



Submission to Shropshire Council 2026-2038 Local Transport Plan 4 (LTP-4) Consultation

February 2025

Introduction

1. Alongside a strongly motivated group of local people Baschurch Station Campaign Group and Baschurch Parish Council have prepared a high-level case for opening Baschurch Station on the Chester-Shrewsbury railway route.
2. This summarises the station's strategic case in sustainably widening connectivity and accessibility for today's rural community, unlocking further housing growth, and contributing to Net Zero targets.
3. The scheme would actively align with Shropshire Council's policies to reduce car travel and promote sustainable travel, including to and from key educational and leisure facilities.
4. Whilst the station's early Benefit Cost Ratio (BCR) is c. £1+ in value for £1 in cost, it is consistent with the Department for Transport's (DfT) focus on strategic outputs and outcomes.
5. This paper makes the case for inclusion of Baschurch Station as an aspirational scheme in LTP-4 and prospective development of its formal Business Case together with Shropshire Council.

Strategic Case

6. The catchment of c. 5,000+ residents in Baschurch, Bomere Heath, Harner Hill, Hopton, Myddle, Ruyton-XI Towns, Nesscliffe and Walford is underserved by the National Rail Network.
7. This could extend beyond rail industry model assumptions to add c. 1,700 people west of the A5 (Klinnerley, Knockin), reflecting medical and fire service catchments in this part of rural Shropshire.
8. Regional education facilities and leisure attractions in the catchment are largely inaccessible by rail e.g. Walford College (agriculture, engineering, horticulture) and PGL Boreatton Adventure Park.
9. Access to principal rail services is distant, at Shrewsbury (9 miles S), Gobowen (13 miles N) and Yorton (6 miles E/1 train per 2 hours), whilst Baschurch-Shrewsbury buses take c. 30-37 minutes.
10. By contrast rail journey times from Baschurch to Shrewsbury could be as swift as 10 minutes.
11. Baschurch Station would meet government and Shropshire Council travel strategies including 'Shrewsbury Moves' (2024) which seeks to discourage car-based access to Shrewsbury Station.
12. The Draft 2016-2038 Shropshire Local Plan, rejected by the Planning Inspectorate in January 2025, proposed 360 new homes/c. 800 people in Baschurch as a Community Hub Settlement.
13. In December 2024 the Government mandated 34% growth in Shropshire housing targets beyond existing plans, which could increase new homes around Baschurch to 480-plus/c. 1100 people, a c. 22% growth in the station catchment population.
14. A substantively better-rail-connected Baschurch could thus prospectively unlock, facilitate and be key to the sustainability of such further Shropshire growth.
15. Baschurch Station is not within current rail industry strategic planning, which is focused on faster Chester-Shrewsbury-Cardiff/Birmingham journeys and new Liverpool-Shrewsbury services.
16. However, Baschurch Station calls may be feasible with Transport for Wales' (TfW) faster-accelerating new trains and be incorporated into such new services.

17. Clearly detailed train timetable and performance planning would be necessary to progress the station concept with Network Rail, TFW, West Midlands Trains and Open Access operator WSMR.

Economic Case

18. With 1 train per hour Baschurch Station is forecast to generate c. 95,000 rail trips p.a., c. 150 return passengers per day, 65% new to rail, assuming delivery of the rejected Local Plan's 360 homes.
19. This passenger volume takes account of demand for Baschurch Station as a destination serving educational facilities such as Walford College, Adcote School and PGL Boreatton Park.
20. With an assumed capital cost of £15m and 56% risk applied as required by DfT appraisal guidance, Baschurch Station achieves a Benefit Cost Ratio (BCR) of c.0.96.
21. This BCR takes account of abstraction of existing passengers to Baschurch from existing stations, representing c. 35% of demand, many of whom may be reducing their highway usage in the process.
22. It assumes abstraction from bus service 576 Oswestry-Shrewsbury is matched by new passengers to the station, with no increase in Shropshire Council subsidy (a view shared by Council officers).
23. The new government housing targets, with a further c.120 houses beyond the rejected Local Plan, and student numbers growing to Walford College capacity would raise the prospective BCR to c.1.37, closer to the DfT's 'Medium' Value for Money threshold of 1.5.

Summary

24. Baschurch Parish Council believes Baschurch Station is key to sustainable housing growth and its case sufficient for inclusion as an aspirational project within Shropshire's Local Transport Plan 4.
25. The station would attract 'new to rail' passengers, reduce car journeys, support UK and local Net Zero and 'Shrewsbury Moves' objectives as well as further expanded Local Plan housing growth.
26. It is not currently within rail industry plans, and Baschurch Parish Council does not underestimate the challenges of reaching agreement with the industry on its merits and delivery.
27. Progress will depend on the development of a DfT-compliant business case, together with consideration of scheme promotion by Shropshire Council as the transport authority.
28. The Parish Council suggests preparation of a formal 'Strategic Outline Case' is now warranted and is willing to work with Shropshire Council and others to examine its joint funding.



Location on Chester-Wrexham-Gobowen-Shrewsbury Line