

COUNTY COUNCIL MEETING – 10 OCTOBER 2019

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

By Ann Edgeller

Question

Whenever there is disruption on the M6 Junctions 12-15, traffic is diverted through Stafford and it becomes gridlocked.

This is becoming more frequent and together with heavier volumes of traffic, in addition to scheduled road works, is making local journeys difficult if not impossible.

With so much housing development taking place or planned in Stafford, will the County Council use its powers and influence on others to look into this problem, and also with a view to help resolve the situation whenever there is a Planning Application in the south of the town?

Reply

The network management unit (NMU) work closely with Highways England to manage traffic in the event of a major incident that requires closure of the M6 through Staffordshire.

In the case of protracted closures or restrictions on the motorway, the authority requires the deployment of a national, rather than emergency, diversion route, and variable messaging on the strategic network advises of the closure from Dover to Carlisle, to allow motorists to make alternative route choices. We have seen the implementation of this strategic diversion significantly reduce the volume of traffic that makes it to the point of closure, and subsequently divert onto the Staffordshire network.

In addition to the above, any works or developments on the route through Staffordshire are advised they are working on an agreed emergency diversion route for the M6 before works commence, and in the case of an incident will be required to remove or reduce traffic management as appropriate, or ensure that signals are manually controlled to assist in maintaining traffic flows.

When disruption or congestion occurs on the M6, rather than an incident, many drivers will refer to sat navs to find quicker alternative routes and reduce journey time. In this case traffic is not being purposely diverted onto the Staffordshire network by Highways England, rather drivers are making a free choice on their chosen route.