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West Midlands Police and Crime Panel

September 16, 2016

Dear Sean,

I would like to firstly thank you and the panel for their careful consideration of my draft Police and Crime Plan, as required by the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011 in your statutory role to scrutinise and support me. The discussion on Monday 5th September was interesting, thorough and useful.

I was pleased to share the Plan with members and hear their views as I firmly believe that as many people and different views as possible should be involved in its production. In addition to the consultation that I ran to hear more about people's policing priorities I also value the contributions put forward by panel members.

I welcome the panel's strong statement of support for my Plan, stating that it is 'reflective of the current priorities across the West Midlands and that it will support the continuation of the existing work being undertaken by West Midlands Police (WMP) and partner organisations to reduce crime and improve community safety.'

I also welcome the recognition from the panel of the changes made to my previous Plan, especially where I have taken on-board their previous comments on: hidden crimes, substance misuse and modern-day Police Cadets. The panel's support for my efforts to tackle cyber crime and make West Midlands Police look more like the people it serves were also most encouraging.

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In the panel's comments on my Plan, there is desire to see benchmarking against other forces and previous years data. With this in mind I have already included in my headline performance measures for 'West Midlands Police to continue to have a lower recorded crime rate compared to other similar forces.' To ensure that progress can be tracked and that targets do not change from one year to the next I aim for my Plan to cover my whole term of office rather than be revised after a single year. I am committed to improving how we use and publish performance information, and this is reflected in the Plan.

I have also already included headline measures to see 'increased reporting of hidden crimes' and welcome the panel's recognition of the important area. Indeed I have decided not to make Total Recorded Crime a target and used a comparative measure with other forces precisely to recognise that due to increased public awareness and confidence building work reporting is increasing in relation to certain offences.

West Midlands Police is a learning organisation and I am pleased that the panel has recognised this. My Plan contains a clear commitment to continue to learn and take on-board best practice wherever possible.

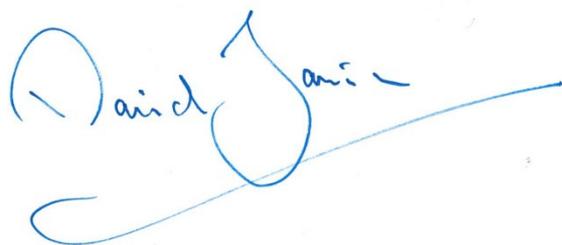
I welcome the panel's recognition of the importance of technology and keeping up to date in the fight against crime. However, I would also point out that West Midlands has been at forefront of this work for several years. Indeed HMIC have recognised West Midlands Police as one of the only outstandingly efficient forces in the country and a large reason for that is the WMP2020 modernisation programme (which began in 2014) that has improved technology at its core.

I would also like to thank the panel for recognising and welcoming the increased rate of recruitment. This doubling of recruitment compared to the previous four year term has been possible thanks to the efficiencies that the Chief Constable and I have found in the force's budget and the prudent use of reserves. I have made clear in my public declarations that this recruitment will stabilise officer numbers, rather than increase them. In my Plan I have made reference to recruitment numbers, rather than officer numbers and believe that to be a sensible way of communicating. I note however, that we remain significantly disadvantaged by government's unfair approach to police funding.

In the coming weeks I will publish my finalised Police and Crime Plan. I look forward to the panel fulfilling its statutory role of scrutiny and support as I work with the Chief Constable to deliver on the aims and objectives contained in my Plan.

I look forward to working with the panel over the coming year, but it may be helpful to point out that the role of the panel is not to hold to account (as your letter indicates), but to scrutinise and support my work.

Yours sincerely



David Jamieson

Police and Crime Commissioner

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