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west midlands
police and crime
commissioner

Our reference: MK072020

Rt Hon Michael Gove MP
Minister for the Cabinet Office
Cabinet Office
70 Whitehall
London
SW1A 2AS

2 September 2020

Dear Michael

I note with interest the Government's plans to move parts of the civil service out of London to other areas of the country. This will assist with the distribution of employment and investment across the country and will provide a boost to the local economies of the areas to which government offices move.

In the West Midlands we are currently implementing a major estates strategy which will see investment in new police facilities. This includes the building of new police sites and the refurbishment of existing facilities. The strategy will involve the disposal of sites that are no longer required for policing across the region. This includes two of our largest sites in central locations in Solihull and Sutton Coldfield which are currently only partially used. Both buildings are in good condition and are located next to the respective town centres. This underuse is a burden to our budget (and the taxpayer) and prevents us carrying out improvements to buildings elsewhere in our estate.

Both the sites in Solihull and Sutton Coldfield have excellent transport links and in total there will be around 3,000 square metres potentially available, post COVID restrictions. This means there is potential space for hundreds of civil service posts in these buildings. There are also other buildings available that could be considered.

I am willing to explore the possibility of the civil service moving into these vacant police buildings as they become available. There is also an opportunity for potential dual use of the buildings with the police continuing to use their existing space whilst civil servants occupy the vacant part of the buildings. Detail would need to be worked through in terms of logistics and the financial implications of any arrangement, however such an arrangement has the ability to:

- * reduce the burden on WMP maintaining underused buildings,
- * potentially keep the police presence where it currently is,
- * provide an income stream to boost local police resources,
- * provide high quality employment in these areas,
- * bring much needed foot-fall in the existing town centre areas.

I would be grateful if you can let me know your thoughts on the above proposal by the middle of September. Timing is important because we are currently working through options for the sites. Also, please let me know if you need detail on any specific police sites that are planned to become available as part of the estates strategy.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "David Jamieson". The signature is written in a cursive style, with the first letters of "David" and "Jamieson" being large and prominent. A horizontal line is drawn across the bottom of the signature.

David Jamieson
West Midlands Police and Crime Commissioner