

COUNTY COUNCIL MEETING – 10 OCTOBER 2019

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

By David Smith

Question

At the July Council meeting I asked the following question.

“Twelve months ago, on the 11th 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?

West Midlands Rail have now implemented the charges for parking and, as anticipated, the car park at Shenstone Station is now running at half capacity and the car parking in Shenstone has seriously worsened. What action can the Council take to address this problem? We already have a plan to better control parking but this will not be operational before the year end.

Reply

As Chair of West Midlands Rail Executive, I am extremely disappointed that parking charges have now been introduced in an uncoordinated manner without the necessary parking restrictions on the adjacent roads. This is despite assurances from West Midlands Trains that they would work with the County Council prior to the introduction of parking charges to look at how the displacement of vehicles onto the local highway network could be managed – some of which the County Council has offered to finance.

My officers are aware of the impact that these charges are having on local residents living in the vicinity of Shenstone Rail Station and they have raised these issues with West Midlands Trains. I can assure you that they will continue

to liaise and work with West Midlands Trains to try and agree solutions that are acceptable to both parties and that will minimise the impact of vehicle displacement on the local highway network.

West Midlands Trains has worked with the County Council to reduce the level of parking charges that have now been introduced at Shenstone Rail Station.

I will continue to press the matter and would like to thank Local Members for raising awareness of the issue.