

Telephone Number: 0121 626 6060
wmpcc@west-midlands.pnn.police.uk



Our reference: 2020-00406

Councillor Ken Hawkins

Sent by email to:
wmpcp@birmingham.gov.uk

29 May 2020

Dear Cllr Hawkins,

Thank you for your letter on behalf of the Police and Crime Panel dated 22 May 2020. I have given careful and full consideration of your recommendation.

I was pleased to read that the Panel recognised that Waheed has the skills and experience to undertake the role, and acknowledged the work he continues to undertake to support delivery of the Police and Crime Plan and to respond to the coronavirus epidemic. As set out in my previous correspondence, I remain satisfied that he has the skills, experience and aptitude to take on this role. I therefore confirm his appointment as Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner, and look forward to working with him until May 2021 as we navigate the COVID-19 national emergency.

We are in the midst of a national emergency of the utmost gravity and it is essential that policing is well-governed so that it responds effectively, supports restart and recovery, and maintains its organisational health.

As you know, I had planned to retire with the end of my term in May 2020. However, my term of office has been extended until May 2021 due to COVID-19. The national emergency means that the effective governance of West Midlands Police is more important now than at any previous point. I'm working full time from home, and the Office of the PCC has transitioned to effective delivery in this new operational environment. I am committed to the continued delivery of the West Midlands Police and Crime Plan and the emergency chapter. The national emergency is with us right now, claiming thousands of lives in the region and requiring policing to respond to a unique and rapidly changing operational environment. The organisational health of West Midlands Police is challenged by achieving large scale recruitment at the same time as addressing financial pressures and protecting the health and well-being of its existing and new Officers and Staff. As restrictions ease, there is a real risk of increased offending, including youth violence and Serious and Organised Crime. Reported domestic violence is already increasing. We expect a "bulge" of activity across the public sector caused by backlogs, such as those we know exist in the criminal justice system. We have to ensure services to victims of crime are maintained, and projects to reduce reoffending adapt to the new environment. The threat posed by youth unemployment and children out of school for months on end is set out in my newly published report, *A Future Generations Deal: Avoiding the Ticking Time Bomb of Youth Unemployment in the West Midlands* which I encourage you and the other Panel members to read.

Notwithstanding that the Panel accepted Waheed's competence, skills and experience to fulfil the role and that Panel has received reports from him during the past year at your meetings without questioning his ability, you appear to have reached your conclusion based on misleading press articles regarding social media posts from the past, well before he started working for me in 2016.

Given these circumstances, the Panel's recommendation is unreasonable.

Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner Saleem will continue to be central to ensuring West Midlands Police is governed effectively during the national emergency, devoting himself to delivery of my Police and Crime Plan, effective oversight of the Force, and ensuring my Office works with the Force and partners to support recovery. The skills and experience he possesses, which the Panel not only recognises but has seen at its meetings repeatedly over the past year, will be critical in the coming months.

Your letter's suggestion that I undertake a further recruitment exercise in addition to that which took place last year is naïve and unhelpful. The national emergency is happening now, and I need a Deputy urgently. Waiting months for a new appointee would leave me less able to undertake my statutory functions during this critical time and give vital support to the Chief Constable. Waheed went through an open recruitment process *just last year* and repeating this is unnecessary. It is disappointing that I have to remind you and the Panel that the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011 specifically excludes the Deputy post from the recruitment processes that we use across every other staff post in my Office. Local leaders of councils and the West Midlands Mayor do not externally advertise for their Deputy posts. PCCs do not have to either. The Deputy appointment is my responsibility, and given Waheed's evident skills and experience, he is the ideal candidate to take up this role immediately and work with me through the national emergency.

This brings me to the social media posts. First, the characterisation of these as "recent" is inaccurate - they are all from before Waheed joined my Board. Second, they were often simply reposts of articles published in a national newspaper. Third, while some are controversial, they are part of Waheed's status as a public figure who comments on high profile issues. Where the posts were ill advised, Waheed accepted his mistake and apologised. What they do not do, I suggest, is exhibit the callous indifference that marked your tweet of June 2017 in which you characterised the grief and anger of the families of the Grenfell Tower disaster as "*Let's get ourselves a hangin!*" You were suspended and removed from your post on the Council as a result, yet, following an apology, find yourself the Chair of the Panel which claims the legitimacy to pass judgement on my Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner. The incongruity of your approach now is stark. Waheed answered all the Panel's questions on this subject yet for reasons I can only describe as opportunist you chose to use his posts as the basis of your decision. That you, a former police officer, should associate yourself with such grubby tactics to smear a skilled and dedicated public servant genuinely shocks me.

I have worked hard to maintain a positive working relationship with the Police and Crime Panel. We assiduously respect and support your statutory functions. Even when, as was recently the case, the Panel was so delinquent in its duties it failed to be quorate in its consideration of the £600m police budget, we worked with you to ensure members had all the information they needed to support their deliberations. How perverse then, that while it has struggled on a number of occasions to assemble sufficient of its membership to support and scrutinise the exercise of my strategic direction of West Midlands Police, the Panel can find sufficient members to make flimsy assertions about my Deputy.

The Panel's recommendation is ill-founded and cheap. Waheed will serve the public of the West Midlands as Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner, ensuring West Midlands Police continues to be an efficient and effective police force during a period of unprecedented national challenge.

This letter will be published around the time of the publication of your letter.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "David Jamieson". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line underneath.

David Jamieson
Police and Crime Commissioner