

Oswestry Masterplan Vision

Test and review workshop comments

4 March 2021, Zoom Session

GROUP 1

Vision and thematic objectives

- Too long – Concern around past - strong future - too many words
- Is there too much emphasis on place rather than people, how people live, the culture of the town
- People - pedestrians and cyclists are the most important for the masterplan
- Need to move focus towards people
- Like healthy people reference
- Have a stronger reference to accessibility - which helps young parents (perhaps captured in people first)
- Vision should reflect climate emergency - driving down carbon emission
- Cross Street - 4 o'clock dash. Could there be an architectural competition for the redesign of renewal of Cross Street with the total removal of traffic?
- Heritage - opportunity to recover the town's heritage. Public realm opportunities. Road and street signs can do harm
- Cross Street - all about business use of buildings... public realm already good
- Independent retailers depend on parking - so there is an important role for parking

Eastern Gateway

- Cambrian Gateway is a better name
- Beatrice Street is already a good street for the town
- No objection in principle with moving buses closer to town centre - but there might be road safety issues particularly with crossing the road
- Gobowen Road is well served as a coach park used particularly in the summer
- Not enough space for these proposals
- Coach parking is a key piece of infrastructure for the town and the visitor economy
- Need to get people into the town
- What about the Showground and how you manage to tap into those people - they could visit the town and support the local economy?
- How can we get people into the town? Specialist toileting? Park & Ride? Unused existing underpass below A5 may be part of the solution?

Mile End

- Wat's Dyke offers an important opportunity to improve pedestrian and cycle connections
- Cycling not really the priority in this part of town
- Cycle facilities to encourage use would need to include showers etc...
- Whilst there will be investment at the Innovation Park - surely the priority is on improving existing area
- Footbridge over the A5 as part of the SUE is a lack of joined up thinking...
- Cycle lanes are just add ons at the moment - so need much more priority
- Whittington Road, Hill Fort are other entrances which also need thought in terms of the quality of the gateway experience
- Shrewsbury Road - frontages should be a priority, buildings should address the street
- Lorries parking in the Estate will conflict with cycles
- Maesbury Road approach is a good example with good quality well designed buildings
- Key locations at key frontages will play an important role in defining the character of the town
- Gateways could be a key theme for a workshop and further discussions with stakeholders
- Businesses are growing and they need space to expand
- This is a key gateway to the town - therefore the appearance of the corridor is a really important issue

Church Street

- Church Street area - needs a theme... food and drink. That will help attract future investment
- Improvements shouldn't just stop at Red Square - needs to extend along the length of Church Street
- There is scope for more space for pedestrians - particularly along Church Street
- Central car park encourages traffic on residential streets at present
- Materials for public realm - Public Realm Strategy contained much detail... suggestions for materials
- Can buses be removed from Church Street... but the people along Welsh Walls may not be happy. Presume Hoppa buses would be electric
- Keep it as a vision - aim high...

GROUP 2

Vision and thematic objectives

- The town is growing so drop the word 'small'
- Didn't like the term 'frontier town' - prefer border town.
- What would you like to change in the engagement feedback - second highest vote was 'other' which is odd.
- 'ordinary, extraordinary' - what does it mean? Could we drop it?
- The second paragraph – is it helpful?
- There is ambition in Oswestry - it's looking to the future and that should be captured.
- Oswestry serves Wales as much as it serves Shropshire
- The pride that people have of Oswestry - could come out more strongly.
- Character - quirky. Doesn't fully come across.
- Blending of two cultures (Welsh and English) could be made more clear.
- Cultural offer of Oswestry.. where does that come out here? Public realm, liveliness of the markets, pubs etc.
- Skatepark, cinema - with its catchment area it should be able to offer those.
- Attracting people from surrounding villages and countryside – happy to see this as part of the vision. This should be enhanced and shouted about even more. It's doing this well but has potential to be even better. Surrounding areas could be better covered and highlighted in the plan. Often people from surrounding villages go elsewhere - offer of shops.

Eastern Gateway

- Two way traffic on Oswald Road - residential would benefit from wider pavements and tree lined streets to enhance. Not sure if two-way working is necessary to achieve that.
- Improving cycling would be good but doesn't need to be two way working - could have cycle lanes
- In the illustration it looks like housing without parking. People will continue to have cars. Traffic is an issue in Oswestry.
- Some felt like as a visible gateway it should not be residential. A cinema was suggested. Others disagreed and felt residential was appropriate but consideration should be given to the look of that housing. Architecture could reflect the character of the station.
- Old cinema would be a better location for a cinema. Purchase of the Regal building.
- Moving the bus service - not opposed but seems an awful lot of effort and money for little difference.
- There is a lack of parking in this end of town.
- Bus station - support as the existing station doesn't have a building
- Bus orbital route - who would be using that? Variations on the town services. Hub thing didn't make sense.
- Have park and ride services been considered? If you want to detraffick centre but want to bring people in, that could allow people to park on the outskirts.

- Bus interchange: what's depicted here is more suited towards high density operations (cities).
- Some more space is needed in Oswestry. Inter-urban services and cross-boundary travel. People stopping in Oswestry before moving on. Doesn't need the same footprint but traditional format.
- People supported the link into Gobowen via rail. Aware that a bid has gone in under Restore your Railway Fund.

Mile End

- Garage and forecourt area - seems such a waste. Turning people off coming into Oswestry. Could be a shop window for what we have in Oswestry.
- Redevelopment in that location? Capturing people who go past on the A5.
- So much traffic will be encouraged to bypass Oswestry with the new Road layout. Signage and visible aspect of Oswestry.
- The tourist information boards previously located at the existing Mile End services were very well used. People stop and see what's available.
- Shrewsbury Road - the streetscape should be a priority. Disappointed fast food has been prioritised, not the most attractive environment. Alternative option designed
- Shame that Costa/McDonalds etc take precedence over market town with excellent produce.
- Could there be somewhere that sells local produce and represents Oswestry even when the market is closed. For example, Gloucestershire Services.
- Could the innovation park have a theme to it. Could help give Oswestry an identity.
- Bridge on Salop Road - highlighted as an issue for cycling but need a solution

Castle Quarter

- Current Market Hall replaced with a more interesting architecturally designed building. Support for this idea. Bailey Head - could you level? Cultural centre where you can have bands/venue etc. Like the idea of a focal point in the Bailey Head.
- Bailey Head is vacant for 5 days the week so an opportunity to improve
- Road from Bailey Head into Albion Hill - people use it as a shortcut and don't follow restrictions. Others noted there is a consultation on this issue.
- The one thing I like about Oswestry is that it's honest. If the Market Hall is replaced, what it's replaced by is very important. Should not be a fake tudor building but honest.
- Homes - should not be facing onto the Square. Exciting opportunity for mixed civic uses. Other side would be ok.
- Flexibility in use. Really important part of town in terms of vibrancy and community services in the area. Positive experience of community services and attractions.
- Any residential development – seems like a move to smaller units with less parking and green spaces. Quality of life is important, and pandemic has put more emphasis on amenities.

- Would need to be a strong case for residential at this location. Needs to be more of an attraction. Indoor market supports over 40 businesses keen to keep and grow this. Though it's only open three days a week which could be improved.

Church Street area

- Improvements made on alleyways have made a huge difference. Much more interesting and exciting. So many more lanes that you could do more with. You could theme each with its own character. Interesting place to come to. Part of what makes Oswestry quirky.
- Also economic value to those lanes and alleyways. Affordability of small units.
- This area is going to benefit from changes in other areas. Welsh Walls and Willow Street if the junction is improved then this will improve this area by decreasing traffic.
- Routing needs to be looked at/signage – clearly directed to parking and routes for people coming in.
- Could you have a Carnaby Streetstyle archway to create an arrival experience. And more greenery.
- Cycle hire?

GROUP 3

Vision and thematic objectives

- How will it deal with economic regeneration side and what is happening commercially?
- Starting with the overall vision is difficult as it dependent on the economic success of the town.
- The visual impact of urban regeneration / development has the danger of impacting on the small-town feel

Eastern Gateway

- Station hub needs to be state of the art and look to future users and needs. Need to be fully inclusive
- Need to keep the market town feel
- Quality housing - what residential housing will we ultimately get?
- Environment needs to feel safe and enjoyable
- Design of the roads is very important to ensure that the development is integrated to avoid segregated areas
- Bus shelters should be a multi model hub - warm and with seating

Castle Quarter

- Frontage that is more reflective of the local area
- Christmas Live / Stage for events
- Could a hotel replace the indoor market and the market be moved
- Should the market be moved further into the town centre?
- Needs more greening and more welcoming
- Accessibility to Oswestry castle is key
- There is some desire by some market stall holders to move to a more visible location
- Enhancing the alleyways
- Need to make more of the castle area

Mile End

- No comments noted during the break out session

Church Street area

- Festival square lends itself to event space
- Alleyway next to Poundland needs to be improved
- Most important area in town and should be prioritised in terms of investment and encouraging existing retail businesses
- Needs to be a place where people can linger and enjoy

- An alleyway missing from the map

GROUP 4

Vision and objectives

- Strategy for retail? - why come to Oswestry.
- Focus on cycles - encouraging walking and tourists.
- Attracting new businesses / shops - Oswestry an attractive proposition - marketing exercise. To attract businesses then we need to address points made in this strategy
- Destination Strategy - retail and leisure, tourist attractions. Strength of independent retail sector.
- Making a day of your visit to Oswestry and encouraging people to re-visit
- Main service centre - we want a distinctive town and offer

Eastern Gateway area

- Do we need a bus station? Bring it closer to the centre? Smaller buses?
- Need coach facilities within the town
- Is there a need for residential development in this area - how will that attract people?
- Post covid - maybe not look at new retail? Should we condense retail in the centre rather than expand it?
- Housing could create a better street scene.
- Poor mapping of car parking.
- Cost of light rail connection? Costing is currently being undertaken thru feasibility. Budget announcements could support this option.
- Consider secondary centre by SUE

Mile End

- Making Shrewsbury Road (landscape and feel as an entrance) more attractive. Vast empty wasteland. Making it more attractive through design of landscape, pavements to soften approach along Shrewsbury Road
- Improving public transport links between industrial estates and the town centre, look at connection and access to leisure centre and SUE.
- Improve entrance into the town – provide a 'hug'. Street scene with development fronting Shrewsbury Road - careful thought for future developments. Well designed street frontage - opportunities that should not be missed. Design around people not the car.
- Poor impression at Travelodge / services at Mile End.

Castle Quarter

- Re-development image is stunning.
- Market traders – should it be closer to the town?

- Area should be used for outdoor events. Potential people place. Example of Llangollen's flexible space.
- Covered market is a unique selling point for Oswestry. Could there be two covered markets – the existing and a food court? Re-imagining the market is essential.
- Need to keep the market – look at alternative space or re-develop so the asset is open for longer. Discussed 'destination' markets such as Oxford, Burrow, Shrewsbury markets.
- Need to also consider evening economy and how area could help deliver this.
- There are key building blocks already to support the Cultural or Historic Quarter – the castle, existing cinema, Guildhall and pubs however the offer needs to be fleshed out more. Examples included commerce, young entrepreneurs, food court.

Church Street area

- Comment on image – don't have a hybrid, either have it pedestrianised or one way. Some people would love it to be pedestrianised.
- Could Church Street be closed to traffic and open up Cross street to traffic to access Willow Street?
- Problem is access to Willow Street and deliveries if Church Street is pedestrianised.
- Suggestion to extend pavements permanently on Church Street (rather than use of hogs). Restricted width would slow traffic.
- Could the length of Church Street from the traffic lights be considered?
- Proposals for Festival Square and Church Street offers the opportunity to upgrade the quality of the town centre.
- Focus of town centre has moved from Cross Street and Bailey Head. Cross Street is typically bigger shops – too big for the smaller independents.
- Improvements at Festival Square / Church Street could make a statement to visitors to create first impressions from Central Car Park and access to the shopping streets.
- The development of Square 1 has change the vibe and increased footfall in the square. Potential to use the Square as a space for everyone. Would like to see it used for public space / entertaining rather than for a market as shown in the image.
- Pedestrianisation of Cross Street – could be improved visually.