Improve town centre traffic management with a focus on improving the 'town centre experience' for pedestrians and addressing key issues and implementing projects/changes in key locations.
20. Continue to press for improvements to the strategic transport network (road and rail) to improve Oswestry's regional connections.

# 4 STRATEGY

## Our Approach

This section sets out the more detailed theme based Strategy of the 2020 Plan.

Each of the plan themes are introduced in turn and the objectives restated. Relevant consultation feedback is summarised and the basis of our approach is outlined, before the proposed actions and areas of intervention which make up the 'plan' are set out.

Our approach is very much based on:

- Responding to key issues and concerns
- Being positive and reflecting local aspirations
- Building on the town's established strengths and making the most of its assets
- Looking at ways of doing things differently
- Embracing change - seeing the planned growth of the town as a positive, something which can bring additional benefits and contribute to the Vision and Objectives of the 2020 Plan
- Aligning Oswestry 2020 with other relevant plans and strategies

PLAN THEME:

# A VIBRANT AND WELCOMING TOWN CENTRE

# Introduction

The town centre lies at the heart of the Oswestry community. It is clear from preparing the 2020 Plan that local people are passionate about 'their high street' and while they may have different views about what's wrong and what should be done to improve things, they do care. Above all, they want Oswestry to have a vibrant and successful town centre. For many, issues relating to the town centre are some of the most important for the Oswestry 2020 Plan to tackle. The concentration of large vacant units on Cross Street is a very visible, everyday reminder, that the town centre is not as healthy as it once was.

On the positive side, one of the town's key strengths is its diverse independent retail offer which helps to make it a unique place. Fortunately, Oswestry has not been subject to a homogenization which has afflicted many towns in terms of the types of shops and general uses found within town centres. Indeed, entrepreneurial activity has seen many independent businesses foster strong reputations helping them become destination shops in their own right.

The problems facing the high street and all town centres are well known. How people shop has fundamentally changed. The massive growth of online retailing coupled with the economic recession has made the high street a difficult place from which to trade. A succession of high street chains have gone out of business or have fundamentally changed the way they operate and the number of stores they trade from. In Oswestry, it appears to be the independent businesses that have shown the most resilience during the recession and it is perhaps these which can contribute most in the vibrancy of the town in the future.

After the good work of the Portas Review (December 2011) the Government still continues to wrestle with strategies on what to do to support town centres and high streets. Now is not the time for Oswestry to sit back and wait for things to happen. The town needs to develop its own strategy, its own response to the specific challenges it faces. Oswestry 2020 is the starting point for this.

## Consultation feedback

### Headlines



- 87% of resident survey respondents say they regularly do their food shopping in Oswestry. Fewer (62%) say they use the town to shop for comparison (non-food) goods. (Source: Resident Questionnaire).
- In terms of the town's existing retail offer, 48% of resident survey respondents and 68% of street stall respondents feel their needs for comparison (non-food) goods are not being well met. (Source: Resident Questionnaire & Street Stalls).
- For those who don't use or only occasionally use the shops in Oswestry, lack of variety (77%) and the fact that a particular shop is not available (69%) are cited as the main reasons why people shop elsewhere. The ability to buy things more cheaply or on the internet is mentioned by 41% of survey respondents. (Source: Resident Questionnaire).  
For young people, the lack of 'high street' brands is a frustration (Source: Young People Consultation Sessions).
- 33% of survey respondents say they often use the town markets (indoor & outdoor) and a further 36% say they use them sometimes. Only 7% said they never used the markets. (Source: Resident Questionnaire).
- With regard to the overall mix of uses with the town centre (shops/services/vacant units/charity shops), 67% of resident survey respondents and 66% of street stall respondents are dissatisfied and feel the balance is not right, in particular the number of vacant units and also the number of charity shops. (Source: Resident Questionnaire & Street Stalls).
- Reducing the number of empty shops and bringing vacant upper floors back into beneficial use, is considered a 'very high' priority by 81% of resident survey respondents, 88% of street stall respondents and 77% of business survey respondents. (Source: Resident & Business Questionnaires, Street Stalls)
- In terms of public spaces within the town centre (eg. Festival Square, Bailey Head, The Cross), 62% of survey respondents felt we could be doing things better. (Source: Resident Questionnaire)



## These are our objectives

- Tackle the number of vacant and underused buildings in the town centre and help bring them back into beneficial use with a focus on key premises in key locations
- Seek to improve the quality and diversity of Oswestry's retail offer. Support the town's independent retailers helping them to innovate, adapt and maintain a distinctive presence on the high street
- Support the continued development of Oswestry's Markets with a focus on encouraging enterprise and developing different types of markets operating in different town centre locations
- Secure investment in the town's public realm, ensuring Oswestry's town centre is accessible, attractive and safe. Explore opportunities for enhancing the role and function of key public spaces as focal points for civic, commercial and cultural activities to support town life

## Our approach

Our approach in planning for a vibrant and welcoming town centre focuses on the following main areas of action:

### *(i) Tackling vacant town centre premises*

The number of vacant town centre premises and in particular, the concentration of large vacant units on Cross Street, is a particular concern. There was a time when the existence of vacant premises within a town centre was largely seen as something solely for the market to address. As such, very little information was known about who owned what property and the terms on which it was being offered.

Shropshire Council's 'Project North' team has already begun to identify the owners of vacant properties within the town centre and make contact with them to investigate the reasons for vacancy, discuss their outlook and what steps, if any, they are taking to seek new tenants. This is valuable intelligence and needs to continue in order to build up the 'full picture'. The information can then be used to determine where opportunities exist and whether further intervention would be appropriate to help bring the premises back into beneficial use. A targeted approach focusing on key units in key locations is advocated.

A Retail Regeneration Grant Scheme run by the Oswestry Joint Economic Board is already in operation offering small grants to help kickstart the refurbishment of vacant property. Attention also needs to be focused on unused upper floors, in particular their potential for residential use.



### *(ii) Establishing a town team*

One of the key recommendations of the Portas Review was the need for town's to put in place a 'Town Team' to provide a visionary, strategic and strong operational management structure to lead the revival of the high street and the town centre. Establishing a Town Team is something we see as critical to the implementation of the Oswestry 2020 Plan, which we discuss further in Section 6 – Taking things forward. Consideration should also be given to employing a Town Centre Regeneration Manager as a resource to support the work of the Town Team.

### *(iii) Supporting independents*

Taking steps to support Oswestry's small businesses and independent retailers has very strong community support, as evidenced throughout the process of preparing the Plan. Local people clearly value and appreciate the diversity of the town's independent retail offer and want to see this develop and thrive. They also recognise many of the issues that town centre businesses face in terms of the high level of business rates and rents, which serve to make the high street a less viable and less attractive option as a location from which to trade. Both are a heavy burden for new and struggling businesses to bear. The business rate discounts that charity shops enjoy is also seen by some as building unfair advantage into the system.

The Portas Review (2011) argues strongly that the Government should consider how business rates can better support small businesses and independent traders. It also encourages local authorities to use their discretionary powers to give business rate concessions to new local businesses. The Oswestry & Border Counties Advertiser has run a high profile and very well supported local campaign during 2012/13, lobbying both the Government and Shropshire Council to reduce business rates for independent traders. It is understood that Shropshire Council is beginning to look at its discretionary powers. In the meantime, lobbying of both national and local government on the business rates issue needs to continue.

Given the challenges faced by the town's independent retailers, including the growth in online shopping, it is recommended that consideration be given to putting together a package of support to help businesses innovate and adapt and enable them to develop a strong web presence and combine this with an attractive high quality 'bricks and mortar' shop on the high street. This package could include grant funding assistance for physical improvements to premises, website development and internet trading. It could also include a training programme providing access to specialist advice on how existing businesses can innovate and adapt and better present themselves to customers, both on the high street and online.



#### *(iv) Developing Oswestry's markets offer*

Oswestry Town Council employs a dedicated Markets and Events Manager and works hard to sustain and promote the town's market offer, which has a long tradition based around indoor and outdoor markets in the Powys Hall and on the Bailey Head/Horsemarket. The indoor market has recently been refurbished with assistance from the Market Town Revitalisation Programme. However, both the weekly Wednesday and Saturday outdoor markets continue to struggle with fewer traders taking stalls than previously.

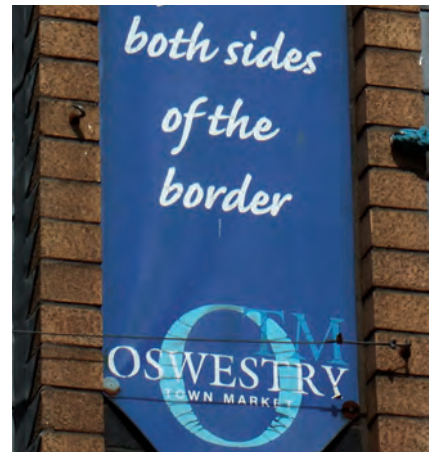
Markets can help bring life and vibrancy to a town and can be an important part of a distinctive retail offer. They also provide opportunities and spaces for entrepreneurial activity enabling new businesses to start up and flourish, bringing new ideas and products. Specialist markets, while needing time to develop, can also become a significant draw.

Oswestry's markets are part of the town's cultural heritage. The decline of the outdoor market needs to be addressed before it is too late. Its operation and location need to be reviewed. If the outdoor market is to survive and thrive, things need to be done differently. Different locations/days of operation need to be considered, as do the development of specialist markets.

#### *(v) Creating multi-functional public spaces*

The town centre has three key public spaces, where residents and visitors can stop, sit and take time to relax and where the community can come together for events. These are Cae Glas Park, Festival Square and the Bailey Head. Spaces such as these are important to the 'public life' of the community and the civic, cultural and commercial activities that take place within the town centre. Cae Glas Park in particular is a well-treasured space, often seen as the 'jewel in the crown'. Festival Square and the Bailey Head are not viewed with such high esteem. Both spaces have the potential to contribute significantly more to town life and support civic, cultural and commercial activities within the town centre. Festival Square, in particular is looking tired and dated and lacks quality in terms of surfacing materials, landscaping, and street furniture.

Options and opportunities for the enhanced use of Festival Square and the Bailey Head as multi-functional public spaces should be explored and proposals designed for consultation. These would need to consider issues such as impact on car parking and deliveries.







**(vi) Improving town centre arrival points**

The town centre is supported by a mix of short and long stay public car parking. The main Central Car Park (500+ spaces) and the Horsemarket (200 spaces on non market days) are the two key town centre arrival points for those visiting the town. Both car parks are well located, providing quick and convenient access to the heart of the town centre. However, neither provides a particularly welcoming first impression of the town. While well maintained, they are both dominated by large expanses of tarmac, with little or no landscaping to improve the quality of their appearance. The profile and quality of both car parks, including the entrance to the Central Car Park could be significantly enhanced through well designed proposals. These could form part of a wider package of urban design proposals to improve the accessibility and attractiveness of the town centre and the quality of the public realm.



**(vii) Improving signage and information**

The need for a signage strategy for the town is something that has long been identified. A more co-ordinated approach is required to help visitors find their way into and around the town more easily. As a starting point, the Oswestry Tourism Action Plan (July 2012) identifies the need for an audit of signage in and around the town to identify and make recommendations for improvement. While, new finger post signage within the town centre has recently been provided with funding through the Market Town Revitalisation Programme, further upgrading is needed. In addition, the need for information points at key locations within the town centre, is something identified through consultation.

**(viii) A more flexible car parking offer**

The ease, convenience and cost of car parking are an important consideration for any town centre. In a rural area like Oswestry, cars and car parking are intrinsic to the way people shop. Indeed car parking is an issue which crops up in most consultations. The public car parks within Oswestry are operated by both the Town Council and Shropshire Council and provide important revenue streams. Town centre businesses typically see car parking charges as something that puts them at a competitive disadvantage. However, simply offering free car parking all day is not the solution.



Oswestry's town centre car parking offer is something which should be reviewed, particularly in light of the proposed Smithfield Livestock Market development. The review needs to draw on good practice from elsewhere, particularly similar market towns that are doing things differently. A more flexible, well communicated parking offer, with incentives for quieter times is something to consider.



## This is our plan for a vibrant and welcoming town centre

- Proactively address the number of vacant town centre premises and bring vacant shops and unused upper floors back into beneficial use
- Establish an Oswestry “Town Team” to help manage and lead the revitalisation of the town centre
- Consider whether the Town Team should be supported by a “Town Centre Regeneration Manager”
- Explore how Business Rates can better support small businesses and independent retailers in the town centre
- Provide support to help town centre independent retailers innovate and adapt by combining a strong web presence with an attractive high quality shop on the high street
- Review the location and operation of the existing Oswestry outdoor market and consider potential for the development of specialist markets on additional days and in alternative/additional locations
- Explore opportunities/options for the use of the Bailey Head “Market Square” as a multi-functioning public space
- Explore opportunities/options for the enhanced use of Festival Square as a multi-functioning public space
- Improve the profile and quality of the Central Car Park as a key town centre ‘arrival point’
- Improve the profile and quality of the Horsemarket Car Park as a key town centre ‘arrival’ point
- Implement a co-ordinated town centre signage strategy, including the provision of Information Points at key locations
- Investigate and identify town centre/edge of town centre redevelopment opportunities and those key buildings which would benefit from refurbishment
- Review approach to short stay car parking to provide a more flexible and unified town centre parking offer, including possible incentives for quieter times

See the Delivery Framework & Action Plan for the full list of Actions, Priorities, Timescales and Delivery Partners.

PLAN THEME:

# A STRONG AND ENTERPRISING LOCAL ECONOMY



## Introduction

Building a strong and enterprising local economy is perhaps the key theme of the 2020 Plan and an important priority for local people.

Section 2 of the 2020 Plan includes a brief overview of Oswestry's local economy, an indication of its relative strengths and weaknesses and some of the key issues and challenges that need to be addressed. The general picture is not necessarily unique to Oswestry and is reflective of Shropshire and its market towns as a whole. If local people are to have access to better paid and a more diverse range of job opportunities, it is clear that steps need to be taken to expand Oswestry's economic base, support local enterprise and indigenous business growth and generally raise the town's profile as a business location.

Shropshire's Economic Growth Strategy (December 2012) provides the strategic context and priorities for the work of Shropshire Council and the Shropshire Business Board to develop and grow the Shropshire economy. The Shropshire Development Plan (Core Strategy and SAMDev Plan) provides the spatial planning framework. The 2020 Plan seeks to provide the all important local dimension focusing on actions which can help Oswestry's economy to become stronger and grow.

The Oswestry Joint Economic Board, a partnership established by Shropshire Council, Oswestry Town Council and Oswestry Chamber of Commerce to pool resources and knowledge with a specific economic development remit, has already instigated a number of proposals. These include the Oswestry Start-Up Club, the Oswestry Urban Safari Trail and a Retail Regeneration Grant Scheme, using Market Town Revitalisation funding to kickstart improvements.



## Consultation feedback

### Headlines

- When asked how well Oswestry is doing in terms of the availability of full-time work opportunities, 65% of survey respondents said either not very well, or not well at all. 79% of street stall respondents and 62% of business survey respondents shared this view. (Source: Resident & Business Questionnaires, Street Stalls)
- With regard to the variety of work opportunities available, 63% of those surveyed felt Oswestry was doing either not very well or not well at all. 70% of street stall respondents and 61% of business survey respondents felt the same. (Source: Resident & Business Questionnaires, Street Stalls)
- Of those expressing a view, skills training for unemployed people (42%), skills training for young adults (35%) and apprenticeships (33%) were all areas where survey respondents felt things were not right and needed doing differently. (Source: Resident Questionnaire).
- In terms of the availability of premises suitable for small businesses looking to expand, 62% of business survey respondents thought Oswestry was either not doing very well or not well at all. (Source Business Questionnaire)
- Looking at the availability of premises for business start ups, 56% of business survey respondents felt Oswestry was either not doing very well or not well at all. (Source Business Questionnaire)
- 42% of respondents see investing in economic development and infrastructure to bring forward new employment and premises as a 'very high' priority. 33% consider it a 'quite high' priority. (Source: Resident Questionnaire). This view was shared by business survey respondents, with 40% seeing this as a 'very high' priority and 30% a 'quite high' priority. (Source: Business Questionnaire)
- Boosting tourism and developing Oswestry's tourism offer is a 'very high' priority for 34% of resident survey respondents and 61% of street stall respondents. It is seen as a 'quite high' priority by a further 49% of survey respondents and 30% of street stall respondents. (Source: Resident Questionnaire & Street Stalls)
- Of the Oswestry based festivals and events people had been to in the last 12 months and enjoyed, 67% of resident survey respondents had visited the Food & Drink Festival, 46% Christmas Live, 35% Oswestry Show, 29% Open Arts Studios, 26% Heritage Open Days and 20% Literary Festival. (Source: Resident Questionnaire)





## These are our objectives

- Ensure sufficient good quality new employment land is allocated and brought forward in the 'right location' to support local business development and attract new investment
- Ensure there is an adequate supply of premises available, providing work spaces to support enterprise - business start up, development and expansion
- Maintain high quality education provision and learning opportunities for all ages. Support the development of the town's further education offer, providing training & skills for a 'work ready' local workforce plus access to higher education
- Develop and co-ordinate Oswestry's tourism offer, focusing on its cultural, heritage and countryside assets to attract more visitors and encourage them to stay longer, using the town as a base to explore

## Our approach

Our approach in planning for a strong and enterprising local economy focuses on the following main areas of action:

### *(i) Bringing forward new employment land and premises*

Oswestry is desperately short of readily available, good quality new employment land. There is an urgent need for the SAMDev Plan to address this and identify the 'right' sites in the 'right' locations on the A5/A483 corridor. The existing employment land allocation at Weston Farm lacks prominence and has major highway access constraints which have contributed to its failure to come forward for development. Alternative provision now needs to be made.

The identification of new employment land will be key factor in efforts to raise Oswestry's profile as a business location, expand the town's economic base and in time, the generation of new job opportunities. Oswestry needs new employment land to be able to cater for and support the growth aspirations of local businesses as well as those locating to Oswestry. Shropshire Council will be carrying out further consultation on the SAMDev Plan during 2013, when proposed new employment sites will be revealed. It should be noted that the commercial reality of speculatively developing new employment land in Shropshire is challenging. Depending on the sites in question, further public sector intervention may be required to help service the land and bring it forward for development. The preparation of development briefs can assist with this and ensure there is a clear vision for how the sites are intended to be developed.

## **(ii) Supporting local enterprise**

Supporting local enterprise and indigenous business growth is one of the keys to Oswestry's future success. There are four areas where it is considered efforts could be focused:

- Identifying a suitable site/premises for the development of an Oswestry Enterprise Hub, providing 'incubator' space for new small business start-ups. This is something that Shropshire Council has previously given consideration to, but has no plans in the pipeline at this stage. A review of the availability and suitability of existing small workspace provision within the town would provide a starting point.
- Providing opportunities for local people to develop new independent retail businesses, using Oswestry's markets as platform to test run their ideas and help them to establish a first step on the business ladder. This is an area in which Oswestry Town Council is already active. There is scope to develop this further and provide additional advice and business mentoring.
- Optimising access to the 'right' type of business advice and support to encourage enterprise, business start-up and the expansion and growth of local businesses. This is an area where Shropshire Council has a lead role. Its commitment is reaffirmed in Shropshire's Economic Growth Strategy. The Oswestry Business Start Up Club is currently providing advice and support to enterprising young people aged 18 to 30 looking to start up their own business.
- Encouraging a responsible 'buy local' business procurement culture, with more Oswestry based businesses, engaging, collaborating and working together to improve the economic well being of the town, increasing the amount of money spent and retained locally. This is an area where the Chamber of Commerce could possibly take a lead in developing and promoting to the Oswestry business community.

## **(iii) Raising Oswestry's profile**

After Shrewsbury, Oswestry is Shropshire's largest market town. It has an important role to play and needs to raise its profile and become recognised both as a business location and tourism destination. There is a need to develop the 'Oswestry' brand and communicate this effectively through a clear marketing strategy. This is not something the town has been particularly good at doing. It tends to struggle to identify and convey its unique selling points and generally undersells all that it has to offer.

Solving the 'identity crisis' is something the North Shropshire and Oswestry Visitor Economy Strategy (2012-2017) focuses on as a programme priority.



**(iv) Training and skills**

With Walford and North Shropshire College based in Oswestry, the town benefits from an accessible high quality Further Education and training offer. The 2020 Plan looks to support the continued development of the College as set out in its Strategic Plan (2012-2015), including its specialisms in land based industries and sport. Also important is the need to encourage closer links between the Oswestry business community and the College to ensure young people have access to training programmes to develop skills that more closely match the needs of local employers and which serve to maximise their employability. Priority areas for the College, as set out the Strategic Plan, include engineering/vehicle maintenance, environmental technology, hair and beauty, care and childcare, hospitality, sport, business services, ICT and food and drink.

**(v) Making the most of town's tourism assets**

The Oswestry Tourism Action Plan (July 2012) identifies those actions, which if progress is made, have the potential to make a major difference to Oswestry's visitor economy. Pursuing the proposed Cambrian Railway connection from Oswestry to Gobowen and the subsequent development of the heritage railway project is one such priority, which the 2020 Plan endorses. If Oswestry is to develop as a tourism destination it clearly needs to make the most of its assets. Efforts to deliver the Cambrian Railway project need to be sustained. The Cambrian Railway connection is considered further under the Well Connected Plan Theme.



The Oswestry Showground at Park Hall is a key facility and asset for the town capable of accommodating a range of larger scale events drawing significant numbers of visitors to Oswestry. Big events include Oswestry Show, OsFest music festival, and the Bus Types VW show. The Market Town Revitalisation Programme has already funded some recent infrastructure improvements. The 2020 Plan supports the continued development of the Showground site. When events are taking place, there is a need to consider how best to improve transport links with the town centre and how to generate more business in the area.



Old Oswestry Hill Fort is one of the finest examples of an iron age hill fort in the country. While access and interpretation improvements have taken place in recent years, it is still a heritage asset which is very much underplayed and there is a general feeling, confirmed through the 2020 consultation process that residents want to see far more made of the Hill Fort. Options and opportunities to do so should be explored, including the potential to provide a visitor car park facility off Gobowen Road to serve and provide footpath access. Discussions with English Heritage and the landowner will be key to this. During the preparation of the 2020 Plan concerns have been expressed about possible SAMDev housing site allocations on Gobowen Road in the vicinity of the Hill Fort.





### *(vi) Developing the 'Oswestry Season' of festivals and events*

Oswestry already has more cultural activities than many market towns with a varied programme of festival and events which generate interest and footfall. These include a Food & Drink Festival, Literary Festival, Music Festival, Youth Music Festival, Heritage Open Days, Walking Festival, Agricultural Show, Open Arts Studios, Apple Day, Christmas Live and Christmas Procession. As identified in the Oswestry Tourism Action Plan (July 2012), this 'Oswestry Season' of events needs to be capitalised upon and further developed. The ideas and impetus for many events comes from within the community itself. This needs supporting. A cycling festival, Alpe D'Huoz, is the latest planned addition with the inaugural event due to take place in July 2013.

### *(vii) Celebrating Wilfred Owen*

With the centenary of WWI in 2014, there is renewed focus on the celebrated war poet, Wilfred Owen, who was born in Oswestry. The Oswestry Literary Festival, now in its fourth year, is timed to coincide with Owen's birthday in March. The Oswestry Tourism Action Plan identifies the opportunity to celebrate the life and works of Wilfred Owen through more permanent memorials, bringing with it significant PR opportunities for the town. This is something the 2020 Plan seeks to encourage.

### *(viii) Other actions*

Other proposed actions under the local economy theme include:

- The wider promotion of the existing B&B grant scheme, funded through the Market Town Revitalisation Programme, to encourage greater take up and the provision of new Bed & Breakfast accommodation within the town.
- The re-launch, wider promotion and development of the Oswestry App, with news and information for both residents and visitors on all things Oswestry.
- Reviewing the operation of the Heritage Centre Tourist Information Centre (TIC) in its current location, with consideration given to the potential to relocate it to a more prominent position in the heart of the town centre
- Supporting for the continued development of the Oswestry Town Museum and as part of its further development, review the suitability of its current location on the first floor of The Guildhall.





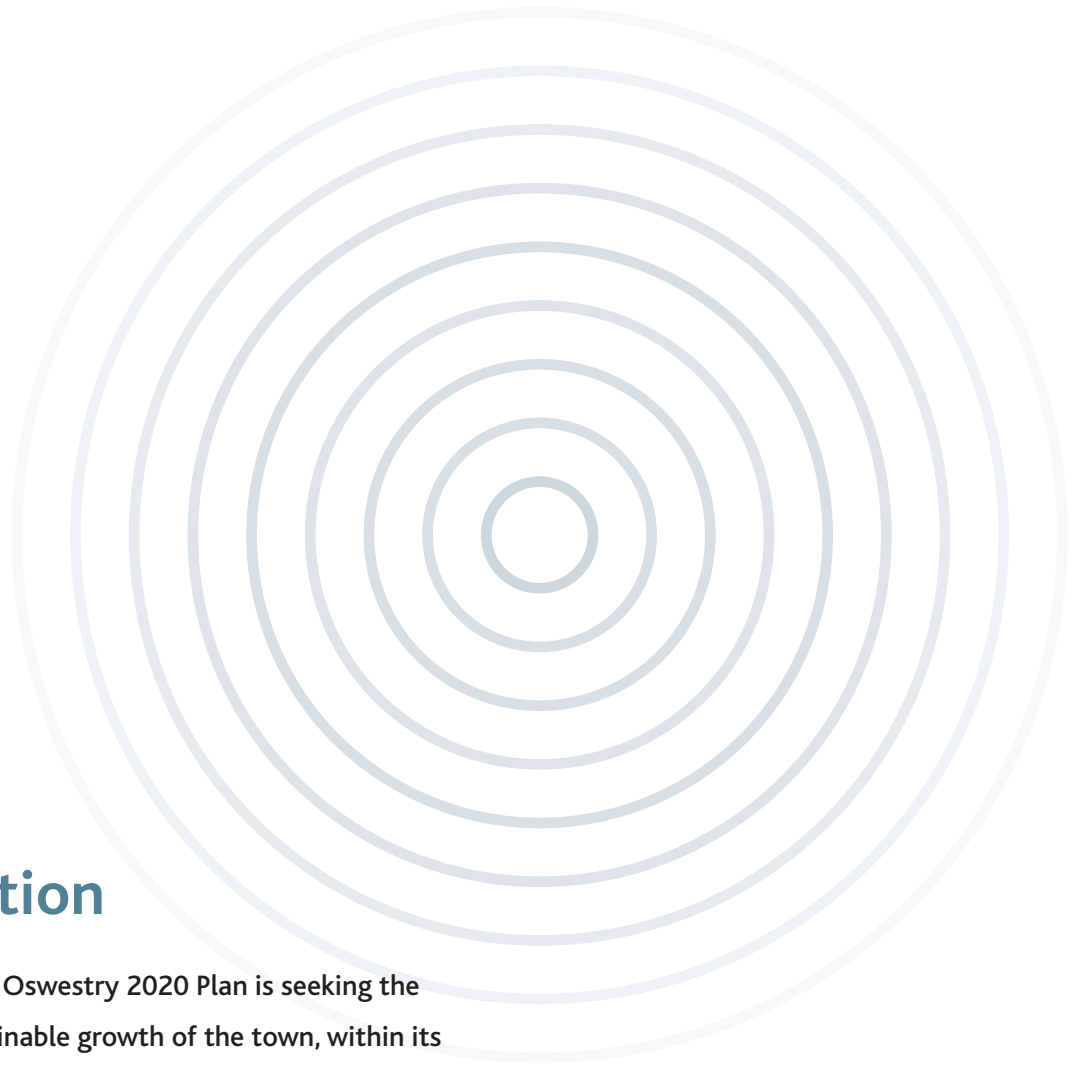
## This is our plan for a strong and enterprising local economy

- Secure the allocation and provision of sufficient good quality new employment land at locations on the strategic road network (A5/A483) to support the growth aspirations of local businesses and those locating to Oswestry
- Ensure there is a coordinated approach to the planning and subsequent development of new employment site allocations through the preparation of development briefs for each site
- Identify a suitable site/premises for the development of an Oswestry Enterprise Hub with 'incubator' space for new small business start-ups
- Provide opportunities for local people to develop new independent retail businesses using Oswestry's Markets as a platform
- Optimise access to the 'right' type of business support to encourage enterprise, business start-up and the expansion and growth of local business
- Encourage a responsible 'buy local' business procurement culture with more Oswestry based businesses engaging, collaborating and working with each other
- Develop the 'Oswestry' brand through a clear marketing strategy to raise the profile of the town based on its unique selling points, and all that it offers as a business and tourism location
- Support the continued development of the town's high quality Further Education & Training offer, including the development of specialisms
- Encourage the development of closer links between the Oswestry business community and education providers so that young people have access to training programmes to develop skills that match more closely the needs of local employers
- Pursue the proposed Cambrian Railway connection from Oswestry to Gobowen and the subsequent development of the heritage railway project
- Support the further development of Oswestry Showground as a key local facility capable of accommodating larger-scale events drawing significant numbers of visitors to the town
- Explore the options and opportunities to make more of Old Oswestry Hillfort as a tourism asset, including the potential to develop a visitor car park facility off Gobowen Road to serve and provide footpath access
- Support the further development and wider promotion of the 'Oswestry Season' of festivals and events
- Re-launch and support the further development and wider promotion of the "Oswestry App", giving instant access to local information, news and events
- Identify opportunities to celebrate the life and works of Wilfred Owen through more permanent Memorials
- Wider promotion of the B&B Grant Scheme to encourage greater take-up and provision of new and improved tourist accommodation
- Review the operation of the Heritage Centre TIC in its current location. Consider its possible relocation to the heart of town centre
- Support the further development of the Oswestry Town Museum. As part of its development, review the suitability of its current location

See the Delivery Framework & Action Plan for the full list of Actions, Priorities, Timescales and Delivery Partners.

PLAN THEME:

**A SUSTAINABLE  
TOWN WITH AN  
ATTRACTIVE PHYSICAL  
ENVIRONMENT**



# Introduction

In broad terms, the Oswestry 2020 Plan is seeking the balanced and sustainable growth of the town, within its environmental limits, supported by new community infrastructure. Oswestry already benefits from a relatively high level of economic self containment and has the critical mass to sustain a range of facilities and services. As the town continues to grow, there is scope for Oswestry to develop its role, for it to improve its sustainability and become a more sustainable place in which to live and work.

To do so, it needs to be able to adapt and respond to changing circumstances and the challenges it faces. It is in everyone's interest that we get this right. To this end, the 2020 Plan seeks to ensure that in planning for growth, the character of the town is maintained and enhanced and that opportunities to improve the quality of the physical environment are identified and taken.

## Consultation feedback

### Headlines

- In terms of the local housing stock, 46% of resident survey respondents feel there is not enough housing available at an affordable price. 32% of respondents do not feel there is enough social housing. (Source: Resident Questionnaire)
- 58% of survey respondents feel Oswestry's green open spaces meet their needs 'quite well', a further 13% think their needs are met 'extremely well'. Cae Glas Park, Oswestry Hill Fort and The Racecourse are the town's most used green spaces. (Source: Resident Questionnaire)
- Improving the quantity, quality and accessibility of the town's public open spaces is not really seen as a priority for investment by 43% of survey respondents. (Source: Resident Questionnaire)
- In terms of Oswestry's public realm, 52% of survey respondents identify the state of town centre buildings with street frontages as an area of concern, where things are not right and we need to do things differently. Improving the state of pavements, roads and kerbsides (56%), signage and information boards (52%), conservation of old buildings (50%) and public art and street furniture (50%) are all areas where survey respondents feel there is room for improvement. (Source: Resident Questionnaire)



### These are our objectives

- Raise the profile of Oswestry as a distinctive and progressive borderland market town, developing its role as a business location, a retail and tourism destination, and a hub for cultural, sports and leisure activities
- Promote the balanced and sustainable growth of the town, ensuring the timely and co-ordinated provision of new community infrastructure, facilities and services to support the existing and future population
- Improve first impressions of the town, focusing on key gateways, approaches and main town centre arrival points and enhance Oswestry's public realm
- Protect, manage and enhance the town's network of open spaces, addressing shortfalls in existing provision and improving access and local biodiversity



## Our approach

Our approach in planning for a sustainable town with an attractive physical environment focuses on the following main areas of action:

### *(i) Planning for a growing town*

The Shropshire Core Strategy provides the strategic context for the future growth of the town. This is now being taken forward by the emerging SAMDev Plan which will identify new sites for housing and employment use. The main growth point for Oswestry is the proposed Sustainable Urban Extension (SUE) which will see a new neighbourhood created to the south east of the town, comprising a mix of housing employment and open space uses. It is essential that the SUE is comprehensively planned to an agreed masterplan with full community involvement. It is anticipated that work in developing the masterplan will commence during 2013.

The 2020 Plan has set out a detailed vision for the town, with a range of objectives developed in response to local aspirations. In making decisions on which new sites should be allocated for housing and employment use, it is vital that the SAMDev Plan responds and contributes to Oswestry 2020 and does not undermine it. SAMDev proposals for new housing on Gobowen Road in the vicinity of Old Oswestry Hill Fort, consulted on during 2012, were particularly sensitive and have drawn significant local concern and objection. Further site based consultation is planned during 2013, before the SAMDev Final Plan is prepared.

The sites which are eventually allocated for future development will need to contribute to the vision, objectives and actions of the 2020 Plan through their design and layout.

Shropshire Council's planning policies set out in the Core Strategy and its Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) provide the basis for ensuring that new housing development responds to local housing needs. Shropshire Council needs to use its planning powers and adopted policies to ensure the 'right type' of housing is built to meet the town's needs in terms of size, type and tenure.

In planning for a growing town it is important to ensure that 'landmark' buildings and spaces which help define the town are protected, preserved and where possible enhanced for the benefit of residents and visitors, now and in the future. As well as sites, the SAMDev Plan will include a series of development management policies. Draft policies have been consulted on. Proposed policy MD2 covers Sustainable Design. It is open for communities to produce more detailed local design guidance to underpin the SAMDev policy and provide a basis to help determine planning applications. It is recommended that a Town Design Statement be produced to ensure all new development addresses green issues and makes a positive contribution to the character and quality of its location.

### **(ii) Improving first impressions**

In terms of access to Oswestry from the strategic highway network (A5/A483) there are two key gateways and approaches into the town centre from the east: Mile End gateway and the Shrewsbury Road corridor and Whittington Road gateway and the Whittington Road/Gobowen Road corridor. These gateway locations and approaches provide an important 'first impression' of the town to the majority of visitors.

Proposals should be developed to enhance these key gateways and approaches. There is also an opportunity to secure a contribution from the design of proposed new developments (eg. Sustainable Urban Extension and Smithfield Livestock Market on Shrewsbury Road, SAMDev site allocation on Whittington Road).

### **(iii) Enhancing Oswestry's public realm**

While some streetscape enhancements have been carried out in Oswestry in the relatively recent past covering Cross Street and Willow Street, the overall quality of the public realm within the heart of the town centre is deteriorating and is in need of investment. The streetscape features a mix of uncoordinated street furniture (seating, lighting, bollards, signage) and paving/surfacing materials and lacks unity. It does not contribute to an attractive town centre environment.

Urban design proposals should be developed identifying potential streetscape enhancements to improve the quality of Oswestry's public realm and which consider options to improve pedestrian safety, such as scope to widen pavements/provide build outs and improve crossing points on English Walls and Church Street.

Options and opportunities to improve the appearance and use of civic space in the Castle View/Oswestry Castle area, whilst less of a priority, should also be considered if resources permit.

Oswestry has previously operated a shopfront enhancement scheme for the repair/reinstatement of traditional shopfronts. It is proposed that consideration be given to its re-introduction with a grant scheme developed to provide match funding for shopfronts that would benefit from improvement. It is also proposed that greater attention be given within the development management process to ensuring that new development (shopfronts/signage/buildings) is sensitive and makes a contribution to improving the quality of the town centre environment.

Following the success of the train mural on New Street, it is proposed that support be given to the further development of the Oswestry Murals project, focusing on blank gables and dead frontages on key corridors of movement within the town centre. Any murals that are commissioned should be based on the town's heritage and should help tell the 'Oswestry story'



#### ***(iv) Protecting and managing the town's greenspaces***

Work to develop an Oswestry Green Network Strategy to protect, manage and enhance greenspace within the town started as long ago as 2000, but was never concluded. Shropshire Council's Outdoor Recreation team is now re-visiting some of this early work and is developing a new Green Network Masterplan to positively manage greenspace and improve access and local biodiversity. Initial work is focusing on eastern Oswestry.

Shelf Bank, one of Oswestry's 'landmark' areas of greenspace is proposed to be designated as a Local Nature Reserve by Shropshire Council, working in conjunction with Shropshire Wildlife Trust and the local community. Opportunities to secure greater community involvement in the future management of greenspaces is also being piloted through a 'Friends Of' approach focusing on Henley Wood.

Brogynryn Park is a Registered Park and Garden to the north west of the town. Oswestry Town Council consider there is potential to develop a Country Park to secure wider public access. Discussions are needed with the landowner to establish whether this is something they would be interested in pursuing.

#### ***(v) Addressing open space deficiencies***

Shropshire Council has identified that Oswestry is deficient in four types of open space provision: Natural and Semi Natural Open Space; Open Space Facilities for Young People; Outdoor Sports; Allotments. Opportunities to address these shortfalls should be considered, wherever possible, in particular new allotment provision. The Town Council have identified a need for an additional 75 plots. Scope exists to secure provision to the east of the town as part of the development of the SUE masterplan. It is considered that efforts should also be made to identify a new site to the west. This would then give the town three allotment sites.

#### ***(vi) Providing additional burial space***

Additional burial land provision needs to be made at the existing Town Cemetery off Victoria Road, through an allocation of land in the SAMDev Plan. Opportunities to improve existing substandard access and parking arrangements also need to be explored.



## This is our plan for a sustainable town with an attractive physical environment

- Ensure the proposed Sustainable Urban Extension (SUE) to the east of the town is comprehensively planned to an agreed Masterplan with full community involvement
- Ensure sites identified for new housing and employment development in the SAMDev Plan contribute to the Vision, Objectives and Actions of Oswestry 2020
- Ensure that new housing development responds to the range of identified local housing needs in terms of its type, size and tenure
- Ensure Oswestry's 'landmark' buildings and spaces are protected, preserved and where possible enhanced
- Prepare a Town Design Statement providing local design guidance to ensure all new development addresses sustainable design (green) issues and makes a positive contribution to the character and quality of its location
- Develop proposals to enhance Oswestry's key gateways and approaches to improve 'first impressions'
- Identify and bring forward streetscape enhancements to improve the safety and quality of the public realm and unify the town centre core
- Ensure new development within the town centre (shopfronts/signage/buildings) is sensitive and contributes to improving its character and quality
- Explore options/opportunities for improvements to the appearance and use of the Castle View/Oswestry Castle area
- Introduce a Shop Front Enhancement Scheme for the repair/reinstatement of traditional shop-fronts
- Support the further development of the Oswestry Murals Project
- Develop a Green Network Masterplan to guide the protection, positive management and enhancement of the town's greenspaces, improving access and local biodiversity
- Designate Shelf Bank as a Local Nature Reserve
- Encourage and secure community involvement in the future management of greenspaces through a 'Friends Of' approach
- Explore the potential to create a new Country Park at Brogyntyn
- Address existing deficiencies in open space provision. Bring forward new allotment provision to the east and west of the town.
- Bring forward proposals to provide additional burial land at the existing Town Cemetery as part of the SAMDev process. Consider need for additional long-term provision if necessary. Consider options to improve existing sub-standard access and parking arrangements

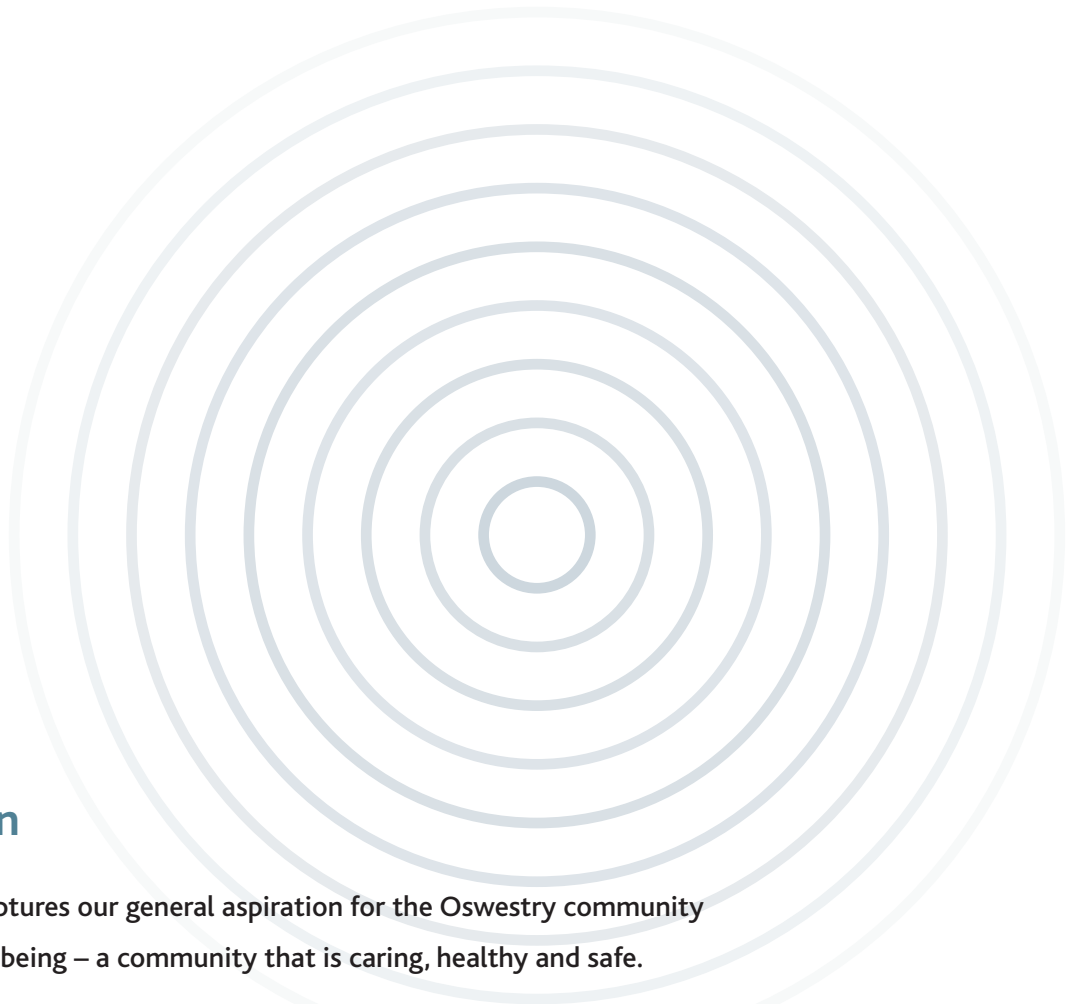
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PLAN THEME:

**A CARING,  
HEALTHY  
AND SAFE  
COMMUNITY**



## Introduction

This Plan theme captures our general aspiration for the Oswestry community and its general wellbeing – a community that is caring, healthy and safe.

Although Oswestry is a large market town, the consultation feedback received both before and during the preparation of the 2020 Plan confirms that the town is still small enough to retain a strong sense of community. This comes across strongly, both in terms of how people feel about the town now and their aspirations for the future.

Local people are pretty resilient with a 'can-do' spirit. This is reflected in their voluntary effort and participation in community life. The impetus for local projects and initiatives often comes from the community itself, which has the creativity and energy to look at ways of doing things differently. A recent example is the Incredible Edible Oswestry initiative which looks to encourage community food growing and bringing local people together through gardening. It ties with the Cambrian Railway Community Orchard Project started in 2011 and the Apple Day started in 2012. As Shropshire Council moves towards locality based commissioning of services, this is one 2020 Plan theme where further more detailed work with the community is likely to generate new ideas for the way local services are delivered in the future.



## Consultation feedback

### Headlines

- 41% of resident survey respondents feel that local health services (eg. GP, Dentist) meet their needs 'extremely well'. A further 46% feel their needs are being met 'quite well'. (Source: Resident Questionnaire)
- In terms of sports and recreation facilities, 48% of resident survey respondents feel their needs are being met 'quite well'. (Source: Resident Questionnaire)
- Developing Oswestry's cultural, arts, sporting and heritage offer is a 'very high' priority for investment for 30% of resident survey respondents. A further 40% consider it a 'quite high' priority. (Source: Resident Questionnaire)
- 78% of resident survey respondents feel Oswestry should be looking to build on its growing arts, events and music scene. (Source: Resident Questionnaire)
- 56% of resident survey respondents identify large auditorium type spaces (audiences of 100+) as something that is not well provided for in Oswestry. 52% of the community groups who responded share this view. (Source: Resident & Community Groups Questionnaires)
- 54% of resident survey respondents feel existing community buildings do not provide well for film events. (Source: Resident Questionnaire). 82% of the community groups who responded felt the same. (Source: Resident & Community Groups Questionnaires)
- Oswestry Library is the town's most frequently used community building, 31% of resident survey respondents use it often, 25% sometimes and 24% occasionally. (Source: Resident Questionnaire)
- Improving facilities and spaces for children and young people is a 'very high' priority for investment for 30% of resident survey respondents and 66% of street stall respondents. A further 42% responding to the resident survey see this as a 'quite high' priority. (Source: Resident Questionnaire & Street Stalls)
- By and large, people feel safe in Oswestry. 26% of resident survey respondents always feel safe, 60% feel safe most of the time. It is generally late at night when people feel unsafe. (89% of survey respondents).
- A more visible police presence on the streets (92%), community action (67%), Pub Watch (66%) and improved street lighting (63%) would generally make resident survey respondents feel safer. (Source: Resident Questionnaire)





## These are our objectives

- Encourage continued investment in local health facilities and the delivery of as many services locally as possible
- Support the voluntary and community sector in the town and their growing role in providing education, training and activities for local people
- Support the development of Oswestry's growing cultural/creative arts scene
- Support the development of good quality sporting and recreation facilities and encourage active and healthy lifestyles
- Develop improved lines of communication/consultation between all sectors of the 'Oswestry Community'

## Our approach

Our approach in planning for a caring, healthy and safe community focuses on the following main areas of action:

### *(i) Maintaining and investing in local health facilities*

The 2020 consultation process did not throw up any specific issues or concerns in terms of local healthcare. The main desire for local people is to have as many health services delivered as locally as possible. The new Oswestry Health Centre is situated in the former Cambrian Railway buildings off Gobowen Road. It opened in July 2011 as a multi-purpose outpatient healthcare centre providing a range of services, including a minor injuries unit with X ray facilities. Both the Cambrian and Willow Street Medical Practices are based at the Health Centre. Following the closure of the Oswestry Ambulance station, the first responder community paramedics are also now based here.

Whilst being located in an accessible location in the centre of Oswestry, close to the bus station, one practical issue that has arisen is the availability of on-site car parking provision. A number of spaces are being taken up by those who work at the health centre, reducing the spaces available for patients.

The 2020 Plan looks to support the further development of the Oswestry Health Centre as a base for the provision of locally delivered health services. The car parking issue is something that will need to be looked at, with consideration given to options to provide overspill car parking if necessary.



### ***(ii) Supporting the voluntary sector***

The voluntary sector and community sector within Oswestry has a growing role in providing education, training, activities, advice and support to the more vulnerable within the local community. Those groups and organisations involved often have their own requirements for office space and typically approach Shropshire Council for assistance. The 2020 Plan proposes that the potential to utilise vacant space at Oswestry Library/Castle View Council Offices be explored to provide an office 'hub' facility to support the sector as a whole and improve the economies and efficiencies of individual organisations looking for office accommodation.

### ***(iii) Developing a multi-purpose arts/theatre/performance venue***

The Oswestry 2020 consultation has demonstrated a strong level of community support in developing Oswestry's cultural/arts offer. Although the town has The Attfield theatre, housed within the Guildhall, its capacity is limited to just under 100 seats. The town clearly lacks a larger auditorium type space and in this sense is often seen as the poor relation of smaller Shropshire market towns like Market Drayton, Wem and Ludlow, which all benefit from such a facility.

A good example of a project beginning to emerge and one being led by the community is the Oswestry Regal Project, which plans to create a community interest company and buy and transform the former Regal Cinema into a multi-purpose arts/theatre/performance venue. This is an ambitious project, but one which has the potential to boost the local economy, help regenerate the town centre, enhance the night-time economy and reduce the need for people to travel elsewhere for entertainment. It is one the Oswestry 2020 Plan seeks to support.



#### ***(iv) Spaces, places and activities for young people***

The provision of spaces, places and outdoor activities for young people drew a good measure of support through the 2020 consultation. In general most people agree that young people need places to meet informally and socialise that don't cost them money. However, difficulties often arise when proposals are put forward to make provision for young people close to or within residential areas.

The 2020 Plan proposes a town wide review of existing spaces, places and outdoor activities for young people with a view to identifying where gaps in provision currently exist and to work with them to determine their priorities for new and improved provision at key locations across the town, taking into account the amenity of local residents. The provision of a BMX track has previously been identified as one such priority.

#### ***(v) Improving local sport and recreation provision***

There are a number of areas where it is considered efforts should be focused to help maintain and improve local sport and recreation provision to serve the town:

- Bringing forward proposals for Phase 2 of the Oswald Park Leisure Centre development. A number of options have previously been considered by Shropshire Council featuring different mixes and intensity of outdoor recreational use. However, final proposals are still to be determined, designed and progressed.
- Improving the quality of playing pitches and changing accommodation at Gatacre Recreation Ground. The Shropshire Playing Pitch Strategy identifies Gatacre as a multi pitch site for competition and training, with football and cricket the main uses. Options to improve playing pitches and changing accommodation are currently being looked at in conjunction with the adjoining Woodside School via a feasibility study.
- Supporting local sports clubs in the preparation of their development plans for new and enhanced facilities. Reflective of its size, the town is home to a diverse range of sports clubs, which provide opportunities for local people of all ages and abilities to actively participate in sport and physical activity.
- Encouraging the continued and enhanced use of key college and school facilities as a community resource. Walford and North Shropshire College, The Marches School and Oswestry School provide a number of indoor and outdoor sports facilities for community use.

#### ***(vi) Community safety***

Town Centre CCTV has been successfully operating in Oswestry since 2001 with cameras monitored by volunteers from a control room at Oswestry Police Station. The long term future of the CCTV system is under review and there is continuing uncertainty over future funding. Securing its long term retention and replacement is considered a priority and one which is reflected in the 2020 Plan.

Following a review of estates and premises by West Mercia Police, it was confirmed in February 2013 that Oswestry Police Station would be retained and remain open, continuing to serve as a base for the town's local policing teams. The Police and Crime Plan for West Mercia (2013–2017) has now been published. As a large and growing town, ensuring best service delivery in local policing in is a high priority for the 2020 Plan in order to maintain safety and reassurance to the community.

## This is our plan for a caring, healthy and safe community

- Support the further development of the Oswestry Health Centre (Cambrian Buildings) as a base for the provision of locally delivered health services
- Explore the potential to utilise vacant space at Oswestry Library/Castle View Council Offices to provide an Office 'Hub' for the Voluntary and Community Sector
- Explore opportunities for developing a new multi-purpose Arts/Theatre/Performance Venue within the town centre
- Review existing town-wide provision of spaces, places and outdoor activities for young people, and work with them to determine priorities for new and improved provision at key locations across the town
- Bring forward and develop proposals for Phase 2 of the Oswald Park leisure centre development
- Improve the quality of playing pitches and changing accommodation at Gatacre Recreation Ground
- Support local Sports Clubs in the preparation of their development plans for new and enhanced sporting facilities in Oswestry and at Park Hall
- Explore options for the enhanced recreational use and enjoyment of Brynhafod/Jennings Road open space
- Encourage the continued and enhanced use of key local College & School facilities as a wider community resource
- Secure long-term retention and replacement of Town Centre CCTV system. Consider the possible extension of CCTV coverage on the fringes of the Town Centre
- Work with the Police Commissioner and local police to ensure best service delivery to maintain safety and reassurance to the community

See the Delivery Framework & Action Plan for the full list of Actions, Priorities, Timescales and Delivery Partners.





PLAN THEME:

# A WELL-CONNECTED TOWN



## Introduction

In Oswestry, as with any market town in a rural area, there is a strong reliance on the car as a means of getting around. Taking into account the town's level of self containment and its general topography, there are considered to be a number of opportunities to reduce this reliance and encourage more sustainable transport behaviour. There is potential for a greater number of trips within the town to be made on foot or by bicycle. Indeed, cycling in particular is becoming increasingly popular, with a growing cycling fraternity. Oswestry is well placed to develop as a centre for cycling.

Shropshire Council's Sustainable Transport Project (2012-2015) is already supporting a range of initiatives covering walking and cycling promotion (eg. Cycle Oswestry), walking and cycling route improvements (eg. Railway Line Greenway) and a Town Centre Traffic Study looking at possible improvements to traffic circulation and enhanced pedestrian crossing facilities.

The biggest transport challenge facing Oswestry is the Cambrian Railway proposal to re-connect the town and provide direct rail access to the mainline at Gobowen. Whilst this will not be easy to achieve, particularly in the current financial climate, the 2020 Plan acknowledges the potential for this project to make a significant difference to the town, both in terms of a sustainable transport link and also the subsequent development of the heritage railway and its potential to become a significant tourist attraction.



## Consultation feedback

### Headlines



- The availability of public transport is seen as the biggest issue for travelling into and around Oswestry. 47% of resident survey respondents think this is the biggest problem. (Source: Resident Questionnaire)
- Improving opportunities for public transport, cycling and walking is a 'very high' priority for investment for 36% of resident survey respondents. A further 38% see this as a 'quite high' priority. 68% of street stall respondents see it as a 'very high' priority (Source: Resident Questionnaire & Street Stalls)
- 66% of survey respondents said a public train service between Oswestry and Gobowen would make them use public transport or use it more. (Source: Resident Questionnaire)
- Dedicated cycle lanes separate from cars would make 77% of survey respondents cycle or cycle more. 51% would cycle or cycle more if there were more 'on road' cycle lanes. (Source: Resident Questionnaire)
- In terms of driving into and around Oswestry, 54% of survey respondents identify better traffic flow as something that would improve their driving experience. Physical improvements to traffic pinch points (42%) and more parking available (40%) were also identified. (Source: Resident Questionnaire)

### These are our objectives

- Improve accessibility by public transport, cycling and walking with a focus on improved links to the town centre, industrial estates, Schools & College and key facilities within/on the periphery of the town
- Improve town centre traffic management with a focus on improving the 'town centre experience' for pedestrians and addressing key issues and implementing projects/changes in key locations
- Continue to press for improvements to the strategic transport network (road and rail) to improve Oswestry's regional connections



## Our approach

Our approach in planning for a well connected town focuses on the following main areas of action:

### *(i) Connecting Oswestry with Gobowen*

Pursuing the Cambrian Railway connection from Oswestry to the main line at Gobowen Railway Station is a major undertaking, with a number of challenges to be overcome, including the need to gain a Transport & Works Act Order. However, the project is an established local priority and one included in The North Shropshire & Oswestry Visitor Economy Strategy (2012-2017) and Oswestry Tourism Action Plan (July 2012). There has been a good degree of support for the project expressed throughout the process of preparing the 2020 Plan, with people clearly recognising the potential for direct rail access to make a significant difference to both local people and visitors wanting to reach the town by public transport and the potential to provide better links with Oswestry Showground and the Orthopaedic Hospital.

### *(ii) Bringing Forward the Railway Line Greenway*

Bringing forward the phased development of the 'Railway Line Greenway' an off road footpath/cycle route through the heart of Oswestry and the longer term connection through to Gobowen is a major opportunity for the town which the 2020 Plan looks to support. The development of the Greenway will provide safe, direct links between the town centre, industrial estates and key facilities and services. Shropshire Council's Sustainable Transport Project for Oswestry (2012-2015) is funding the delivery of the first two phases of the Greenway. Phase 1 covers Coney Green to Middleton Road and Phase 2, Middleton Road to Maesbury Road. Phase 1 is due to start in 2014. Subsequent phases should be planned for and development and funding opportunities to enable these to be programmed should be pursued.



### *(iii) Addressing town centre traffic management issues*

The Oswestry Town Centre Traffic Study is currently being prepared by Shropshire Council. The Study is reviewing town centre traffic management issues and is focusing on a number of key locations: the part-time pedestrianisation of Cross Street; Roft Street and its relationship with the operation of the Central Car Park; pedestrian crossing needs on Salop Road, in the vicinity of Roft Street and improvements to the junction of Victoria Road/Salop Road/Shrewsbury Road. The publication of the Study is awaited and will help determine Shropshire Council's response, as Highway Authority, in terms of proposed improvements .

If the part time pedestrianisation of Cross Street is to be retained, there is a need to improve the design and quality of the street layout and pedestrian environment to better reflect its shared use.

#### ***(iv) Promoting walking and cycling***

Encouraging walking and cycling as a means of getting around Oswestry is a key aim of the 2020 Plan and an area where there is scope to make some significant improvements, particularly in terms of walking/cycle routes and links between key facilities. The Shropshire Sustainable Transport Project for Oswestry (2012-2015) has already identified a number of route options for off-road improvements, including the Railway Line Greenway, mentioned above, and connections to the east of the town.

Opportunities to continue to improve the network of pedestrian and cycling links within the town need to be pursued in the planning of new housing and employment sites allocated in the SAMDev Plan, particularly those with the potential to connect with the Railway Line Greenway.

Safe links between the town, Oswestry Showground and the Park Hall area are currently hampered by the need to cross the A5/A483 Oswestry bypass at the Whittington Road roundabout. Options to improve access need to be investigated, including the potential to utilise the existing underpass that connects Oswestry Showground with land on the western side of the bypass. This land, north of Whittington Road is currently being considered as a potential site allocation in the emerging SAMDev Plan.

Within the town centre, a number of passageways provide important pedestrian links between key streets. Claw Ddu, 'Bakers Oven' and Old Chapel Court passageways have all been improved in the past. Proposals to enhance the appearance of the 'Littlewoods' and 'The Star' Passageways should be considered, along with further improvements to the 'Bakers Oven'

The potential to improve access to the town centre from the Castlefields area via the Horsemarket is also identified for further investigation. Although a new pedestrian crossing on Castle Street has now been provided, access to the Horsemarket is via a narrow flight of steps only, with no ramp. Proposals to improve access should be considered and the safety of the existing zebra crossing reviewed.

#### ***(v) Other actions***

Other proposed actions under the 'well connected' theme include:

- Reviewing the operation and function of the Oswald Road Coach Park, taking into account its existing usage and its future role in supporting the development of Oswestry's tourism offer.
- Reviewing the location and operation of town centre bus stops and taxi ranks, identifying any localised improvements required.
- Working with businesses to explore their sustainable transport needs and opportunities to improve accessibility of Oswestry's main industrial estates, including any car/commercial vehicle parking issues.





















## This is our plan for a well-connected town

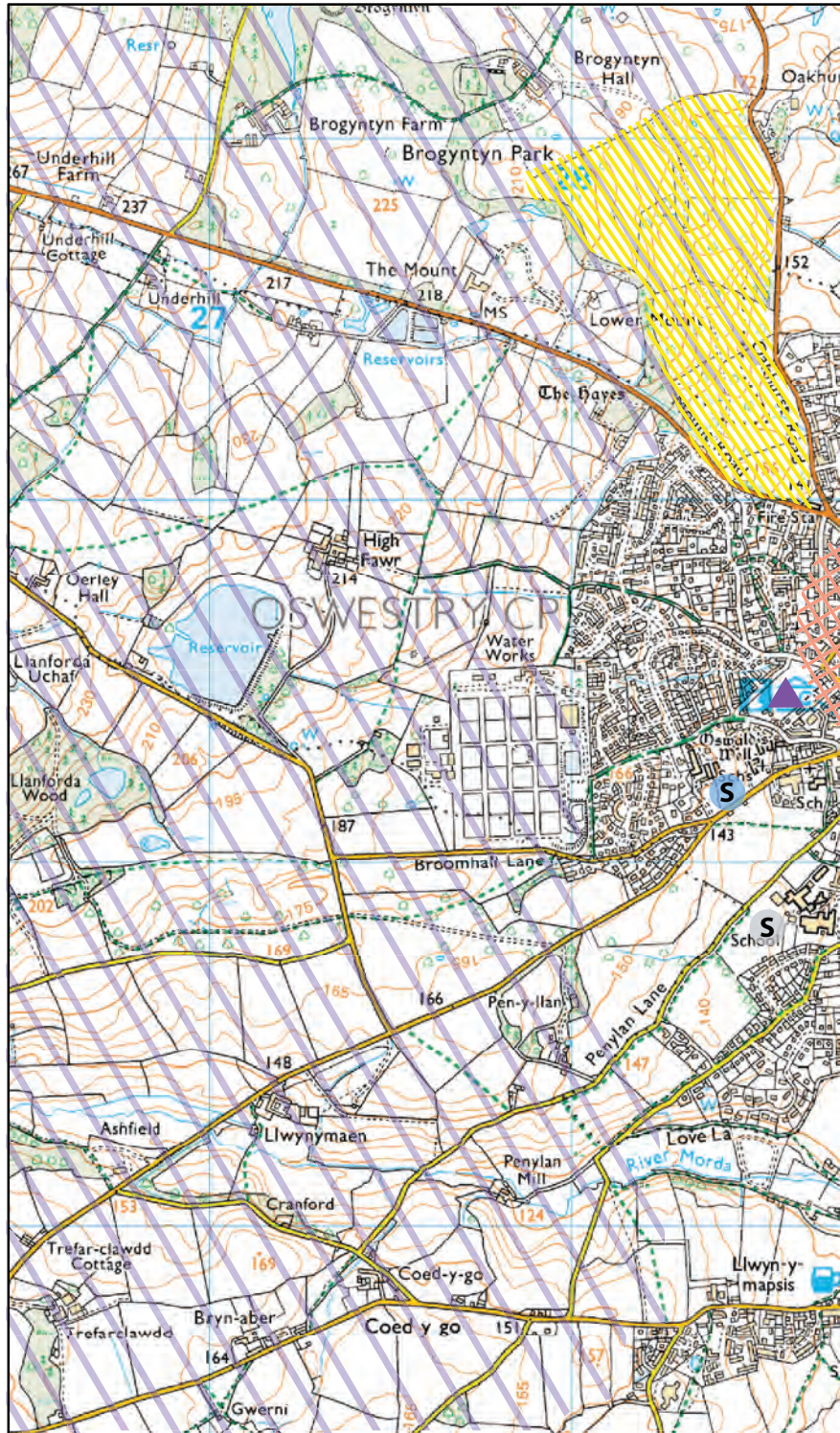
- Pursue the proposed Cambrian Railway connection from Oswestry to the main line at Gobowen Railway Station
- Bring forward the phased development of the 'Railway Line Greenway' (footpath/cycle route) through Oswestry, and the longer-term connection to Gobowen
- Review town centre traffic management, focusing on key locations and based on Shropshire Council's emerging 'Oswestry Town Centre Traffic Study'
- If Cross Street part-time pedestrianisation is retained, look to improve the quality and definition of the pedestrian environment
- Improve walking and cycling links within the town, focusing on access to the town centre, industrial estates, schools/college and key community facilities
- Improve pedestrian and cycle links between Oswestry and the Park Hall area, and address the issue of crossing the Oswestry by-pass
- Bring forward proposals to enhance the appearance and safety of town centre
- Investigate potential improvements to pedestrian access to the Horsemarket from Castle Street/Castlefields area, including the safety of the existing zebra crossing
- Review the operation and function of the Oswald Road Coach Park with local and national coach operators, and with the Oswestry Access Group (re. disabled parking spaces)
- Review the location and operation of town centre bus stops and taxi ranks with Bus/Taxi Operators and users, and identify any improvements
- Work with businesses to explore sustainable transport needs and opportunities on existing industrial estates and car/commercial vehicle parking issues

See the Delivery Framework & Action Plan for the full list of Actions, Priorities, Timescales and Delivery Partners.

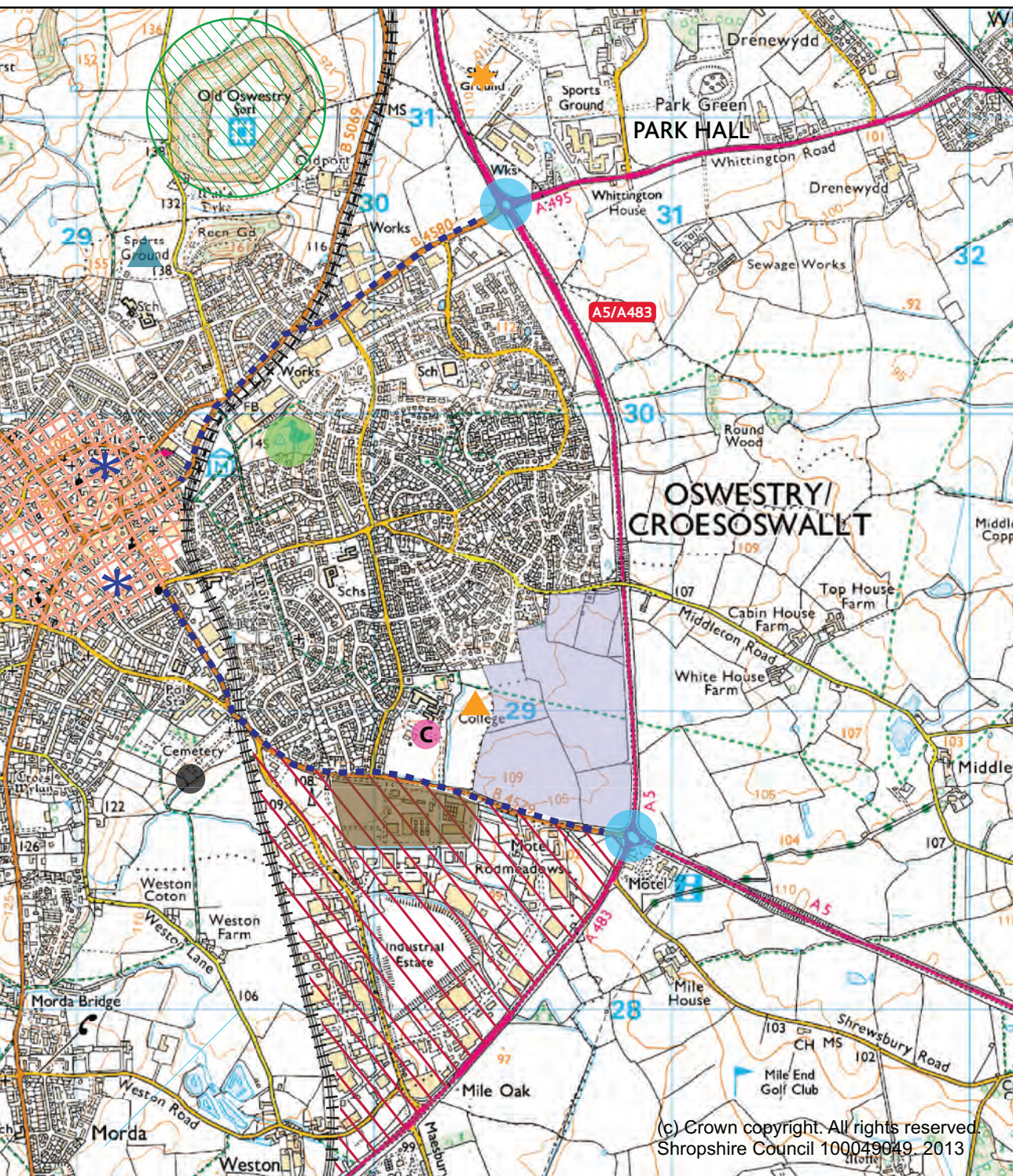


**KEY**

-  Key Gateway
-  Key Corridor
-  Shelf Bank
-  Sustainable Urban Extension
-  Smithfield Livestock Market
-  Oswestry Hillfort
-  Oswestry Uplands
-  Cambrian Railway Corridor
-  Town Centre Arrival Point
-  Town Centre
-  Oswestry Showground
-  Brogyntyn Park
-  Oswestry Industrial Estates
-  Oswald Park Phase 2
-  Gatacre Recreation Ground
-  Brynhafod/Jenning Road Playing Fields
-  Walford & North Shropshire College
-  The Marches School
-  Oswestry School
-  Cemetery









# 5 TAKING THINGS FORWARD

## Using the 2020 Plan

The Oswestry 2020 Plan includes a 'high level' Delivery Framework and Action Plan containing a diverse range of 70 proposed actions responding to the main issues, challenges and opportunities facing the town.

Arising from the actions, it is envisaged that individual projects will be developed, led by different organisations and supported by different combinations of stakeholders and community groups. Oswestry Town Council and Shropshire Council will have important roles to play. While they may have an involvement in many projects, they will not always be the lead.

Oswestry 2020, with its Vision, Plan Themes and Objectives provides a framework for stakeholder discussions, enabling additional actions and projects to come forward. With the 2020 Plan in place, decisions around these actions and projects can be taken in context and not in isolation.

## Implementation - Town Team

In order to promote a comprehensive approach to implementation, in particular those actions which have a town centre focus, it is strongly recommended that a Town Team be established. A Town Team partnership approach was proposed as part of the town's unsuccessful Portas Pilot bid in 2012.

The role of the Oswestry Town Team would be to take ownership of the 2020 Plan and work in partnership to lead its implementation and drive forward as many of the actions as possible. The Town Team would use the Delivery Framework as the basis for its work plan and the co-ordination of resources.

Suggested membership of the Town Team would include representatives of:

- Shropshire Council
- Oswestry Town Council
- Oswestry Chamber of Commerce
- Oswestry Civic Society
- Oswestry Borderlands Tourism
- Oswestry & District Arts Association
- Footfall
- Walford & North Shropshire College
- The Marches School
- Voluntary/community sector
- Businesses
- Residents Associations

The Town Team would enable key stakeholders with a direct and vested interest in the future of the town to come together with a specific remit. It would harness knowledge, skills, enthusiasm and creativity, but without unnecessary bureaucracy. Ideally, the Oswestry Town Team would be formalised by adopting a memorandum of understanding or non-binding partnership agreement, committing the partners to work together in implementing the 2020 Plan to the benefit of the town.

The relationship of the Town Team to the existing Oswestry Joint Economic Board and other working partnerships such as the North Shropshire and Oswestry Destination Development Partnership, would need to be considered.

Given the amount of work involved in developing the actions into projects and then taking those projects forward, it is also suggested that consideration be given to appointing a Town Centre Regeneration Manager, with a 'hands on' role to support the Town Team, and the knowledge, skills and influence to get things done. Again, a similar role (Portas Pilot Activator) was proposed in the unsuccessful Portas Pilot bid.

The Town Team would meet on a regular basis.

## Funding Opportunities

In preparing the 2020 Plan it is important to consider the relevant sources of potential funding that are likely to be available to support its implementation and the delivery of projects in Oswestry over the next few years.

This list of funding sources is an overview and by no means exhaustive. It serves to show that a realistic package of support is likely to be available to help deliver Oswestry 2020, and support a range of projects capable of making a significant difference to the town's future.

Depending on their nature, specific projects will also be eligible for funding and bids to specific funding programmes administered by organisations like the Heritage Lottery Fund, Big Lottery Fund, Sports England and Arts Council England. The success of bids is often dependent on the demonstration of local commitment through match funding.

### ● *Oswestry Town Council Funds*

The Town Council has committed to re-invest in the region of £5m in the regeneration of Oswestry from the proceeds of the Smithfield Livestock Market development, should the site be fully tenanted after the various phases of development are delivered.

### ● *Shropshire Council Funds*

Shropshire has a £2.5m Market Towns Revitalisation Programme, of which £650k was allocated to Oswestry. The majority of the funding has now been committed, providing support for 19 capital projects. Shropshire Council has not given any undertaking to extend the programme of funding. The Council's Business & Enterprise Team also advises on external funding and supports and develops funding bids.

### ● *Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)*

Shropshire Council has a CIL in place that currently imposes a levy of £40/sqm for new residential development in market towns like Oswestry. Some of the Levy is passed to the Town Council as a 'Neighbourhood Fund' while the rest of the Levy is the responsibility of Shropshire Council. In Shropshire, a small proportion (10%) is used for strategic infrastructure and the majority is assigned to local infrastructure, the priorities for which are identified by the Town Council. The levy must be used to 'support the development of an area'.

### ● *Marches Local Economic partnership (LEP)*

The Marches LEP (covering Shropshire, Herefordshire & Telford & Wrekin) was awarded over £8m from the Government's Growing Places fund to provide upfront loans for physical infrastructure to help unlock development and bring forward land and premises for future business needs. Many new mechanisms and sources of funding are being channelled through LEP's.

### ● *Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF)*

The Heritage Lottery Fund operates a number of funding programmes geared towards, heritage, people and communities and awarding grants from £3k to over £5m.

### ● *New Homes Bonus (NHB)*

The Government's New Homes Bonus is designed to incentivise housing development with a payment made to local authorities rewarding each new house built. In Shropshire, around £3.5m was available to spend in 2012/13 focusing on stimulating the supply of local housing, supporting economic growth and developing community based working.

The funding landscape for regeneration projects is dynamic and changes rapidly with new initiatives and programmes being announced on a regular basis, sometimes with limited timescales to make grant applications. This clearly points to the need for the Town Team to work quickly to begin to develop projects in readiness for funding bids and to take advantage of opportunities as they arise.

## 6 DELIVERY FRAMEWORK AND ACTION PLAN

The following pages set out the Oswestry 2020 Delivery Framework and Action Plan, based on a series of tables covering the five main plan themes.

This part of the 2020 Plan should not be regarded as 'set in stone'. The Delivery Framework and Action Plan will need to be reviewed and updated as actions are taken forward and developed into projects and as new opportunities and actions arise.

Progress should be monitored on an annual basis by the 2020 Steering Group. This should coincide with the annual updating of priorities in the Oswestry Place Plan.

The tables include:

- **The proposed Actions**
- **The potential delivery partners**
- **An indication of the level of priority**  
HIGH, MEDIUM, LOW PRIORITY
- **The broad timescale for delivery**  
SHORT            UP TO 1 YR;  
MEDIUM        1-3 YRS;  
LONG            3 YRS+
- **Notes**

### Delivery Partners

The following abbreviations are used

Shropshire Council	SC
Oswestry Town Council	OTC
Oswestry Chamber of Commerce	CoC
Walford & North Shropshire College	W&NSC
Oswestry & District Arts Association	ODDA
Cambrian Heritage Railways	CHR
Churches Together Oswestry District	CTOD
Taxi & Private Hire Operators	T&PH
Selattyn & Gobowen Parish Council	S&GPC
Whittington Parish Council	WPC
Oswestry Joint Economic Board	JEB



## Delivery Framework & Action Plan

### PLAN THEME - A VIBRANT & WELCOMING TOWN CENTRE

ACTION REF	ACTION	DELIVERY PARTNERS	PRIORITY			TIMESCALE			NOTES
			H	M	L	0-1	1-3	3+	
TC1	Proactively address the number of vacant town centre premises and bring vacant shops and unused upper floors back into beneficial use	SC, OTC, CoC, Property Owners, Grant Funders	✓			✓	✓	✓	<p>Continue current work on identifying owners of vacant properties and investigating reasons for vacancy</p> <p>Target key units in key locations</p> <p>Provide match funding for a bid for a multi-agency grant scheme, in partnership with Property Owners, SC Private Sector Housing, Heritage Lottery Fund, European Funds, Others</p> <p>Consider property acquisitions where necessary</p>
TC2	Establish an Oswestry "Town Team" to help manage and lead the revitalisation of the town centre.	OTC, SC, CoC, Businesses, Landlords, Civic Society, CTOD	✓			✓	✓	✓	<p>Establish a Town Team of key stakeholders with the knowledge, skills and commitment to lead and drive forward the revitalisation of the town centre</p> <p>Portas Pilot Bid proposal</p>
TC3	Consider whether the Town Team should be supported by a "Town Centre Regeneration Manager"	OTC, SC, CoC	✓			✓	✓	✓	<p>A 'hands on' role to support the Town Team and drive forward implementation</p> <p>Portas Pilot Bid proposal</p>
TC4	Explore how Business Rates can better support small businesses and independent retailers in the town centre	SC, CoC, OTC	✓			✓			<p>Lobby Local MP and Minister for DCLG to re-assess town centre business rates and do more to support small businesses and independent traders</p> <p>Lobby SC to use their discretionary powers to give business rate discounts/relief to small businesses and independent retailers in the town centre</p> <p>Campaign should be supported by local evidence of impact. The business rate discounts which charity shops enjoy builds disadvantage</p>

## Delivery Framework & Action Plan

### PLAN THEME - A VIBRANT & WELCOMING TOWN CENTRE

ACTION REF	ACTION	DELIVERY PARTNERS	PRIORITY			TIMESCALE			NOTES
			H	M	L	0-1	1-3	3+	
TC5	Provide a package of support to help town centre independent retailers innovate and adapt by combining a strong web presence with an attractive high quality shop on the high street	SC, OTC, CoC	✓			✓	✓	✓	<p>Provide access to grant scheme funding for physical improvements to premises, website development, internet trading etc.</p> <p>Work with Chamber of Commerce to put together a training programme providing specialist advice on how existing retail businesses can innovate and adapt, and better present themselves to customers</p> <p>Use CoC as a forum for exchanging ideas and creative approaches</p>
TC6	Review the location and operation of the existing Oswestry outdoor market and consider potential for the development of specialist markets on additional days and in alternative/additional locations	OTC, SC, CoC		✓			✓		<p>Consider potential scope to introduce and/or further develop "specialist" markets (eg. Food, Farmers' Market, Artisan, Clothing, Craft)</p> <p>Possible alternative locations are:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bailey Street/Cross Street</li> <li>• A revised Festival Square (see TC9)</li> <li>• Top of Central Car Park</li> </ul>
TC7	Explore opportunities/options for the use of the Bailey Head "Market Square" as a multi-functioning civic space	OTC, SC, CoC, Adjoining Businesses, Civic Society	✓				✓	✓	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Link to future of weekly outdoor market</li> <li>• Discussions with adjoining businesses</li> <li>• Explore opportunities for its physical enhancement</li> </ul>
TC8	Explore opportunities/options for the enhanced use of Festival Square as a multi-functioning civic space	OTC, SC, CoC, Adjoining Businesses, Civic Society	✓				✓	✓	<p>Review existing use for short-stay parking</p> <p>Explore opportunities/options for enhanced use, providing a multi-purpose space for:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Public outdoor events &amp; performances</li> <li>• As an extension/alternative location for the outdoor market</li> <li>• Outdoor seating area for adjoining Cafes</li> </ul>

## Delivery Framework & Action Plan

### PLAN THEME - A VIBRANT & WELCOMING TOWN CENTRE

ACTION REF	ACTION	DELIVERY PARTNERS	PRIORITY			TIMESCALE			NOTES
			H	M	L	0-1	1-3	3+	
TC9	Improve the profile and quality of the Central Car Park as a key town centre 'arrival point'	OTC, SC, Civic Society		✓			✓	✓	<p>Improve the appearance of the Car Park entrance</p> <p>Improve the quality of the space as a more welcoming arrival point through landscaping etc.</p> <p>Gateway/signpost key areas from the car park</p> <p>Town Centre Traffic Study is looking at existing access/exit arrangements</p>
TC10	Improve the profile and quality of the Horsemarket Car Park as a key town centre 'arrival' point	OTC, SC, Civic Society		✓			✓	✓	<p>Improve the quality of the space as a more welcoming arrival point:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improve hard &amp; soft landscaping</li> <li>• Gateway/signpost key areas from the car park</li> <li>• Address Market Stall storage</li> <li>• Historic interpretation of the Oswestry Castle site</li> <li>• Improve pedestrian access from Castle Street (see WC8)</li> </ul>
TC11	Implement a co-ordinated Town Centre Signage Strategy, including the provision Information Points at key locations	SC, OTC, Tourism Assoc. Civic Society, CTOD	✓				✓	✓	<p>Complete audit of existing signage</p> <p>Remove unnecessary clutter</p> <p>Make new provision</p>
TC12	Investigate and identify town centre/edge of town centre redevelopment opportunities and those key buildings which would benefit from refurbishment	SC, OTC, Civic Society, Property owners, Private Developers	✓				✓	✓	<p>Identify potential redevelopment opportunities to sensitively replace buildings which do not contribute positively to the character of the town centre and to refurbish key buildings when they become available for new uses</p>
TC13	Review approach to short stay car parking to provide a more flexible and unified town centre parking offer, including possible incentives for quieter times (eg. free after 3pm)	OTC, SC, CoC	✓				✓		<p>Emerging Shropshire Council proposal to provide free car parking on its car parks for first 15 minutes is an example of a more flexible approach. Further options need to be considered, also involving Town Council car parks</p>

## Delivery Framework & Action Plan

### PLAN THEME - A STRONG AND ENTERPRISING LOCAL ECONOMY

ACTION REF	ACTION	DELIVERY PARTNERS	PRIORITY			TIMESCALE			NOTES
			H	M	L	0-1	1-3	3+	
LE1	Secure the allocation and provision of sufficient good quality new employment land at locations on the strategic road network (A5/A483) to support the growth aspirations of local businesses and those locating to Oswestry	SC, OTC, JEB, Landowners CoC	✓			✓	✓		Shropshire Council's SAMDev Plan needs to allocate the 'right sites' in the 'right locations' to ensure there is a sufficient supply of available employment land to meet needs and aspirations  New allocations must be close to the Trunk Road network
LE2	Ensure there is a coordinated approach to the planning and subsequent development of new employment site allocations through the preparation of development briefs for each site	SC, Landowners/ developers, OTC, JEB, CoC		✓		✓	✓		All new employment sites allocated in the SAMDev Plan should have development briefs prepared to ensure they are developed in a coordinated manner
LE3	Identify a suitable site/premises for the development of an Oswestry Enterprise Hub with 'Incubator' space for new small business start-ups	SC, OTC, JEB, W&NSC	✓			✓	✓		Review existing workspace provision. Identify needs, requirements and scope for new provision
LE4	Provide opportunities for local people to develop new independent retail businesses using Oswestry's Markets as a platform	OTC, CoC	✓			✓	✓	✓	Offer incentives to local people (especially younger people) to set up their own small retail business via a market stall and gain a first step on the business ladder
LE5	Optimise access to the 'right' type of Business Support to encourage enterprise, business start-up and the expansion and growth of local business	SC, OTC, CoC	✓			✓	✓	✓	Provision of support through a variety of agencies. Oswestry Business Start-Up Club is providing free support to business minded young people aged 18-30
LE6	Encourage a responsible 'buy local' business procurement culture with more Oswestry based businesses engaging, collaborating and working with each other	CoC, SC, OTC, JEB	✓			✓	✓	✓	Encourage Oswestry businesses to 'buy local' by developing a campaign to raise awareness, possibly leading to some form of local economic charter
LE7	Develop the 'Oswestry' brand through a clear marketing strategy to raise the profile of the town based on its unique selling points, and all that it offers as a business and tourism location	CoC, OTC, CTOD, SC	✓			✓			Develop a clear message based on Oswestry's 'Unique Selling Points'



## Delivery Framework & Action Plan

### PLAN THEME - A STRONG AND ENTERPRISING LOCAL ECONOMY

ACTION REF	ACTION	DELIVERY PARTNERS	PRIORITY			TIMESCALE			NOTES
			H	M	L	0-1	1-3	3+	
LE8	Support the continued development of the town's high quality Further Education & Training offer, including the development of specialisms	SC, W&NSC, Schools		✓		✓	✓	✓	W&NS College, The Marches School, Oswestry School  Relate to important local employment sectors – eg. Food & Drink, Hospitality, Land-Based Industries, Sport
LE9	Encourage the development of closer links between the Oswestry business community and Education Providers so that young people have access to training programmes to develop skills that match more closely the needs of local employers	SC, W&NSC, Marches, CoC	✓			✓	✓	✓	W&NSC College Strategic Plan
LE10	Pursue the proposed Cambrian Railway connection from Oswestry to Gobowen and the subsequent development of the heritage railway project	Cambrian Heritage Railways, SC, OTC, JEB	✓			✓	✓	✓	Long-standing campaign to re-open the line from Oswestry to the main line at Gobowen (3 miles) and the development of a Heritage Railway as a potential significant new tourist attraction  There are a number of challenges to overcome. Pursuing the project will require sustained commitment and significant funding
LE11	Support the further development of Oswestry Showground as a key local facility capable of accommodating larger-scale events drawing significant numbers of visitors to the town	Oswestry & District Agricultural Society, SC, OTC, JEB, CHR, WPC		✓		✓	✓		Further examine infrastructure needs on the Showground site and buildings  Explore the potential of proposed SAMDev development site to the north of Whittington Road to fund/incorporate improved sustainable transport links between Park Hall Showground and the town  Involve Oswestry Rugby Club in discussions regarding wider potential of the area  Need to strengthen its pedestrian/cycle links with the town

## Delivery Framework & Action Plan

### PLAN THEME - A STRONG AND ENTERPRISING LOCAL ECONOMY

ACTION REF	ACTION	DELIVERY PARTNERS	PRIORITY			TIMESCALE			NOTES
			H	M	L	0-1	1-3	3+	
LE12	Explore the options and opportunities to make more of Old Oswestry Hillfort as a tourism asset, including the potential to develop a visitor car park facility off Gobowen Road to serve and provide footpath access	Landowner, English Heritage, SC, OTC, CHR, S&GPC	✓			✓	✓	✓	The Hill Fort is a key asset but is underplayed. Scope to improve pedestrian access and provide car parking for visitors in the right location. Needs further discussion with English Heritage and landowner to identify a suitable location off Gobowen Road
LE13	Support the further development and wider promotion of the 'Oswestry Season' of festivals and events	OTC, CoC, Festival & Events Organisers, CTOD	✓			✓	✓	✓	Support further development of key festivals and events (eg. Food & Drink Festival, Literary Festival, Christmas Live, OSFEST, Oswestry Show)
LE14	Re-Launch and support the further development and wider promotion of the "Oswestry App", giving instant access to local information, news and events	SC, OTC, CoC, App Developers, CTOD		✓		✓			Mobile phone application. Consider how best to promote its widespread use by residents, visitors, businesses and community groups
LE15	Identify opportunities to celebrate the life and works of Wilfred Owen through more permanent Memorials	OTC, SC, Tourism Assoc	✓			✓	✓		Centenary of WW1 in 2014 provides the impetus to consider fitting and permanent memorials to Wilfred Owen, with significant PR opportunities for Oswestry
LE16	Wider promotion of the B&B Grant Scheme to encourage greater take-up and provision of new and improved tourist accommodation	OTC, Tourism Assoc		✓		✓	✓	✓	Existing MTRP-funded project needs wider promotion
LE17	Review the operation of the Heritage Centre TIC in its current location. Consider its possible relocation to the heart of town centre	OTC, SC, Tourism Assoc, Private Sector		✓		✓			Consider whether a TIC operation would be viable in a more central and prominent location
LE18	Support the further development of the Oswestry Town Museum. As part of its development, review the suitability of its current location	Oswestry Town Museum, OTC, SC, Private Sector		✓		✓	✓		Town museum currently located on first floor of Guildhall. As the Museum develops, consider options for a more accessible location

## Delivery Framework & Action Plan

### PLAN THEME – A SUSTAINABLE TOWN WITH AN ATTRACTIVE PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

ACTION REF	ACTION	DELIVERY PARTNERS	PRIORITY			TIMESCALE			NOTES
			H	M	L	0-1	1-3	3+	
ST1	Ensure the proposed Sustainable Urban Extension (SUE) to the east of the town is comprehensively planned to an agreed Masterplan with full community involvement	SC, Landowner, Developer,	✓			✓	✓	✓	The principle of a mixed use SUE to the south east of the town is established in the Shropshire Core Strategy. The location will accommodate a mix housing (750+ dwellings), employment land (4-6 hectares), a local centre and open space and green infrastructure.  The detailed Masterplan is still to be developed
ST2	Ensure that sites identified for new housing and employment development in the SAMDev Plan contribute to the Vision, Objectives and Actions of Oswestry 2020	SC, OTC		✓		✓	✓	✓	SC to use their Development Management powers in a reasonable and proportionate way. OTC role in commenting on Planning applications
ST3	Ensure Oswestry's 'landmark' buildings and spaces are protected, preserved, and where possible enhanced	OTC, SC, Property & Land Owners, CTOD	✓			✓	✓	✓	This includes Historic Churches & Chapels, other key buildings such as Llwyd Mansion and Brogyntyn Hall, and areas such as Shelf Bank & Cae Glas Park
ST4	Prepare a Town Design Statement providing local design guidance to ensure all new development addresses sustainable design (green) issues and makes a positive contribution to the character and quality of its location	OTC, Civic Society		✓		✓			Local design guidance is required to underpin proposed SAMDev Development Management Policy MD2 covering Sustainable Design. Shropshire Council to adopt once guidance prepared
ST5	Develop proposals to enhance Oswestry's key gateways and approaches to improve 'first impressions'	OTC, SC, Landowners/ developers, Civic Society	✓			✓	✓	✓	Mile End gateway & Shrewsbury Road corridor Whittington Road gateway/corridor Gobowen Road corridor  Secure contribution from design of new developments (eg. Sustainable Urban Extension, Smithfield Livestock Market redevelopment)
ST6	Identify and bring forward streetscape enhancements to improve the safety and quality of the public realm and unify the town centre core	SC, OTC, Civic Society	✓			✓	✓	✓	Look at scope to widen pavements/provide pavement build outs where necessary – English Walls & Church Street  Look at improving crossing points on English Walls & Church Street (existing formal crossings and informal crossing points)  Address uncoordinated street furniture and paving/surfacing within town centre core

## Delivery Framework & Action Plan

### PLAN THEME – A SUSTAINABLE TOWN WITH AN ATTRACTIVE PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

ACTION REF	ACTION	DELIVERY PARTNERS	PRIORITY			TIMESCALE			NOTES
			H	M	L	0-1	1-3	3+	
ST7	Ensure new development within the town centre (shopfronts/signage/buildings) is sensitive and contributes to improving the quality of the town centre		✓			✓	✓	✓	SC to use their development control powers in a reasonable and proportionate way. Proposals should be 'good enough to approve' not 'bad enough to refuse' OTC & Civic Society role in commenting on planning applications Scope to address within proposed Town Design Statement
ST8	Explore options/opportunities for improvements to the appearance and use of the Castle View/Oswestry Castle area	SC, OTC, Civic Society	✓			✓	✓	✓	Consider options for an improved civic space, linking key adjoining buildings and features (Christ Church, The Castle Mound, Council Offices/Library) Manage vehicular traffic and parking provision to allow for safer use by pedestrians
ST9	Introduce a shopfront enhancement scheme for the repair/reinstatement of traditional shop fronts	Property Owners, OTC, HLF, CoC, Civic Society	✓			✓	✓	✓	Provide match-funding for a joint Grants Scheme Identify shopfronts that would benefit from improvement Liaise with landlords & businesses Consider funding provision to support bid for HLF match-funding
ST10	Support for the further development of the Oswestry Murals Project	Footfall, OTC Property Owners	✓			✓	✓	✓	Identify blank gables and dead frontages on key corridors of movement within the town centre as potential mural locations
ST11	Develop a Green Network Masterplan to guide the protection, positive management and enhancement of the town's greenspaces, improving access and local biodiversity	SC, OTC	✓			✓	✓		Build on previous work and complete Masterplan to provide basis for positive management and enhancement
ST12	Designate Shelf Bank as a Local Nature Reserve	SC, Shrops Wildlife Trust	✓			✓	✓		Local authority to designate with support of Shropshire Wildlife Trust (Oswestry Branch). Consider other possible designations in the town (eg. Plas Ffynnon)



## Delivery Framework & Action Plan

### PLAN THEME – A SUSTAINABLE TOWN WITH AN ATTRACTIVE PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

ACTION REF	ACTION	DELIVERY PARTNERS	PRIORITY			TIMESCALE			NOTES	
			H	M	L	0-1	1-3	3+		
ST13	Encourage and secure community involvement in the future management of greenspaces through a 'Friends Of' approach	SC, Local Community, OTC		✓			✓	✓	✓	Henley Wood pilot project trialling approach with community in Eastern Oswestry
ST14	Explore the potential to create a new Country Park at Brogyntyn	OTC, SC, Landowner, English Heritage		✓			✓	✓		Brogyntyn is a Registered Park & Garden. Discussions with Landowner required to consider the possible scope for the development of a Country Park with wider public access
ST15	Address existing deficiencies in open space provision in the town. Bring forward new allotment provision to the east and west of the town.	OTC, Landowners		✓			✓	✓		Address shortfall in existing provision and respond to demand for additional plots. OTC has identified need for 75 plots.  Secure allotment provision within the Masterplan for the Sustainable Urban Extension to the east of the town. Identify new site to the west
ST16	Bring forward proposals to provide additional burial land at the existing Town Cemetery as part of the SAMDev process. Consider need for additional long-term provision if necessary. Consider options to improve existing sub-standard access and parking arrangements.	OTC, SC, CTOD		✓			✓	✓		Additional burial land provision needs to be made. Existing site is constrained with access & parking limitations

## Delivery Framework & Action Plan

### PLAN THEME – A CARING, HEALTHY & SAFE COMMUNITY

ACTION REF	ACTION	DELIVERY PARTNERS	PRIORITY			TIMESCALE			NOTES
			H	M	L	0-1	1-3	3+	
CHSC1	Ensure that new housing development responds to the range of identified local housing needs in terms of its type, size and tenure	OTC, SC	✓			✓	✓	✓	SC to use its Planning powers and adopted policies to ensure that the right type of housing is provided for all sections of the local community
CHSC2	Support the further development of the Oswestry Health Centre (Cambrian Buildings) as a base for the provision of locally delivered health services	OTC, SC, PCT	✓			✓	✓	✓	Health Centre now well established as a base for locally delivered health services. Seek further development. Issues regarding on-site car parking provision may need to be addressed
CHSC3	Explore the potential to utilise vacant space at Oswestry Library/Castle View Council Offices to provide an Office 'Hub' for the Voluntary and Community Sector	SC, OTC, Voluntary & Community Sector	✓			✓	✓	✓	Voluntary & Community Sector has a growing role in providing education, training and activities for local people. An Office Hub would help support the sector as a whole and improve the economies and efficiencies of the individual organisations in terms of their requirements for office accommodation
CHSC4	Explore opportunities for developing a new multi-purpose Arts/Theatre/Performance Venue within the town centre	OTC, SC, ODAA, KinoKulture	✓			✓	✓		The emerging 'Oswestry Regal Project' is focusing on the potential of the vacant Seconds Ahead (Old Regal Cinema) building, currently being offered for let/sale
CHSC5	Review existing town-wide provision of spaces, places and outdoor activities for young people, and work with them to determine priorities for new and improved provision at key locations across the town	OTC, SC, Youth Service, Young People	✓			✓	✓		Consider existing and future provision of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Informal meeting spaces</li> <li>• Spaces for kickabout areas</li> <li>• More formal facilities – eg. Skate parks, BMX, etc.</li> </ul>

## Delivery Framework & Action Plan

### PLAN THEME – A CARING, HEALTHY & SAFE COMMUNITY

ACTION REF	ACTION	DELIVERY PARTNERS	PRIORITY			TIMESCALE			NOTES
			H	M	L	0-1	1-3	3+	
CHSC6	Bring forward and develop proposals for Phase 2 of the Oswald Park leisure centre development	SC, OTC, Local Sports Groups, W&NSC, Young People	✓			✓	✓	✓	Determine key components of the Phase 2 proposal in partnership with the local community.
CHSC7	Improve the quality of playing pitches and changing accommodation at Gatacre Recreation Ground	OTC, SC, Woodside School, User Groups	✓			✓	✓		Gatacre Recreation Ground identified in Shropshire Playing Pitch Strategy as a multi pitch site for competition and training Options to improve playing pitches and changing accommodation currently being looked at in conjunction with adjoining Woodside School
CHSC8	Support local Sports Clubs in the preparation of their development plans for new and enhanced sporting facilities in Oswestry and at Park Hall.	SC, OTC, Sports Council, Local Clubs, W&NSC, Schools, WPC	✓			✓	✓	✓	Local sports clubs provide a diverse range of sporting opportunities for town residents. Look to support clubs in their endeavour to maintain and improve their facilities
CHSC9	Explore options for the enhanced recreational use and enjoyment of Brynhafod/Jennings Road open space	OTC, SC, Local Community, Young People, Youth Service	✓			✓	✓		Brynhafod/Jennings Road open space has scope for enhanced recreational use to compliment Cae Glas Park.  Consider options/aspirations with local community, in particular young people
CHSC10	Encourage the continued and enhanced use of key local College & School facilities as a wider community resource.	W&NSC, Schools	✓			✓	✓	✓	Key facilities: • W&NSC Football pitches & Multi Use Games Area • Marches Sports Hall, All-Weather Pitch, Tennis Courts, School Hall • Oswestry School Swimming Pool, Playing Fields & new All-Weather Pitch
CHSC11	Secure long-term retention and replacement of Town Centre CCTV system. Consider the possible extension of CCTV coverage on the fringes of the Town Centre	OTC, SC, Volunteers, Police, Businesses, CTOD	✓			✓	✓	✓	SC reviewing CCTV schemes across Shropshire. Need to secure retention and replacement of Oswestry system. Possible locations for extension include the Boxing Club/Castle Street area, Coney Green Area and Oswestry Industrial Estates
CHSC12	Work with the Police Commissioner and local police to ensure best service delivery to maintain safety and reassurance to the community	PC, Local Police, OTC, SC	✓			✓	✓	✓	Oswestry Police Station to be retained as an operational base for local policing teams. Basic aim should be to ensure best service delivery

## Delivery Framework & Action Plan

### PLAN THEME – A WELL-CONNECTED TOWN

ACTION REF	ACTION	DELIVERY PARTNERS	PRIORITY			TIMESCALE			NOTES
			H	M	L	0-1	1-3	3+	
WC1	Pursue the proposed Cambrian Railway connection from Oswestry to the main line at Gobowen Railway Station	CHR, SC, OTC, JEB	✓			✓	✓	✓	Long-standing campaign to re-open the line from Oswestry to the main line at Gobowen (3 miles) There are a number of challenges to overcome. Pursuing the project will require sustained commitment and significant funding. Support of Shropshire Council is key
WC2	Bring forward the phased development of the 'Railway Line Greenway' (footpath/cycle route) through Oswestry, and the longer-term connection to Gobowen	SC, OTC, CHR	✓			✓	✓	✓	Shropshire Council's Sustainable Transport Project will deliver first two phases: Phase 1 – Coney Green to Middleton Road Phase 2 – Middleton Road to Maesbury Road Oswestry to Gobowen alongside the Cambrian Railway line is longer term aspiration
WC3	Review town centre traffic management, focusing on key locations and based on Shropshire Council's emerging 'Oswestry Town Centre Traffic Study'	SC, OTC, Residents, Businesses		✓		✓			Oswestry Town Centre Traffic Study is looking at Cross Street part-time pedestrianisation, Roft Street and its relationship with the Central car park, and pedestrian crossing needs on Salop Road (in the vicinity of Roft Street)
WC4	If Cross Street part-time pedestrianisation is retained, look to improve the quality and definition of the pedestrian environment	SC, OTC	✓			✓	✓		Dependant on outcome of Oswestry Town Centre Traffic Study
WC5	Improve walking and cycling links within the town, focusing on access to the town centre, industrial estates, schools/college and key community facilities	SC, OTC		✓		✓	✓	✓	Further to Sustainable Transport Project, continue to identify opportunities to improve walking and cycling links within the town, particularly in connection with those sites allocated for development in SAMDev Plan



## Delivery Framework & Action Plan

### PLAN THEME – A WELL-CONNECTED TOWN

ACTION REF	ACTION	DELIVERY PARTNERS	PRIORITY			TIMESCALE			NOTES
			H	M	L	0-1	1-3	3+	
WC6	Improve pedestrian and cycle links between Oswestry and the Park Hall area, and address the issue of crossing the Oswestry by-pass	SC, OTC	✓	✓		✓	✓		Explore options for a safe crossing of the by-pass, including scope to utilise the existing underpass serving the Oswestry Showground, via the Whittington Road site proposed in the SAMDevPlan
WC7	Bring forward proposals to enhance the appearance and safety of town centre passageways	SC, OTC	✓			✓	✓	✓	Improvements previously completed for Clawdd Ddu, Bakers Oven and Old Chapel Court  Devise proposals for Littlewoods and The Star. Consider further improvements to Bakers Oven  Potential Oswestry Murals Project?
WC8	Investigate potential improvements to pedestrian access to the Horsemarket from Castle Street/Castlefields area, including the safety of the existing zebra crossing	SC, OTC		✓		✓			Original ramped link to the Horsemarket is now closed. Only stepped access to Horsemarket currently available from Castle Street. Review the safety of the existing zebra crossing and consider possible upgrade
WC9	Review the operation and function of the Oswald Road Coach Park with local and national coach operators, and with the Oswestry Access Group (re. disabled parking spaces)	SC, OTC, Bus/Coach Operators, Access Group,CHR		✓		✓			Review operation and existing usage, taking into account likely future requirements
WC10	Review the location of town centre Bus Stops, Taxi Ranks and Private Hire pick-up/drop-off points with Bus, Taxi & Private Hire Operators and users, and identify the need for any improvements	SC, OTC, Bus Operators, Taxi & Private Hire Operators	✓			✓			Are the existing bus stops in the right location?  Are there opportunities or needs for additional stops close to the town centre (eg. English Walls)  Additional facilities (shelters, information) needed?
WC11	Work with businesses to explore Sustainable Transport needs and opportunities on existing Oswestry industrial estates and car/commercial vehicle parking issues	SC, OTC, Businesses, CHR		✓		✓			Explore the possible extension of the Town Service  Additional cycling/walking facilities  On-street parking of cars and larger commercial vehicles

# APPENDICES

## APPENDIX 1

### Oswestry 2020 Steering Group

#### CORE MEMBERSHIP

*Martin Bennett – Chair*

*Sandy Best*

*John Bickerton*

*Ruth Carter*

*Kate Clarke*

*Roger Date*

*Melva Duley*

*Ian Garland*

*Mark Higgins*

*Mike Horner*

*Steve Howorth*

*Mike Jeffrey*

*Richard Laycock*

*Peter Lloyd*

*Sarah Longville*

*Neil Phillips*

*David Roll*

*Chris Schofield*

*Buz Thomas*

*Andrew Tyley*

*During the course of preparing the 2020 Plan various others attended Steering Group meetings.*

### The Steering Group was supported by:

*Kate Garner – Shropshire Council  
Community Action Team*

*David Preston – Town Clerk, Oswestry Town Council*

*Tim Morris – Planning Consultant*

*David Parker – Planning Consultant*

*Irene Evison – Resources for Change*



## APPENDIX 2

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