



Committee and Date

Cabinet
19 January 2022

Item

Public

FUTURE OSWESTRY MASTER PLAN CONSULTATION

Responsible Officer

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1. Synopsis

This report outlines work to date led by the Future Oswestry Group to progress the Oswestry masterplan, which will be used to guide future development and investment decisions. Following engagement with key stakeholders, the draft masterplan report is now ready to be consulted on.

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1 The development of the Future Oswestry Masterplan and Vision is the outcome of ongoing collaborative work between Shropshire Council, Oswestry Town Council, and the Oswestry Business Improvement District (BID).
- 2.2 This report outlines the work undertaken to date, provides details of the engagement work to date and outlines the proposed public and stakeholder consultations that will be undertaken over a period of six weeks.
- 2.3 The Future Oswestry Masterplan and Vision to be consulted on sets out the aims, aspirations, and vision for Oswestry and provides details of the engagement work to date and how this has informed the draft report.
- 2.4 Following consultation, the plan will be presented to Council for endorsement to guide future developments in line with the vision and objectives within the masterplan and to support future funding bids to support regeneration priorities within the town.
- 2.5 To help enable this to happen and to ensure the Plan has the status required for it to be used to coordinate change, the intention is for the Future Oswestry Plan to be formally endorsed by the relevant committees and boards of Shropshire Council, Oswestry Town

Council and the Oswestry BID. This process will enable the Plan to act and be used in a number of important ways, to:

- A. implement local policies already in place as a material consideration – such as those associated with maintaining Oswestry’s status as one of Shropshire’s major commercial centres, and, capitalising on the regenerative benefits of the town’s heritage assets through the ongoing High Street Heritage Action Zone (HSHAZ) programme;
- B. inform the emerging and future policy framework – such as the priorities being outlined in the adopted and emerging Local Plans; and
- C. inform decisions to be made by relevant authorities – and where appropriate will be a material consideration in planning decisions on key areas of the town to help ensure the vision outlined in the Plan is delivered in the longer term.

3. Recommendations

3.1 Cabinet agrees that the Future Oswestry Masterplan and Vision - Final Draft be made available for public consultation for a period of six weeks, to commence from the beginning of February 2022.

3.2 Cabinet agrees that the officers will report back to Cabinet and / or Council, as appropriate, on the outcome of consultation and present the final Masterplan and Vision for endorsement.

REPORT

4. Risk Assessment and Opportunities Appraisal

- 4.1 The Vision and Plan incorporates the feedback obtained from the online survey, online workshops, static display, and face to face events undertaken from November 2020 to September 2021 as part of the master planning process. The engagement period had been extended to undertake additional engagement activities as Covid-19 social distancing measures were lifted. Feedback from the surveys, displays and face to face activities was collated and analysed by Shropshire Council’s Feedback and Insights Team.
- 4.2 An updated Equality, Social Inclusion and Health Impact Assessment (ESHIA) has been undertaken to incorporate the planned consultation due to take place from February 2022 for a period of six weeks. Individual assessments and proposals will be undertaken for specific

projects as they come forward from the development of the delivery plan to support the Vision.

- 4.3 There are no direct legal implications arising from the recommendation in this report. There may however be legal implications arising from projects/work which come forward as a result of the masterplan being adopted and advice should be sought as appropriate.
- 4.4 It will be necessary to keep the Plan under review. The economy and prevailing property markets will change, and decisions might be made which change the context within which the Future Oswestry Plan must be seen. The intention however is for the Plan to be a flexible, long-term call to action – not determining specific projects or initiatives, but rather flagging a range of potential projects and opportunities on which further discussions should be had and local collaborative decisions be made.

Risks	Mitigations / Opportunities
Reputational risk to the Council	Ensure openness and manage expectations through clear communications from the outset about how and when stakeholders and community members can get involved, make their views known and the next steps. This will be supported by a communications and engagement plan developed with the elected Community Representatives and Future Oswestry members.
Consultation is seen not to be accessible and inclusive	Ensure that the venues used for consultation and community engagement activities are accessible to all who wish to participate. Ensure that the times when consultation and community engagement activities take place and the time given to respond to consultation are reasonable and appropriate. For people without internet access, access will be facilitated via other methods such as exhibitions and events in public venues. Paper copies of the consultation documents to be made available at

	<p>Council buildings. Engagement will not rely solely on electronic methods of consultation and reporting on the consultation results.</p> <p>A summary document and survey questions will be made available as part of the exhibitions and events. Consultation to be promoted through press notices, the Council's website and other media as appropriate.</p> <p>A summary of consultation responses received will be published to explain how responses have been used in informing the final report. Feedback is be made available to participants on the results of their involvement and the decisions made and keep them informed of progress in implementing the Masterplan.</p>
<p>Engagement and consultation approaches are subject to changes in Covid-19 guidance and regulations.</p>	<p>Risk assessment for consultation approaches will be reviewed and updated in response to changes in local circumstances and national guidance.</p> <p>Changes to consultation approaches will be promoted and shared through press notices, the Council's website and other media as appropriate</p>
<p>Ad hoc development and missed opportunities</p>	<p>The Vision will guide future developments in line with the vision and objectives within the masterplan and will be used to support future funding bids to support regeneration priorities within the town.</p>

5. Financial Implications

5.1 The costs incurred in the preparation of the Masterplan and Vision has been met by One Public Estate Programme funding supplemented by funding from Oswestry Town Council. The

consultation programme proposed will be funded and resourced through existing Economic Growth team budget. There are no further financial implications for Shropshire Council in relation to the adoption of the Vision Plan.

- 5.2 As development proposals and projects come forward, in the context of the Future Oswestry Vision, and subject to the Council's role being determined, they will be subject to further business case assessment, financial appraisal and the Council's governance and reporting procedures.

6. Climate Change Appraisal

- 6.1 As development proposals and projects identified through the Masterplan come forward, these projects will be thoroughly investigated, and business cases developed. These projects will individually be appraised against the key Climate Change considerations.
- 6.2 One of the key themes of the Vision is for Oswestry to be a healthier and more sustainable town. The masterplan and vision will align with other strategies and areas of work such as the Bus Strategy and the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan to encourage sustainable travel options.

7. Background

- 7.1 The development of the Future Oswestry Masterplan and Vision is the outcome of ongoing collaborative work between Shropshire Council, Oswestry Town Council, and the Oswestry Business Improvement District (BID).
- 7.2 The Future Oswestry Group has shaped the development of the master planning work to produce a report which identifies a range of potential projects and opportunities which will be investigated further. The Future Oswestry Plan seeks to set the agenda for local action, investment, and changes to deliver a shared vision for the town's future.
- 7.3 The main phase of community engagement was led by the Future Oswestry Group and revolved around a series of stakeholder and community workshop sessions. Local members and officers (Planning, Highways and Estates) have been involved in the engagement workshops with key stakeholders. The outcomes of these discussion have informed the development of the Future Oswestry Masterplan and Vision.
- 7.4 The next step is a formal consultation on the masterplan report which will comply with Shropshire Council Consultation guidance and any engagement undertaken will be reviewed to ensure it is Covid-19 secure. The arrangements for the consultation will be reviewed by

the Future Oswestry group with appointed Community Representatives at their regular meetings to consider consultation arrangements and changes to Covid-19 guidance.

- 7.5 It is proposed that consultation will focus on a mix of face-to-face exhibitions (subject to Covid-19 guidance), online workshops, online meetings, and questionnaires, alongside Shropshire Council's consultation portal within the website.
- 7.6 The Economic Growth function will co-ordinate the consultation with Oswestry BID and Oswestry Town Council to undertake the six-week public consultation exercise via the Future Oswestry partners.
- 7.7 The outcomes of the consultation will be evaluated by Shropshire Council's Insights Team supported by the Economic Growth function and presented to the Future Oswestry partners for discussion with recommendations. It is anticipated that this will be available in early April 2022. The outcome of the consultation and a definitive version of the Future Oswestry Masterplan and Vision will then be reported to Cabinet and/or Council as appropriate.
- 7.8 Following consultation, the Future Oswestry Masterplan and Vision will be presented to Shropshire Council, Oswestry Town Council and Oswestry Business Improvement District Board for endorsement and adoption. Once the plan has been adopted, bids for funding to support more detailed modelling and design work can be prepared when appropriate funding opportunities arise.

8. Additional Information

- 8.1 The membership of the Future Oswestry group includes two Councillors representing Shropshire Council two Councillors representing Oswestry Town Council and two representatives of the Oswestry Business Board.
- 8.2 The Future Oswestry group has already helped support and develop the High Street Heritage Action Zone, hosted workshops to refresh the vision for Oswestry as part of the master planning process and supported work to help with social distancing measures in the town centre in response to Covid-19 measures.
- 8.3 Two Community Representatives have been appointed to provide advice and support to the Future Oswestry partners to shape the shared vision and help develop appropriate mechanisms for communicating with key stakeholders, established networks and the wider community.

9. Conclusions

- 9.1 Following engagement with stakeholders and the wider community, the Future Oswestry Masterplan and Vision has been prepared. Formal consultation on the Future Oswestry Masterplan and Vision is proposed.
- 9.2 Following this consultation period, the Future Oswestry Masterplan and Vision will be presented to Shropshire Council, Oswestry Town Council and Oswestry Business Improvement District Board for endorsement and adoption.
- 9.3 The Masterplan and Vision provides the overview of regeneration ambitions. The next step following consultation is the preparation of a detailed delivery plan which will provide the framework for the development of key projects. Engagement with stakeholders and the wider community on the developing proposals will be undertaken, through the Future Oswestry group, supported by the Community Representatives.

List of Background Papers (This MUST be completed for all reports, but does not include items containing exempt or confidential information)

Equality, Social Inclusion and Health Impact Assessment (ESHIA) for the Future Oswestry Masterplan Consultation

Cabinet Member (Portfolio Holder)

Councillor Ed Potter

Local Member

Councillor Mike Isherwood, Councillor Duncan Kerr, Councillor Chris Schofield, Councillor John Price, Councillor Joyce Barrow

Appendices

Appendix 1: Draft Future Oswestry Masterplan and Vision