

CABINET 10 NOVEMBER 2021

PUBLIC QUESTIONS

Question from Robert Jones

Question for Cabinet Regarding Baschurch Railway Station

Taking note of

- Shropshire Council's declaration of a climate emergency in May 2019 and its subsequent commitment in the Climate Change Strategy of December 2020 to supporting the reduction of county-wide carbon emissions to net-zero by 2030;
- the demand of local residents in Baschurch and nearby villages for improved transport and connectivity with and access to local and national public transport networks;
- the social and economic advantages for residents in having better access to local services and facilities, educational and employment opportunities as well as opportunities for social and cultural experiences and development;
- the rapid growth of villages, in particular Baschurch, which has placed much greater pressure on local transport infrastructure, and the lack of substantial investment in that infrastructure to date;
- the growth in rail travel nationally, rising by 97% over the last 20 years, and existing plans for expansion along the Shrewsbury to Chester line, including a rail link between Oswestry and Gobowen;
- and that all candidates in Ruyton and Baschurch division in the unitary election on May 6 2021, including Cllr Nick Bardsley, supported reopening Baschurch station.

Given the potential of a railway station at Baschurch to reduce traffic congestion and pollution in the villages to the north of Shrewsbury whilst combating climate change, and providing, material economic and social benefits to local residents in the area, **will Shropshire Council support and take action to carry out a full feasibility study into the opening of a new railway station in Baschurch?**

Response:

Shropshire Council is currently developing its next Local Transport Plan (LTP). The LTP will set out the long-term strategy for the development, management and maintenance of Shropshire's highway and transport systems for the whole county, and in doing so will reflect upon the growth aspirations of the emerging Local Plan. It is recognised that transport has a key role to play in reducing carbon, maintaining sustainable communities, encouraging economic growth, and strengthening links with health agendas. The next LTP is therefore being developed using a future ready approach that will consider and prioritise the

mobility needs of people, places, and activities across all of Shropshire. Part of the process will be to identify short, medium and long term interventions that will support the overall vision and objectives of the plan. Rather than prejudge where the greatest benefits may come and potentially undermine any business case which could integrate with a broader and holistic transport strategy, the council will await the outcomes of the LTP.

The former Baschurch railway station lies very close to a significant new housing development on Station Road Baschurch. Baschurch Parish Council, the previous owner of the site and Nick Bardsley (local SC Member) have been working collaboratively with the developer, Shingler Homes over many months to make sure that the layout of the housing development *allows for the reopening/building of new railway station at Baschurch*, as well as other community benefits.

The most recent planning application (21/00666, approved on October 14th) is now moving towards its construction phase. It is probable that a new station will be built (because the old station building is in separate ownership *not Shingler Homes*) to the South East of the former station. This requires space for a new station building, over bridge (so that both up and down platforms can be readily accessed) signalling equipment and car parking. Mr Jones and other local residents can see on the plans that there is a substantial undeveloped area between the houses to be built adjacent to the railway and the railway track itself. Currently this is earmarked as open space/landscaping but, provided alternative open space is provided, this could be re-designated as land for the new station.