

# Future Oswestry Plan

## Survey Feedback 2022

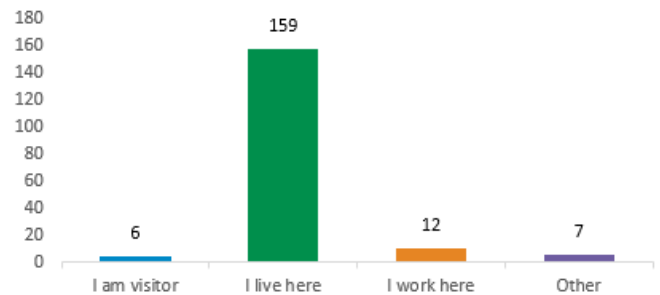


Shropshire Council, Oswestry Town Council and Oswestry BID have been working together as the Future Oswestry Group to prepare a draft vision and plan for Oswestry. The document was developed through an engagement process with local stakeholders, businesses, and residents. On completion of the draft, and to enable ongoing feedback, a survey was delivered from early February 2022.

This report summarises the survey results and views on the Draft Future Oswestry Plan. The plan is not a blueprint but the start of a process of deciding potential projects and initiatives. Further engagement will follow as the vision and ambitions develop into clearer proposals.

To find out more visit the Future Oswestry pages on Shropshire Council's website.

Survey respondents' connections to Oswestry



Most of the people who selected 'other' for their connection to Oswestry live in Shropshire but travel from slightly further away including Shrewsbury, Ellesmere and a range of other Shropshire towns. A very small number of people responded to the survey from Wales (survey respondents gave postcodes to allow further analysis). Unlike other online surveys where responses can be provided from across the UK or beyond, this survey only attracted responses from a more local area. The comments within the survey included details highlighting robust local knowledge.

The Draft Future Oswestry Plan survey ran for 6 weeks from 9th February to 24th March 2022. The survey explored how people feel about the vision and the opportunities for each of the main locations. The survey was also used to determine priorities and which 'big ideas' are most important to local people.

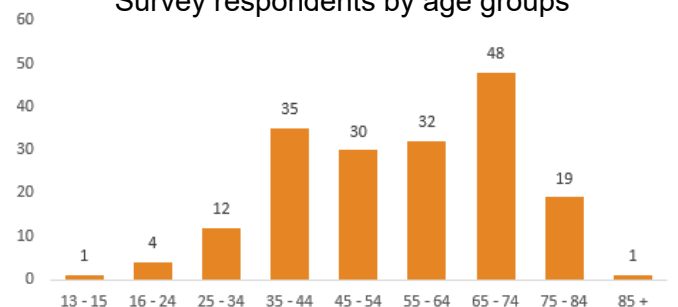
The responses and comments help to further understand the issues that matter most but they also highlight that there is not necessarily consensus in all areas and more of a range of opinions.

192 people responded to the survey (most responded online but a few chose to complete a paper copy of the questionnaire). Of those 177 (92.2%) completed the survey as a member of the public, 7 (3.6%) represented a local business and 8 (4.2%) did not say how they were responding. A little more detail was collected on survey respondents connection to Oswestry and this is shown in the chart above.

82.8% of the survey respondents live in, or very near, Oswestry and this was confirmed when 87% described Oswestry as their nearest town. There were small numbers of people living elsewhere and visiting Oswestry for other reasons. 6.3% of the survey respondents work in Oswestry, 3.1% describe themselves as a visitor and 7.8% either gave another reason or did not say.

Of those who stated a gender 55.4% of the respondents were female, 43.5% male and 1.1% other. There was a good spread across age groups with most aged 35 to 74 (the greatest response from 65 to 74-year olds). 5.7% were from a non-white British background. Some diversity of gender/age/background is important within survey samples to ensure a range of views and experiences are represented. The survey sample provided a mix of people with different daily lifestyles and employment status. 35.9% were retired, 34.4% working full time, 11.5% working part time, 7.8% self-employed and 1.0% unemployed. Employment status can influence the way people access town centre facilities, services and other opportunities such as leisure, so this representation across groups is helpful.

Survey respondents by age groups



Recognising the importance of accessibility and meeting different needs within the community, the Future Oswestry Group were keen to hear from a range of people within the wider community. 7.3% of the survey respondents were carers, 10.4% of the survey respondents have a long-standing illness of disability that limits their daily activity a little and 5.2% have a long-standing illness of disability which means daily activity is limited a lot.

To encourage people with different accessibility needs to comment, a question was included within the survey which read 'Please use the space below to add any comments you would like to include about accessibility (for example if you have sensory impairments or physical access needs and would like to highlight any issues for consideration within the survey analysis). There were 42 comments in total. The table below displays the themes from the comments and example comments are included below. Top themes included; narrow or dangerous pavements, the importance of good access for wheelchairs/ scooters, and the need for suitable public transport.

Theme	Count	%
Already adequate/no need for change	2	5
Pavements are narrow/dangerous	10	24
Increased/improved accessibility for wheelchairs/scooters	9	21
Increased/improved public transport	5	12
Increased/improved street lighting	2	5
Increased/improved toilet facilities	3	7
Traffic calming/improved road safety	3	7
Other	8	19
<b>Total</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>100</b>

### Example comments

- "Having shops accessible for push chairs and wheelchairs would be useful. So many shops are poorly designed for this."
- "Maybe improved toilets, and more places to sit?"
- "More dropped kerbs needed and restrictions placed on shop signs/market stalls being placed in a manner that impedes all people not just us wheelchair users."
- "The town needs wider pedestrian footways in the town centre in order to accommodate the increasing number of motorised wheelchairs."
- "The pavements in Church Street are dangerous for the elderly and those using mobility scooters."
- "Pavements are very uneven and roads full of potholes, sort it out!"
- "Lack of public transport is my biggest issue with accessibility as my condition does not allow me to drive."
- "...Dial A Ride needs to be able to deliver those with reduced mobility to the services they wish to access."

The survey was also used to assess any impact of the proposed Future Oswestry Plan on diversity, equality or social inclusion. Shropshire Council assesses equality, social inclusion and health impact through the work it does when considering new policies, services and service changes and will work in partnership with Oswestry Town Council and Oswestry BIG, and within the Future Oswestry Group to continue to consider inclusion throughout the process of plan implementation.

There were 31 comments provided and the main themes were consideration of accessibility, consideration of low income and vulnerable households, and the importance of assessing impact for businesses. Some example comments are included below.

### Example comments

- "...the total lack of words for the disabled. I think this plan neglects any consideration in making town disabled friendly. Narrow pavements, lack of safe crossings. No mention of health services and need for provision of parking and transport. Please don't make festival square a food outlet - some of us can't afford to keep eating out."
- "The town currently favours drivers to a huge degree, where 25% of households have no access to a car, they are left behind by funding and are usually the poorest and most vulnerable. More support needed for a safe walking/cycle network across Oswestry."
- "How accessible will the out of town proposals (Mile End) be to those without their own transport?"
- "Do more to support anti poverty and create equal life chance opportunities. More social housing."

The comments provided through the survey were very helpful in better understanding the accessibility and inclusion issues of most concern within Oswestry. A few comments called for ongoing opportunity to get involved and for engagement work to continue as future stages of work develop and the Future Oswestry Plan is implemented. This commitment to get involved and feed in views is really valuable and many of the comments highlight how much people value Oswestry as a place to live or visit.

The next sections of this report consider the feedback received when survey respondents were asked about the plan's vision and the proposals for each main location and theme/ 'big idea'.

## The Vision

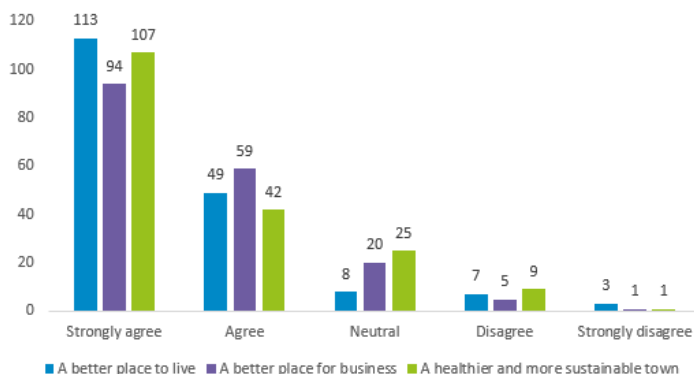
**90%** agree with the proposed vision for Oswestry to become 'a better place to live'.

**86%** agree with the proposed vision for Oswestry to become 'a better place for business'.

**81%** agree with the proposed vision for Oswestry to become 'a healthier and more sustainable town'.

The chart below highlights all the responses received with breakdowns by how strongly people agreed or disagreed with the vision statements. No more than 10 people disagreed with any of the vision statements.

Views on the proposed vision



The survey asked 'Is there anything you would change about the vision? Or is there anything missing from the vision?' There were 106 comments provided and the table below displays the main themes from the comments.

Theme	Count	%
Positive - like vision	6	6
Negative - dislike vision	8	8
Suggestion: More general town clean up	4	4
Suggestion: Focus on environment/climate	8	8
Suggestion: Public transport and access	8	8
Suggestion: Parking facilities	3	3
Suggestion: Focus on road condition/traffic	6	6
Suggestion: Culture and arts	3	3
Suggestion: Young people, leisure activities	8	8
Suggestion: Attract people to town/tourism	9	8
Suggestion: Thriving businesses/ employment	12	11
Suggestion: Accessibility and inclusion	5	5
Suggestion: Oswestry's USP and character	8	8
Multiple suggestions and themes	2	2
Other comments and specific sites	16	15
<b>Total</b>	<b>106</b>	<b>100</b>

Some of the top themes included the need for a focus on thriving businesses and employment, the importance of environment and climate, the need for the plans to include consideration of public transport and access, and comments on road condition and traffic. The example comments shown below help to better illustrate some of the comments provided.

### Example comments

- "I agree with the vision for the future of Oswestry."
- "Overall this is a brilliant visionary plan, some of it could be slightly fine tuned, but that is being a little picky. If just half of the proposals were implemented then it would add so much to the future of Oswestry."
- "It doesn't go far enough; should be more innovative."
- "I would prioritise the challenge of climate change. I'm taken aback that this isn't central to all your ideas. We need to brainstorm what it's likely to mean for us in Oswestry and focus on sustainable energy and transport and on strengthening our community..."
- "Include a commitment to make Oswestry better connected to other towns and cities by public transport."
- "Unless the roads are repaired Oswestry remains an unwelcoming town."
- Cultural angles such as a strong library that supports the growth of youngsters... is a hub of the local community."
- "A good place to work, thus encouraging larger businesses into the area."
- "...As long as we keep the character and history of our town alive I'm happy. We don't want a plastic & mirror glass town. Oswestry is unique in its individuality."
- "It is a start. The final equation must include costs, benefits that are real and tangible, how it is to be financed."

Overall the feedback on the vision is very positive. The majority of people agree with the vision statements and the comments suggest that rather than elements being missing from the vision, the themes highlighted are all essential in helping to achieve the vision. For example, the comments on thriving businesses and employment will help to achieve 'a better place for business'; the comments on public transport, parking, culture and arts, young people and leisure could help to achieve 'a better place to live'; and the comments relating to visitor experience, environment/climate and a town clean up could help to achieve 'a healthier and more sustainable town'. Some of the comments fit into more than one of the vision statements and there are linkages between them.

The next section of the report considers the opportunities for different areas within the town.



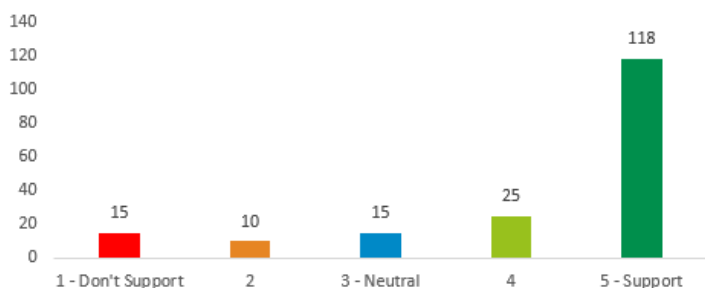
# The Cambrian Gateway

The Future Oswestry Plan highlights four areas of Oswestry where more significant change is anticipated and the first area considered within the survey was the Cambrian Gateway. For this area potential opportunities are:

- Create a public transport interchange hub
- Strengthen north east connections
- Enhance Wilfred Owen Park
- Redevelop the former Morrisons site
- Refurbish the Railway Station building

Survey respondents were asked for an overall opinion on the vision for the area using a scale of 5 'support' to 1 'don't support'. The chart below displays the results.

Views on the vision for the Cambrian Gateway



78% of those who responded to the question support the vision and opportunities for the Cambrian Gateway set out within the draft plan. There were 106 comments about the area and the table below displays the main themes.

Theme	Count	%
Importance of historic integrity and good design	8	8
Attract visitors through gateway into town	7	7
Retain Morrison's (shopping, market, leisure)	11	10
Build housing and re-develop	4	4
Need for good public transport	14	13
Importance of parking (access to GP etc.)	10	9
Public facilities and toilets needed	2	2
Traffic concerns and road/pavement improvement	6	6
Wish to see rail links re-established	13	12
Negative comments - concerns	11	10
Request for more detail	4	4
Positive comments - agree with proposals	5	5
Other comments	11	10
<b>Total</b>	<b>106</b>	<b>100</b>

Top suggestions for this area included the importance of good public transport, re-establishing rail links, and retaining the old Morrison's building for shopping/leisure use. 13% don't support the proposals for the area. Approximately 10% of the comments highlighted concerns some examples included concerns about the proposals for Morrisons, concerns about the bus station proposals and other concerns such as the need to retain coach parking and the need for effective investment.

### Example comments

- "Don't overbuild on former Morrison's site, go for aesthetics over profit."
- "Keep the Morrison Building and use it purposely."
- "Instead of knocking down Morrisons, and losing a building which could be used as a cinema or a bowling Alley. Putting horrendous flats up won't improve the town."
- "It is vital to make better use of existing wasted spaces and to improve the first impression given to visitors/residents when entering the town from this direction."
- "Needs good housing development, high density not an ugly detached houses taking up valuable town centre space."
- "The large car park is still essential at the old Morrisons site, especially if we are to encourage more people into the town."
- "The current bus station provides a safe space for users of public transport. The obvious way to link the town to Gobowen Station is to provide two elective shuttle buses to travel on the existing highway. Resurrecting the railway link to Gobowen is financial lunacy."
- "A shuttle bus should be available from the bus station to the post office , as it is quite a way to push in a wheelchair or for the elderly or less able to walk from the bus station to the town centre."
- "We desperately need a rail link to Gobowen and better bus routes."
- "Totally unworkable, bus station fine where it is. Will reduce access to town."
- "I don't think the proposal is viable."
- "Give more specific examples of what will be done."
- "Looks amazing."

Although views on rail connections are mixed, there is more agreement that transport connections are very important and that people need good access to services and the town. There is agreement that the design and 'look' of development is important, both to retain the town's character but also to ensure a good experience when visiting Oswestry. Some concerns may be alleviated as more detail becomes available in the next stages of the plan.

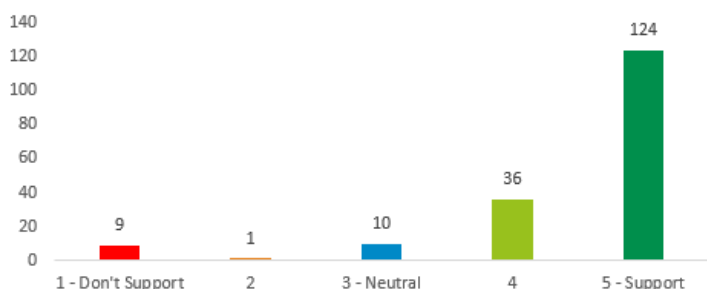
## Church Street Quarter

The second main area of focus considered within the survey was the Church Street Quarter. For this area potential opportunities are:

- Manage car parking
- Alleyway improvement
- Festival Square public space
- Make the town centre shopping streets more attractive
- Bringing vacant properties back into use
- Rethink deliveries

Survey respondents were asked for an overall opinion on the vision for the area using a scale of 5 'support' to 1 'don't support'. The chart below displays the results.

Views on the vision for Church Street Quarter



89% of those who responded to the question support the vision and opportunities for the Church Street Quarter. There were 101 comments summarised into themes in the table below. The comments predominantly covered access and leisure/business use.

Theme	Count	%
Retain parking/importance of parking	11	11
Remove traffic congestion/ reduce speed	3	3
Support one way system	5	5
Level, wide and improved pavements	6	6
Importance of through traffic, access and deliveries	13	13
Pedestrianize	4	4
Café culture and leisure use in Festival/Red Square	19	19
Right building uses, right businesses for economy	13	13
Street design, lighting etc.	4	4
Positive - Like proposals	7	7
Negative - Dislike proposals	3	3
Other comments	13	13
<b>Total</b>	<b>101</b>	<b>100</b>

Approximately 3% of the comments highlighted concerns some examples included comments that suggest people don't see the need for change or would rather see investment in other things (examples included youth activities, filling vacant shops and re-instating 2-way traffic). Most people support the vision and opportunities for the area and the top suggestions within the comments included support for a café culture and leisure use in Festival/Red Square, the importance of through traffic, access and deliveries, and the right building uses and right businesses for the local economy.

### Example comments

- "Please do not reduce parking places. People cannot carry their shopping home by bus (too heavy, bad weather etc). They will just do it all in the big supermarkets without car parking."
- "Short-visit car parking in Red Square is well used and must benefit local shops."
- "Bring in red double lines to stop carparking along this road I, there's 3 car park near by, let them go there, bring back the local traffic warden as a friendly face in the area. Most of the shops look tired and some (Bewise) have been boarded up almost 30 years. Get rid of the traffic and reduce the rates to local businesses."
- "Stop the daft parking on Church Street. Make it one way. Suggest car parks be free on Friday and Saturday."
- "Make the temporary one way system permanent with proper kerbs and paving."
- "Improvements to footpaths to make wider would be great – they are very narrow on 'Booka Book Shop' side."
- "It would be nice to see the Church Street totally pedestrianised to encourage shoppers and the café culture which is growing in the town. Make deliveries at certain times of the day with disabled parking only in millennium square free of free charge."
- "Everyone loves the cafe atmosphere now in Festival Square. Attracts locals and visitors. Also support further pedestrianisation of shopping streets."
- "How would this affect through traffic and access to town?"

The comments show that there are concerns around access to the area and parking. Although most people support the idea of more cultural and leisure opportunities, there are some mixed views on how this should be achieved. Some people believe that improvements for pedestrians and pedestrianisation would be beneficial, whereas others oppose restrictions on access for vehicles. There is consensus that it is important to support local businesses and attract visitors and local people to the area.

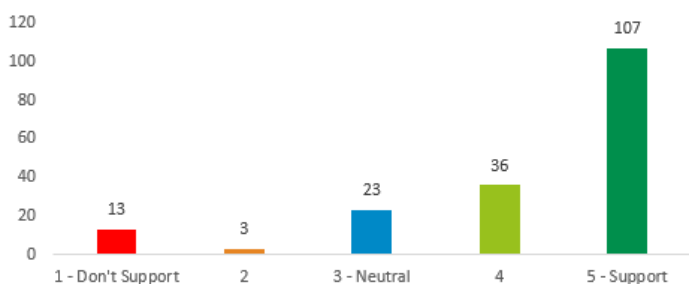
## The Castle Quarter

The third main area of focus considered within the survey was The Castle Quarter. For this area potential opportunities are:

- Bailey Head/Castle View public realm improvements
- Strengthening the cultural offer
- Potential redevelopment of Bailey Head indoor market hall
- Manage car parking
- Alleyway improvement

Survey respondents were asked for an overall opinion on the vision for the area using a scale of 5 'support' to 1 'don't support'. The chart below displays the results.

Views on the vision for The Castle Quarter



79% of those who responded to the question support the vision and opportunities for The Castle Quarter. There were 80 comments (fewer comments than for the Cambrian Gateway and Church Street Quarter) summarised into themes in the table below.

Theme	Count	%
Importance of parking	5	6
Value of the castle site	4	5
Importance of public seating	5	6
No need for more cafés	2	3
Design and visual improvements to attract visitors	10	13
Support refurbishment of indoor market	12	15
Retain indoor market	9	11
Suggestions to change market provision	5	6
Value culture and attractions (e.g. library)	5	6
Accessibility, safety and alley improvements	4	5
Negative - dislike proposals	0	0
Positive - like proposals	6	8
Other comments	13	16
<b>Total</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>100</b>

There were very few, if any negative comments about the proposals for The Castle Quarter. The 8.3% of respondents who said they didn't support the proposals did not fully explain why they had concerns within the comments. However, some useful feedback was provided, and issues were raised such as the importance of parking, and the value of cultural activities, historic sites and public amenities. Some example comments are included below and some of the themes reflect the issues raised for the other locations.

### Example comments

- "I don't support anything that reduces car parking further!"
- "More car parking so disabled people can get to facilities easier."
- "There is nothing in the plan on the access to the top of the castle mound which should be a big attraction for visitors for the views and the historical background it can provide."
- "Some seating at the top of the castle would be good."
- "There are already more than enough cafes etc in town. Many are struggling to stay open. Money is not always available to eat out."
- "Make Bailey Head market area more of a focal point as has been done with Festival Square."
- "Market hall needs a facelift. Current improvement have helped but the building is out dated and an eyesore. Not sure what is meant by manage car parks."
- "Don't over modernise the market but just refresh it - keep its character and heritage."
- "Yes to strengthening cultural offer. No to indoor market - it has had an update and is a lively place with a wide variety of stalls, a lift etc."
- "Definitely cultural redevelopment like opening the museum."
- "Alleyways should be being done now. Market: would like to see it at EWM shop its original home more accessible for older people as less steep."
- "Mixed use development to make the quarter more lively."
- "Great idea. So much potential."

Feedback from the survey respondents highlights issues around parking and calls for adequate parking space within the area. There are some differing views on the market hall with some uncertain whether any significant changes are necessary. The comments are all helpful and have been reviewed carefully to understand where views differ. Despite some minor differences of opinion relating to certain buildings or locations, there is widespread support for the vision for the area.

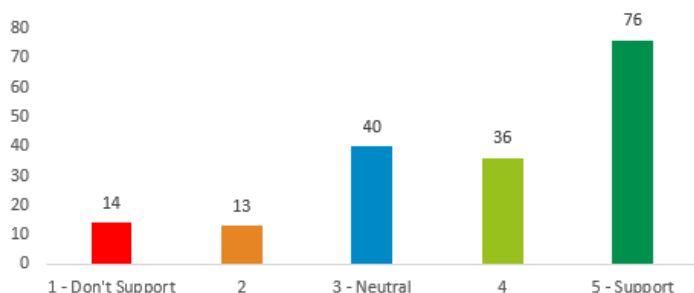
## Mile End

Mile End was the last main area of focus within the survey and the area includes the Maesbury Industrial Estate, Oswestry Sustainable Urban Extension and Oswestry Innovation Park. Within the draft Future Oswestry Plan the potential opportunities outlined are:

- Strengthen south east connections
- Better bus services

The area includes the A5 and this featured within the comments received. In the same way as the other areas, survey respondents were asked for an overall opinion on the vision for the area using a scale of 5 'support' to 1 'don't support'. The chart below displays the results.

Views on the vision for Mile End



63% of those who responded to the question support the vision and opportunities for Mile End. A much larger proportion of survey respondents had a neutral view (22.3%) compared to the other areas. There were 79 comments summarised below by main theme.

Theme	Count	%
Concern will reduce investment in town centre	6	8
Importance park & ride, bus, transport links	14	18
Retain green spaces and countryside	3	4
The need to address the roundabout, complexity of road layout/traffic	8	10
Need for public services to serve new housing	4	5
Pedestrian access to area important	4	5
Leisure centre investment (e.g. new exterior)	3	4
Visual improvements needed to make the area attractive	8	10
Offer must differ from town centre	3	4
Negative - dislike proposals	10	13
Positive - like proposals	6	8
Other comments	10	13
<b>Total</b>	<b>79</b>	<b>100</b>

Although the majority of people support the proposals, there were more concerns about the proposals for Mile End than for any of the other areas (27 people scored a 1 'don't support' or a 2).

13% of the comments highlighted concerns and they included access by public transport and concerns for those without cars, integration with the town, the need for visual improvements and 'gateway' feel and concern that investment would not be effective and needs further consideration.

### Example comments

- "Need better connectivity of Mile End to town centre, including public transport and dedicated footpaths/ cycleways."
- "It is not a particularly attractive area and will lose the rural aspect as a gateway to the town. I don't think the improvements are going to enhance this any further. A bolder green vision is needed rather than just a focus on business units and modern ugly buildings."
- "There needs to be access to the innovation site by tunnel or a bridge, having a crossing on the A5 will just be a nightmare. What is going into the innovation park and why will companies be attracted to set their businesses up here - have we got some untapped creative, technical, or otherwise unknown skills in the area?"
- "Mile end is wasteful, it takes away much needed money from the town centre. Large corporations are short sighted, have little care for local economy or environment."
- "Don't waste any more money there. Like the roundabouts. Better off how they were. Or make a fly over so people could stay on the A5. Total waste of money having the new layout."
- "Park and Ride needed."
- "It seriously needs to be considered that traffic lights are put on that round about. Its a seriously dangerous round about and I avoid it at all costs."
- "More houses? What about schools? Extending minor injuries and services? Re-opening ambulance base? Dentists? GPs who will see you? Old Cattle market site needs developing. Roads need resurfacing!"

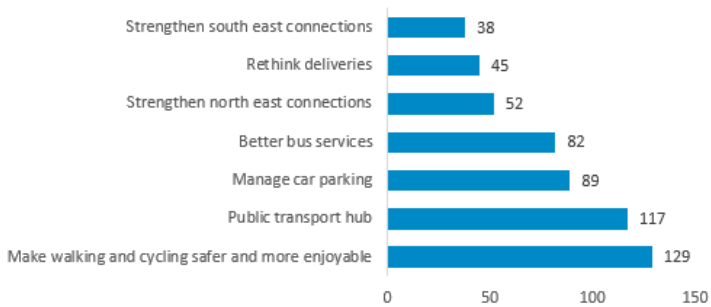
The feedback suggests that this area of Oswestry is a lower priority for most people compared to the areas closer to the town centre. There are some comments to suggest that further investment in the area may not result in the impact people would like to see achieved. However, there seems to be some recognition that the area could provide employment opportunities, particularly if it is easily accessible by other forms of transport and by a crossing point for people to cross the A5.



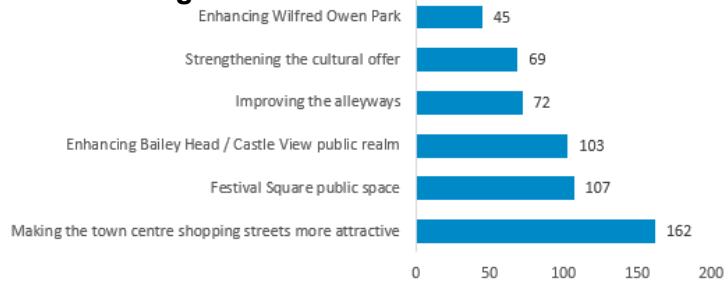
## The Big Ideas

The Big Ideas cover 3 themes: movement, placemaking and development. The plan and survey were designed to obtain feedback on these ideas and better understand views and priorities before further work takes place within the Future Oswestry Group to develop ideas into more defined projects and plans. Survey respondents were asked to pick their top three for each theme and the results are shown below:

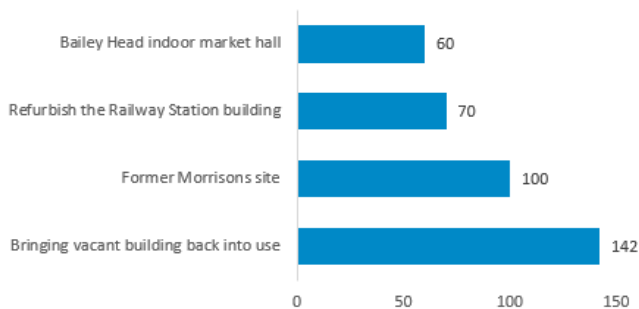
### Movement



### Placemaking



### Development



The most popular ideas for movement were making walking and cycling safer and more enjoyable, a public transport hub and managing car parking. For placemaking the top responses were making the town centre shopping streets more attractive, Festival Square public space, and enhancing Bailey Head/Castle View public realm. The top priority for development was bringing the vacant building (Morrisons) back into use. This feedback closely reflects many of the comments provided within the other sections of the survey. To further check views, survey respondents were asked if there were any ideas missing from the Big Ideas for Oswestry. There were 104 comments summarised in the following table with examples below.

Theme	Count	%
Services (dentist, health services, police etc.)	7	7
Business growth, employment, economy	8	8
Accessibility	3	3
Parking, transport, movement for all needs	11	11
Facilities for children and young people	9	9
Traffic management and some pedestrianisation (without displacement)	5	5
Reinstate railway line and services	6	6
Heritage, culture and leisure (museum, music, cinema etc.)	11	11
Investment and delivering the vision	3	3
Fill empty properties and improve facades	4	4
Clean up, repair streets and improve safety	6	6
Attract well-known shops and businesses	2	2
Concerns about proposals	7	7
Like proposals - no gaps	6	6
Other comments	16	15
<b>Total</b>	<b>104</b>	<b>100</b>

### Example comments

- “NHS Dentists! Ambulance station maybe at old Morrisons?”
- “People: not a focus on people's needs e.g. make Oswestry pedestrianised - how will buses come near to shops for people; how will disabled access businesses? Street crossing is urgent (Roff Street, Middleton Road - Medical centre crossing so hard to cross, especially for elderly with no car.”
- “Ensuring services such as Dial A Ride can encourage accessibility.”
- “Make walking and cycling safer and more enjoyable but ...older people need to use cars.”
- “What about employment - how to encourage employers to expand in Oswestry or to set up here?”
- “This is a rural town that relies on the use of the car and bus so plenty of car parking at low prices and good bus facilities will help....Oswestry compete with out-of-town developments. Bikes do have their place in a transport plan but for Oswestry they are mainly for people who are very local and would not attract people from more than 5 miles away.”
- “Morrisons - bowling alley, milk bar, skatepark, clubs and other youth activities. There could be reasonable charges for the activities and jobs for young people.”
- “Offerings for young people and transport to the leisure centre area.”
- “Invest in the library, cinema and music venues.”
- “No mention of Tourism. Visitor centre under funded, hidden away...tourism is needed to bring in money from outside...”

Although not all suggestions are new ideas the message that people's needs need to be considered is clear throughout. There are calls for easy use and enjoyment of Oswestry and its attractions.



## Other comments

The survey included many open comment questions designed to ensure survey respondents had opportunity to share their thoughts on the things that matter most to them and their priorities for the Future Oswestry Plan. To ensure any concerns or suggestions had not been missed, a last question was included in the survey which read 'Is there anything else you would like to tell us in relation to the draft Future Oswestry Plan?'

There were 76 comments provided. The comments generally fall under three broad headings: suggestions and specific themes (issues that matter to people), concerns about the plan or its implementation and positive feedback about the work taking place. The table below summarises the feedback into the main sub-themes. Considering the more detailed feedback (rather than the comments on the plan itself), the issues that seem to matter most include:

- Design to reflect the character and history of Oswestry.
- Improved shopping and recreational facilities.
- Support for local businesses and the local economy.
- Public transport and active travel options.
- The need for robust infrastructure to support any increases in housing provision and growth.

There were also more general, overarching concerns about the plan's implementation, investment and requests for further details. Balancing those concerns, some survey respondents also highlighted positive views and the example comments shown help to better illustrate the type of comments that were made and the views shared within the last open part of the survey.

Theme	Count	%
Positive comments/like the plans for Oswestry	8	11
Need to consider future infrastructure needs (e.g. increased housing)	7	9
Be considerate of Oswestry's character	9	12
Increased/improved shopping/recreational facilities	8	11
Support for business in Oswestry	7	9
Increased/improved public transport and active travel options	7	9
Consideration of environmental concerns	3	4
Concern that funding for the plan is not available	4	5
Plan needs more detail/not confident plan is achievable	14	18
Other	9	12
<b>Total</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>100</b>

## Example comments

### Suggestions and specific themes

- "More trees and attention to wildlife, e.g. with what flowers get planted in containers etc - trees and shrubs to break up main large car park in the centre of town. More places to recharge electric cars."
- "The proposed development will generate an increase in population who have to be catered for socially, educationally and medically. So the infrastructure to provide should be looked at an plans drawn up to provide the buildings, equipment and trained people to deal with these additional demands."
- "Allowing huge housing estates to be built without thought for the already overburdened infrastructures."
- "We need events, monthly perhaps to bring people back into the heart of Oswestry and spend some money in the local restaurants and shops."
- "There isn't any plan to increase visitors at night to make the town alive once again."
- "Less expensive items that make an impact for visitors may increase visitor numbers and thus businesses in the town will benefit which may then develop cash for future improvements."
- "Maybe more pedestrianisation of streets so cars are on the edge of town rather than through the middle."
- "Oswald road two way plan needs further explanation."
- "Better cycle routes."
- "Please think of teenagers including a skatepark to get the skaters off the streets but onto dedicated flat space (street skating)!"

### Concerns

- "It is too 'pie in the sky' - this is a town not a city."
- "Need to ensure that all the good work on the Future Oswestry Plan is (further) integrated with local planning policy to ensure delivery and success of the plan. The plan should ideally be adopted as either a Supplementary Planning Document/Neighbourhood Plan etc to ensure that it is a material planning consideration as part of the development plan."
- "How is this being funded? Surely this will be an increase to our council tax?"
- "The challenge of attracting funding should not be under estimated."

### Positive comments

- "This, mostly, would be terrific for Oswestry."
- "Encouraging - glad to see some big ideas for the town."
- "It's very exciting that this is happening. Congratulations."
- "I would love to see the whole of town bringing back to life."

## Summary

The draft Future Oswestry Plan is led by the Future Oswestry Group with members including Shropshire Council, Oswestry Town Council and Oswestry BID. Community representatives also play an important role in influencing local engagement. The survey conducted from 9th February to 24th March 2022 obtained feedback on the draft, highlighting where there is support for the contents of the draft plan, local priorities and suggestions for the future.

### Responses

- 192 people responded to the survey. Most are members of the public living within or near Oswestry with much smaller numbers representing local businesses or other interests.
- Those responding to the survey represented a mix of gender, age group and lifestyles, helping to ensure some diversity of views/experiences.
- The survey results highlighted accessibility as a strong theme throughout the questions and two more targeted questions highlighted the importance of future plans considering people with limited mobility, wheelchair users and those with limited travel options available to them.
- Survey respondents were asked for any comments on diversity, equality and inclusion and the main issues raised were the importance of accessibility through the town (e.g. access, parking, pavements, toilets); dial-a-ride, consideration of lower income households, the need for affordable/social housing and consideration of local businesses.

### The Vision

- The survey feedback suggested widespread support for the vision set out within the draft plan.
- 90% agree with the proposed vision for Oswestry to become 'a better place to live'.
- 86% agree with the proposed vision for Oswestry to become 'a better place for business'.
- 81% agree with the vision for Oswestry to become 'a healthier and more sustainable town'.
- 106 people made comments about the vision and themes suggested included:
  - Focus on thriving businesses and employment
  - Focus on environment and climate
  - Public transport and access.

### Area proposals

- 78% who gave a view, support the vision and opportunities for the Cambrian Gateway.
- 89% with an opinion support the vision and opportunities for the Church Street Quarter.

- 79% of those who responded to the question support the vision and opportunities for The Castle Quarter.
- 63% of those with an opinion support the vision and opportunities for Mile End.
- Very few disagree with the proposals set out but many provided comments for consideration.

### The Big Ideas

- The top 3 priorities for movement are make walking and cycling safer and more enjoyable, public transport hub and manage car parking.
- The top 3 priorities for placemaking are making the town centre shopping streets more attractive, Festival Square public space and enhancing Bailey Head/ Castle View public realm.
- The top priorities for development and investment are bringing the vacant building back into use, and the former Morrisons site.
- Not all people felt there were any ideas missing, but the top suggestions made were around parking, transport and movement for all needs, heritage, culture and leisure, and facilities for children and young people.
- The other feedback received included comments that Oswestry must meet the needs of residents and visitors, highlighting the importance of local services, culture and leisure and good supporting infrastructure.

## Next steps

The feedback obtained through the survey is very valuable and it will support the work of the Future Oswestry Group in making better informed investment decisions and with the prioritisation and targeting of resources. Overall support for the vision and clearer prioritisation of the big ideas and the proposals for each main location, means proposals can now be turned into firmer plans and more detailed projects. Updates will continue to be posted on Shropshire Council's Future Oswestry webpages and further engagement will follow at each key stage of implementation. In the meantime all enquiries can be made by email to: [Futureoswestry@shropshire.gov.uk](mailto:Futureoswestry@shropshire.gov.uk)

Analysis and report by the Feedback and Insight Team, Resources, Shropshire Council (May 2022). If you would like a more accessible copy of this report please email [TellUs@shropshire.gov.uk](mailto:TellUs@shropshire.gov.uk) or telephone Customer Services.