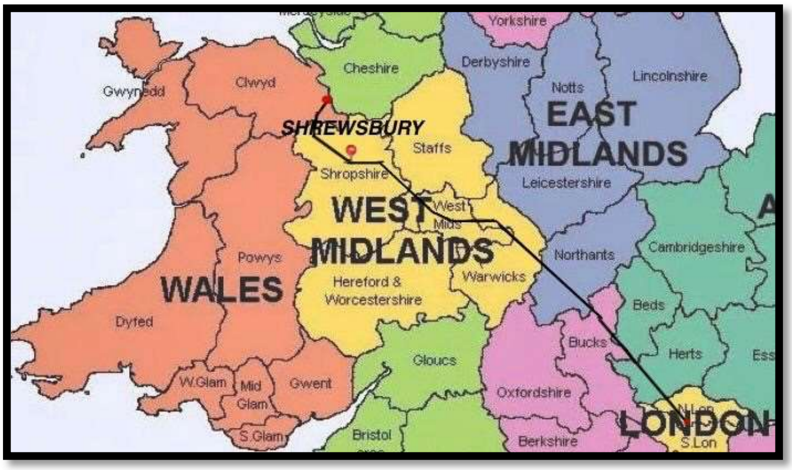
EXPOTENTIAL ADDED VALUE: RECONNECTING SHROPSHIRE TO LONDON

A Strategic Business case on the wider economic impact of restoring the direct London rail service for Shrewsbury town and the wider Shropshire region



Julia Buckley MP

September 2026

Exponential Added Value: Reconnecting Shropshire to London

A **strategic business case** on the wider economic impact of a restoring the direct London rail service for Shrewsbury town and the wider Shropshire region.

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"The economic importance of inter-regional connectivity between the powerhouse of the West Midlands and tourism offer in Wales is well documented in the reports emphasising the Wolverhampton - Shrewsbury corridor, which serves as the key gateway.

With the Government's determination to build the 1.5 million homes we need across our regions, transport connectivity will continue to grow as a key driver for all local economies in the immediate future.

This is on top of already growing public transport passenger numbers, demonstrating clear demand for more regional and national connectivity to fulfil the true economic potential of our residents, communities and business base. Improved connectivity will unlock employment, training and leisure opportunities for areas, all too often forgotten.

With public transport offering value for money to combat the cost-of-living crisis and unlock employment, our communities will flourish together if we can increase this vital transport link between towns - small and large - along the Wales, Shropshire, Midlands route into London".

Cllr Steve Simkins
Deputy Mayor of West Midlands Combined Authority
Leader, of Wolverhampton City Council

Executive Summary

Shropshire is the only mainland county in England without a scheduled direct passenger rail service to London. Despite this, Shrewsbury's economy is growing and diversifying and already exceeding what its current level of rail connectivity would predict.

This report sets out the case for a direct rail service between Shrewsbury and London that goes well beyond the value of the ticket revenue it would generate. It highlights how the benefits of direct connectivity would flow through Shrewsbury's visitor economy, its labour market and skills base, and its wider business environment both across Shropshire and its neighbour regions the West Midlands and Wales - the "wider economic impacts" that the Department for Transport's own appraisal framework recognises sit alongside direct fare revenue in the overall case for a rail service.

The evidence gathered shows:

- A rapidly growing visitor economy, already worth over £1 billion a year to Shropshire, which is increasingly reliant on overnight visitors - the segment most likely to benefit from improved rail access.
- Shrewsbury town centre is bucking the national and regional trend of high street decline, with footfall and dwell times increasing even without the direct service being assessed.
- An excellent skills and education base anchored by an Ofsted Outstanding tertiary college educating over 9,000 students and apprentices a year (set to grow with recent expansion funding). Shrewsbury College is currently constrained by poor rail connectivity, both in recruiting specialist staff and in giving talented young people access to higher education without leaving the county.
- Strong and unanimous support from Shrewsbury's business community, represented by Shrewsbury Business Improvement District (BID) and more than 500 town-centre businesses, who identify direct connectivity to London as a key factor in attracting investment, supporting tourism, enabling relocation and strengthening Shrewsbury's competitiveness as a business location.
- Workforce growth will not keep pace with overall population growth. Long-term demographic and economic forecasts highlight the importance of transport connectivity in attracting skilled workers, widening labour market access and supporting future economic growth.
- Current connectivity constraints are suppressing latent demand that already exists rather than there being an absence of demand in itself. There is a clear pattern of this across the evidence.

1. Introduction

The Case Beyond Fare Revenue: Wider Economic Impacts

Standard rail appraisal, as set out in the Department for Transport's own WebTAG guidance, does not judge a new service on ticket revenue alone. It recognises a category of "*wider economic impacts*" that sit alongside direct transport user benefits: the effect of improved connectivity on labour market efficiency (making it easier for employers to recruit, and for workers to reach a wider range of jobs), on agglomeration (bringing businesses and skilled workers closer together in economic terms), and on the ability of a place to attract investment, visitors and students it would not otherwise reach.

This is the basis on which this report is built which develops the business case laid out in the Midlands Connect report *Wolverhampton to Shrewsbury: a corridor for growth*. Rather than focusing solely on projected passenger numbers and fare revenue for a Shrewsbury-London service, the evidence gathered from stakeholders is organised around three pillars:

- The visitor and tourism economy
- Jobs, skills and the labour market
- Business demand and the wider investment climate

These are addressed in detail below, drawing on contributions received from Visit Shropshire, Shrewsbury Town Football Club, Shrewsbury College, Shropshire Council, Shropshire Chamber of Commerce, and Shrewsbury BID.

The report then sets out the case of exploring the costs of not enabling the reconnection between Shropshire and London.

2. Strategic & Policy Context

Shropshire is, at present, the only mainland county in England without a scheduled direct passenger rail service to London. Shrewsbury, as the county town and principal rail hub, therefore, lacks the direct capital connection that is currently available in every other mainland English county. Recent open access proposals - including the current application from the Wrexham, Shropshire & Midlands Railway (WSMR) - aim to change that, alongside restoring links for Wrexham, Gobowen, Wellington, Telford and other communities along the route.

WSMR's initial application, submitted in March 2024, was the only Open Access application to secure conditional support from the Department for Transport. However, it was rejected by the Office of Rail and Road in July 2025 following concerns, including from Network Rail, about available capacity on the southern section of the West Coast Main Line. A revised application was submitted in December 2025, requesting fewer daily train paths and adding Wellington as an additional stop, with a targeted start date of December 2026. Network Rail's formal representation to the ORR on this revised bid, published in early 2026, maintains that it is not currently able to support the application on capacity grounds.

The current round of assessment therefore represents a critical juncture, but it is not the only opportunity: the same underlying case for Shrewsbury's connectivity is directly relevant to the Great British Railways December 2028 and December 2032 timetable planning processes, regardless of the outcome of the current WSMR bid.

In both contexts, the strength of the wider economic business case for Shrewsbury and Shropshire is central to how the proposal will be judged.

In Shrewsbury we have established a strategic stakeholder partnership called the “Shrewsbury Transport Integration Group” (STIG) which brings together over 25 local and regional strategic stakeholders involved in transport provision and planning. The partnership meets bi-monthly to develop strategic masterplans, identify gaps in provision, and pilot projects to extend the offer; and works to support local partners to improve integration between transport modes[1].

3. Evidence Pillar 1: A Growing Visitor Economy

3.1 Scale and Growth

Shropshire visitor economy, 2025[2]	
Total visitor economy impact	£1.002 billion (+10.1% vs 2024; +42.2% since 2019)
Total visitors	10.66 million (+4.2% year-on-year)
Visitor days generated	13.94 million (+5.0% year-on-year)
Staying-visitor economic impact	£510 million (51% of total impact)
Staying-visitor days	4.76 million

[1] See Annexes 2 and 3 for the Terms of Reference of the Group, and its membership list.

[2] Contribution from Visit Shropshire, drawing on the STEAM (Scarborough Tourism Economic Activity Monitor) report for Shropshire, 2019-2025, and Place Informatics footfall data for Shrewsbury town centre, May 2026.

This year, Shropshire celebrated the milestone of achieving a visitor economy worth £1bn. Over half of this economic impact (51%) comes from staying visitors rather than day-trippers; the segment of demand most directly influenced by ease of long-distance travel. A direct London service would increase this demand further. Growth of 42.2% since 2019 significantly outpaces consumer price inflation over the same period, indicating genuine real-terms growth rather than simple price effects.

The accommodation sector is investing to keep pace: serviced accommodation grew 11.2% in the last year and 42% since 2019, with paid accommodation bed stock up by more than 3,650 beds since 2019; evidence of both confidence in future demand and existing capacity to absorb more staying visitors.

3.2 Jobs Supported

The visitor economy now supports 9,454 full-time-equivalent jobs across Shropshire: 7,553 direct and 1,902 indirect. This marks a 3.3% increase on the previous year and an increase from 8,846 in 2019. According to Visit Shropshire, this is equivalent to around one in seven jobs in the county. Growth is fastest in sectors such as accommodation and food & drink, which are particularly sensitive to improved connectivity with visitors from across the UK staying longer.

3.3 Shrewsbury Town Centre: Bucking the National Trend

Even without a direct London service, Shrewsbury town centre is currently outperforming national and regional footfall trends:

- 1.22 million visits in May 2026 (+4.5% on the previous month; +2.1% year-on-year)
- This compares with a 4.5% national footfall decline over the same period, and a West Midlands regional average of +1.2%
- Average dwell time has risen to 68 minutes, up 10 minutes on May 2025, suggesting Shrewsbury is increasingly treated as a destination town

3.4 Catchment and Spending Power

A third of town centre visitors travel from beyond three miles, including 10.4% from more than 25 miles away. 23% are classed by Visit Shropshire as "high spend potential", evidencing an existing regional pull that a direct London service would extend considerably further.

Shrewsbury and Shropshire repeatedly win national accolades, attracting visitors from all over the country, putting the area on the map. Shrewsbury was named by “The Week” as one of the top 10 destinations to visit, listed on ABTA 10 global holiday destinations list, named number one in the Telegraph's lists of the UK's best high street, and Shrewsbury Market Hall has won the "Nation's Favourite Market" award three times. This blossoming profile of the town, much promoted by the successful Business Improvement District and "Visit Shropshire", has supported growth in visitor numbers.

Taken together, Visit Shropshire's contribution argues that the county town already has the infrastructure, investment and appetite to absorb the additional business and leisure demand a direct London service would generate; the connectivity gap, not a lack of underlying demand, is the constraint.

3.5 Recurring Event-Led Demand

Shrewsbury Town Football Club provides a further source of regular and measurable visitor demand. Across the 2024/25 and 2025/26 league seasons, the club hosted 46 home league fixtures and recorded approximately 273,000 spectator visits at the Croud Meadow. The stadium has a capacity of 9,875, including space for up to 1,796 away supporters.

Many fixtures bring visitors from Greater London and the Southeast. Charlton Athletic brought 765 away supporters to Shrewsbury on 14 September 2024. Bromley brought 280 supporters to the opening home fixture of the 2025/26 season. The 2026/27 fixture list includes Barnet, Colchester United, Gillingham and Crawley Town, all of which draw support from places linked closely to London and its rail network.

The club estimates that Gillingham, Colchester United, Barnet and Crawley Town averaged a combined total of more than 1,600 away supporters per round of fixtures during 2025/26. This provides a useful indication of the potential market, although actual attendance at Shrewsbury will depend on fixture timing, team performance, ticket allocation and travel options. The figure should therefore be presented as evidence of potential demand rather than a forecast.

Football-related journeys have three characteristics that are relevant to the economic case:

- Demand is recurring. Shrewsbury Town normally stages 23 home league fixtures each season, with cup ties and other events creating further travel opportunities.
- Demand is predictable. Most fixture dates are known well in advance, giving operators an opportunity to market services and plan capacity.
- Spending extends beyond the stadium. Visiting supporters use pubs, cafes, restaurants, shops, taxis and accommodation before and after matches.
- Evening matches create a particular barrier. The risk of missing a connection after the final whistle can discourage rail travel or lead visitors to choose other modes.

- The market extends beyond supporters. Sponsors, corporate guests, media staff, scouts, officials and conference delegates also travel to the Croud Meadow.

A direct service could increase both rail mode share and total attendance by making journeys easier to understand and less exposed to missed connections. The club has illustrated the scale of a modest uplift: 100 additional spectators at each home league fixture would produce about 2,300 additional visits in a season. This is a scenario rather than a forecast, but it shows how relatively small changes in attendance can create repeat spending for the club and the wider town economy.

The football evidence strengthens the visitor economy argument because it identifies a market that is frequent, externally generated and linked to known dates. It also supports the case for complementary measures such as matchday ticket offers, coordinated departure times, station-to-stadium information and joint promotion by the club, rail operator and town-centre businesses.

4. Evidence Pillar 2: Skills, Education and Labour Market Access

4.1 Current Constraints on Scale and Reach

Shrewsbury College educates and trains more than 9,000 students and apprentices each year, across three campuses, two of which are within a seven-minute walk of Shrewsbury railway station. Its reach extends well beyond the town: as well as serving Shrewsbury and the wider county, the college works with significant numbers of students and apprentices from across the West Midlands and Powys. It was judged "Outstanding" by Ofsted in March 2025 but is oversubscribed with applications and not enough space in the current facilities.

In August 2026 the College was awarded an additional £10m from the Department of Education to expand two campuses further, increasing capacity with a new Construction skills centre opening in 2027.

Shrewsbury College at a glance[3]	
Students and apprentices per year	9,000+
Students aged 16-19	4,500 (c. 2,000 A Levels; c. 2,500 vocational/technical)
Progress to university each year	800, predominantly STEM, health, digital and construction
Apprentices	1,000, concentrated in engineering and construction
Adult learners	4,000, drawn from the region and nationally
Ofsted rating	Outstanding (March 2025)

4.2 A higher Education "Cold Spot"

Shropshire has no university of its own, making it a higher education cold spot. Shrewsbury College fills part of this gap by offering higher education courses in key sectors, but its evidence highlights a specific and growing problem: a rising number of academically qualified students who want to continue to higher-level study but do not want to leave home - a trend the college describes as having grown sharply since the pandemic. Improved connectivity north towards Wrexham and east towards Wolverhampton would open up specialist university courses to these students without requiring relocation.

4.3 Recruiting Specialist Staff

The college's ability to recruit skilled teachers and trainers in subjects central to national economic productivity such as engineering, construction, digital and health, all areas of growing student demand, is constrained by poor rail connectivity. Commuting by rail from Wrexham or Gobowen is currently almost prohibitive under the limited and inconsistent existing service. Connectivity from Telford and Wellington is better, but additional journey options, including

[3] Contribution from Shrewsbury College.

from Walsall and Wolverhampton, would make Shrewsbury a materially more attractive destination for specialist staff.

The proposed service would therefore provide not only direct London connectivity, but additional regional journey opportunities along the route.

4.4 Extending Opportunity Beyond Shrewsbury

Students in the north and east of the county currently have access only to a limited local offer, through small school sixth forms with a narrow range of A Levels and limited technical and vocational options, often taught by generalist rather than specialist staff. Shrewsbury College's scale allows it to offer the specialist provision these students need; but only if they, and the staff who teach them, can reach it reliably.

4.5 Capacity and Reliability

Shrewsbury College's evidence is consistent with Visit Shropshire's: existing rail services are frequently overcrowded and unreliable, constraining both current travel and the ability of students, apprentices and staff to make full use of the wider region. The college's assessment is that a new service, including the proposed London to Wrexham service via Shrewsbury, would meet both pent-up demand from existing constrained travel and genuinely new demand created by the additional capacity and flexibility on offer.

4.6 Future Labour Market Needs

The challenges identified by Shrewsbury College are reflected in wider evidence gathered through the Marches Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP). The LSIP highlights that the rural nature of Shropshire creates accessibility challenges where journey times are longer for residents seeking to access education, training and employment opportunities. The report identifies location-based barriers to training and employment as a contributing factor to local skills gaps and notes the continued out-migration of young people from the area.

The LSIP further highlights that many young people leave the region to access higher education opportunities and are often unlikely to return until later in life, creating a risk of long-term skills loss. It also notes that retaining residents and attracting new residents into employment is a key priority for supporting economic growth.

Looking ahead, demographic projections from Shropshire Council suggest these labour market challenges are likely to become more significant over time. Shropshire's population is projected to grow by around 19% by 2050, yet the working-age population is forecast to increase by only

6%. Over the same period, the county's dependency ratio is expected to rise substantially, reflecting a growing proportion of residents outside the labour market. Forecasts also indicate a decline in the number of younger workers, with approximately 2,000 fewer workers aged under 34 by 2050 and more than four in ten workers expected to be aged 50 or over. These trends point towards increasing competition for skilled labour and reinforce the importance of transport connectivity in widening labour market catchments, attracting talent into the area and supporting workforce mobility

5. Evidence Pillar 3: Business Demand and the Wider Investment Climate

5.1 Business Demand[4]

Shrewsbury BID reports, based on qualitative evidence and business feedback that the case for a direct London rail service is one of the issues most consistently raised by its local business members. The subject arises regularly in discussions with retailers, hospitality operators and professional services firms, and enjoys the full and unanimous support of the BID Board.

The BID represents more than 500 businesses operating within Shrewsbury town centre, providing a broad cross-section of the local economy. The consistency with which direct rail connectivity is raised suggests that it is viewed by businesses not as a transport issue alone, but as an economic development issue that affects investment, recruitment, visitor flows and long-term growth.

5.2 Inward Investment & Relocation

The BID's evidence indicates that direct rail connectivity to London is frequently identified as an important factor in investment and relocation decisions.

Businesses considering relocation to Shrewsbury increasingly compare the town against competitor locations across England and Wales. In these discussions, rail connectivity is often considered alongside digital infrastructure and road access as a core requirement of a competitive business environment. Poor connectivity to the capital therefore represents a real disadvantage when competing for investment. The absence of a direct service can create a perception of relative remoteness which may discourage potential investors before more detailed conversations take place. A direct service would help position Shrewsbury more strongly as a location for professional services and enterprises seeking access to national markets while benefiting from lower operating costs and a higher quality of life.

[4] Contribution from Shrewsbury BID, representing more than 500 businesses across Shrewsbury town centre.

5.3 Labour Market Consequences

Changes in working patterns since the pandemic have increased interest in locations that combine a high quality of life with access to major economic centres.

Shropshire is increasingly well positioned to benefit from this trend. The county offers attractive living environments, lower housing costs than many parts of the Southeast and growing opportunities for flexible working. The town's success in marketing itself for national attention speaks for itself with the awards and top-ranking scores in visitor guides. However, the BID argues that this opportunity is constrained by current transport links.

Professionals and businesses considering relocation require confidence that London and other major cities remain readily accessible. A direct service would improve that confidence and help convert interest in relocation into actual moves, bringing new residents, spending power, entrepreneurship and economic activity into the local economy.

The challenge of attracting and retaining younger workers is also evident in evidence gathered through the Shropshire Chamber Quarterly Economic Survey. One manufacturing business reported that it had "*an aging workforce, remote and rural manufacturing sites, and very little young blood coming in or even on the horizon*".

This highlights a wider challenge facing employers in rural and semi-rural areas. Businesses operating in locations that are perceived as less accessible can find it harder to attract younger workers and skilled professionals, particularly when competing with larger urban centres. Improved transport connectivity, including stronger links between Shropshire and major economic centres such as London, the West Midlands and North Wales, could help widen labour markets, improve accessibility and strengthen the attractiveness of the county as a place to build a career.

Longer-term economic projections suggest that maintaining economic growth will depend increasingly on the ability of employers to attract and retain workers from a wider geographical area. Forecasts indicate that Shropshire will require at least 11,000 additional jobs by 2050 simply to maintain its current balance between resident workers and available employment, while labour supply growth is expected to lag behind overall population growth.

This creates a growing premium on connectivity, as businesses seek access to wider labour markets and potential employees increasingly expect strong links to major economic centres. Improved rail connections, including direct access to London, would help mitigate these constraints and support sustainable business growth.

5.4 County Town Status and Place Competitiveness

The BID also draws attention to the anomaly that Shrewsbury, as Shropshire's county town, remains without a direct rail service to London.

Connectivity plays an important role in how towns are perceived by investors, visitors and businesses when comparing locations. The absence of a direct link undermines perceptions of accessibility and economic connectedness.

The importance of connectivity is reinforced by Shropshire Council’s projections for the future structure of Shropshire's economy. The sectors forecast to experience the strongest employment growth include professional and business services, accommodation and hospitality, education, information and communications, and construction. These sectors are particularly reliant on access to skilled labour, external investment, customers and national markets.

As one of the largest towns in England (population of 70,000) without a direct London rail service, Shrewsbury is unusual among peer locations. A direct connection would strengthen the town's position within regional and national economic networks and better reflect its role as the principal commercial, administrative and cultural centre of Shropshire: a county of 332,000 residents across 19 market towns and hundreds of picturesque villages.

5.5 Summary

The evidence from Shrewsbury BID supports the wider conclusion emerging from this report: that the benefits of a direct London rail service are not limited to passenger revenue. Businesses view direct connectivity as an important enabler of investment, visitor growth, workforce mobility and economic competitiveness.

Taken alongside the evidence from Visit Shropshire and Shrewsbury College, the BID contribution suggests that improved rail connectivity would help unlock existing economic potential rather than create entirely new demand. The constraint identified throughout the evidence is not a lack of interest in Shrewsbury as a place to invest, visit, study or live, but the limitations imposed by current transport connectivity.

6. The Wider Catchment: Shropshire, Mid Wales and the West Midlands

6.1 Survey

For us to better understand sentiment on the ground, a survey was undertaken on 13 August 2026 by the North and Mid Wales Association of Local Councils, which considered passenger experience on the Cambrian corridor and support for the proposed Wrexham to London Euston service. The report states that passengers travelling to and from the Cambrian Lines were supportive of the proposal. The survey covered trains carrying 264 passengers. Of those interviewed, over 50% said they would use the service at least once a month and a further 25% said they would use it occasionally.

This supports our hypothesis that Shrewsbury functions as a gateway for Mid Wales and that a London service is not just about Shropshire and North Wales. The service would improve Union connectivity, drawing from diverse communities as far west as Aberystwyth and the Dyfi Valley.

6.2 Reliability, Interchange and Capacity as Economic Barriers

The same survey records the effects of disruption during exceptional heat on 13 August 2026. It describes late cancellation information, uncertainty about replacement buses and confusion at interchange points - an all-too-common occurrence in Shrewsbury. One Birmingham-bound West Midlands service was reported to be 85% loaded between Telford and Birmingham. The report also notes that West Midlands services coped well with additional traffic and that staff at Birmingham New Street and Birmingham International provided effective assistance.

A single disrupted day cannot establish normal service performance. It does, however, illustrate why interchange quality matters. When passengers depend on a connection, disruption can affect more than journey time. It can create uncertainty about whether a meeting, match, lesson, hotel check-in or onward journey can be completed. A direct service removes one point of failure for through passengers, although it does not remove the need for a resilient railway and accurate information.

7. Key Findings

The key findings from the evidence show there is a clear groundswell of support from businesses including the football club, Shropshire Chamber of Commerce and the Shrewsbury BID. This economic understanding is supported by a survey of existing rail users, in an impressively strong fashion. Often it is thought these services are considered in terms of the benefit of connecting Shrewsbury to London, but it is clear to us the benefit is more than bilateral. Our key observations are:

- Demand is being suppressed by existing connectivity constraints, causing economic harm to our vibrant town. Contributors describe existing services as overcrowded, unreliable and limited, constraining demand from visitors, students and staff, rather than describing a market that would need to be built from nothing.

- Shrewsbury is well organised and outperforming comparator metrics despite being one of the few county towns in England without a direct rail link to London. The town centre's footfall and dwell-time growth demonstrate an economy not constrained by capability but by transport capacity.

- The benefits reach further than the ticket price. The contributions describe impacts on jobs, skills, staff recruitment, higher education access and investment in accommodation; value that would not be captured by fare revenue projections alone, but which speaks directly to the wider economic impacts that DfT and Network Rail assessment frameworks are designed to recognise.

- The county town serves a wider hinterland all the way to the Welsh Coast. The contributions describe Shrewsbury's economic and educational reach extending well beyond the town itself, into North Wales, Powys, the Cambrian corridor and the wider West Midlands. This reinforces the case that this is a regional, not purely local, connectivity gap.

8. Conclusion

For all our national awards and accolades, Shropshire remains the only mainland English county without a scheduled direct passenger rail service to London. But the opportunity identified in this report is greater than correcting that anomaly alone. Shrewsbury is the gateway connecting Shropshire, the West Midlands, Mid Wales and London.

As well as setting out the strong case for passenger demand to justify reconnecting Shropshire to London, the evidence invites a different question:

What is the economic cost of continuing not to connect Shropshire with London?

The status quo is not cost-free. Poor connectivity affects choices about where people visit, study, work, invest and locate businesses — effects which will not necessarily appear in railway passenger forecasts.

The ask is simple: that these wider economic impacts, the wider regional catchment and the cost of continued poor connectivity are properly considered alongside the conventional railway case.

We ask you to consider not only whether reconnecting Shropshire can be justified, but whether continuing to leave Shropshire disconnected is acceptable.

Julia Buckley
Member of Parliament for Shrewsbury
Chair of Shrewsbury Transport Integration Group (STIG)
September 2026

Annex A: Evidence Sources Log

Contributor	Evidence area	Notes
Midlands Connect	Wolverhampton to Shrewsbury: A Corridor for Growth 2025:	Highlights the importance of improving transport links between Wolverhampton, Telford and Shrewsbury to support economic growth, housing development, employment, tourism and access to education and healthcare
Visit Shropshire	Tourism economy, footfall, visitor spending	Based on STEAM 2019-2025 report and Place Informatics footfall data (May 2026); full reports offered as supporting annexes; contributor available for the September presentation
Shrewsbury College	Skills, education, labour market	Covers recruitment, HE access, apprenticeships and student demand
Shropshire Chamber of Commerce	Skills, education, labour market, business demand	Quarterly Survey Marches Local Skills Improvement Plan 2026
Shropshire Council	Labour market, economic forecast	Shropshire 2050 Projections & Forecasts
Shrewsbury BID	Business demand, investment case studies	Written stakeholder submission on business demand, inward investment, tourism and relocation impacts, September 2026. Evidence representing the views of more than 500 town-centre businesses.
Shrewsbury Town Football Club	Sport, events, attendance and visitor demand	Provides recurring fixture-led demand, away-support examples and a scenario for attendance growth
North and Mid Wales Association of Local Councils	Passenger demand, Cambrian catchment and interchange experience	Survey report dated 13 August 2026.

Annex B: Shrewsbury Transport Integration Group (STIG) Terms of Reference

The purpose of the **Shrewsbury Transport Integration Group** (STIG) is to facilitate Shrewsbury's goals for the integration, accessibility, and economic growth of public transport.

The group will bring together stakeholders including rail leaders and civic leadership from the Shrewsbury Big Town Plan in order to coordinate work.

The three main themes of the group will be to:

1. Increase rail services through, from and to Shrewsbury
2. Improve connectivity between rail and bus services for the town
3. Facilitate improvements at Shrewsbury Train Station: including unlocking its potential as an economic and social hub.

A key function of the group is to oversee the Shrewsbury Transport Integration Report which will provide a comprehensive analysis of rail and wider transport strategy in Shrewsbury. This report is being undertaken by Marcus Mayers from Manchester Metropolitan University.

Meetings will take place on a bi-monthly basis, alternating between online and in person.

The membership of the group is listed as an attachment. Additional guest speakers will be invited as appropriate.

April 2025

Annex C: Shrewsbury Transport Integration Group (STIG) Membership

Job Title	Organisation
Commercial Director for Open Access	Alstom Group
Head of Commercial	Arriva
Director	Shrewsbury Business Improvement District
Chair	Bus Users Shropshire
Area Lead West Midlands	DfT
MP	Julia Buckley's Office
Researcher / resident voice	Lay member
Cambrian and North Wales Transport Committee / Rail Users voice	Llanfair Town Council
Senior Sales and Marketing Manager	London Northwestern & West Midlands Railways
Director	Manchester Metropolitan University
Stakeholder Engagement & Comms	Midlands Connect
Strategic Partnerships Lead	Midlands Connect
Senior Public Affairs Manager – Wales and Borders	Network Rail
Community and Stakeholder Engagement	Network Rail
Network lead for the Marches	Network Rail
Public affairs lead	Omio
CEO	Phil Jones Associates, local transport consultant with council contract
CEO	Shropshire Chamber
Shrewsbury Strategic Programme Manager	Shropshire Council
Transport Project Manager	Shropshire Council
Passenger Transport Operations Manager	Shropshire Council
Public Transport Manager	Shropshire Council
Transport Portofolio Representative	Shropshire Council
Leader	Shrewsbury Town Council
Strategy Director	SLC rail
Mobilisation Director - Open Access Operations	SLC/WSMR
Executive Director Regional Transport & integration	Transport for Wales
Station Manager	Transport for Wales
Government Relations and Public Affairs	Transport for Wales
General Manager, WMRE / Head of Rail, TfWM	West Midlands Rail Executive
Stakeholder Manager	West Midlands Trains
Policy lead	West Midlands Regional Executive
Lay member	Better Shrewsbury Transport