



Oswestry BID Proposal and Business Plan 2018 – 2023



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Oswestry Business Improvement District (BID) Proposal and Business Plan 2018 – 2023

1. Foreword

Message from the Chair of Oswestry BID Ltd

I am proud to be writing the introduction to this Proposal and Business Plan for the Oswestry Business Improvement District (BID). Over the last 18 months we have been working hard conducting surveys, consultations, workshops and studying successful BIDs across the UK. Based on this work we have identified a set of initiatives that we believe will make a real difference to the success and prosperity of the Oswestry business community.

Oswestry's strength lies in its rich mixture of business activities and focusing this strength is the key to improving the prosperity of the town and developing a business community able to protect itself from the uncertainty and challenges that issues like Brexit may bring.

The Oswestry BID Working Group team has consulted with and listened to the business community and its stakeholders to identify many common themes as concerns for all sectors within the BID Area. The projects and initiatives in this BID Proposal and Business Plan are based on this consultation and aim to address the challenges facing all sectors of the BID Area and take advantage of the real opportunities for us all. Oswestry BID would act as a catalyst to help bring together all elements of the business community to address their concerns and realise their full potential.

Acting as one, Oswestry's business community is in an ideal position to elevate itself in the national and international arena as a special, welcoming and entrepreneurial place with so much to offer its visitors, residents, workers and businesses. It will be towns offering a diverse retail, leisure and cultural experience, an exciting and supportive business environment and a great quality of life which are going to thrive in the future – **we aim to help Oswestry thrive.**

The investment we are seeking from businesses in the BID Area would be used to attract and retain additional investment in Oswestry and provide a direct return to BID members by improving the trading environment for existing businesses - **This will make a positive difference to your business.** This BID Proposal and Business Plan has been created by a volunteer Working Group of business people like you, formed especially to prepare the plan, and all with a wide range of business experience. They have given their time freely because they believe in the future of Oswestry and are willing to play their part in helping to shape it. Our cumulative investment will provide a business-driven focus to ensure that our businesses, not only survive, but prosper in these uncertain times. This investment, with a budget over the five-year BID lifetime of over £1.5 million, will set standards which reflect our own aspirations as Oswestry businesses.

This is a realistic plan with realistic targets at a realistic cost. It is our chance to come together and put Oswestry on the national stage. Let's not allow this unique opportunity to slip away. We urge you to look carefully at this proposal and give it your full support at the formal BID vote in February 2018.

Ian Follington
Director of Business Doctors Shropshire
Chair of Oswestry BID Ltd

Oswestry BID Working Group Members

A volunteer Working Group was established for the development of this BID which acts as the body which has 'proposed' the BID for the purposes of the BID Statutory Provisions. A totally separate and independent company has been set up (Oswestry BID Limited), limited by guarantee and which will be responsible for the implementation of the BID Business Plan. The membership of the Board of the company will be open to all businesses in the BID making a financial contribution via the levy or voluntarily.

The members of the Oswestry BID Working Group are as follows:

Name	Business
Ian Follington (Chair)	Business Doctors
Heather Noble (Vice Chair)	Salt Solutions
Kelly Mansell	ABC HR
Tom Jones	Liar Liar Café
Ruth Hart	Marks & Spencer's
Sebastian Siddi	Wynnstay Hotel
John Waine	Independent
Stuart Phillips	Celt Rowlands
Rebecca Jones	DRE Accountants
Allister Moutrie	Sainsbury's
Gill Jones	The New Saints FC
Jo White	North Shropshire College
Adam Shilcock	Boots

2. Executive Summary

How BIDs work

Business Improvement Districts (BIDs) are created by businesses and organisations which come together to collaborate on initiatives that improve the location where they trade or do business. BIDs are driven by participating businesses - who work together to draw up a business plan which is voted on and, if agreed, is then funded through a levy based on business ratable values, as well as trying to lever in additional funding where possible for investment into the delivery of projects for the benefit of businesses.

This levy is collected by the relevant Council and paid directly to the BID company. This is a not for profit company which has been set up by business representatives and will be accountable to the businesses in the BID Area to manage the delivery of the BID Business Plan.

The benefits of the Oswestry Business Improvement District

After a deep recession and now the economic turbulence of Brexit, the need for businesses to work together for a better future has never been greater.

The benefits of a BID do not just come from the ability to deliver projects and services from a guaranteed budget but come from the collective influence of the businesses in the BID Area. It can positively influence perceptions about a place for potential visitors to the area and potential new business investors and of the residents, that they can have pride in where they live.

The influence of the collective voice of businesses working together also translates into productive relationships and outcomes when working with stakeholders, such as the Local Authorities, the Local Economic Partnership and other organisations including the Police, to meet the Oswestry business community's needs.

Oswestry is Shropshire's second largest town, it has a rich cultural heritage and is surrounded by beautiful countryside. It has seen the development of many strong entrepreneurial, independent and family run businesses over the years, operating in a variety of business sectors with national and international reputations. However, in many respects the town has become isolated with challenging infra-structure links and struggles to retain young skilled people or attract new skilled people to live and work in the area.

Oswestry has many opportunities to further develop its attractiveness as a tourist destination and as a touring centre, in particular. There is also great potential to build upon the reputation of many of its successful businesses at a regional, national and international level to drive further trade and encourage expansion and new investment.

This BID Business Plan has been developed to ensure that it:

- Is balanced to cover all business sectors
- Clearly defines the role of the BID
- Seeks to create and take advantage of new opportunities
- Has focused activity but remains relevant for the next five years
- Has deliverable and achievable objectives

It clearly lays out a business-led programme of investment to tackle issues identified by the business community with the aim of creating a positive, more profitable and growing trading environment to benefit all business sectors in the BID Areas. To achieve this, the BID levy will be set at 1.75% of rateable value (RV) for business rate payers with an RV of £12,000 or more, with charges rising in line with inflation each year.

In addition to receiving the broad benefits that BID offers your business in terms of driving local business investment and growth, you will have exclusive access to collective business cost saving and security initiatives, the opportunity to participate in seminars and workshops offering business support, guidance and advice and invitations to regular BID networking events to facilitate greater local business community collaboration.

You will also gain direct access to participate in promotional initiatives and have the opportunity to link into social and digital media activities and much more.

As a business who pays into the BID this is an investment. The aim of the BID is to deliver as much value back in benefits, if not more, than the money you pay in.

The BID Area

The Oswestry BID Area has been selected to cover the commercial core of the town centre together with the surrounding commercial areas which extend down to the industrial area of Maesbury Industrial Estate and covers areas to the east of the A5 including those scheduled for development. The aim of the BID Area is to bring the Oswestry business community together to act with one voice with an open policy to encourage dialogue and involvement from other businesses and organisations which may not be in the area but have a direct stake in Oswestry.

The Vision

The vision for this business-led programme of development, growth and investment for Oswestry is:

- **To be recognised regionally & nationally as a great place to live, work, shop, relax and be entertained.**
- **To be a high performing centre for business growth and a national destination of choice for business investment.**

Strategic Objectives and Projects

The BID Business Plan will be delivered through the four strategic objectives and their related projects.

Objective A: Raising Profile

- To effectively develop and promote the strengths and characteristics of Oswestry to prospective visitors and business investors

Objective B: Business Support & Investment

- To actively support the growth and development of existing local businesses
- To attract and support start-ups, young businesses and new investment which complements and builds upon Oswestry's existing strengths

Objective C: A Great Place To Be

- To build upon Oswestry's multi-faceted heritage and cultural assets to further develop a welcoming, vibrant & enriching environment where visitors, workers & residents want to be

Objective D: Accessible & Safe Environment

- To facilitate safe, functional and efficient access and navigation for visitors, workers, residents and businesses

Costs and funding

The budgeted income over the five-year period of the BID is approximately £1.5 million. The yearly income will be made up of some £270,000 from the levy revenues and a sum averaging around £25,000 from voluntary, private and public-sector contributions. Opportunities to attract external investment and in-kind contributions equal to the BID funding over the 5-year period will be identified and energetically pursued to leverage off the BID budget.

3. What is a Business Improvement District?

A Business Improvement District (BID) is a defined geographical area within which the businesses have voted to invest collectively in local improvements to enhance their trading environment.

BIDs were enabled by Parliament through the Business Improvement Districts (England) Regulations 2004. This legislation was based on the experience of some twenty years of successful BID activity in America and Canada. Since 2004, over 280 BIDs have been proposed and approved by business communities in England and Wales. These include large cities such as Nottingham, Leeds, Birmingham and Manchester besides smaller towns such as Shrewsbury and Chester.

There are a more than 90 BID areas which have been operating for more than five years and have gone through a renewal ballot and more than 30 have now entered their third term having gone through a third ballot. In most cases BIDs going on to a second term have received an even greater endorsement in the vote than they did the first time. The number second and third BID terms demonstrate that BIDs have brought significant improvements to the trading environment of the businesses based in these locations. Further details are available on the Association of Town and City Management web site: www.atcm.org.

The lifetime of the BID is prescribed by the Regulations and is set at no more than 5 years. It is possible for a BID to be extended by proposing a new Business Plan at the end of the BID lifetime for a fresh formal vote by the businesses.

The purposes of a BID are to provide new or expanded works and services or environmental enhancements within the prescribed BID Area, funded via a BID Levy charge. All services/improvements will be additional to those already provided by Oswestry Town Council and Shropshire Council. This charge is payable by non-domestic rate payers and is collected by the Shropshire Council in much the same way as business rates. The manner in which the BID Levy charge is calculated is defined in Section 12.

All works and services will be contracted by Oswestry BID Limited, the BID body for the BID Area. The objectives and aspirations of Oswestry BID are set out in this BID Proposal and Business Plan. This BID Proposal and Business Plan has been prepared in line with best practice and guidelines of the 'Industry Criteria and Guidance Notes' prepared the British Retail Consortium (BRC) and the ATCM. A set of definitions for terms used throughout this document is contained in Appendix 1.

The Ballot

In order for the proposals set out in this Business Plan to go ahead, more than 50 per cent of eligible business ratepayers, i.e. subject to the proposed BID Levy, who vote have to vote 'yes'. Those in favour also have to represent more than 50 per cent of the combined 'rateable values' of those who vote. If these two criteria are met, the Business Plan is activated and all businesses in the defined BID Area,

and subject to the BID Levy, will be required to pay.

The businesses entitled to vote, and liable for the BID Levy, are ratepayers of non-domestic premises in the BID Area. Properties with a rateable value of less than £12,000 will not be subject to a BID levy and therefore not have a vote. However, all businesses below this threshold and those outside the BID Area, will be welcomed and encouraged to become involved in Oswestry BID and benefit from its activities through a voluntary membership scheme on a similar contribution basis.

The Ballot Holder for the Business Improvement District vote is the Shropshire Council whose Returning Officer will be the Corporate Head of Legal and Democratic Services Claire Porter. Details of voting procedures and how you can confirm persons entitled to vote can be found by contacting Shropshire Council, by telephone 01743 252330 or email: elections@shropshire.gov.uk.

Alteration of arrangements

The BID, its boundary and business plan vision and objectives cannot be altered without an alteration ballot. The BID Levy cannot be altered outside the parameters set within the levy criteria in Section 12 without an alteration ballot, although the Oswestry BID Limited Board can adjust projects and spend as they feel appropriate, across time and between and within Objectives, provided the basic tenets and overall budget are not compromised.

The BID Levy

A BID Levy of 1.75% of the rateable value (RV) is proposed for businesses with an RV of £12,000 or more and which fall within the levy criteria laid down in Section 12. This levy arrangement will generate around £1.5 million of ring fenced funding over the five year life of the BID and will also be used to attract additional funds from voluntary, private and public-sector contributions where possible adding a further £125,000 over the life of the BID. This will be used to fund the projects identified in this Business Plan. Opportunities to attract external investment and in-kind contributions equal to the BID funding over the 5-year period will be identified and energetically pursued to leverage off the BID budget.

Start Date of BID Arrangements

Subject to a successful vote in February 2018, Oswestry BID will start on 1st April 2018.

Duration

The proposed Oswestry BID Business Plan is for five years and to commence, on the 1st April 2018. In 2023, it can be extended or renewed – but only after being subject to a successful new ballot.

Timescales

Action Point	Action	Day and Date	
1	Notice by BID Proposer to Billing Authority & Secretary of State of intention to hold ballot (at least 84 days before Ballot Holder requested to hold ballot Action Point 4)	Fri	15 September 2017
2	BID Proposer requests Billing Authority to instruct Ballot Holder to hold a Ballot (BID proposals need to be completed)	Target Date:	
		Thu	21 December 2017
		Latest Date:	
Thu	11 January 2018		
3	BID Proposer mail out copies of the BID Prospectus to potential levy payers	Wed	03 January 2018
4	Billing Authority formally requests Ballot Holder to hold ballot and send Initial Register of Businesses compiled by Billing Authority to Ballot Holder	Target Date:	
		Tues	02 January 2018
		Latest Date:	
Thu	11 January 2018		
5	Ballot Holder issues Letter to Business Ratepayers to give information about the ballot and identify named person to receive ballot paper (latest date is 42 days before Ballot Day)	Target Date:	
		Thu	04 January 2018
		Latest Date:	
Thu	11 January 2018		
6	Ballot Holder publishes Notice of Ballot (latest date = 42 days before ballot day) also to send copy to Secretary of State , a copy of the published notice of ballot, as per Schedule 2 3(d) of the 2004 Business Improvement Districts (England) Regulations	Target Date:	
		Thu	04 January 2018
		Latest Date:	
Thu	11 January 2018		
7	Ballot Holder Issues ballot papers (at least 28 days before Ballot Day)	Thu	25 January 2018
8	Last day to appoint a proxy (tenth day before Ballot Day)	Mon	12 February 2018
9	Replacement of lost and spoilt ballot papers (from the fourth working day before the Ballot Day)	Fri	16 February 2018
10	Ballot Day (up to 5pm)	Thu	22 February 2018
11	Count and announcement of result	Fri	23 February 2018

4. Oswestry BID - Working together will make a difference

Having emerged from the deep recession from 2008 to 2013, the national economy is facing turbulent times and many challenges lie ahead over-shadowed by the uncertainty that Brexit introduces. Besides the challenges of the economy, lifestyles are changing and influencing the way in which we use our time and spend our money. Technology continues to influence and change the way we live, work, use our town centres and operate our businesses.

By 2018, over half the national population in at least 500 towns and cities across the country, will be frequent e-commerce users. Retail parks and shopping centres are now starting to realise how important leisure is as part of their tenant mix which means that retail parks cannot rely on retail alone to attract and retain visitor numbers, especially if access and exit become challenging at peak periods such as Christmas.

As already noted, with Brexit there is considerable uncertainty for businesses with the immediate fluctuations in exchange rates and the prospect of tariff barriers or new regulations to comply with. The world economy is changing and opening up new opportunities and an aging population and potentially more restricted movement of labour, means that recruiting and retaining the right people is likely to become more challenging.

Oswestry is the second largest town in Shropshire by population, with 17,400 people (Mid-Year Population Estimates, ONS, 2015), and covers 882 hectares. The town is the second largest employment centre in Shropshire, behind the county town of Shrewsbury, providing employment opportunities for residents of the town as well the wider Shropshire population and beyond. Oswestry is a traditional borderland market town and continues to host a vibrant livestock market as well as regular outdoor markets.

The three largest employment sectors in Oswestry are retail, education and manufacturing. Together these account for 41.7% of employment within the town, with retail accounting for 19.1%, education for 12.4% and manufacturing for 10.3%. Other sectors accounting for at least 5% of employment include accommodation and food services, health, wholesale, arts, entertainment and recreation, transport and storage, business administration and professional, scientific and technical.

The number of jobs in Oswestry has fallen by 400 since 2010, which constitutes a decline of 6.1% and represents an annual average loss of 80 jobs. In comparison, the number of jobs in Shropshire rose by 2.9% over the same period.

Oswestry is located adjacent to the A483, the main north/south route to Wales for tourists and also the A5, a major traffic link to Ireland, Liverpool and Manchester. As such it is well placed geographically and has a strong tradition as a Welsh border town providing a route to market and support centre to Mid-Wales.

Shropshire Council recognises this problem and is committed to the delivery of a strategic employment site to support the economic growth of Oswestry. The identified site, the Oswestry Innovation Park, comprises some 22.7 hectares with the potential to deliver up to 6,000 jobs at a total cost of more than £3.5 million. The proposed scheme itself could deliver 2,389 jobs and an additional 20 in construction. It is part of the planned Oswestry Sustainable Urban Extension of 750 new homes and will help to support growth there. The need for employment land in Oswestry is now pressing and this scheme will help to support the development of the town and the economic development of the wider area, helping to ensure the retention of local firms, enable business expansion, and support the attraction of new businesses to the area.

The three key objectives in the newly launched Economic Growth Strategy for Shropshire are to: support and grow new and existing businesses, attract inward investment and develop and retain talent and skills. Oswestry is well placed to benefit from this strategy and with a greater focus on the market towns and the A5 west growth corridor.

Oswestry Town Council's 2020 Town Plan noted that the town benefited from a diverse and growing cultural scene based around events, festivals and the arts and a countryside setting, surrounded by easily accessible attractions with opportunities for walking, cycling and outdoor activities. However, it also noted the town's low profile as a business and tourism destination and lack of coordinated marketing and promotion and a threat was identified from increasing competition/attraction of other destinations actively pursuing and implementing regeneration strategies. The 2020 Town Plan identified a number of key issues including the: need to raise the profile of Oswestry based on its existing strengths and assets in heritage, environment and culture; development of the local economy, the promotion of Oswestry as a business location and the creation of local job opportunities and promotion of Oswestry as a tourism destination and development of the town's tourism offer focusing on its key assets.

A recent study commissioned by Shropshire Council in partnership with Whitchurch and Oswestry Town Councils, concluded that the identity of the North Shropshire and Oswestry (NSO) area, with a more fragmented offer, was its biggest challenge along with its lower profile. It also concluded that the key priority must be to increase visitor activity, length of stay (both as more nights, but initially more practically by lengthening the hours of day visit through raising local awareness of what else there is to do around the destinations, as well as by creating appealing early evening destinations, places to eat, things to continue to see) and increasing spend into the area. The study further concluded that many practical opportunities simply require greater partnership, coordination, knowledge of the product and collaboration to make more of existing businesses and visitors, by linking places, providers and products.

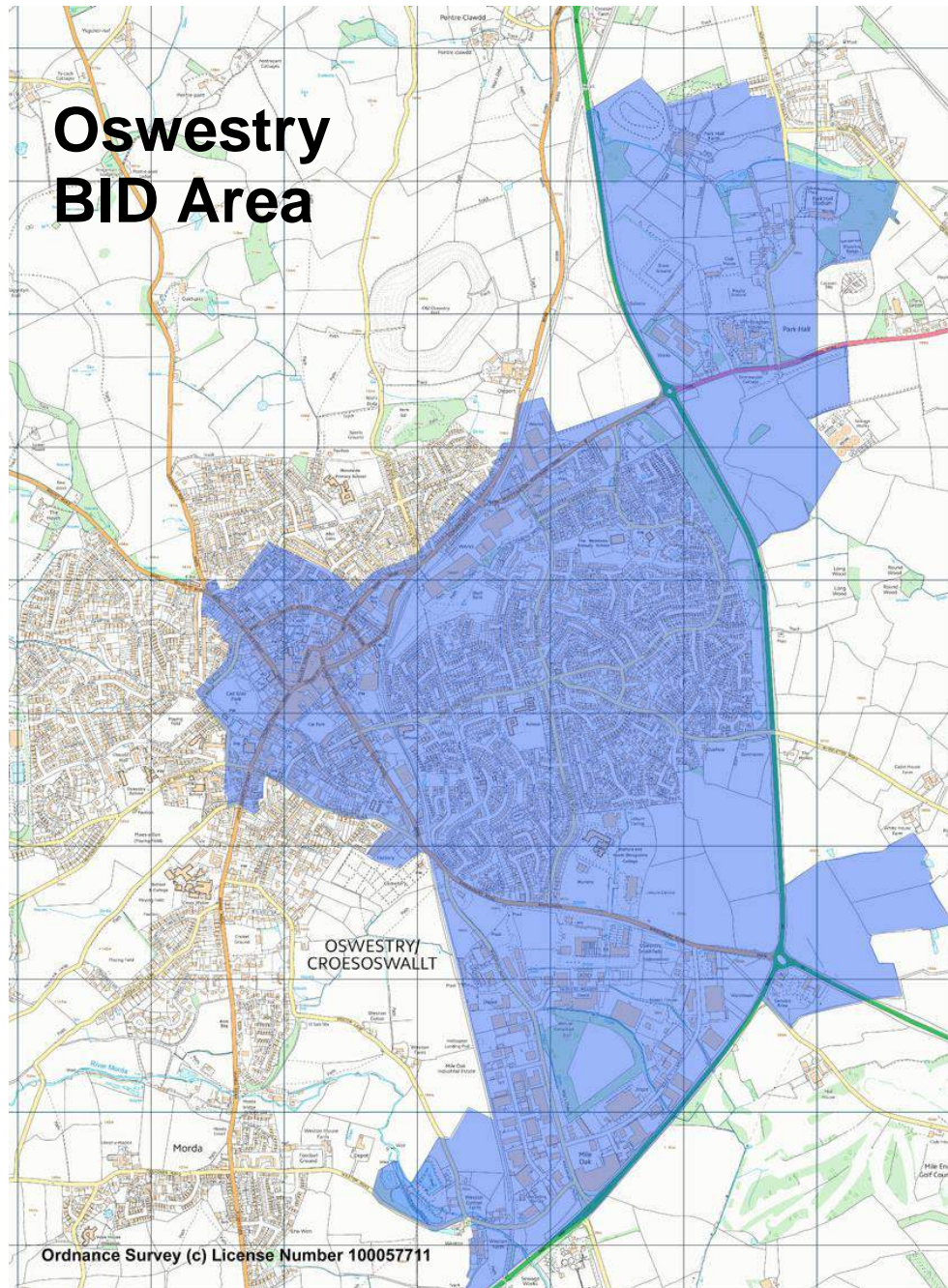
A recent public realm strategy, jointly commissioned by Oswestry Town Council and Shropshire Council, identified opportunities to create an enhanced identity to the town's public realm and to set out a comprehensive range of locally distinctive improvement projects to inspire local partners and the community. This study identified specific opportunities to advance the town's unique identity and highlight its proud heritage.

The extensive surveys, interviews and surveys identified a clear desire expressed by businesses from across Oswestry to work more closely together to raise the town's profile and improve the appeal to visitors, skilled people and business investors. This collective and focused approach would serve to improve the operating environment and allow existing businesses to flourish and grow and attract new business investment.

Oswestry is within relatively easy reach of large audiences and business markets but does not currently fully tap into the great potential of its own assets by working together as a cohesive business community and promoting their collective strength.

Taking onboard all of the above, this Business Plan has identified opportunities and taken account of the needs and challenges faced by all business sectors across the BID Area. By working together through a Business Improvement District there is huge potential to **make Oswestry a great place to visit, live, work and grow a business.**

5. What is the BID Area?



The Oswestry BID Area has been selected to link the main business areas and incorporate areas targeted for development. It covers the main commercial area of the town and extends to the north including businesses along Gobowen Rd at the junction of Whittington Rd. The boundary then runs eastwards along Whittington Rd to the A5 and then northwards to just north of Park Hall Farm. At this point the boundary runs eastwards and then south to include the showground, football ground and Whittington Business Park.

The boundary then continues south crossing the Whittington Rd, before moving back to the A5,

following the A5 down to the junction with the A483. At this point the boundary moves south west along the A483 to a point just past the junction with Maesbury Rd to include businesses in the south west along part of Weston Rd. At this point the boundary then runs north along the railway track to the west of Maesbury Rd before joining Victoria Rd and then running around the west side of the town.

A full list of streets within the BID Area is shown in Appendix 2. All non-domestic hereditaments within the BID Area will, if the BID is approved, be liable for the BID Levy (as defined in section 12). The BID Levy applies to Non-domestic hereditaments whose rateable value is £12,000 or greater. Thus banks, building societies, car parks, Council facilities, restaurants, clubs and pubs, estate agents, leisure operators, recruitment agents, retail and health and beauty outlets, office based businesses and organisations, and transport and travel agents and all other non-domestic hereditaments within the BID Area and will be subject to the detailed BID Levy as defined in Section 12.

The BID Area includes any smaller business areas located off these roads or streets that are located within the boundary of the BID Area defined by the shaded area illustrated on the map and any other road or street, even if they are not listed in Appendix 2 and will include any new road or street which is developed or created during the life of the BID which is within the BID Area.

6. Services provided by the Public Bodies

Shropshire and Oswestry Town Councils' Support for Oswestry BID

Shropshire Council and Oswestry Town Council have financially supported the Oswestry BID proposal and fully supports Oswestry BID and this support is gratefully acknowledged. In particular, they both endorse the fundamental principle of additionality within the BID by agreeing to maintain as far as possible the provision of existing services from the respective Councils to businesses at their current level (subject to budgetary constraints) across the Oswestry BID Area. In line with BID legislation, BID services within the Oswestry BID Area will be additional to (not in substitution for) those provided by both Councils. If there is a need for any change in service levels provided by either Council these will not be disproportionate to other parts of their administrative areas outside the BID Area.

Both Councils' commitment to Oswestry BID and the working relationships between the Councils and Oswestry BID Company will be set out in complementary documents agreed between each Council and Oswestry BID Limited.

- A Memorandum of Understanding and Operating Agreement for each Council which defines the working relationship between each Council and Oswestry BID Limited and sets out the Councils' Operational Support to the BID on a number of specific issues.
- A set of Baseline Statements, each defining the benchmark for a specific service provided by the Councils and other agencies to the businesses in the area.

Shropshire and Oswestry Town Councils' Vision for the BID

Beyond their clear commitments set out in each Memorandum of Understanding, each Council welcomes the opportunity offered by the BID to develop a strong and more dynamic partnership between the Councils themselves and Oswestry's business community. Both Councils intend that this forward-looking evolution of their relationships with the Oswestry business community should take shape along the following lines during the five-year BID period:

- Establishing a regular and constructive dialogue with Oswestry's business community on issues that can promote local economic growth and investment.
- Exploring more effective means of delivering Council services to the Oswestry business community. This will include more cohesive ways of tailoring and delivering specific services to the Oswestry BID Area.

Shropshire and Oswestry Town Councils' Services for Business

Businesses will continue to benefit from all the standard services provided by each Council for the benefit of all stakeholders in the town (cleaning, access, safety, maintenance and public amenities). In addition, each Council delivers a range of services either directly or indirectly specifically for businesses, these include:

Shropshire Council Services

- Business Support and Advice
- Business Engagement and Relationships
- Signposting to Financial Support and Business Services (the Growth Hub)

- Inward Investment
- Economic and business intelligence
- Planning Services
- Project Delivery and
- Strategic Planning

Oswestry Town Council

- Market Support

Details of these services can be found on each of the respective Councils' web sites. The information on these pages gives support and advice to new and existing businesses. There are also links to organisations that can help with a range of business issues.

Individual Baseline Statements

In full support of the above commitments, Shropshire and Oswestry Town Councils' and the Police will draw up Baseline Statements on the specific services they are responsible for. These documents define the benchmarks for the provision of these services and the fact that any change will not disproportionately impact upon the BID Area more than any other area within the bodies' administrative boundaries. They also cover how the services will be measured.

The Baseline Services for Shropshire Council are defined below:

- ASB & Statutory Nuisance & Environmental Crime
- Business Growth & Investment
- Growth Programme and Strategy
- Community Safety
- Culture & Heritage
- Environmental Health
- Grounds Maintenance and Arboricultural Services
- Health and Safety Public Protection - inc Pollution Control
- Highways Maintenance - Bridges and other structures
- Highways Maintenance - Lighting Maintenance
- Highways Maintenance - Signage
- Licensing – this potentially includes licenses for food businesses etc
- Parking Management
- Planning Services
- Public Transport
- Regeneration (Corporate Projects)
- Street Cleansing and Waste Service
- Street Lighting
- Street Management
- Winter Gritting

The Baseline Services for Oswestry Town Council are defined below:

- Christmas Lights
- Street Lighting
- Grounds Maintenance and Arboricultural Services
- Event Management, Arts Programme

- Oswestry Visitor and Exhibition Centre
- Parking
- Markets and Space Hire
- Highway and Visitor Information and Signs (some services are provided by the Shropshire Council)

The West Mercia Police will also draw up a Baseline Statement.

The process of having the baseline statements proves valuable to both the service providers and the BID. The development of these partnerships and the additional focus on the services provided in the area, will give tangible benefits over and above those derived from the projects outlined below.

Shropshire Council's Operational Support for Oswestry BID

The Council's support for the BID will take practical shape in the following specific ways:

- Conducting, through the Council's Democratic Services, the formal BID vote in accordance with current BID legislation and procedures
- Assuming a positive outcome to the BID vote, collecting the BID Levy defined in the BID Business Plan from Oswestry businesses and transferring the levy sums direct to Oswestry BID Limited. The Council proposes to make a charge for the BID Levy collection and will pay the gross levy sums to Oswestry BID Limited within 30 days of collecting it.
- Provide a senior Council officer to provide a business-focused dynamic link on BID matters with senior Council staff
- Paying the appropriate BID Levy set out in the Business Plan in respect of all its own hereditaments within the BID Area.

Oswestry Town Council's Operational Support for Oswestry BID

The Council's support for the BID will take practical shape in the following specific ways:

- Provide a senior Council officer to provide a business-focused dynamic link on BID matters with senior Council staff
- Paying the appropriate BID Levy set out in the Business Plan in respect of all its own hereditaments within the BID Area.

Monitoring and Review

- Both the Shropshire Council and the Oswestry Town Council are committed to the regular monitoring of the operation of the BID Operating Agreement and reviewing its effectiveness in conjunction with Oswestry BID Limited. This will be led by the senior officer from each Council who sit on the Oswestry BID Board as advisers and will reflect the commitments of both Councils to address any shortfalls and propose measures to evolve the respective partnerships to the mutual benefit of each Council and the Oswestry BID. These reviews will be scheduled to best effect for the Council's and Oswestry BID Limited's yearly budgeting cycles.
- There will be annual reviews of each of the specific services for which a Baseline Statement is shown above. This will be led by the respective public bodies that will discuss with the Oswestry BID how the service commitments have been actually delivered during the period, and if necessary update the service levels to reflect the services each will be provided in the following year.

7. The Research and Consultation Process

Background

The last year has seen extensive research and consultation undertaken with a wide range of stakeholders to ensure that the plan which has emerged has an in depth understanding of the views and aspirations of the businesses in the area as well as an appreciation of the perceptions of those who visit and also work in the area.

The research and consultation encouraged participation from all businesses across Oswestry:

- A launch and information event at the start of the project.
- All businesses of above £6,000 rateable value in the proposed BID Area were mailed survey forms and asked to complete them seeking their opinions on a variety of issues.
- All businesses of above £6,000 rateable value in the proposed BID Area were included in mailings of publicity including BID newsletters and frequently asked questions and e-bulletins where e-mail addresses were available.
- There were 574 total personal visits and 227 unique visits to businesses to discuss the BID.
- A total of 161 businesses participated in detailed one-to-one interviews and completed detailed four page surveys.
- 33% of all businesses paying the levy participated in detailed one-to-one interviews and completed detailed four page surveys.
- A series of eight Vision and Objective Setting workshops were held, where all businesses were invited to discuss their challenges, opportunities and their vision for the future of Oswestry.
- A series of four Budget Setting workshops were held, where businesses were invited to allocate funds to projects emerging from the research and consultation process.
- Press releases in the local newspaper promoting all the events and workshops and providing feedback opportunities for businesses to contact the BID development team. Active participation and decision making by the business representatives from the Oswestry BID Working Group in all aspects of the development of this plan.

As noted in section 4, the research and consultation also referenced a range of relevant studies in developing this BID Proposal and Business Plan. The studies referenced included the following:

- Oswestry 2020 – Town Plan, Oswestry Town Council
- Economic Growth Strategy for Shropshire 2017-2021, Shropshire Council
- Strategic Economic Plan 2014, The Marches Local Economic Partnership
- Oswestry / Public Realm Strategy 2017, Oswestry Town Council and Shropshire Council
- North Shropshire and Oswestry Visitor Economy Strategy and Action Plans 2012-2017, Shropshire Council in partnership with Whitchurch and Oswestry Town Councils
- Oswestry Market Town Profile 2017, Shropshire Council

What were the aims of the research and consultation?

The objective of the research and consultation was to:

- Identify the key issues which impact upon all businesses in the area, across all business sectors, and to develop solutions to address these and which will help businesses achieve their own internal objective.
- Identify any specific issues and opportunities by area to ensure that impacts on businesses of the different environments were fully appreciated.

The survey form was comprehensive and probing, asking open questions as well as providing quantitative assessment through multiple choice answers and rating of opportunities and challenges.

Research Results

Surveys and interviews were carried out across a range of businesses from all sectors and all parts of Oswestry.

Figure 1 – Business types surveyed within town centre

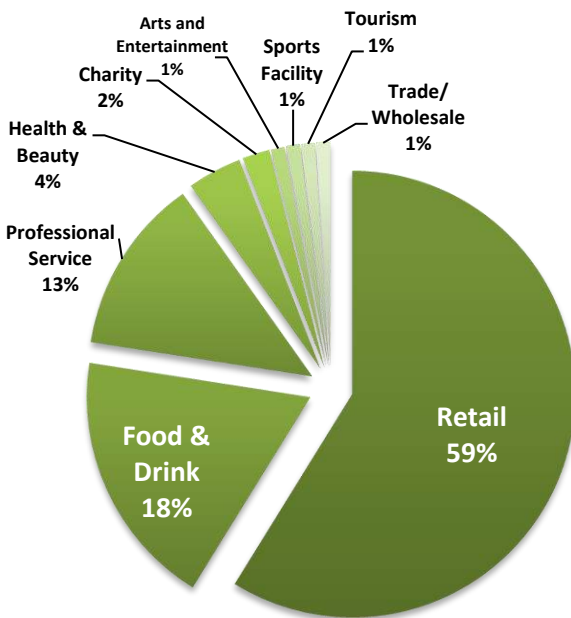
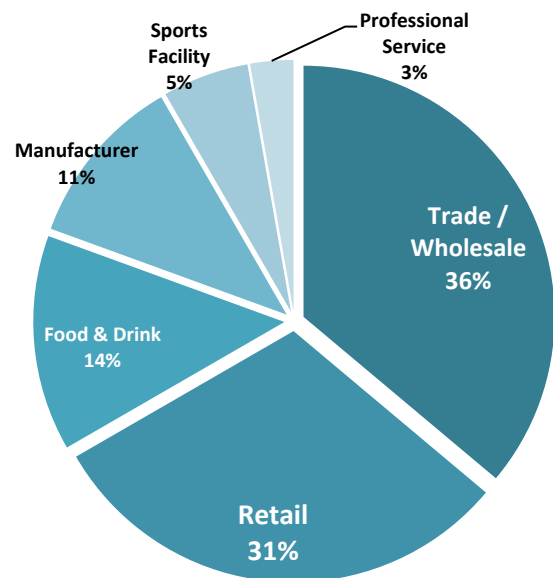


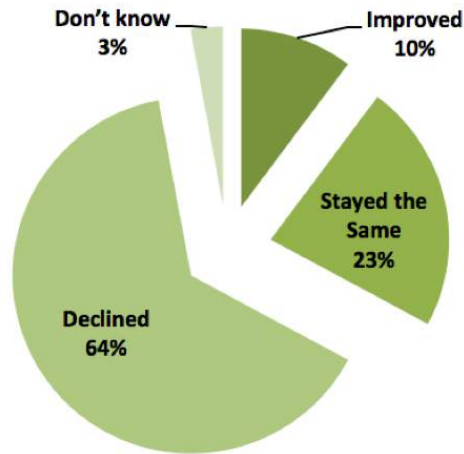
Figure 2 – Business types surveyed outside town centre



Is business good in Oswestry?

The view about whether or not Oswestry has been a good place to do business over the last five years was consistent across the BID Area in that 64% of businesses said that Oswestry town centre had declined over the last five years.

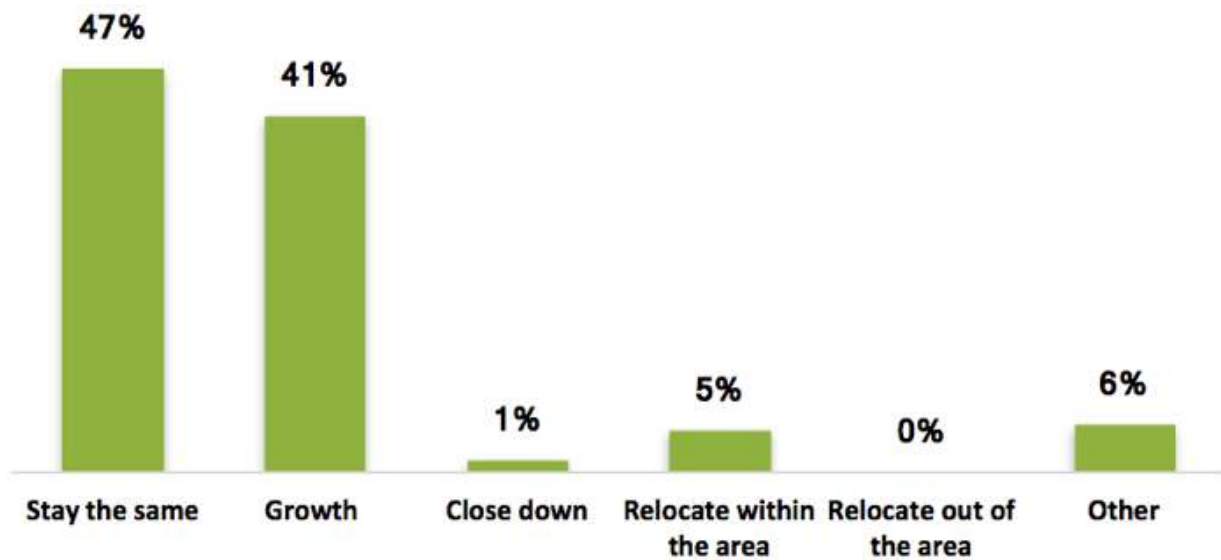
Figure 3 – Views of businesses: Town centre over the last five years



Business confidence in Oswestry

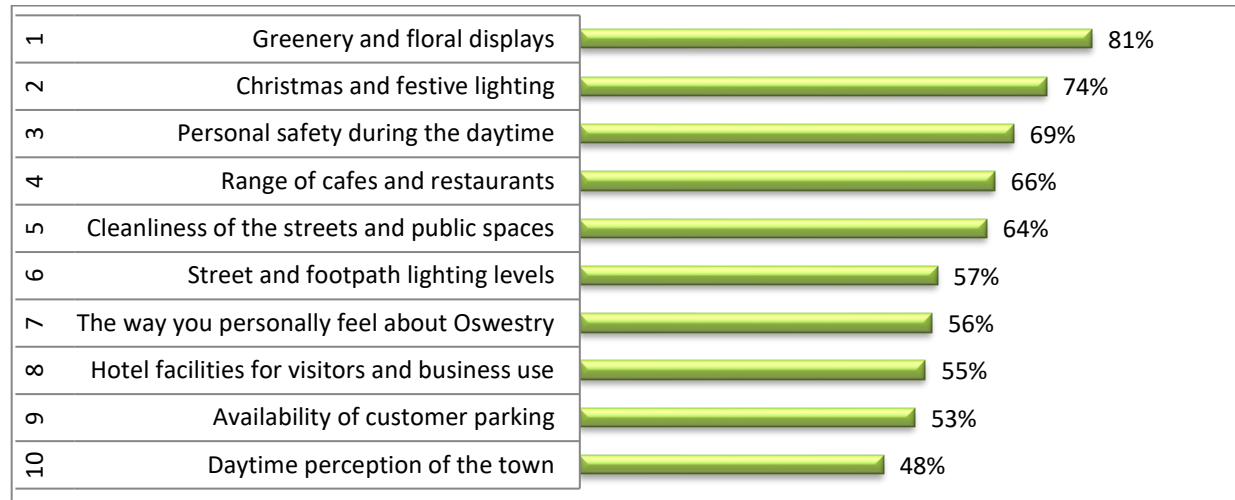
When asked how they expect their business to change in the next one to five years, 87% said that they would at least stay the same or grow, with 5% saying they would relocate and 5% expecting a decline in business. Although 41% are anticipating growth only 30% are expecting to take on any extra staff to accommodate this growth.

Figure 4 – Views of businesses surveyed on expected business change over next five years



Recognising the good aspects of Oswestry

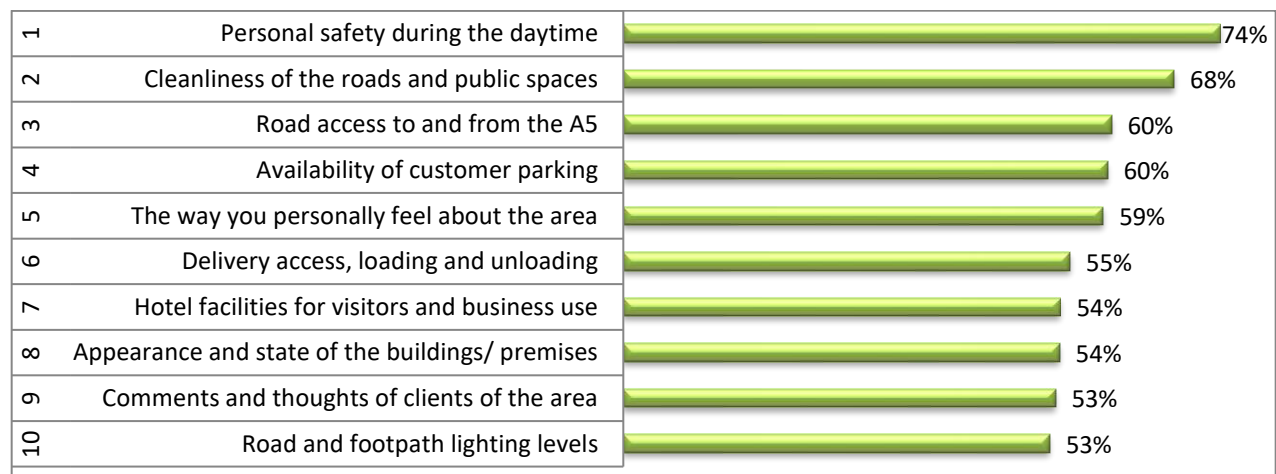
Figure 5 – How businesses rate different aspects of the town centre – top 10 good and very good



When assessing the different aspects of the town and the surrounding area it is important to note that businesses recognised that Oswestry has many assets which they consider good or very good. Many of the aspects featuring in the top ten cover the way the town looks and is cared for and the way people feel about the town centre and the surrounding area.

This is a great starting point for any place but this ranking cannot be taken in isolation. When considering the other analysis there are some things which are considered 'good', such as the range of cafes and restaurants, but then related aspects of the town, such as 'developing the evening and night time economy' rank highly as an initiative for the BID to tackle.

Figure 6 – How businesses rate different aspects outside the town centre – top 10 good and very good



The desire to work together and all be part of Oswestry

Businesses from across the area considered that the way businesses worked together was important for them. In fact, this was particularly important for businesses outside the town centre where they ranked 'the way businesses work together' as the most important issue illustrating that this aspect of the BID would be of real value and benefit to them.

Businesses outside the town centre also considered that interest shown to them by both the Town Council and the Shropshire Council and feeling part of Oswestry and its activity were important to them, featuring in the top ten most important aspects of working in the area.

When assessing the top initiatives which businesses from across Oswestry considered important, it was clear that there were many shared challenges and indeed shared aims for the future. In fact, seventeen of the top twenty measures that businesses thought would help them were common to businesses located both inside and outside the town centre. The four top initiatives which were shared as being key for businesses from across the BID Area were:

- 'Developing area's identity and branding to attract more visitors',
- 'Marketing to target and attract new businesses/investors',
- 'Developing the evening and night time economy in the town' and
- 'Improving the appearance of derelict, vacant or old buildings and sites'.

The profile of Oswestry as a whole

'Developing area's identity and branding to attract more visitors' was considered to be the second most important initiative for businesses within the town centre ranked by 76% of businesses as being a key activity which would benefit them. Businesses outside the town centre also saw this as a key initiative, with 50% of businesses saying it would be of benefit. This reflects the feedback from businesses in workshops which highlighted the issues of attracting skilled people both to live and to work in the area.

'Marketing to target and attract new businesses/investors' was ranked as the third most important initiative by businesses across the whole of Oswestry reflecting the fact that the retail and leisure offer in the town could be improved. Issues such as the 'night time perception of the town' and 'things to do in the evening and night time' were deemed by businesses as being both important and in need of improvement.

Business support and investment

'Providing a strong collective voice to influence key strategic issues' was identified as key initiative shared by businesses across the BID Area. Through working together, the BID has the potential to create a collective business voice which has influence on decisions which directly impact the ability of businesses in Oswestry to remain competitive. Collaboration and improving links between local businesses can also directly lead to more trade. Local networking and initiatives to encourage more local trading were ranked in the top ten initiatives by businesses from across the BID Area. Business-to-business marketing campaigns for professional services was also identified by more than a third of businesses outside the town centre as an important initiative.

Improving links to local educators was identified by more than two thirds of businesses across the whole area as being important to them. This reflects the difficulty many businesses face in

recruiting and retaining skilled workers. Businesses also identified the lack of incubator and grow-on space and attractive office environments as key issues which needed addressing. 59% of businesses outside the town centre ranked Oswestry as a poor place to set up an office based business. Businesses in Oswestry feel that it is important to have the support of Shropshire and Oswestry Councils to help attract skilled people into the area and enable them to operate effectively.

Two factors which were ranked by businesses across the BID Area as being the 'poorest' were the 'range of shops' and 'things to do in the evening and night time'. In fact 72% of businesses in the town centre ranked the range of shops as the 'poorest' and 68% of businesses outside the town centre ranked things to do in the evening as the 'poorest'. There is obviously a need to address this by attracting new business investment to the area, however this can only be done if there is a clear sense of direction and identity for the town so that businesses can see a potential return on investment from setting up here.

A Great Place To Be

'Improved appearance of derelict, vacant or old buildings and sites' came out as the top initiative for businesses within the town centre, 81% of town centre businesses ranking this as the most important issue to be addressed and the fifth most important issue for businesses outside the town centre. Oswestry is a relatively small place where derelict sites or vacant buildings can have a significant impact upon the surrounding environment.

Improving the over-all sense of activity and vibrancy in Oswestry through 'events and animation in the streets and open spaces in the town' was considered important by 54% of businesses in the town centre and more than a third of businesses outside the town centre felt that this was an important initiative and ranked in their top twenty. This ranked alongside 'the lack of things to do for visitors and local people', where 55% of businesses in the town centre and more than a third of businesses outside the town centre ranked this as requiring significant improvement.

Access and safety

Access came out in the workshops as the most important issue to be addressed. This covered many aspects including parking, traffic flow, signage and transport links. The importance of the different issues did vary slightly depending upon where businesses were located in the BID Area but there were common themes which emerged.

Improving the traffic flow around the BID Area was considered in the surveys, by 80% of businesses outside the town centre and more than half of the businesses within the town centre, as a key initiative which would benefit local businesses. Improved links to the Gobowen Railway Station were considered poor and important by half the businesses in the BID Area, highlighting the opportunities of improving these links.

Improved delivery access for loading and unloading was considered by more than half of the businesses across the BID Area as a top twenty initiative. In the workshops, businesses in the industrial area, identified that this was often caused by privately parked cars. It was in the town centre where the improved parking facilities for both visitors and staff were considered as top twenty initiatives by businesses.

An improved business crime prevention scheme was considered a top twenty initiative by half of

the businesses in the BID Area and an increased presence of police in the night time was also considered as a top twenty initiative although this was of more importance to the businesses in the town centre than businesses elsewhere. This was linked to further developing the current CCTV monitoring and coverage which was also a top twenty initiative.

A summary of the top twenty measures identified by the businesses surveyed ranked by popularity and separated out for town centre and non-town centre businesses is presented below.

Figure 7 – Top twenty measures in helping businesses

	Town Centre	No.	Non-Town Centre	No.
1	Improved appearance of derelict, vacant buildings	81%	Improve traffic flow around area	80%
2	Develop area's identify & branding	76%	Improved broadband coverage	62%
3	Marketing to attract new business investment	74%	Marketing to attract new business investment	58%
4	Develop evening & night time economy	65%	Develop evening & night time economy	56%
5	Use digital & social media to target customers	65%	Improved appearance of derelict, vacant buildings	51%
6	Improved parking for visitors/clients	60%	Extension of current CCTV coverage	51%
7	Develop mix of retail & leisure businesses	56%	Develop area's identify & branding	49%
8	Local networking & initiatives improve local trading	55%	Marketing campaign for retailers & venues	48%
9	Events & animation in the streets & open spaces	54%	Local networking & initiatives improve local trading	48%
10	More night time police support	54%	Improved delivery access, loading & unloading	48%
11	Extension of current CCTV coverage	54%	Develop mix of retail & leisure businesses	47%
12	Develop/improve/relocate market in town	53%	Improved business crime prevention scheme	47%
13	Improve traffic flow around area	53%	Develop/improve/relocate market in town	47%
14	Improved staff parking	52%	Single point of contact for issues, support	45%
15	Marketing campaign for retailers & venues	52%	Use digital & social media to target customers	41%
16	Provide strong collective voice	50%	Provide strong collective voice	39%
17	Improved broadband coverage	50%	B2B marketing campaign for professional services	38%
18	Improved delivery access, loading & unloading	48%	Events & animation in the streets & open spaces	38%
19	Improved business crime prevention scheme	48%	More night time police support	37%
20	Create WiFi hotspots or town centre WiFi	47%	Introduce specialist markets into the town	35%

 Common top 10 issues  Common top 20 issues

8. The BID's response

Following our extensive research and consultation over the past 18 months, four key project areas have emerged for Oswestry BID. These reflect the key issues and opportunities identified by the businesses. The activities within each of the project areas have been specifically designed to address and take advantage of these respectively.

Oswestry has rich and diverse business community made up of a mixture of elements including the following:

- Town centre with its heritage features, smaller shops, professional services and its markets
- More industrial areas with its wholesalers, specialist manufacturers, logistics operators, livestock market and trade counters
- Specialist business parks
- Smaller concentrations of retail supermarkets and destination stores
- Tourist, leisure and arts attractions with the showground, football stadium, leisure centre, galleries etc.
- Educational and training facilities

However, these currently sit as isolated, disjointed elements rather than as one celebrated and promoted entity. In order to prosper, Oswestry needs to offer a complete package to meet all the needs of today's consumer, whether a visitor, worker or resident, whether day or night.

The non-town centre businesses identified 'the way businesses work together' and 'feeling part of Oswestry and its activities' as important. Bringing all of the elements together to operate and be promoted as a single entity benefits all businesses by creating a much more attractive destination which appeals to visitors, workers, residents and businesses.

With a clear sense of purpose and vision to create a cohesive quality environment which offers a great place to be, Oswestry will attract additional investment and new businesses to enhance the offer even further.

The following activities have been identified as crucial to the future of business success in Oswestry:

- To celebrate and promote the diversity of the area and grow the reputation of Oswestry as a great place to live, work, shop, invest, relax and be entertained.
- To make the area smarter and more attractive and encourage a greater sense of pride in Oswestry.
- To create an more enjoyable and easily accessible place to explore for visitors, workers and residents.
- To encourage the growth, development and investment of businesses which complement and build on Oswestry's strengths.

How will the delivery be monitored?

Monitoring and measuring the performance and effectiveness of the BID activities is an integral and essential part of the plan. Businesses need to be confident that their levy money is being invested effectively to maximise the benefits.

The effectiveness of the measures undertaken will be gauged by tracking key performance indicators relevant for each business sector. These will include footfall, customer surveys, business surveys, photographic evidence, vacant property and footfall trends. These measures and key performance indicators are identified for each objective and will be monitored and reported to members and stakeholders on a regular basis throughout the life of the BID.

9. Vision and Objectives

The Vision

The vision for this business-led programme of development, growth and investment for Oswestry is:

- **To be recognised regionally & nationally as a great place to live, work, shop, relax and be entertained.**
- **To be a high performing centre for business growth and a national destination of choice for business investment.**

Strategic Objectives and Projects

The BID Business Plan will be delivered through the four strategic objectives and their related projects.

Objective A: Raising Profile

- **To effectively develop and promote the strengths and characteristics of Oswestry to prospective visitors and business investors**

Objective B: Business Support & Investment

- **To actively support the growth and development of existing local businesses**
- **To attract and support start-ups, young businesses and new investment which complements and builds upon Oswestry's existing strengths**

Objective C: A Great Place To Be

- **To build upon Oswestry's multi-faceted heritage and cultural assets to further develop a welcoming, vibrant & enriching environment where visitors, workers & residents want to be**

Objective D: Accessible & Safe Environment

- **To facilitate safe, functional and efficient access and navigation for visitors, workers, residents and businesses**

Objectives, Activities and Results

Objective A: Raising Profile

- To effectively develop and promote the strengths and characteristics of Oswestry to prospective visitors and business investors

Amount the BID will spend:

An initial budget of £60,000 p.a, increasing to £62,000 by year 5 – a total of £305,000 over five years.

Activities

- a. Work with all stakeholders to refine, develop and promote the identity of Oswestry to fully reflect its strengths and characteristics and add to the sense of pride of its businesses, workers and residents.
- b. Act as a collective voice and ensure that business community interests are effectively represented in line with the BID business plan's objectives.
- c. Explore opportunities to improve the immediate approach and entrance to the town with innovative artwork and signage to raise awareness and create a more positive first impression and welcome.
- d. Work closely with established stakeholder organisations to encourage and support collaboration and coordination of local events and festivals to maximise their impact through combined marketing activities.
- e. Further develop and elevate the use of digital and social media channels, marketing campaigns and public relations to inform and increase awareness of what Oswestry and its business community has to offer to visitors, workers, business owners and residents, in a way which is consistent with its identity and amplifies existing local initiatives.

Outcomes:

- Increased interaction with and support from stakeholders including local authorities.
- Increased number of active users of digital media promoting Oswestry and its business community.
- Increased numbers of people visiting Oswestry from the BID Area catchment and beyond.
- Footfall to the whole BID Area which is stronger than national trends
- Increased levels of sales activity; retail, wholesale, leisure and tourism, across the whole BID Area.
- Increased positive media exposure locally, regionally and nationally measured through numbers of articles, publications, click-throughs on digital media and value through using advertising value equivalent (a.v.e).
- Increased number of businesses actively engaged in BID activities and using their association with Oswestry BID in their own marketing and promotion.

Objective B: Business Support & Investment

- To actively support the growth and development of existing local businesses
- To attract and support start-ups, young businesses and new investment which complements and builds upon Oswestry's existing strengths

Amount the BID will spend:

An initial budget of £47,000 p.a, increasing to £49,000 by year 5 – a total of £241,000 over five years.

Activities

Business support

- a. Act as a collective voice to constructively represent business interests with stakeholders in all aspects of development, planning and implementation of any event or initiative which businesses consider will potentially have an impact upon their trading or operating environment.
- b. Develop effective communication platforms for businesses in the BID Area to promote awareness of inter-trading opportunities and synergies which may affect their trading and operating conditions including regular networking, seminar and workshop events in collaboration with stakeholders and relevant organisations.
- c. Work with businesses and organisations across all sectors to encourage stronger links with local education and training organisations to support staff recruitment, development and retention.
- d. Support greater inter-trading activities within the BID Area and assist the development of influential working relationships to achieve tangible improvements in business performance and drive future business development.
- e. Identify and develop cost saving initiatives working with businesses and organisations in the BID Area.
- f. Provide support and guidance for businesses in how best to combat cybercrime and manage data protection.
- g. Work with others to improve broadband access and regulate Wi-Fi hot spots to ensure that all businesses and the public have the option to access secure and effective digital communication.

Encourage investment to complement the Oswestry vision

- h. Actively seek match funding, grant opportunities and sponsorship to enhance the BID budget and increase the return on investment to Oswestry's business community.
- i. Work with Local Authorities, Marches LEP, partners, landlords and property agents to promote Oswestry as an attractive destination for inward investment for new and existing businesses in all business sectors which complement and build upon Oswestry's strengths.

- j. Work with stakeholders to increase innovation and develop, attract and retain commercial talent by developing business incubation facilities for start-ups and young businesses and developing grow-on space and attractive office space for developing and established businesses.
- k. Work closely with Local Authorities, Marches LEP, partners, landlords and property agents to support initiatives such the proposed Oswestry Innovation Park to represent the Oswestry business community's interests.

Monitoring the Results

- l. Work with other organisations to monitor footfall, commercial performance, parking statistics, customer perceptions and other key measures across the whole of the Oswestry BID Area and provide regular reports and performance updates for businesses.

Outcomes:

- Increased level of investment in existing and new businesses.
- Increased range of retail, tourism, leisure and evening economy offerings.
- Reduced levels of vacant and derelict properties across the BID Area.
- Increased number of new businesses established in the BID Area.
- Increased number of business enquiries through commercial property agents.
- Monitoring of footfall and sales performances across the Oswestry BID area with regular reports and feedback to businesses.
- Increased number of skilled people being recruited and also available for recruitment
- Skills audit to show an increase in over-all skill levels of people and numbers of skilled people being recruited in Oswestry through greater collaboration with education and training providers.
- Improved download and upload access speeds for broadband connections and reliability of service to businesses in the BID Area.

Objective C: A Great Place To Be

- To build upon Oswestry's multi-faceted heritage and cultural assets to further develop a welcoming, vibrant & enriching environment where visitors, workers & residents want to be

Amount the BID will spend:

An initial budget of £65,000 p.a, increasing to £68,000 by year 5 – a total of £330,000 over five years.

Activities

- a. Engage and work with stakeholders and organisations to develop, influence and organise events, markets, cultural and leisure activities to create an animated feel to Oswestry, in a way which benefits a wide range of businesses and builds the reputation of Oswestry as a great place to relax, enjoy and be entertained.
- b. Support the development and implementation of creative and imaginative initiatives which improve and protect the appearance of the streets, roads and green spaces.

- c. Improve the appearance and vibrancy of the streets and open spaces through the greater use of floral displays, public art and festive and creative lighting in a way which complements and promotes the rich heritage and cultural characteristics of Oswestry.
- d. Work with Local Authorities, landlords and agents to provide short term and interim solutions to improving the appearance and marketability of derelict sites and vacant properties across the area.
- e. Influence, support and encourage plans and proposals for new buildings, signage, building refurbishments and public realm developments which develop the strengths of each part of the BID Area and which further develop Oswestry's sense of identity.
- f. Encourage and support investment in and diversification of the night time and evening economy in the BID Area working with Local Authorities, landlords, agents and business owners.
- g. Work with Local Authorities, stakeholders and other organisations to develop better signage and links to surrounding attractions, heritage sites, parks, gardens, canals, rivers and wildlife sites for walkers and cyclists and promote the BID Area as a touring centre.

Outcomes:

- Improved perception of attractiveness of Oswestry measured through surveys of visitors and those who work and live across the BID Area.
- Monitoring of footfall and visitor behaviour across the Oswestry BID area with regular reports and feedback to businesses including numbers, demographic, reason for visit, length of stay etc.
- Footfall to the whole BID Area which is stronger than national trends
- Increased number and quality of locations across BID Area where events and street entertainment can be hosted, flourish and grow.
- Increased number of events and street entertainment and a greater perception of things happening measured through surveys of visitors.
- Reduced levels of vacant and derelict properties across the BID Area.
- Gaining Purple Flag accreditation to help promote a stronger night time and evening economy.
- Increased proportion of visitors staying for one night or more in Oswestry as part of their visit.

Objective 4: Accessible & Safe Environment

- To facilitate safe, functional and efficient access and navigation for visitors, workers, residents and businesses

Amount the BID will spend:

An initial budget of £53,000 p.a, increasing to £55,000 by year 5 – a total of £270,000 over five years.

Activities

- a. Work with others to improve vehicular and pedestrian traffic access and flow into, out of and around the BID Area through short and longer-term initiatives including improved junctions and signage.
- b. Work closely with the Local Authorities, businesses and other stakeholders to improve parking facilities across the BID Area by reducing traffic hazards and obstruction to businesses. Additionally, through influencing parking tariffs, methods of payment and availability in a way which is commercially sustainable, increases patronage and meets the needs of customers and businesses.
- c. Work with Local Authorities and businesses to improve access and parking for coach parties entering the BID Area in conjunction with providing access to improved toilet facilities matched to visitor's needs.
- d. Work closely with operators and authorities to influence and optimise the integration of transport links in respect of trains, buses, taxis, car parks and cycling which benefit businesses across the BID Area including improved links across the A5 corridor and to Gobowen railway station.
- e. Proactively tackle anti-social behaviour and crime issues which impact upon visitors, workers, businesses and residents in certain areas by working with partners and organisations across the whole BID Area, including voluntary organisations, Local Authorities and the Police.
- f. Work with businesses and other partners including the Police and Local Authorities to develop a diverse evening and night time leisure offering which appeals to people from all ages and backgrounds, in a safe, clean and attractive environment.

Outcomes:

- Increased numbers of cars using car parks and regulated street parking.
- Improved perception of the access and parking experience within the BID Area.
- Reduction in incidents of crime and anti-social behaviour.
- Improved perceptions of visitor, worker, business and resident safety and feeling of welcome.
- Improved perceptions of ease with which visitors, workers, and residents they can navigate and traverse the BID Area.
- Gaining Purple Flag accreditation.

10. Organisation, Resources and Delivery

The preparation of this plan has been managed by the Oswestry BID Working Group which is made up of a cross section of businesses and organisations from across Oswestry.

A company has been set up to act as the BID Company, Oswestry BID Limited. This is a not for profit company, limited by guarantee which will be legally and operationally responsible to the member businesses in the BID Area, for the delivery of the BID Business Plan and its associated activities and will act on their behalf.

There will be a Board responsible for the governance of the Oswestry BID Limited and for creating a management structure which will aim to encourage continuous business involvement in determining priorities and shaping and evolving activities within the terms of this BID Proposal and Business Plan. All businesses will be encouraged to be actively involved in the BID and associated working groups to represent the levy payers.

The Board will be elected by the members of the BID, drawn predominantly from those paying a levy in the area and made up of a representative cross-section of the businesses and stakeholders of the area and key agencies associated with the successful delivery of the BID project. It will be driven by the private sector and will include one senior officer from Shropshire Council and a senior officer from the Oswestry Town Council who will act as key operational links to council services, but not as Directors.

The main role of the Board is to safeguard the interests of levy payers by ensuring that the business operates in line with the BID Business Plan, maintains appropriate professional ethics and standards and offers consistent value for money in line with its targets. The Board will ensure that the implementation of the BID Business Plan is monitored and delivered cost-effectively, through keeping overheads to a minimum and using methods which will optimise the use of the revenue budget and add real value to the delivery of the plan.

The Board will provide a consistent, collective and effective voice for the Oswestry business community. All roles on the Board and specific working groups are voluntary and are undertaken with a commitment to represent the interests of all businesses in the area.

Collaborative working will be actively encouraged to build upon the sense of the business community in the area and ensure that the skills and resources available for delivery of the BID Business Plan are enhanced and deliver best value.

There will also be hands-on project and contract management to support the initiatives from the working groups. This support will provide administrative support to the Oswestry BID Limited, coordinate activity with partner organisations and ensure cost-effective delivery of projects through tendering and careful project and contract management.

The Oswestry BID Limited's financial accounts will be independently prepared and the effectiveness of the measures undertaken will be gauged by key performance indicators for each project area, including footfall, customer surveys, business surveys, photographic evidence and retail turnover movement full measures are identified in this plan with each objective.

Besides regular newsletters and other forms of bulletins, there will be an annual report providing details on activities and performance of the company against the objectives of the delivery plan for the previous year.

All levy payers shall be entitled to be members of the BID Company. There will be an annual general meeting at which all members are invited to attend and vote and at which Directors may be retired by rotation providing an opportunity for new Directors to be elected in accordance with the articles of the company. The Board will provide a consistent, collective and effective voice for the businesses in Oswestry.

11. Oswestry BID Budget and Finances

A turbulent economy, changing lifestyles, rapidly changing technology and increased options for supply chains, retail and leisure mean that the way in which we supply goods and services, and use our towns is changing dramatically and quickly. When the different elements of Oswestry are brought together it has the potential to outperform many other towns which do not have the combination of retail, wholesale, education, leisure, tourism, culture, heritage and entrepreneurial business which we take for granted.

A BID provides the opportunity for businesses to have a real influence on their local environment to ensure that collectively we can take advantage of the new opportunities these changes will bring.

In the next five years, we will strive to ensure that our collective voice and the relatively modest budget will make a real difference to the businesses in the BID Area and the lives of those who work in the BID Area. We will strive to lever in additional cash funding, value in kind and work hard to try to match fund to support the delivery of this plan and add to the investment made by Oswestry businesses through the BID.

We feel that the investment we are seeking from businesses in the BID is modest in relation to what can be achieved. With the proposed 1.75 % BID Levy on business rates, the indicative costs to a business for each of the rate bands are:

Rateable Value	Levy Rate	Annual	This equates to: Weekly	This equates to: Daily
£12,000	1.75%	£210	£4.04	£0.58
£25,000	1.75%	£438	£8.41	£1.20
£75,000	1.75%	£1,313	£25.24	£3.60
£150,000	1.75%	£2,625	£50.48	£7.19
£350,000	1.75%	£6,125	£117.79	£16.78

For the smallest business subject to the proposed BID Levy in the BID Area, the daily cost is less than a first-class postage stamp and even for a large business the daily cost is less than the price of a single cinema ticket

Oswestry BID 5-year Budget: 2018 – 2023

	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Total	% to total
Income							
BID levy revenue (Note 1)	£ 271,821	£ 277,257	£ 282,803	£ 288,459	£ 294,228	£ 1,414,567	92%
Other Income (Note 2)	£ 25,000	£ 25,500	£ 26,010	£ 26,530	£ 27,061	£ 130,101	8%
Total Income	£ 296,821	£ 302,757	£ 308,813	£ 314,989	£ 321,289	£ 1,544,668	100%
Expenditure							
Objective A: Raising Profile	£ 60,000	£ 60,513	£ 61,037	£ 61,571	£ 62,116	£ 305,237	20%
Objective B: Business Support & Investment	£ 47,445	£ 47,851	£ 48,265	£ 48,687	£ 49,118	£ 241,366	16%
Objective C: A Great Place To Be	£ 65,000	£ 65,556	£ 66,123	£ 66,702	£ 67,292	£ 330,673	22%
Objective D: Accessible & Safe Environment	£ 53,185	£ 53,640	£ 54,104	£ 54,578	£ 55,060	£ 270,567	18%
Central Management Costs, Administration, Office (Note 3)	£ 43,500	£ 44,370	£ 45,257	£ 46,163	£ 47,086	£ 226,376	15%
Levy Collection costs	£ 14,100	£ 14,382	£ 14,670	£ 14,963	£ 15,262	£ 73,377	5%
Contingency (Note 4)	£ 13,591	£ 13,863	£ 14,140	£ 14,423	£ 14,711	£ 70,728	5%
Total Expenditure	£ 296,821	£ 300,175	£ 303,596	£ 307,086	£ 310,645	£ 1,518,324	100%
Accrual for Renewal (Note 5)	£ -	£ 2,582	£ 5,216	£ 7,903	£ 10,643	£ 26,345	

Notes

- 1 - Assumes a 95% collection rate and 2% per annum inflation
- 2 - Including income from landlords, associate members of the BID and other sources (excluding in-kind)
- 3 - Central admin, office and fixed overheads
- 4 - Calculated as 5% of total levy billed
- 5 - Accrual retained from levy revenue to provide for costs of renewal of the BID for any further term, otherwise they will be spent on additional projects in the final year

Cost of the BID Development

The costs incurred in undertaking the research, developing the BID proposals and holding the ballot were met by Shropshire Council and Oswestry Town Council for which we give sincere thanks.

The Benefits

As a business which pays, whether through a levy or voluntary payment, you will have the opportunity to be directly involved in the decision making and action planning for everything the BID delivers based upon the BID's business plan.

You will be entitled to be considered as a Director to the Board of the BID Company, responsible for ensuring that the BID delivers value and benefit to all those who pay into the BID.

In addition to receiving the broad benefits that BID offers your business in terms of driving local business investment and growth, you will have exclusive access to collective business cost saving and security initiatives, the opportunity to participate in seminars and workshops offering business support, guidance and advice and invitations to regular BID networking events to facilitate greater local business community collaboration.

You will also gain direct access to participate in promotional initiatives and have the opportunity to link into social and digital media activities and much more.

As a business who pays into the BID this is an investment. The aim of the BID is to deliver as much value back in benefits, if not more, than the money you pay in.

By working together as a collective voice you will be not only be benefiting your business but improving Oswestry.

Sources of Additional Funding

The BID Company is committed to seeking additional funding where possible to increase the benefits that can be delivered by the BID to businesses. Other possible income sources will include grants where the criteria matches the aims of the business plan, voluntary contributions from companies or organisations, property owners and those not liable for the BID Levy located both inside and outside the BID Area. It is estimated that this could be around £130,000 over the five-year period.

A focus will be to actively drive discussion and collaboration with Local Authorities, Marches LEP, business investors, developers, property owners and other stakeholders to attract and retain additional investment in and around the BID Area to improve delivery against the Business Plan objectives even further.

Application of BID Funds

The BID funds will be ring-fenced and will be controlled by the Oswestry BID Limited's Board. Details of the Oswestry BID Limited's accountability to the BID Levy payers are given in Sections 10 and 13.

The budget headings and the project costs can be altered within the constraints of the revenue received through the BID Levy. Oswestry BID Limited's Board will be empowered to move funds between budget headings to provide the services which best meet the requirements of the BID Area. Such adjustments will be fully accountable to the businesses through the performance monitoring arrangements set out in Sections 6, 8 and 9.

Governance and management of the BID Budget

The Oswestry BID Limited Board will monitor and gauge the effectiveness of the BID operations and activities to ensure that the projects remain relevant and continue to address needs and priorities of the businesses in Oswestry during its five-year life.

If the Oswestry BID Limited Board deem it appropriate they will make adjustments to the allocations of the expenditure budget for each of the main projects and the management and administration of the BID, and will ensure that all the main aims of the BID, stated in Section 9, continue to be addressed and that all BID activity contributes towards the achievement of the vision.

12. BID Levy Criteria for Oswestry BID

Every BID has to establish its own levy rules. Reference has been made to the 'Industry Criteria and Guidance Notes' prepared for the British Retail Consortium (BRC) and the ACTM in developing the rules which will apply to the Oswestry BID.

The Oswestry BID Working Group has tried to balance the needs and ambitions of businesses in the BID Proposal and Business Plan against the affordability of the BID Levy and the requirement to ensure that the BID is able to deliver best value.

1. Assuming a positive BID vote by a majority of businesses by number and rateable value (RV) of those who vote, the BID Levy will be charged on all hereditaments listed in the local Non-Domestic Rating List located within the BID area. This applies irrespective of whether or how a business has voted in the formal BID ballot. Legislation within the Local Government Finance Act (2003) enables the local authority to issue a bill for the BID Levy. The BID Levy is collected by the Billing Authority, Shropshire Council. Oswestry BID Limited will invoice the Billing Authority, Shropshire Council, for the BID Levy collected for exclusive use of the BID.
2. All businesses which fall within the class of non-domestic ratepayers which are liable for the BID Levy, on the date the ballot holder, Shropshire Council, publishes the notice of the ballot, shall be entitled to vote for the BID Proposal and Business Plan in a 28-day postal ballot which will commence on 25th January 2018, with the close of ballot at 5pm on 22nd February 2017. The result will be announced the following day or as soon as possible thereafter.
3. If successful at the ballot, the Oswestry BID will commence operation on 1st April 2018, and will be for a fixed term of 5 years
4. The BID Levy amounts will be applied as follows:
 - a. The BID levy will be 1.75% of the 2017 rateable value shown on Shropshire Council's (the billing authority's) NNDR billing system as at 1st December 2017 for each eligible hereditament within the BID Area, with the exception of those premises with an RV of less than £12,000.
 - b. Business ratepayers of a property with an RV of less than £12,000 will pay nothing for these properties and will not have a vote for these properties although they will enjoy the benefits that come with trading in the BID Area. Any business with an RV which falls below this will be encouraged to enter into a voluntary arrangement direct with the Oswestry BID Limited so that they can benefit from the full range of services and support provided by the BID.
5. The levy will be due from businesses who are liable to pay business rates, including empty properties (even if they are listed under the 'Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 or is included in a list compiled under section 1 of that Act'), other than those businesses that are exempt within the criteria laid out in Section 12 of this BID Proposal and Business Plan (this section).
6. The liable person is the business ratepayer liable for occupied or unoccupied premises. In accordance with the Non-Domestic Rating (Collection and Enforcement) (Local Lists)

Regulations 1989 (S.I. 1989/1058) and the Non-Domestic Rating (Collection and Enforcement) (Miscellaneous Provisions) Regulations 1989 (S.I. 1989/1060), Shropshire Council will be responsible for the imposition, administration, collection, recovery and application of the BID levy. Shropshire Council will also be responsible for any enforcement action that may be appropriate in case of non-payment of the BID Levy.

7. There will be an annual inflationary increase of all BID Levy charges year on year for the duration of the BID. This will be a minimum of 2% increase year on year or the inflation percentage as determined by the Consumer Price Index as at the 1st December of the year before the next billing process, whichever is the greater, rounded to the nearest tenth of a penny. (e.g. if a BID Levy bill is £200 the inflation applied to this at a level of 2% would be £4.00 per annum). Negative inflation will not apply. Inflation will not apply for the first full billing cycle in 2018. Therefore, the first billing cycle, which will be in 2018, will be 1.75% of RV without any inflation applied.
8. The BID financial year will start on 1st April and last for 365 days (366 in a leap year). The BID Levy will be charged annually in advance upon service of a Demand Notice, the chargeable period being from 1st April to 31st March each year, based on the rateable value as at the 1st December 2017. It is to be paid in full in advance, the payment date being the 1st April of that year.
9. Any changes during the life of the BID will be handled as follows:
 - a. New premises, or properties which were not on the rate valuation list but become subject to rates in the BID Area or new streets raised in the BID Area after the BID is in force will be expected to pay a BID Levy based on the % criteria for that year, in relation to its new/current rateable value.
 - b. Where property is split, two or more BID levies should be made on the revised premises from the date of split on the basis of the revised new/current RVs
 - c. Where premises are merged the BID Levy should be charged at the appropriate % of the revised properties new/current valuation.
 - d. Any change of use or ownership (or the creation of a new business within the BID Area will be liable to the BID Levy rate current at the time of the change.
 - e. Where the status of the hereditament changes from one where a BID Levy is due within the meaning of the levy criteria in this Section 12 to one where it is not due
 - f. No amendments will be made to the RV of any property in the BID Area as a result of any general or property specific re-valuation within the life of the BID other than for the criteria listed above or unless the RV of the property falls below £12,000.
 - g. If a property is deleted from the rating list

adjustments will only be made at the start of the next chargeable period following the change.

10. No other relief will be given to any class of non-domestic ratepayer and there is no distinction made between occupied or unoccupied hereditaments, both occupancy status attracting the full BID Levy, unless it is a hereditament:
 - a. whose owner is prohibited by law from occupying it or allowing it to be occupied.
 - b. which is included in the Schedule of monuments compiled under section 1 of the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979.
 - c. where, in respect of the owner's estate, there subsists a bankruptcy order within the meaning of section 381(2) of the Insolvency Act 1986.

- d. whose owner is entitled to possession of the hereditament in his capacity as trustee under a deed of arrangement to which the Deeds of Arrangement Act 1914 applies;
- e. whose owner is a company which is subject to a winding-up order made under the Insolvency Act 1986 or which is being wound up voluntarily under that Act.
- f. whose owner is a company in administration within the meaning of paragraph 1 of Schedule B1 to the Insolvency Act 1986 or is subject to an administration order made under the former administration provisions within the meaning of article 3 of the Enterprise Act 2002 (Commencement No. 4 and Transitional Provisions and Savings) Order 2003.
- g. whose owner is entitled to possession of the hereditament in his capacity as liquidator by virtue of an order made under section 112 or section 145 of the Insolvency Act 1986.
- h. where it is a place of religious worship

in which case the hereditament will be exempt.

- 11. For clarity, a hereditament which is the subject of a building preservation notice within the meaning of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990(a) or is included in a list compiled under section 1 of that Act will be subject to BID Levy unless its use is covered by any of the other exemptions listed in Section 12 of this BID Proposal and Business Plan (this section).
- 12. The BID Levy contribution will not be reassessed if the RV is amended after the end of the BID. New or altered properties entered into the valuation list will become liable for the BID Levy from the date they appear in the list.
- 13. Subject to the criteria stated above and within the BID Area as defined in this document, the BID Levy is a statutorily compulsory payment regardless of whether the business exercised its vote or voted against the BID.

13. Risk analysis

The responsibilities of Oswestry BID Limited

Oswestry BID Limited will be a legal entity and a significant business in its own right. It will not only have all the attendant risks and responsibilities that go with this but also, subject to the vote in favour of the BID, will have a mandate from the businesses in the area to deliver the BID Business Plan. This is a significant responsibility which has an influence over the commercial prosperity of Oswestry, the businesses in the area and their staff who rely upon it for their living.

It is important therefore, to articulate some of the external and internal issues that have a direct bearing on the ability of the Company to trade successfully, as well as highlight the consequences of not adopting the principles of the BID and the benefits that accrue from the delivery of the plan.

BIDs in other places

BIDs have been proving their worth and commercial value across the UK over the last ten years as effective mechanisms to improve trading environments for all sorts and types of businesses. Where BIDs have reached the end of their first term the majority have seen even greater votes in favour and larger turn-outs for their second term than at the first time of voting. They have been seen as providing businesses with very effective returns on investment.

Many major towns and cities in the West and Midlands now have BIDs. These include Shrewsbury, Chester, Lichfield, Birmingham which has 11 BIDs, Derby and Nottingham.

Working with key partners

In order to deliver exceptional value for money within the framework of the aims and objectives of the plan, the BID will work closely with other key stakeholders such as business owners, property owners, developers, Shropshire Council and Town Council and the Police. It will seek, wherever possible to influence and shape larger projects to the benefit of its own aims while supporting others to achieve their own objectives.

In working with others, the over-riding principle of the BID should not be compromised i.e that the BID is providing services and benefits additional to those which would have happened if the BID had not been in existence.

Sustainable mechanism for the development of Oswestry

The BID is a unique mechanism which combines solid business support with a compulsory payment scheme which creates benefit for all on an equitable basis. It also guarantees constant cash flow to deliver the projects and priorities identified by the businesses. It provides a solid platform for the Oswestry BID Limited to control costs, plan over the longer term and rise to the expectations of its stakeholders.

A contingency is contained within the budget, meaning, that should the income from the additional voluntary contributions fall short of those budgeted for any period, costs can be adjusted accordingly.

In the unlikely event that circumstances beyond the control of Oswestry BID Limited mean that it

fails to bring about the benefits envisaged, the business electorate will have the final say. At the end of the 5 years, if no discernable difference is detected then a vote against renewal can simply “switch off” the BID and with it all future business contributions.

There is no plan to rely upon any bank or other financial support other than the BID Levy and so there is no prospect of financial insecurity. In any event, Oswestry BID Limited will produce monthly management accounts and financial forecasts for the information of the Board. End-of-year accounts will be produced and made available to all members of the Company and the local authority and these will be filed at Companies House in the normal way.

The Company will be VAT registered to ensure that the tax can be reclaimed on expenditure. It also benefits from mutual trading status meaning that it is exempt from any Corporation Tax liability.

14. Final thoughts

I have been privileged, over the last year, to work closely with a group of business people who are all committed to creating new opportunities for the businesses community of Oswestry and for those who live and work here. I believe Oswestry is a place which has a good sense of community but is in need of direction, a renewed sense of purpose and a clearer identity in a rapidly changing world.

The setting up of a Business Improvement District provides us with huge opportunity to forge even stronger links between ourselves and to work on a range of projects which we will be able to initiate and which are important to us as committed and hardworking business people.

Towns across the UK are changing rapidly and we need to ensure that Oswestry does not simply remain just a 'nice place to be' but takes full advantage of its strong entrepreneurial business sectors and unique location.

Investing in these qualities and building upon them for the mutual benefit of everyone in the area is an exciting and interesting opportunity.

This business plan provides a clear direction for a period of renewed energy for Oswestry. I believe this is an opportunity Oswestry cannot afford to miss and would urge you to support the initiative so that we can work together for the future of Oswestry.

The first step in your involvement and the forthcoming journey is to vote YES in the ballot in February”.

Heather Noble
Salt Solutions
Vice Chair of Oswestry BID Working Group

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Definitions

- The following terms, used throughout this Proposal document, shall have the same meaning as provided in the Local Government Act 2003 and the Business Improvement Districts (England) Regulations 2004.
- This document is a BID proposal for the purposes of the Act. If approved it will become the BID arrangements which govern the way in which the BID levy can be used.
- “the 2003 Act” means the Local Government Act 2003.
- “the 1988 Act” means the Local Government Finance Act 1988.
- “BID” means Business Improvement District.
- “BID ballot” means a ballot under section 49(1) of the Local Government Act, 2003.
- “BID body” means, the body (whether corporate or not corporate) responsible for the implementation of the arrangements: Oswestry BID Working Group.
- “BID proposer” means a person who draws up BID proposals: BID Oswestry Working Group
- “commencement date” subject to regulation 9(12) of the Business Improvement Districts (England) Regulations 2004, means the day, pursuant to section 53 of the 2003 Act, the BID arrangements are to come into force.
- “hereditament” means anything which is or is treated as being a hereditament by virtue of the provisions of or any provisions made under section 64 of the 1988 Act including any hereditament to which regulation 6 of the Non-Domestic Rating (Miscellaneous Provisions) Regulations 1989 applies but otherwise excluding any hereditament to which regulations made under section 64(3)(b) of the 1988 Act apply.
- “renewal ballot” means a ballot under section 54(2) of the 2003 Act.

Appendix 2 – Streets included in the BID Area listed alphabetically

Property - Major St	Property - Major St
Albany Park	Mile End
Albert Road	Mile End Business Park
Albion Hill	New Street
Arthur Street	Oak Street
Bailey Head	Oakhurst Road
Bailey Street	Off Windsor Road
Beatrice Street	Oswald Road
Black Gate Street	Park Green
Brooklands House	Park Hall
Bryn-Y-Plentyn	Park Street
Cabin Lane	Roft Street
Castle Street	Salop Road
Chapel Street	Shrewsbury Road
Church Street	Smithfield Road
College Road	Smithfield Street
Coney Green	Station Road
Cross Street	The Cross
English Walls	Thomas Savin Road
Gobowen Road	Unicorn Road
Greyfriars	Upper Brook Street
Greystones Way	Upper Church Street
Horsemarket	Victoria Road
King Street	Victoria Street
Laburnum Drive	Welsh Walls
Leg Street	Weston Lane
Lorne Street	Weston Road
Lower Brook Street	Weston Wharf
Maesbury Road	Whittington Road
Maes-Y-Clawdd	Willow Street
Middleton Road	York Street

The BID area includes any and all of the smaller business areas, courtyards and parks located off these roads that are located within the boundary of the defined BID area as per the shaded area on the map shown in Section 5 in this Business Plan, even if they are not listed in the table. It will also include any roads yet to be constructed and named and any new development sites created within the shaded area of the map shown in Section 5 in this BID Proposal and Business Plan.

Acknowledgements

The Oswestry BID would like to gratefully acknowledge the support of the following in preparing this BID Proposal and Business Plan.

- Oswestry Town Council
- Shropshire Council
- Marches LEP
- Partnerships for Better Business Ltd

Further information

For more information about the BID or to discuss any aspect of this business plan please contact the Oswestry BID Development Team on email feedback@Oswestry4bid.co.uk or go to www.Oswestry4bid.co.uk