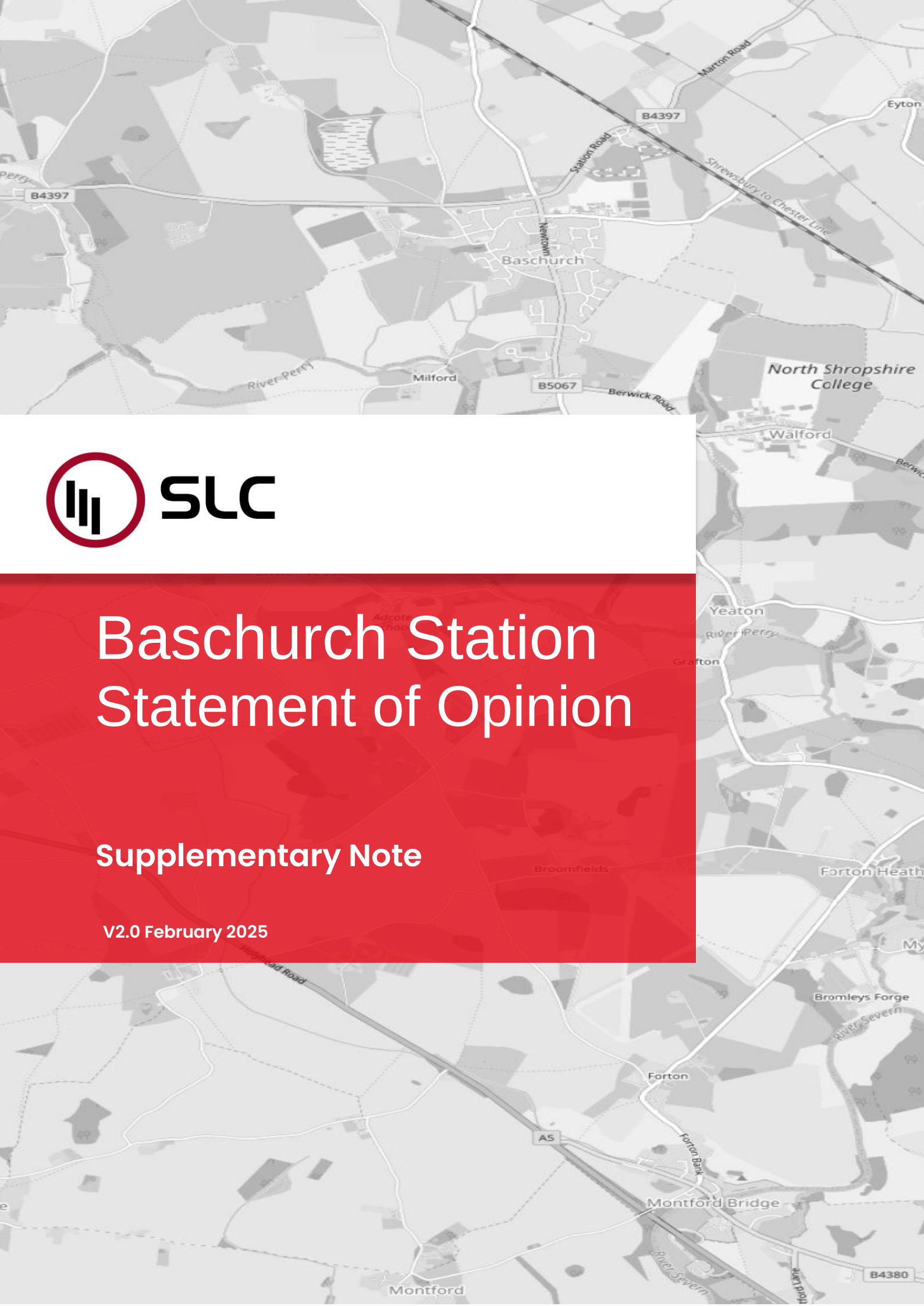

SLC

Baschurch Station
Statement of Opinion

Supplementary Note

V2.0 February 2025

Content

Document Control

Version Control

Version No.	Date	Created/Modified by	Notes
V 1.0	22.10.2024	Andrew Helm	First Draft
V 1.1	08.12.2024	Andrew Helm	Issued Draft
V 2.0	26.02.2025	Ian Baxter	Final Issue

Approvals

Version No.	Name of approver	Title & organisation	Date
V 1.1	Clare Horton	Strategy Manager	06.12.2024
V 2.0	Ian Baxter	Strategy Director	26.02.2025

Executive Summary

1. SLC Rail was commissioned by Baschurch Parish Council (BPC) in late 2023 to produce a high-level 'Statement of Opinion' on the case for reopening a railway station at Baschurch. This was based on indicative modelling, judgement and SLC experience of multiple station openings, and was not a 'Strategic Outline Case' (SOC) under the Department for Transport's (DfT) Transport Appraisal Guidance (TAG) given the extensive scale and cost of such a piece of work.

2. This first analysis concluded that Baschurch station would align with Shropshire Council and national strategic policies to promote sustainable housing growth and alternatives to car usage.

3. However, assessed demand, capital and operational costs generated a prospective Benefit Cost Ratio (BCR) of under 1.0 which would represent 'poor value-for-money' (VFM) under DfT TAG criteria which generally suggest a 'medium' to 'high' VFM BCR of c. 1.5-2.0+ for progression of new stations.

4. Feedback from the Parish Council on the Statement of Opinion focused on whether the BCR may be strengthened via :

    a) A more granulated assessment of the geography and size of Baschurch's potential catchment, considered by BPC to be egg-shaped rather than circular, extending further west towards the A5.

    b) Significant potential for inbound traffic associated with local area educational facilities.

    c) A potential volume of new bus-rail interchange at the station which would be net positive rather than abstracting from the overall bus service demand.

5. SLC Rail thus undertook further analysis resulting in this supplementary note, including :

    a) An alternative approach to catchment demand modelling, including assessment of the ratio of 'new to rail' demand compared to abstraction from other stations - a key element when any formal business case is prepared.

    b) Consultation with local area educational/leisure facilities to determine demand potential.

    c) Discussions with Shropshire Council public transport officers on the impact of the station on the publicly funded 576 Oswestry – Ryton-Xl-Towns-Baschurch-Shrewsbury bus service.

Key Conclusions

6. **Catchment** - The alternative catchment model confirms that Baschurch has a broadly egg-shaped catchment extending west, but with the number of journeys generated from that catchment broadly similar to that produced by the previous model.

7. **New to Rail/Abstraction** - The supplemental modelling estimates c. 65% of travel from Baschurch would be 'new to rail', a positive scenario, with c. 35% existing rail users abstracted from other stations. Abstraction was not netted off in the initial economic analysis as the previous catchment trip-rate model could not estimate its impact. This percentage split is not unusual for any new station (and is modest compared to a number of cases for subsequently delivered new stations) but does further challenge the potential BCR for Baschurch.

8. **In-bound educational demand**

   a) The scale of potential inbound travel into Baschurch is not fully reflected by either of the two industry modelling approaches which both principally use a form of benchmarking against other local stations to predict likely demand.

   b) At this pre-formal Business Case stage such benchmarking is inevitably subjective – Gobowen, for example, serves the c. 20,000 populations of Oswestry and Gobowen, significantly larger than the Baschurch catchment, whilst stations on the Crewe line have different service patterns.

   c) However, after discussions with Adcote School and Walford College identifying significant potential for inbound trips from the student cohort, our conclusion is that overlaying of the inbound educational traffic at Baschurch is justifiable and can support the station's BCR (although in Strategic Outline Case modelling it will be important to ensure this is not 'double counted' alongside overall inbound demand).

   d) Student journeys would be focused in peak AM and PM times, which could impact upon train capacity requiring train lengthening on key journeys. This operating cost impact has not been factored into the economics and thus remains a downside risk. In other words once the additional operating cost of running the extra train vehicles is factored in the BCR may fall.

   e) At the Boreatton Park Outdoor Activity Centre the dispersal of trip origins, the wider age range of students and the occasional nature of student attendance suggest that the potential here is more limited and more likely to be from resident staff making outbound trips.

9. **Bus services** - Shropshire Council officers consider the impact of the station on bus revenues to be neutral, although there may be a risk of increased operating costs if the schedules of the buses were to be impacted significantly by the need to connect with the train services (e.g. if more vehicles or staff were required).

Scheme Economics

10. The range of factors assessed in this review generate both BCR reductions and uplifts, with an overall increase to 1.05 i.e. Baschurch station could return £1.05 for every £1 invested in it. This is made up of:

    a) Updates of appraisal parameters to the latest DfT guidance which increase the 'base' BCR in the initial Statement of Opinion from 0.85 to 0.95.

    b) Removing those trips/revenue at Baschurch abstracted from existing passenger journeys already using other stations reduces the BCR to 0.50.

    c) Adding in potential inbound demand from local educational facilities increases the BCR by 0.55 back up to 1.05. This assumes that Baschurch station acts as an enabler for Walford College to double its student cohort and that all of these new students use rail.

    d) As noted at 8(d) the cost of any train lengthening to cater for peaked student demand is not factored into the economics at this stage.

11. The base local catchment model assumes existing Local Plan housing commitments in the Baschurch area are delivered. For every 100 additional homes built within the Baschurch station walk-in catchment the BCR raises by 0.15. This offers a significant opportunity to strengthen the scheme's case given the government's 2024 requirement for much increased housing delivery numbers beyond those such as contained in the draft Shropshire 2016-2038 Local Plan.

Summary

12. The economic case for the scheme remains challenging.
13. Inclusion of inbound student demand compensates for netted off abstraction but could require the scheme to bear the incremental operating cost of train lengthening to cater for it.
14. Housing growth around the station site going hand-in-hand with its development can increase the scheme BCR and provide some insulation to this risk of increased operating cost.
15. At this early, high-level stage the evidence suggests that the station's BCR is likely to be around 1.05+ depending on the combination of assumptions made around demand, housing and operating cost.

In parallel with this supplementary note SLC Rail has produced a draft commentary for Baschurch Parish Council to submit to Shropshire Council's consultation process for its Local Transport Plan 4 (expected to commence during 2025). Taking account of this second stage of work this suggests inclusion of the Baschurch Station ambition within LTP4 and consideration of progression to a formal Strategic Outline Case.

SLC Rail
Birmingham
February 2025

1 Introduction

1.1 SLC Rail was commissioned in late 2023 by Baschurch Parish Council to produce a Statement of Opinion on the potential strength of the business case for reopening a railway station at Baschurch, between Shrewsbury and Gobowen on the Marches Line.

1.2 This commission was completed in early 2024 and indicated:

a) **Strategic Case** - A strong strategic case for the station, supportive as it is of policies to reduce car travel and promote sustainable travel.

b) **Benefit Cost Ratio** - A prospective Benefit Cost Ratio (BCR) of under 1.0 for Baschurch station which would represent 'poor value-for-money' (VFM) under Department for Trasport (DfT) Transport Appraisal Guidance (TAG) criteria which generally suggest a 'medium' to 'high' VFM BCR of c. 1.5-2.0+ for progression of new stations.

c) **Bus service** - A potential risk from a rail service at Baschurch to demand and revenues on the publicly funded 576 bus service between Oswestry, Ruyton XI Towns, Baschurch and Shrewsbury.

d) **Strategic Rail Fit** - A challenging strategic fit with current long-distance rail services on the North Wales-Marches/Midlands-South Wales corridor upon which Baschurch station would depend, for 2 key reasons. Firstly Transport for Wales (TfW) is seeking to reduce journey times, which would run counter to adding calls at Baschurch, and secondly established industry revenue models demonstrate reductions in some existing passenger usage when journey times are extended (which together with abstraction would need to be factored into the case for Baschurch).

1.3 SLC Rail presented the findings to Baschurch Parish Council on 27-Feb 2024. Feedback from the Parish Council focused on whether the BCR may be strengthened via :

a) **Catchment** - A more granulated assessment of the geography and size of Baschurch's potential catchment, considered by BPC to be egg-shaped rather than circular and extending further west towards the A5, more closely reflecting the true reach of the station.

b) **Inbound educational travel** - Significant potential for inbound traffic associated with local area educational facilities at Walford College, Adcote School for Girls and PGL Boreatton Park.

c) **Bus/rail interchange** - A potential volume of new bus-rail interchange at the station which would be net positive rather than abstracting from overall demand on the 576 bus service.

1.4 The Parish Council subsequently commissioned SLC Rail in June 2024 to undertake a follow-up piece of work to revisit the case with the incorporation of more nuanced local context and information. In its proposal to the Parish Council, SLC Rail defined the following key tasks:

a) Develop a different modelling approach to reflect real catchments. The approach proposed by SLC Rail would produce a revised demand forecast and would also give an indication of the potential for abstraction of demand from other stations (something the initial work did not estimate and which will have a downward impact on the economic BCR).

b) Consult with TfW (the train operator) to determine support for the proposal and to gain rail user data to support the modelling/economics.

c) Consult with Shropshire Council Public Transport to determine its views on the impact of the station on local bus services

d) Consult with Walford College, Adcote School for Girls and PGL Boreatton Park to determine support for the station and an indication of likely usage.

e) Consider how the station can form part of the thinking within the emerging Local Plan and Local Transport Plan 4 processes and to facilitate feeding into the consultation process.

2 Refined Catchment Model

2.1 A zone-based model was developed using Census Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs) comprising a population of 1,000-3,000. Podaris® accessibility software was used to derive access distances from each zone centroid to the following rail stations around the area – Welshpool, Gobowen, Wem, Whitchurch, Prees, Yorton and Shrewsbury. Each zone was allocated to its nearest station. The different combination of train services available at some of these stations does cause some issues in calibration but with the resources available it is as detailed as it could be.

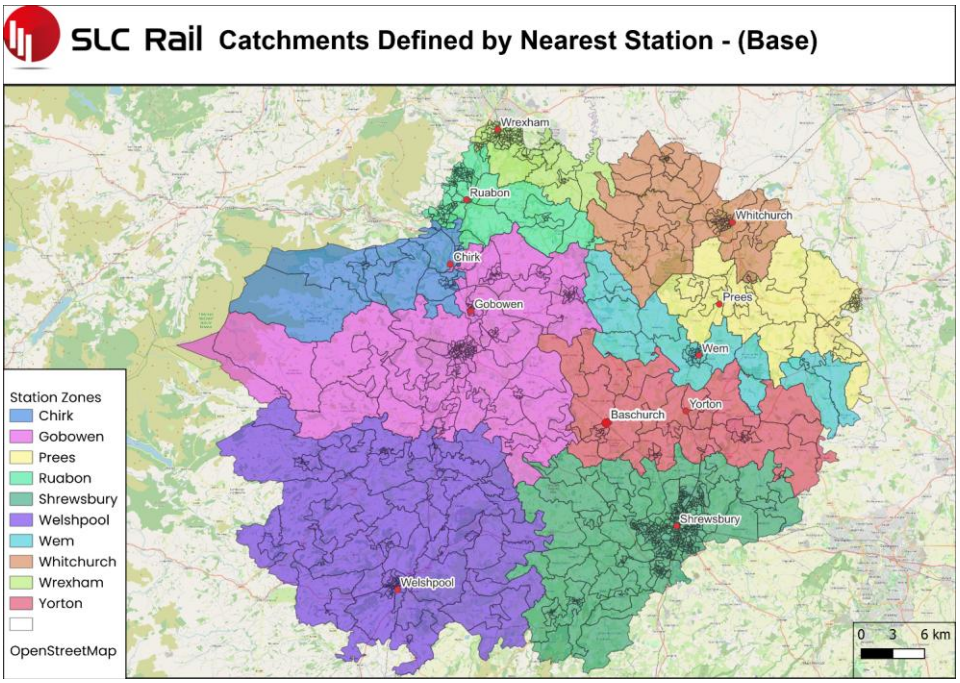

Figure 1 Station Catchments - Base

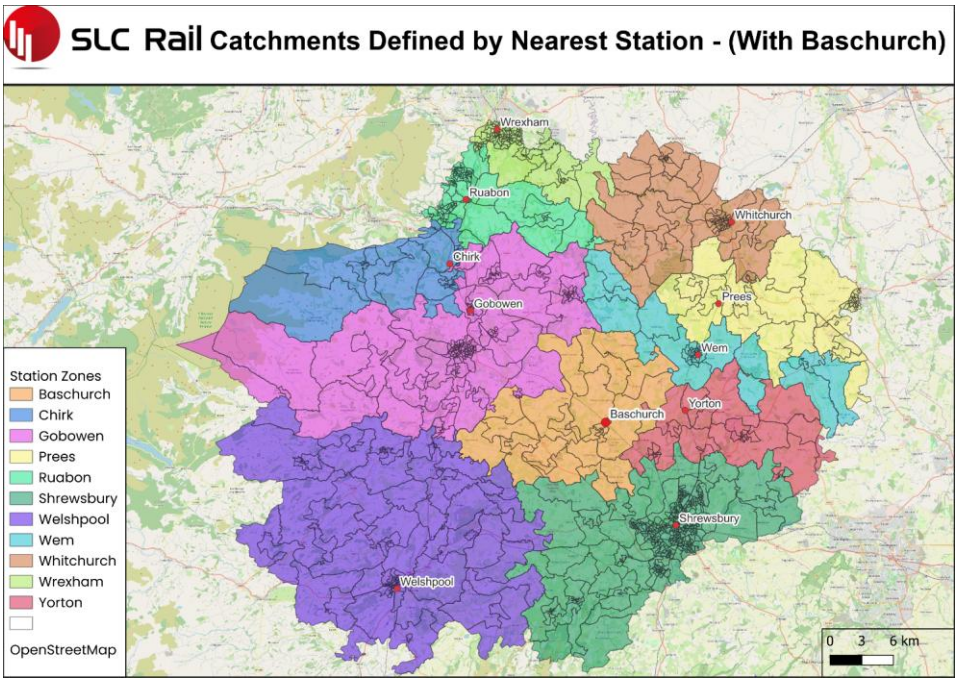

Figure 2 Station Catchments - with Baschurch

2.2 Figure 1 shows how the accessibility software allocates census LSOAs to their nearest station. The software considers the road distance and speed profiles (rather than crow-fly).

Figure 2 then replicates the analysis with Baschurch station included.

2.3 Baschurch appears to take much of its catchment from Yorton with some from Gobowen and Shrewsbury. In reality the Yorton and Wem catchments will be much more fluid and, with so few people using Yorton the likelihood is that Baschurch is eating into Wem's natural catchment rather than that of Yorton.

2.4 As noted above, the model is not perfect as it does not fully capture the different service levels and destinations available at each of the stations, but it does illustrate the principle of abstraction. Within the 'natural' catchment for Baschurch people will currently be making rail trips and, whilst they may well use a new station at Baschurch, they would not be 'new-to-rail' passengers and cannot be claimed as a benefit of a new station in economic terms.

2.5 A trip-rate distance-decay function was developed based on established academic research and Passenger Demand Forecasting Handbook (PDFH) techniques. It assumes three parameters:

a) A maximum level of trip making (i.e. if you live effectively adjacent to a station). This will differ geographically depending on relative distance from key economic centres and the level of train service on offer. So, in the London commuter belt it would be much higher than in a more rural location.

b) A buffer distance from the station where this maximum level of trip-making is maintained. This is typically thought of as c.750m and reflects a walk-in catchment.

c) A rate of trip decay based on distance. Again, this will differ by type of location e.g. conurbation, town suburban, rural. We would expect the decay curve to be flatter in rural areas.

2.6 A small piece of computer code was written to test calibration using all possible combinations of the local stations. Recognising that the best calibration might not be against all of the stations is a reflection of the issue of the differing levels of service and different destination choices available at the stations within the choice set. The parameter values were allowed to vary within tolerable limits until a stable calibration was established.

2.7 The best calibration was achieved using Gobowen and Wem as comparator stations (i.e. calibrated against the Office of Rail and Road [ORR] station entry/exit data).

2.8 Having established a baseline, Baschurch station was added to the model. This yields two effects:

a) The improvement in accessibility to the rail network will increase the overall level of demand for rail from within the modelled area.

b) The model will estimate how many people will switch from existing stations to Baschurch by virtue of it being nearer to a LSOA.

2.9 The model estimates that demand at Baschurch will be in the order of 50,000 trips per year. This is about 10% lower than the estimate previously produced. Furthermore, it estimates that as much as between a third and a half of the demand at Baschurch will be abstracted from other stations. The range is dependent on the way in which the error factor from the calibration is treated. For the purposes

of adjusting our economic BCR we have assumed the lower end of this range i.e. that c. 35% of Baschurch's demand is abstracted.

2.10 A future mitigating factor could be the extent to which the neighbouring stations' car parks reach capacity, at which point it may be argued that Baschurch is acting to release suppressed demand at these. We define this as 'good abstraction' and in more detailed modelling the impact of release of suppressed demand can be claimed as a net benefit. We were unable to obtain car park data from TfW during the course of the work so we are unable to make an informed view as to the likelihood of either Wem's or Gobowen's car park reaching capacity in the near future.

3 Consultation Findings

3.1 Walford College

3.1.1 The following notes summarise a Teams meeting with Melanie Taylor, Assistant Principal, in September 2024, and her perspectives on the value of a new Baschurch station to the College.

3.1.2. The College largely caters for 16-18 year olds and has a pupil cohort that currently averages around 250 and oscillates between c.200 and c.300. The site could accommodate c.500 students without the need for significant investment in buildings. Very few students drive to the campus, most (c.80%) arriving by bus or coach. The college operates a small fleet of four minibuses that pick up on a demand-responsive basis from the more scattered rural communities. A series of tendered coach services bring pupils in from specified pick-up points in key settlements such as Shrewsbury, Gobowen and Telford.

3.1.3 The College would like to reduce its transportation costs and a new station would assist in encouraging more independent travel and removing the need for some of the fixed route coach services.

3.1.4 If the station were opened the College would employ a minibus shuttle to/from the campus (as it currently does to its Oswestry campus from Gobowen station). If the redundant pathway from Baschurch to the campus were reinstated this could provide a safe route for active travel including e-bikes.

3.1.5 There are c.70 staff associated with the college including teachers, cleaners, kitchen staff and caretakers. Currently almost all travel by private car, and it is not anticipated that more than a few, if any, staff would consider switching to rail.

Conclusion & Appraisal Impact

3.16 The station would be of benefit to the College in reducing the need for coach services to bring students in. This would yield cost savings as well as the wider environmental benefits of reduced road vehicle mileage. It could also assist in developing student numbers up to the aspirational 500 through better connectivity/improved access.

3.1.7 The College envisages no more than a handful of staff using rail so we have assumed these are picked up by the overall trip-rate model which assumes some inbound trips within the trip rates.

3.1.8 In the appraisal summary in section 4 we have assumed a cautious Base-Case scenario in which 50% of the students currently on the fixed route coach services from Shrewsbury, Telford and Oswestry (numbering c.135) transfer to rail. We also show sensitivities of 100% and 25%.

3.1.9 We have additionally considered a scenario in which the College increases its student numbers to the maximum 500 capacity and that, again, 50% of these come by rail (this remaining a cautious assumption if one takes the view that the expansion of the college is largely dependent on improved access).

3.1.10 The appraisal summary notes that whilst added student numbers do potentially increase the station footfall significantly, these are less impactful on revenue since the net additional journeys are short distance, discounted and consequently of relatively low fare yield.

3.2 Adcote School for Girls

3.2.1 The following notes summarise an email exchange with Louise Hudson, Deputy Head Teacher, in July 2024.

3.2.2 The school has c.200 students and c.70 staff. It currently runs minibuses from Shrewsbury, Telford, Welshpool and Oswestry. Around one third of the students are considered to be in-scope for switching to rail to access the school. The current number of students using the minibus service is 64, split by:

- Telford – 24
- Shrewsbury – 24
- Oswestry/Welshpool – 16

3.2.3 It is envisaged that the minibuses could be re-purposed to shuttle students to and from a new Baschurch station.

3.2.4 The school also allow its boarders to use public transport at weekends to visit Shrewsbury or Chester. Whilst these trips would use Baschurch, they are by definition abstracted from elsewhere – either from Gobowen to Chester or from the local bus service to Shrewsbury. Of the staff cohort, it is anticipated that no more than a handful would be potential rail users.

Conclusion & Appraisal Impact

3.2.5 The station would be of benefit to the school in reducing the need for fixed route minibus services to bring students in, with these vehicles re-purposed to collect/drop-off students at Baschurch station. This would yield cost savings as well as the wider environmental benefits of reduced road vehicle mileage.

3.2.6 The school anticipates no more than a handful of staff commuting by rail and in terms of the overall appraisal we have assumed that any inbound staff journeys picked up by the trip-rate model .

3.2.7 In the appraisal summary impacts at section 4 we have again assumed a cautious Base-Case scenario in which 50% of the students currently on the fixed route coach services from Shrewsbury, Telford and Oswestry transfer to rail.

3.2.8 As with Walford College, adding in the student numbers for Adcote does potentially increase the station footfall significantly, but again is less impactful on revenue since the net additional journeys are short distance, discounted and consequently of low yield..

3.3 PGL Boreatton Park

3.3.1 The following notes summarise an email exchange with Ali Duffy, General Manager, PGL in July 2024.

3.3.2 PGL offers residential activity holidays to school-age children (mostly 7–16 year olds) with the capacity for up to 900 children on site at any one time. The activity season runs from February to November, but a small cohort of c.40 staff work all year round. Group sizes vary from 15 up to 250 with stay lengths of 2, 3, 5 and 7 nights. A typical week will see 50-60 groups at the centre. Guests come from across the UK, but a high proportion are from Birmingham, Liverpool and Manchester metropolitan areas.

3.3.3. Individual guests come in non-term time with up to 400 children per week across the summer holidays and around 100 across other holiday periods and half-term breaks. Individual guests are typically dropped off by parents.

3.3.4 The centre receives some international visitors, generally across the summer, who are currently transported from UK airports by coach. International groups are typically of around 30 children with a maximum of 6-7 groups at any one time.

3.3.5 The activities are led by a staff team of c.220 with 80% resident on site. Staff are predominantly 18–25 year-olds and it is believed that c.50% of them do not have access to private transport.

3.3.6 In addition to the resident staff, around 40 staff travel in daily by car or taxi – mainly from Oswestry, Shrewsbury, Telford and surrounding villages. Staff also generate outbound journeys with c.30 daily being on day-off with demand for trips into Shrewsbury of beyond for a day out. Residential staff also look beyond the centre for evening food and entertainment being currently heavily reliant on taxis where they have no private transport.

Conclusion & Appraisal Impact

3.3.7 Compared to Adcote School and Walford College, PGL generates a rather more complex mix of journeys to and from the centre. The age range of the guests means that a proportion of them would be too young to travel independently by rail. The highly dispersed origins of groups visiting the centre and the size of the groups themselves would probably largely lend itself to the continued use of coaches to bring child guests in.

3.3.8 Where there is potentially a market for rail is from within the resident staff taking day and evening trips into Shrewsbury and beyond though some form of travel solution would need to be considered to get staff to/from the station (a 3-mile journey) e.g. e-bikes or a dedicated minibus.

3.3.9 Given the origins of users noted at 3.3.2 it is also noted that those from Manchester would be more likely to travel on Manchester-Crewe-Shrewsbury services and thus not use Baschurch, and that Liverpool does not currently have direct services to the Chester-Shrewsbury route.

3.3.9 We have assumed in our appraisal that a solution to the 'first and last mile' issue is provided and that a proportion of the resident staff cohort would use the station for a day trip out or an evening trip into Shrewsbury.

3.3.10 We have assumed that the 30 staff with a day off make a trip into Shrewsbury every week during the term time (39 weeks). This generates 16.4k one-way journeys.

3.4 Shropshire Council Public Transport Officers

3.4.1 These notes are from a Teams call on 12th September 2024 with Andy Evans and Richard Davies from Shropshire Council's public transport team.

3.4.2 The discussion focused on the Council's view of Baschurch station and the number 576 bus service operating between Shrewsbury and Oswestry as a candidate for diverting to a new Baschurch station to provide bus-rail interchange opportunities. The service has been fully subsidised by SC for some years as it is considered one of the County's more vital strategic bus links. The current tender contract

ends in December 2027. It is 'fairly well used' by commuters, students and shoppers and there are particular spikes in demand associated with Shrewsbury College and Walford College.

3.4.3 We discussed the relative positive and negative impacts of Baschurch station on the 576 i.e. abstraction from bus to rail vs new journeys through bus-rail interchange. The officers' views were that the two factors would, in all likelihood, net off and as such they don't see Baschurch station as having a negative impact on the 576's revenue.

3.4.4 At the point where the service is re-tendered there would be an opportunity to completely revise the schedule better to tie in with rail arrivals/departures.

3.4.5 The discussion also flagged up that the Council had in the past given consideration to diverting the 501 Shrewsbury to Ellesmere service via Baschurch station but concluded that the impact on through journey times for bus passengers would be too great.

Conclusion & Appraisal Impact

3.4.6 On the basis of this discussion, we are content that the revenue impact of Baschurch on the 576 bus service would be net neutral. We would add a cautionary note however that it may not be possible to reschedule the 576 to tie in with train arrivals/departures without impacting on the number of vehicles and drivers required to operate the service. Therefore, whilst the revenue may be net neutral there is a risk of the subsidy cost rising to meet an increased operating cost.

4 Economics Adjustments

4.1 Overview

In this section we run through the adjustments to the economic model that this supplemental analysis has facilitated.

4.2 Demand Impact Summary

4.2.1 Figure 3 summarises the potential changes to station footfall from the analysis undertaken against the 3 tasks set at 1.3 (a-c) above.

4.2.2 Figure 4 illustrates the potential uplift if Walford College were to reach its full 500-student capacity. We do not consider this should currently form part of any Base Case, given its uncertainty, although it may be seen as an illustration of the wider impact of new railway service connectivity and accessibility, and a beneficial element to BCR-development examined more fully in any formal Strategic Outline Case.

Demand Source CURRENT	**BASE CASE @ 50% Educational Demand 1-way Trips**	**Daily RETURN journeys**	**100% Educational Demand 1-way trips**	**Daily RETURN journeys**	**25% Education al Demand 1-way trips**	**Daily RETURN journeys**
Local Catchment (revised model)	49,700	75	49,700	75	49,700	75
Adcote School	10,900	17	21,800	35	5,450	8
Walford College (existing size)	26,500	40	53,000	80	13,250	20
PGL Boreatton Park	8,200	12	16,400	25	4,100	6
TOTAL	**95,300**	**150**	**141,000**	**215**	**72,500**	**109**

Figure 3 Baschurch Demand Impact Summary

Demand Source WALFORD COLLEGE EXPANSION	**BASE CASE @ 50% Educational Demand 1-way Trips**	**Daily RETURN journeys**	**100% Educational Demand 1-way trips**	**Daily RETURN journeys**	**25% Education al Demand 1-way trips**	**Daily RETURN journeys**
FIGURE 3 TOTAL	**95,300**	**150**	**141,000**	**215**	**72,500**	**109**
Walford College expansion trips	*48,750*	*75*	*97,500*	*150*	*24,375*	*37*
NEW TOTAL	***144,050***	***225***	***238,500***	***365***	***96,875***	***146***

Figure 4 Baschurch Demand Impact Summary with Walford College at full 500-student capacity

4.3 Incremental Adjustments

4.3.1 We begin from the Benefit Cost Ratio (BCR) that we presented in the February 2024 Statement of Opinion, and which is based on a central case assumption of the station being served by 1 train per hour (tph) with calls in the TfW services alternating between Holyhead-Cardiff and Holyhead-Birmingham International. **That first-cut, central case BCR was 0.86**.

4.3.2 **Step 1 - Rebase**

Since we produced the Statement of Opinion in February 2024, a new set of appraisal parameters has been released by DfT. We have revisited the assumptions used in the appraisal and made amendments to parameters where applicable.

This has resulted in **a small uplift in the BCR from 0.86 to 0.96**.

4.3.3 **Step 2 – Incremental Impacts of Sensitivities**

4.3.3.1 **New Demand Model & The Question of Abstraction**

The development of a new model based on more realistic geographical catchments did not produce an increase in the gross level of trips expected to be generated by the local catchment. What the model did however indicate is the potential level of abstraction that might occur i.e. passengers already making journeys on the network who would transfer to Baschurch. The range of potential abstraction indicated by the model is c. 35% to 50% of all trips using Baschurch.

We have assumed the lower c. 35% end of the range which results in **a fall in the BCR of 0.45 to 0.51.**

4.3.3.2 **Walford College and Adcote School Inbound Trips**

The estimated incremental revenue from in-bound schools/college traffic is around £75k per annum assuming the 50% Base Case described at 3.1.8, 3.2.7 and Figures 3 and 3 and 4. This is commensurate with a c.100% increase in station footfall against the Local Catchment model, but as noted at 3.1.10 and 3.28 the average journey length and fare yield are relatively low, so it has a limited impact on revenue. Because the transfer is from coach to rail there is very little highway decongestion benefit to claim within the economics. The uplift in the BCR is driven by the revenue.

The impact of the inbound student uplift in the 50% Base Case is to **raise the BCR by 0.12 to 0.63.**

If the station becomes an enabler for Walford College to double its student cohort from c.250 to c.500 with an assumption that 50%f the additional students come from the Oswestry/Shrewsbury/Telford areas (a best-case scenario), this generates a further c.£87.5k of revenue at the 50% Base Case.

Walford College growth in the 50% Base Case would further **raise the BCR by 0.23 to 0.86**.

We address the benefit of Walford College achieving 100% student use of 500 places at 4.3.3.6 below.

We have made no allowance in the economics for any impact on rolling stock requirement to cater for the peak movements of students. In the 50% Base Case scenario the number of daily student movements is between 200 and 225 which would be carried on 2 trains – one northbound and one southbound. This could have consequences for on-train capacity, necessitate train lengthening and generate a reduction in the BCR.

4.3.3.4 PGL Boreatton Park Outbound Trips

We have considered the potential market for outbound day return trips by staff on their days off which, from the discussion we had with PGL, could amount to up to 30 day returns per day (assuming all staff make a trip by train to Shrewsbury on a day off). This potentially adds a further £65k to the revenue total and **raises the BCR by 0.1 to 0.96**, thus bringing the scheme close to the key 1.0 BCR where its benefits are matching its costs, **a 10% uplift from the February 2024 figure**.

4.3.3.5 New Housing Around Baschurch Station

One of the ways in which the economics of the business case for Baschurch can be improved is by making an assumption of more houses around the station.

The central case already assumes that the local plan allocations for c.360 homes within the 5km+ catchment of Baschurch are built.

Given the government's new December 2024 housing targets mandate a c.34% increase in Shropshire numbers which could increase new homes around Baschurch to 480-plus/c. 1100 people, we have considered the economic benefit to the scheme of additional housing allocation specifically within walking distance of the station.

Notably accommodating more homes and doing so with enhanced transport sustainability would further support the existing strong strategic case for Baschurch station.

Our model suggests that **for every 100 homes** built in the walk-in catchment (assuming average occupancy of 2.3), **the BCR improves by 0.15**.

Assuming 120 extra houses to a total of 480 would **improve the BCR by 0.18 to 1.14.**

Critically this assumes that the housing development and station reinstatement go hand in hand. If the houses around the station were built without the station, in economic terms when appraising the station, one would need to net off some rail demand for abstraction since some rail journeys will be assumed to take place regardless.

4.3.3.6 Walford College growth

If the station becomes an enabler for Walford College to double its student cohort from c.250 to its maximum capacity of c.500, with an assumption that all of the additional students come from the Oswestry/Shrewsbury/Telford areas, this generates a further c.£87.5k of revenue at our cautious assumed 50% rate of usage (3.1.8 above).

The impact in turn is to further **raise the BCR by c.0.23 to 1.37**, beginning to approach the DfT's 'medium' Value for Money threshold of 1.5.

4.3.3.7 This BCR progression is summarised at Figure 5.

Scenario	Incremental Impact	Benefit-Cost Ratio
Base BCR - February 2024		0.86
New DfT TAG Parameters	+0.1	0.96
Demand Abstraction	-0.45	0.51
Walford College/Adcote School Inbound Trips	+0.35	0.86
Boreatton Park Outbound Trips	+0.1	0.96
BASE CASE BCR – February 2025		**0.96**
New homes via + 34% GOVT target (120)	+0.18	1.14
Walford College student number growth (to 500)	+0.23	1.37
POTENTIAL INCREMENTAL BCR		**1.37**

Figure 5 Benefit Cost Ratio (BCR) Progression

4.4 Conclusions

4.4.1 **Abstraction** - Our zonal model has allowed us to estimate the level of abstraction that is forecast to be present within the gross demand and revenue forecasts for Baschurch which, at a reduction of c. 0.45 from the February 2024 figure and however challenging to the scheme BCR, represents this early station case now containing a key element which no railway business case can avoid and all have to address to meet DfT Transport Appraisal Guidance.

4.4.2 **Educational demand** - Adding inbound/outbound school/college/PGL traffic recovers the BCR to 0.96 (though this takes no account of the costs associated with any need for train lengthening).

4.4.3 **Base Case BCR** – the Base Case BCR thus sits at 0.96 before possible additional new housing beyond the Draft 2016-2038 Shropshire Local Plan, or expansion of Walford College student numbers.

4.4.4. **New Housing** – The February 2024 BCR assumes delivery of 360 homes in the Draft 2016-2038 Shropshire Local Plan (rejected by the Planning Inspectorate in January 2025). 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. Delivery of an extra 120 homes would increase the BCR to 1.14, as well as adding to the strength of the existing strategic case.

4.4.5 **Walford College** - If student numbers at Walford College grow to its maximum 500-capacity the BCR could be increased to 1.37, beginning to approach the DfT's 'medium' Value for Money threshold of 1.5.

4.4.6 **What this means** - A BCR is not the sole determining factor in a new station business case, and the DfT itself recognises this. However, a BCR of less than 1.0, where a scheme is generating fewer benefits than costs, is always going to be the most challenging to promote. This supplementary review illustrates those elements of the Baschurch context that may enable Baschurch Parish Council to argue the new station rationale for it and Shropshire Council to progress to a formal Strategic Outline Case.