

Draft Oswestry Local Economic Growth Strategy 2020-2025

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Foreword

Shropshire Council is delighted to present the Oswestry Economic Growth Strategy, the development of which was a key action from the wider Economic Growth Strategy for Shropshire. This document will provide an economic focus for the town and surrounding areas and outlines the key actions that we will collectively be looking to deliver during this timeframe.

These strategies will help the Council to achieve its objectives and deliver the economic vision for Shropshire. This local economic growth strategy is fully aligned with the Local Plan Review 2019 and other key documents such as the Place Plans. The Local Economic Growth Strategy is an external investment document for the local area, which focuses on how economic growth is tailored in Oswestry.

Oswestry and its surrounding area provides a unique opportunity for businesses looking to invest and grow. As well as informing and guiding delivery, this strategy is seen as having a key role in encouraging growth, attracting new businesses and investment into not just the town, but also the surrounding area.



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Economic Growth Strategy for Shropshire 2017-2021

Our Economic Growth vision for Shropshire...

To be the best place to do business and invest, renowned for its pool of local talent and expertise. We will strive to maximise our economic potential and increase productivity by fully utilising the benefits of our special environment and high-quality assets.

Shropshire Council has 3 objectives for Economic growth:

- supporting the growth of new and existing businesses
- attracting inward investment
- developing and retaining talent and skills

There are five priority actions and targets to help deliver the vision from a local perspective:

1. Target actions and resources where there are economic opportunities
 2. Enable businesses to start, grow and succeed
 3. Deliver infrastructure to support growth
 4. Meet skills needs of business and people's aspirations for work
 5. Promote Oswestry to investors
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Shropshire Council's values and approach to growth will influence this strategy, effective engagement is necessary to communicate growth ambitions and the methods proposed to achieve them. Shropshire Council understands the need to work closely locally in the production of this strategy and to understand the local perspective of the needs and ambitions of Oswestry. This will help the collective delivery of a strategy in a commercial, enterprising and innovative way. However, it is recognised that Shropshire Council and local councils do not have control over all actions and activities that have been outlined in this strategy. Shropshire Council will therefore take a collaborative approach to working across the public and private sectors locally to open communication channels to enable discussions for the benefit of Oswestry's economy, businesses and residents.

Climate Change

Shropshire Council has declared a Climate Emergency and is taking active steps to develop a Climate Change Strategy to reduce its own carbon footprint and to adapt the services for which it is directly responsible. Shropshire Council will also use its direct influence through its regulatory and procurement roles to encourage others to adopt a rapid transition to net zero carbon. Finally, the Council will work with businesses and residents in Shropshire to support their efforts to tackle Climate Change by encouraging behavioural changes that will help reduce carbon emissions and build resilience to climate change.



1. Oswestry – A Local Profile

Oswestry is the second largest employment centre in Shropshire after Shrewsbury, strategically located close to the English-Welsh border and sitting on the main north south A483 route to Wales. The geographic location and economic profile of Oswestry provides a significant opportunity on which to promote and capitalise on.

It sits in a key strategic location in terms of transport links to the West Midlands and North Wales which also opens up the opportunities generated through cross border relationships, particularly in regard to infrastructure and skills. Work is actively being undertaken through the Marches Local Enterprise Partnership with Powys, Gwynedd and Ceredigion on cross border issues, such as transport and skills. The town acts as a gateway to the West and Oswestry, being located on the A5, is part of the Trans-European Network from Felixstowe to Holyhead which facilitates national and European freight movements from southern and eastern English seaports into Wales and Ireland.

Oswestry is a vibrant market town with a rich cultural heritage incorporating a mix of businesses operating across a variety of sectors from small independent retailers to large international businesses. It is a thriving centre which still retains an active and regular outdoor retail market as well a highly regarded livestock market which preserves the agricultural links to the town. Already home to life sciences, manufacturing, construction and logistics sectors,

companies based here include Arla Linstrandt Balloons, Aico, Lloyds Animal Feeds, Newgate Clocks, Oswestry Waste Paper, The Pickstock Group, Skyjack UK and the Robert Jones and Agnes Hunt Orthopaedic Hospital at Gobowen. Oswestry is also home to seven of the top 50 fastest growing companies in Shropshire according to annual turnover (Shropshire Growth Barometer, 2017foods.). These businesses fall across a range of sectors, including the construction, retail, automotive, manufacturing and food and drink sectors.

Oswestry has a strong tourism offer being a key town located in the north-west of the county and, being close to the border with Wales, this opens up the opportunity to develop this offer further.

Oswestry is set to benefit from the setting up of the High Streets Heritage Action Zone (HAZ) following a successful bid for government funding. The scheme will comprise of physical interventions, a cultural programme of events and projects and community engagement to ensure long sustainability beyond the four year HAZ programme.

Business Improvement District

Oswestry has an active Business Improvement District (BID). The vision of the Oswestry BID is leading a business led programme of development, growth and investment for Oswestry to deliver key objectives and projects. There is a varied mix of independent shops and markets which provides a good opportunity to build on the retail offer, particularly centred on attracting visitors to the town. The town has a high retail offer and, in terms of sectors, it is the largest with retail accounting for 19.1% of the total employment. Retail plays an important role in the Oswestry Economy providing amenities for the local residents and also serving as a shopping hub for the hinterland of the market town.

Future Oswestry Group

Future Oswestry group has been set up to review the priorities in Oswestry's 2020 Neighbourhood Plan and to help deliver activities and projects that will benefit the town, its residents and its businesses. Made up of representatives from Shropshire Council, Oswestry Town Council and Oswestry Business Improvement District (BID) the Future Oswestry Group held its inception meeting in May 2019 at the town's Guildhall. The group will help to deliver each organisation's activities and projects through working more closely together.

Oswestry – High Street Survey

An audit of businesses operating in Oswestry's main shopping streets was undertaken in August 2019 as part of a piece of research reviewing the vibrancy of Shropshire's main market towns and key settlements. The objective of this audit was to provide a snapshot of the vitality of the town.

A total of 348 businesses operate in the survey area, primarily in Bailey Street/Bailey Head (56), Beatrice Street (40), Church Street (58), Leg Street (37), Oswald Road (36), Willow Street (31), Cross Street/The Cross (32) and English Walls (23). Some non-consumer facing businesses based in offices above ground floor level businesses may be excluded from this count. Gross floor space allocated to these businesses is almost 54,200m¹.

The highest proportion of businesses operating in the town are comparison retailers², accounting for 30% of units and 35% of gross floor space. Within the comparison retail category, there are 13 clothes shops, 11 charity shops, seven mobile phone stores, six discount stores and five gift shops.

Retail services account for the second highest proportion of outlets at 19% (albeit for just 11% of floor space). Well represented in this category are hair and beauty salons (28 units), barbers (8 units) and opticians (5 units). There are also travel agents (6 units) in the town centre.

¹ Defined as stores selling a service rather than a product

² Defined as stores selling non-food/drink/tobacco products

There are 42 restaurants and takeaways in Oswestry town centre, which is the equivalent of 12% of all units in the town (8% of gross floor space). 11% of units and 9% of floor space is occupied by financial and business service providers. There are nine banks/building societies and nine estate agents.

In the tourism and leisure category, there is 1 hotel and 15 public houses/bars as well as 3 museums, a visitor attraction, an amusement arcade, a night club and a gym.

Representing a relatively small proportion of units (8%) but a much larger share of floor space (14%) in Oswestry town centre is the convenience retail category. The 27 outlets in this category comprise butchers (5 units), bakers/confectioners (6 units), health food shops (4 units) and supermarkets/general food stores (6 units). There is also a market, frozen food stores (2 units), a delicatessen and a greengrocer. Aldi, Morrison and Iceland all fall within the main shopping area of Oswestry.

9% of Oswestry town centre outlets are vacant (6% of gross floor space). There are 8 vacant units on Beatrice Street, 4 on Church Street and 3 each on Cross Street, English Walls, Oswald Street and Leg Street.

2. An Economic Vision for Oswestry

The vision for Oswestry has been formed collaboratively and informed by engagement with the town and parishes.

The economic vision for Oswestry is about enabling growth through the innovative use of existing assets and land to both attract and retain key businesses. Oswestry has a strong sense of place which is reflected in the economic portrait of the town. There is a real drive within the town to act on its economic ambitions with specific scope to attract new businesses, retain young people, provide higher skilled jobs, support the independent retailers, boost the night time economy and provide accommodation to encourage both visitors and businesses to invest.

A number of key themes were raised as part of the engagement with local stakeholders and all will be addressed within the appropriate priority sections of this strategy. A summary of the key themes is included below;

- Opportunities to promote Oswestry as a destination and a gateway with improvements to road network and gateway site
- Aspiration to capitalise on Oswestry's location, unique assets and cultural offer to raise the profile of Oswestry
- Enhancing the accommodation offer to attract and retain visitors
- Making sure that there is enough land to provide grow on space to attract and retain major employers
- Opportunities around the hospital and health clustering
- Development of a growth corridor

There is an identified lack of grow on space in Oswestry to allow for local company expansion which increases the risk of companies leaving. There have been viability issues in the past related to housing and commercial development which have resulted in low levels of housing and commercial space and employment land being brought forward.

However, Shropshire Council is working hard to unlock this land and commercial space to bring forward key sites for development.

In addition to the challenges outlined above, any future development in Oswestry will also need to recognise the presence of physical, heritage and environmental constraints such as the setting of the Old Oswestry Hillfort; sensitive landscapes to the north and west; and flood risk and accessibility issues to the south.



3. Case Study – Developing a gateway to Oswestry

A number of local, regional and national organisations are working together to deliver potential housing and employment land developments in Oswestry, Shropshire's second largest market town. Led by Shropshire Council, the work involves Homes England, Highways England, The Marches Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP), Oswestry Town Council, the Environment Agency, Oswestry BID and many other key stakeholders.

Ongoing work includes proposed improvements to Mile End roundabout, the development of the Oswestry Innovation Park, and the delivery of housing and employment land. This work provides an important opportunity to design quality developments as a focal point 'Gateway to Oswestry'.

Proposed improvements to the strategic road network at Mile End junction

Development within Oswestry has been heavily constrained by the existing capacity of the road network. Previous improvements to the Mile End junction addressed only existing traffic issues, and there has been a significant increase in traffic unrelated to proposed developments.

Improvements to the strategic highways network are required to bring forward planned housing and employment development that are facing significant infrastructure costs for traffic mitigation. This affects the viability of planned sites and local growth aspirations. Delays in the development of housing and the lack of serviced employment land threaten the role and function of the town and the wider rural hinterland and its sustainability.

In March 2019 the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) announced the award of £9.3m from the Housing Infrastructure Fund (HIF) to improve the capacity of the road network on the A5 at Mile End and improve the viability of planned housing developments. This follows a funding bid by Shropshire Council in 2018. The planned housing is crucial to support demand for employment land in the locality.

Shropshire Council has been working with Homes England and Highways England to agree the proposed design of the Mile End improvements and local stakeholders were invited to make comments on proposals through community consultation before the proposed preparation of a planning application.

The work undertaken on the remodelling of the strategic road network at Mile End junction as part of the Housing Infrastructure Fund (HIF) proposal has resulted in the development of an innovative solution, which opens land opportunities and would minimise disruption on the road network while the improvements are carried out.

Oswestry Innovation Park

The proposed remodelling of the Mile End roundabout and road network opens new opportunities for the Oswestry Innovation Park site, which are currently being explored. The potential for prospective employment and commercial development usage on the Oswestry Innovation Park is currently under investigation through feasibility and development appraisal work. Following this work, the masterplan for the site will be updated with indicative designs produced.

As part of the more detailed options appraisal work and masterplan for the sites within Shropshire Council ownership, including the Oswestry Innovation Park, options for sustainable links will be explored, including pedestrian and cycle access.

Oswestry Sustainable Urban Extension (SUE)

The Oswestry Sustainable Urban Extension (SUE) was identified in the adopted Core Strategy as a strategic location for development to help to meet the town's future housing and employment needs. The SUE will include the provision of approximately 900 new homes together with associated open space and community facilities. The site is allocated for residential development, although it is considered to also have potential for some commercial use.

4. Performance and Monitoring

The action plan contained within this document will be reviewed regularly and updated annually by Shropshire Council for the duration of this strategy.

5. References and Links

[Economic Growth Strategy for Shropshire 2017-2021](#)

[European Structural Investment Fund \(ESIF\) Strategy](#)

[Marches Strategic Economic Plan \(SEP\).](#)

[Marches Skills Plan 2017 - 2020](#)

[Site Allocations and Management of Development \(SAMDev\)](#)

[Shropshire Council Core Strategy \(2011\)](#)

[Local Plan Review 2016-2036](#)

[Shropshire Growth Barometer 2019](#)

[Place Plans](#)

[The Marches LEP Visitor Economy Strategy](#)

Annexe 1: Action Plans

The Local Economic Growth Strategies are a key action contained within the strategy. Delivering the vision from a local perspective will be managed through action plans contained within the strategy to:

1. Target actions and resources where there are economic opportunities
2. Enable businesses to start, grow and succeed
3. Deliver infrastructure to support growth
4. Meet skills needs of business and people's aspirations for work
5. Promote Oswestry to investors

Target actions and resources where there are economic opportunities

There are a number of key opportunities which have been identified through the preparation of this strategy. The three largest employment sectors in Oswestry are retail, education and manufacturing. These will provide the focus for Oswestry's future activity and guide the key actions to ensure that Shropshire Council maximises and promotes these opportunities for economic growth.

All development will need to take account of known infrastructure constraints and requirements as identified in the place plan and Local Development Framework implementation plan.

Major employment sites and growth corridors

There will be opportunities to bring forward new employment land to meet our economic needs and Shropshire Council will continue to work with developers and partners to identify and prioritise deliverable future sites. The Local Plan Review is currently taking place, and this provides the framework for housing and economic delivery ensuring that Shropshire Council has a plan-led approach to achieving sustainable development. The scale of future development proposed in Oswestry reflects its role as the principal employment, commercial and administrative centre in the north west of the county and the vision and objectives of the adopted Oswestry 2020 Town Plan.

Ambition	Action/Delivery	Partners	Timescale	Progress
Oswestry Innovation Park	<p>Part of large infrastructure development, Shropshire Council is supporting the implementation of the Oswestry Eastern Gateway sustainable urban extension through the delivery of strategic employment land to drive long term sustainability in Oswestry and create conditions for employment growth. The proposed Oswestry Innovation Park is a major employment area on the east side of the town adjacent to the Mile End roundabout. Previous work undertaken includes the preparation of a masterplan for the site and estimated costs to undertake the infrastructure works.</p> <p>Traffic capacity issues have been identified, there is an intensifying need to undertake mitigation improvements to the strategic road network (A5/A453).</p> <p>Options for highways solutions for Mile End and consideration of next steps.</p>	Shropshire Council	Short/Medium	
Provision of business and incubation space	Shropshire Council has recently undertaken a market assessment for grow on/incubation space across the county.	Shropshire Council	Short/Medium	
Opportunities around the RJAH Orthopaedic hospital	Opportunities regarding the emerging innovation healthcare sector will be explored.	Shropshire Council	Short/Medium	

<p>Identify key employment sites Around 45 hectares* of employment land is in the SAMDEV plan period 2006-2026. Those in SAMDEV already identified – need promoting</p>	<p>Options appraisal of development sites. Continue working with developers and partners to identify and prioritise future sites and opportunities. Outcome of discussions with other landowners and business parks will determine partner opportunities. Shropshire Council is undertaking a development appraisal for the sites.</p>	<p>Shropshire Council</p>	<p>Short/Medium</p>	
<p>A5 Corridor/Oswestry Growth Corridor</p>	<p>To work with partners to develop the Oswestry Corridor Action Plan to facilitate economic development in the short, medium and long-term to instigate business expansion and attract new businesses to the area. Continue to explore opportunities to improve strategic road network.</p>	<p>Shropshire Council</p>	<p>Short/Medium</p>	
<p>Development at the Park Hall Estate</p>	<p>There are opportunities for mixed use and housing development (including key worker accommodation) to be considered as part of Local Plan Review which will include development appraisal work to support indicative master planning.</p>	<p>Shropshire Council</p>	<p>Short/Medium</p>	

Target growing and under-represented sectors

There are several sectors in Shropshire which are performing well. The three largest employment sectors in Oswestry are retail, education and manufacturing. Together these sectors account for 41% of employment within the town. Other sectors that make up the profile of Oswestry include accommodation, food services, health, wholesale, arts, entertainment and recreation, transport and storage, professional and business services and scientific and technical.

Specific to Oswestry is the Robert Jones and Agnes Hunt Orthopaedic Hospital which is located approximately two miles from Oswestry Town Centre, is a major employer within the health sector and represents the opportunity to further support the growth and innovative advancements within this sector.

Six existing sectors have been identified in the Economic Growth Strategy as having specific growth potential, with an emphasis on technologies and innovation.

<http://www.investinshropshire.co.uk/key-shropshire-sectors/>

- Advanced Manufacturing including Engineering and Agri-tech
- Food and Drink Processing
- Health and Social Care
- Visitor Economy (and heritage-based business)
- Environmental Science and Technologies
- Creative and Digital Industries

Shropshire Council has also identified a number of under-represented sectors that link well with our sectoral strengths in Shropshire, which are Professional, Business Services and Construction.

Ambition	Action / Delivery	Partners	Timescale	Progress
To identify and support existing sectors and identify cluster opportunities and define sectoral strengths	To prepare sectoral propositions aligned to identify target and growing sectors in the Economic Growth Strategy. http://www.investinshropshire.co.uk/key-shropshire-sectors/	Shropshire Council Business Growth and Investment Team	Immediate	
Produce a Cultural Strategy for Shropshire	Shropshire Council is producing a new Cultural Strategy for Shropshire will be published by Sept 2020	Shropshire Council	Immediate	
Work with the Marches LEP to produce a Visitor Economy Strategy	Shropshire Council is exploring ways of assisting the Local Enterprise Partnership with the production of a Marches Visitor Economy Strategy 2020 The Marches LEP Visitor Economy Strategy	Marches LEP Shropshire Council	Immediate	
Work with the Marches LEP to produce a Local Industrial Strategy.	The Marches LEP has produced a Strategic Economic Plan. Aspirations of key market towns in Shropshire will form part of this Plan. Local Industrial Strategy for the Marches area is being produced looking at sector strengths within the LEP. https://www.marcheslep.org.uk/what-we-do/economic-plan/	Marches LEP Shropshire Council	Short/Medium	

Identifying External Funding Opportunities

This Strategy looks to outline Oswestry's aspiration for Economic Growth helping to identify appropriate funding opportunities which may be suitable to support this.

Investment provided through the UK Government, European and other funding bodies, including the Growth Deal, is already being utilised positively to deliver Economic Growth across the County. This strategy outlines several projects which Shropshire Council can begin to map against different funding sources, fully utilising funding secured for economic growth projects for the benefit of Oswestry. Shropshire Council is working with the Marches LEP to understand the opportunities for funding post Brexit.³

Working in partnership with the Town Council and the surrounding areas, we can collectively look at exploring suitable external funding and private sector investment into the area.

For further up to date information on funding and grants, please contact the Marches Growth Hub.

<https://www.marchesgrowthhub.co.uk/about-us/shropshire/>

³ As the implications of Brexit become clear, Shropshire Council will work across the sector profile of Oswestry to fully understand opportunities and issues that can specifically benefit businesses in Oswestry. This will include implications for the agricultural sector in particular and Shropshire Council will engage with both local and national organisations to capture their full input, information and intelligence

Enable Businesses to Start, Grow and Succeed

Business support is now delivered across the Marches through the Marches Growth Hub which supports businesses across Shropshire; helping them to start, grow and succeed, whilst also helping our county to stimulate, energise and celebrate the enterprise, innovation and successes of our business community. Shropshire benefits from having its own Growth Hub located at the Shropshire Food Enterprise Centre, Shrewsbury.

Continuing effective engagement and collaboration through our key account management with larger businesses in Oswestry is a key focus for the Economic Growth team and the Business Growth and Investment Team. This includes identifying supply chain opportunities whilst also supporting the growth potential of existing Small Medium Enterprises (SMEs) to enable expansion to larger business status.

Ambition	Action / Delivery	Partners	Timescale	Progress
Provision of outreach business support	Develop the hub's outreach programme of business support provision. Explore outreach delivery options in Oswestry and agree a plan of activities and events for the town, which will include one-to-one surgeries in libraries.	Shropshire Council Business Growth and Investment Team	Short/Medium	
	The Shropshire Growth Hub is visiting Industrial/Enterprise Parks based on feedback from businesses that the outreach aspect of the Growth Hub support prompted their engagement.	Shropshire Council Business Growth and Investment Team	Short/Medium	
	Shropshire Council's Business Growth and Investment Team is in discussion with the Shropshire Chamber of Commerce for a joint outreach programme where all partners visit market towns on a Roadshow basis. Currently the option of utilising any redundant mobile libraries to re-configure and repurpose is being explored.	Shropshire Council Business Growth and Investment Team	Short/Medium	
	Continue to support the Marches LEP in the delivery of the Growth Hub.	Shropshire Council Business Growth and Investment Team	Short/Medium	

Support for existing businesses alongside new businesses	The Growth Hub will engage with Town Councils and meetings be arranged with each town clerk to discuss local business support provision.	Shropshire Council Business Growth and Investment Team	Short/Medium	
	To identify fast growing companies and to develop and tailor the business support offer to the Oswestry economic profile.	Shropshire Council Business Growth and Investment Team	Short/Medium	
Succession Planning with new business and community leaders to ensure a vibrant town centre	The Growth Hub is working with HR Shropshire and Shropshire Youth Support Trust (SYST) on an agreed outreach programme of events and activities and will look at how to incorporate succession planning themed events into the programme.	Shropshire Council Business Growth and Investment Team	Short/Medium	
Provision of Incubation Units	There is demand for workshops / office space with limited provision. Supporting incubation and grow on provision within market towns remains a strategic objective.	Shropshire Council Business Growth and investment Team	Short/Medium	
Business Board	To continue to work with the Shropshire Business Board as a key partner in delivering our growth agenda.	Shropshire Council	Immediate	

Deliver Infrastructure to Support Growth

Shropshire Council's Strategic Infrastructure Forum maintains an overview of all the economic growth and infrastructure projects which are led by the council or where the council can enable partners to deliver.

This strategy will be supported by the Oswestry and surrounding area Place Plan. The purpose of the Place Plan is to help Shropshire Council to deliver its Local Development Framework and its Economic Growth Strategy. To do this, Place Plans identify and prioritise infrastructure needs within their local area and identify partners and funding sources to support delivery. There are many facilities and assets that contribute to a place and the Council's role in place shaping is an important one as it creates the conditions and environment that attracts people and businesses to the area. The Oswestry Place Plan is an intrinsic part of helping us to achieve growth within the local economy, through the provision of public services and use of public assets.

Oswestry Growth Corridor

The Marches LEP has produced a Strategic Corridors Study, supported by the three Local Authorities, which is informing the Midlands Connect Programme. Through the Marches LEP we have identified strategic transport corridors which are vital to deliver growth across the Marches area, of which Oswestry is located on one of these identified corridors.

Transport Infrastructure

Transport infrastructure in the north of the county is of particular regional importance. Shropshire Council will continue working closely with statutory bodies such as Highways England to improve and secure funding for strategic road networks that are key for supporting growth in Oswestry.

Ambition	Action / Delivery	Partners	Timescale	Progress
Improvements to strategic road network at Mile End	Ongoing discussions with Highways England regarding future investments to improve the road network to unlock planned and future housing and employment development opportunities. Specific emphasis needed on prioritising investment along strategic corridors and growth zones, utilising existing road and rail connections.	Shropshire Council Marches LEP	Short/Medium	
Public transport hub with links to centre	To explore feasibility.	Shropshire Council	Short/Medium	
Dual Carriage A5	First phase of upgrades to the A5/A483 have been completed to increase traffic capacity and resolving pinch points.	Shropshire Council	Short/Medium	
Improvements to traffic flow into and out of Oswestry and the town centre	Improvements through a better designed traffic management system – future funding.	Shropshire Council	Short/Medium	

Digital Connectivity

Digital connectivity is now fundamental for business. Provision and reliability of the digital network will enable all aspects of business to operate and grow in Oswestry and the surrounding rural area.

Ambition	Action / Delivery	Partners	Timescale	Progress
High-speed broadband outside of town to support businesses operating in the rural hinterland	<p>The connecting Shropshire programme will continue to put forward the case for greater investment in mobile and broadband coverage.</p> <p>Shropshire Council area now has around 90% coverage of superfast broadband, and 98% of premises could have access to superfast broadband by the end of all current contracts (with Airband and BT/Openreach) in 2021.</p> <p>There is a need to identify key corridors that will require ultrafast/ full fibre/ 5G requirements beyond superfast contract delivery.</p> <p>The Marches and Gloucestershire Business Broadband Grant Scheme provides up to £25,000 for local eligible businesses to fund the installation of superfast broadband connections. The funding is designed to support qualifying businesses that cannot access superfast broadband currently and are not within any clearly defined roll out plans to receive superfast broadband.</p> <p>The grant will fund the associated capital costs of delivery and installation of the solution to premises. Applicants are responsible for paying the monthly cost through the contract term.</p>	Shropshire Council Connecting Shropshire Team	Short/Medium	

Utilities Capacity

Understanding capacity constraints and exploring ways of addressing these where possible will be key to improving infrastructure to support growth.

Ambition	Action / Delivery	Lead	Timescale	Progress
Improvements to energy network	Continue to work with SP Energy Network on the proposed Oswestry to Wem electricity reinforcement. SP Energy network plan upgrade in 2022.	Shropshire Council Utility Partners	Short/Medium	
Explore options for energy efficiencies in the town	Energy study has been undertaken by ENCRAFT to explore the energy supply and generation options available. Looking internally at the outcomes. Possibly link to Marches Energy Strategy and align with Strategic Infrastructure Forum. Alternative energy sources – explore possible projects around solar PV. Viability needs to be tested.	Shropshire Council	Short/Medium	

Housing

The availability of housing of the right type, quality and cost to meet the needs of Oswestry is an important consideration for businesses so that employees are able to secure the housing they need. The level of development outlined in the SAMDev is ambitious but is considered consistent with the local growth aspirations and the environmental and physical capacity of the town.

Ambition	Action / Delivery	Lead	Timescale	Progress
Oswestry has aspirations for housing growth. There is an aspiration for the availability of housing of the right type, quality and cost which ensures that Oswestry is an attractive place to live and work. The Local Plan Review 2016-2036 Identifies 47 dwellings having now been completed, with a further 1,559 dwellings committed (Planning	<p>Shropshire Council will support the supply of housing through a plan led approach and allocation of strategic sites for sustainable development (SAMDev).</p> <p>Allocated housing sites in the SAMDev include;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Oswestry SUE – Housing infrastructure Fund (HIF) successfully applied for to support this development• Land off Whittington Road• Former Oswestry Leisure Centre• The Cottams, Morda Road• Land South of the Cemetery• Alexandra Road• Richard Burbidge• Additional Windfall Sites (Sites unknown) <p>There will be a coordinated approach to the delivery of this scheme alongside other sites to ensure development contributes appropriately to the delivery of necessary highway improvements around the town.</p> <p>The Oswestry Sustainable Urban Extension (SUE) will accommodate up to 900 homes and associated ancillary development. This major mixed-use urban extension was allocated in the existing Local Plan to the south east of</p>	Shropshire Council Local Plan delivery framework.	Medium	

<p>Permission, Prior Approval or Allocation).</p> <p>Therefore, a further 194 dwellings will need to be identified on new housing sites to support the housing growth objectives of the Local Plan Review 2019.</p>	<p>Oswestry. The scale and complexity of the scheme and the need for significant infrastructure investment has delayed delivery to date, but work is expected to commence during the first part of the Local Plan Review period. New development proposals will need to complement the offer provided by this urban extension. The viability of housing developments has been tested by traffic mitigation requirements for Mile End Traffic Improvements.</p> <p>Allocations for Gobowen, Knockin, Llanymynech, Pant, Ruyton XI Towns, St Martins, Whittington and community clusters can be found in the SAMDev</p> <p>All sites coming forward need to have full fibre broadband infrastructure installed at build stage.</p>			
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Local Place Infrastructure – Economic Growth Opportunities

The Council's role in place shaping is important to achieving economic growth opportunities as it helps create the conditions to attract people and businesses to an area.

Ambition	Action / Delivery	Lead	Timescale	Progress
Oswestry Innovation Park Delivery of strategic employment land to drive long-term sustainability in Oswestry and create the conditions for employment growth. As development takes place, appropriate infrastructure must be provided. This will include highways, transport, drainage, water and electricity, etc. Additional work required to support and develop proposals with partners.	Project under discussion as part of the One Public Estate Programme for Shropshire and Telford and Wrekin. Shropshire Council is working with the Environment Agency and has successfully secured funding to support development appraisal work. This will support the potential for planned developments in Oswestry, which is a key priority identified within the Council's Economic Growth Strategy.	Shropshire Council, private sector	Short/Medium	
Strategic road network at Mile End Ongoing discussions with Highways England regarding future investments to improve the road network to unlock planned and future housing and employment development opportunities. Housing Infrastructure Fund (HIF) for Mile End has now agreed with Homes England. Pre-commencement conditions are being progressed	Project under discussion. Shropshire Council has a statutory duty to ensure that appropriate infrastructure (e.g. housing, school places, Highways works, etc.) is provided as part of any development. There will be opportunities to align Highways infrastructure with drainage and flood risk delivery. Highways England has acknowledged the importance and priority of this project to the delivery of growth in Oswestry and is working with Shropshire Council to enable delivery.	Shropshire Council, Highways England, Town and Parish Councils	Short/Medium	

<p>Oswestry Sustainable Urban Extension</p> <p>As development takes place, appropriate infrastructure must be provided. Viability of any housing developments will be tested by traffic mitigation requirements (links in to the HIF bid for Mile End roundabout, as above). Local highways mitigations to include: New road link between Middleton Road and Shrewsbury Road; Middleton Road speed restrictions, to include signs and chicanes, to slow down traffic as a result of new housing build; zebra crossing at the top of Cabin Lane and traffic calming on College Road. Further work identified with the Environment Agency to test modelling for surface water and waste water treatment capacity.</p>	<p>Project under discussion. Shropshire Council has a statutory duty to ensure that appropriate infrastructure (e.g. housing, school places, Highways works, etc.) is provided as part of any development.</p> <p>Work with J Ross and Mosaic Housing, which will support housing delivery, and is linked to the HIF bid, is underway.</p> <p>Highways England acknowledge the importance and priority of this project to the delivery of growth in Oswestry and is working with Shropshire Council to enable delivery.</p>	<p>Shropshire Council, Highways England, Environment Agency and private sector</p>	<p>Short/Medium</p>	
<p>Park Hall</p> <p>Opportunities for mixed use and housing development (including key worker accommodation) to be considered as part of the Local Plan Review. Development appraisal work required to support indicative master planning to identify potential scale of housing and mixed-use development. Any development will need to give specific consideration</p>	<p>Project under discussion Shropshire Council has a statutory duty to ensure that appropriate infrastructure (e.g. housing, school places, Highways works, etc.) is provided as part of any development.</p> <p>The Environment Agency, working with Severn Trent Water, will be working to develop an Integrated Drainage Strategy to identify an appropriate package of infrastructure measures.</p> <p>This work has been supported through One</p>	<p>Shropshire Council, Highways England, Environment Agency, private sector Town Council Whittington Parish Council</p>	<p>Short/Medium</p>	

<p>to transport, pedestrian and cycle links between Gobowen Station, the orthopaedic hospital, Derwen College, Park Hall, Whittington, and Oswestry Town Centre. There is interest in a tram link from the hospital, and a small platform at Towpath Bridge.</p>	<p>Public Estate monies. Indicative master planning work is underway. Highways England is yet to understand the detailed transport implications of these emerging proposals but is committed to work with Shropshire Council to identify any needs arising.</p>	<p>Selattyn & Gobowen Parish Council</p>		
<p>Development of small business units, incubator units and micro business support facilities (Oswestry Rural and Oswestry Town)</p>	<p>Advice available through the Business Support team at Shropshire Council, and through the Growth Hub. The new Oswestry BID will promote any local Growth Hub activities. Strong links to the development of the Innovation Park to be explored as part of the development appraisal work planned.</p>	<p>Shropshire Council Town council Oswestry BID</p>	<p>Short/Medium</p>	
<p>Creation of hub for small businesses through the provision of small office units, potentially linked to Gobowen Library and hub</p>	<p>Advice available through the Business Support team at Shropshire Council, and through the Growth Hub. Rural business clinics have been previously piloted at Gobowen Hub.</p>	<p>Parish Council Shropshire Council</p>	<p>Short/Medium</p>	
<p>Oswestry Showground – upgrade of site recognising the importance of the site to the local economy and tourism. Feasibility study required (Whittington / Town Council)</p>	<p>Oswestry Showground lead. May also link in with the activities of the new Oswestry BID.</p>	<p>Showground management committee</p>	<p>Short/Medium</p>	
<p>Develop a tourism strategy to provide economies around funding, resources, signposting, and marketing</p>	<p>Parish lead, in conjunction with partners OBT and Oswestry BID. Future work will be outlined by partners, with the BID inputting. Use WIFI geo sensing to identify footfall and movement</p>	<p>Town Council, OBT, Oswestry BID</p>	<p>Short/Medium</p>	

	in the town. Oswestry BID website is also under development, providing increased visibility for businesses.			
Provision of a hotel to attract visitors to stay overnight and also provide business accommodation. Need for modern quality accommodation	Shropshire Council Economic Growth Team is looking to carry out a need and demand hotel study.	Shropshire Council	Short/Medium	
Links with Pontcysllte World Heritage Site	Develop relationships with WHS networks to identify opportunities to maximise the economic benefits to Oswestry and the surrounding areas.	Shropshire Council Heritage and Culture Team	Short/Medium	

Meet Skills Needs and People's Aspirations for Work

As referenced in the Economic Growth Strategy for Shropshire 2017-2021 Shropshire Council will need to support potential across all segments of the working age population to maximise the full economic output. A skills strategy has been produced which aligns with the Marches LEP skills strategy and Shropshire Council's own action plan.

Ambition	Action / Delivery	Lead	Timescale	Progress
Higher skilled jobs to not only attract a workforce but also to retain young people	To work closely with local schools and colleges to facilitate relationships and foster entrepreneurship so that young people in Oswestry are aware of future opportunities within Shropshire. A skills strategy has been produced which aligns with the Marches LEP skills strategy and our own action plan.	Shropshire Council Enterprise Coordinator	Short/Medium	
Retention of young people within the town and support with skills	Oswestry Secondary School has been matched with an Enterprise Adviser volunteer at a senior level in business who advises the school on their career's guidance strategy and plans, and who assists with business engagement in careers activities in schools. Careers activities have been expanded in school.	Shropshire Council Enterprise Coordinator	Short/Medium	
Look at long term solutions to increase skills through North Shropshire College – Oswestry Campus, Secondary schools, Apprenticeship opportunities and work placements	To work closely with local schools and colleges to facilitate relationships and foster entrepreneurship so that young people in Oswestry are aware of future opportunities within Shropshire. Derwen College in Gobowen are currently expanding and creating a business training hub.	Shropshire Council	Short/Medium	

Promote Oswestry to Investors

This strategy represents the opportunity for Oswestry and its surrounding area to present a clear identity and outlines a prospectus for investors, identifying areas of constraints where intervention can help unlock growth and capitalise on opportunities.

Shropshire Council is preparing an investment proposition which will outline key investment sites, sector propositions and development potential. This will give potential investors and businesses the information they need to show why they should invest/locate/work in our county. This strategy will form an important part of this investment proposition.

Ambition	Action / Delivery	Partners	Timescale	Progress
Promote Oswestry, both as destination and an investment	Production of a locally produced Invest in Oswestry proposition/destination management plan. Invest in Shropshire	Shropshire Council	Immediate	
	Attract inward investment to Oswestry and its key growth sectors linking with the Business Growth and Investment Team to support new business in Oswestry	Shropshire Council Business Investment Team Marches Growth Hub Oswestry Business Improvement District	Short/Medium	
	Produce a new Cultural Strategy for Shropshire – September 2020	Shropshire Council	Short/Medium	
	Support the production of the Marches Visitor Economy Strategy The Marches LEP Visitor Economy Strategy	Marches LEP Shropshire Council	Immediate	

Draft Oswestry Local Economic Growth Strategy 2020-2025

Supporting information

For more information on Shropshire Council's Economic Growth Strategy, please go to:

<http://www.investinshropshire.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/Economic-Growth-Strategy-for-Shropshire-2017-2021.pdf>

For more information on Shropshire Council Growth Hub please go to:

<https://www.marchesgrowthhub.co.uk/about-us/shropshire/>

For more information on Shropshire Council Investment Propositions, please go to:

<http://www.investinshropshire.co.uk/>

For information on Marches LEP, please go to:

<https://www.marcheslep.org.uk/what-we-do/economic-plan/>

For more information on Shropshire Council's planning policies, please go to:

<https://www.shropshire.gov.uk/planning-policy/>

For more information on Place Plans, please go to:

<http://www.shropshire.gov.uk/place-plans>

or contact your Place Plan Officer via PlacePlans@shropshire.gov.uk



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