

**COUNTY COUNCIL MEETING – 25 JULY 2019**

**Question to Mark Winnington  
Cabinet Member for Economic Growth**

**By David Smith**

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**Question**

Twelve months ago, on the 11<sup>th</sup> July 2018, together with a County Officer, I had a meeting with Mr Francis Thomas, Head of Corporate Affairs at West Midlands Railway.

At the meeting Mr Thomas gave an absolute assurance that they would not introduce charging at Shenstone Station until they had completed a full public consultation which would include highway proposals for on street parking and a study into the point of origin of vehicles before introducing parking charges.

My understanding is that there was an understanding that WMT were intent on introducing charging for parking at Shenstone (and Penkridge) and they would work with the County Council so any displacement of vehicles onto the surrounding highway was managed properly.

Can you advise what progress has been made with WMR to see, now they have introduced charging without consultation, what we can do to help ease the situation?

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**Reply**

As Chair of West Midland's Rail Executive, I was naturally very disappointed to hear that WMT were proposing to introduce parking charges at Shenstone Railway Station without undertaking the proper promised consultation and in a manner that would have been uncoordinated with the necessary parking restrictions on adjacent roads – some of which the County Council has offered to finance.

Whilst the bottom line is that we can't stop WMT introducing parking charges at their controlled stations, they really need to explain to their customers why they think charging is a good idea especially as parking at stations within the TfWM area is free. However, my understanding is that whilst ticket machines have been installed parking charges have yet to be introduced.

WMT had initially indicated that charging was going to be introduced from 1<sup>st</sup> July 2019, but the active involvement of County Council officers has delayed this introduction. An officer met with WMT to raise our concerns with respect to the car parking charges and to discuss the wider positives surrounding station travel planning. The latest correspondence received yesterday states that WMT has

now carried out a study which includes station/train user engagement along the Lichfield line including Shenstone and has promised to provide the County Council with a copy of their report.

WMT has now also agreed to work with the County Council prior to the introduction of parking charges to look at both the level/pricing of charges and the management of vehicle displacement onto the local highway network. They are also looking at a cycle parking investment programme.

I will continue to press the matter.