



Home Office

The Rt Hon Kit Malthouse MP
Minister of State for Crime, Policing
and Probation.
2 Marsham Street
London SW1P 4DF
www.gov.uk/home-office

11 May 2022

Dear PCC Simon Foster and Chief Constable Sir David Thompson

Police Uplift Programme: End of Year 2 position and Year 3 delivery

The Home Office has now published the progress made across all forces in the recruitment of 20,000 additional officers to the end of March 2022. I am pleased to say, as a result of the hard work and dedication given by all forces across England and Wales, we have exceeded the 12,000 additional officer target set for the first two years of the Uplift with 13,576 additional officers now recruited.

Your force played their full part in this achievement by recruiting over and above your combined year 1 and 2 allocation. This is a truly fantastic achievement and I congratulate you on your leadership and extend my thanks to those individuals in your force who have ensured this opportunity has been seized at a phenomenal pace. I have, for this year, released full ringfence grant funding in line with all claims submitted. This is on the basis expenditure was eligible by the terms of the agreement. We will be issuing new grant agreements for year 3 shortly which will set out a clear link between officer targets and the release of funding in line with progress.

As you will know, the job for your force is not yet complete and the force must now continue to focus on recruitment to meet the final year 3 allocation, and to maintain and sustain the gains made. This year, forces are being asked to deliver the single biggest annual allocation of officers, 8,000, since the uplift began. As we come out of the pandemic, I recognise that there are different challenges facing forces, including changes to labour markets and greater competition across sectors. Whilst this presents challenges, there is also an opportunity for policing to showcase itself as a profession of choice, offering a variety of exciting roles and excellent development and progression to the most talented individuals who want to serve the public and keep communities safe.

As leaders of your force, I know you will continue to maintain personal oversight over progress being made in recruitment and will ensure local plans will deliver the uplift. In assuring your plans, you should consider what contingency is available to you to mitigate against slippage. This includes the

potential to recruit beyond your allocation as well as having robust plans and action to take in the event of unanticipated rises in attrition.

As a principle, all forces should avoid backloading recruitment to the final quarter of the year. This is to ensure that there is time to respond to any fluctuations in your profiles in good time and ensure we meet the 20,000 target.

We have seen how overreliance on the transferee market has adversely affected uplift delivery in some forces. As a result, I would ask you to consider whether reliance on transferees, particularly towards the end of the year, is a prudent planning decision. The Police Uplift Programme team is working with forces to ensure overreliance on transferees is not a risk to any force and is only used where there is a genuinely pressing operational need.

Whilst we are currently focused on delivering growth, I am clear that post programme forces will need to maintain the 20,000 additional officers recruited. As you progress through the final year of the programme, I would urge your force to ensure the right workforce planning is in place so your force can maintain officer numbers in line with uplift allocations.

The Police Uplift Programme team is available to provide you with support to deliver your year 3 allocations and I ask that you continue to draw upon them as much as you need, to cement your successful delivery of the uplift.

Congratulations on your achievements to date in the delivery of Police Uplift Programme.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Kit Malthouse', with a horizontal line extending to the right.

The Rt Hon Kit Malthouse MP
Minister of State for Crime, Policing and Probation.

Sir David Thompson QPM DL
chief.constable@west-midlands.pnn.police.uk

DECS Reference: MIN/0301533/22
Your Reference: DT/bg

080622

Dear Sir David

Thank you for your email of 21 April following our recent discussion and your meeting with Matthew Rycroft and Jaee Samant earlier this month. I am sorry for the delay in replying.

I would like to thank you for your continued support to the delivery of the Police Uplift Programme and the offer to recruit additional officers. Whilst delivery in a small number of forces fell behind at the end of year 2 of the programme, all forces are currently profiled to achieve uplift. That said, I would like to assure you that we are not being complacent. I am clear that we must do everything we can to recruit the full 20,000 additional officers across England and Wales.

The programme team at the Home Office are already providing extensive support to forces and they continue to consider all interventions to support delivery in forces, including forces that have made successful progress to date.

I fully recognise that the current Police Funding Formula is out of date and no longer accurately reflects the demand on policing. The Police Funding Formula Review is well underway and will deliver proposals for new funding arrangements. A full public consultation will take place before any new funding arrangements are implemented; our intention is to introduce a new formula before the end of this Parliament.

As part of our new Drugs Strategy, the Home Office is investing £300 million over the next three years to drive work in tackling the supply of drugs including up to £145 million allocated to bolster our County Lines Programme. As part of that, I am pleased that we can continue County Lines Programme investment in West Midlands Police with £19.25 million allocated over the next three years.

I am grateful for your continued efforts to crack down on the county lines gangs who exploit our children and devastate communities. I am pleased that you have agreed to pivot to a force-based task force, focusing on long-term criminal justice outcomes and we look forward to continuing to work with West Midlands Police on this and to hearing more of your success.

I am encouraged to hear that you are working closely with the West Midlands Combined Authority on the Levelling Up agenda. Following the publication of the Levelling Up White

Paper and now the Bill, the Home Office will continue to engage with partners in policing and local government where there are opportunities to transfer Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) functions to be exercised by combined authority mayors. From our experience in supporting the transfer of PCC functions in West Yorkshire, we know how important it is to ensure that operational policing partners are fully engaged in these discussions, and the Home Office will support you in your engagement with the Combined Authority on the Levelling Up agenda.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Kit Malthouse'.

Rt Hon Kit Malthouse MP

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Home Office

Home Secretary
Minister for Crime, Policing and Fire

2 Marsham Street
London SW1P 4DF
www.gov.uk/home-office

BY EMAIL ONLY

PCC
Simon Foster

CC
Craig Guildford

31 January 2023

Dear Simon and Craig,

POLICE FUNDING SETTLEMENT 2023-24

We are writing to confirm the details of the police funding settlement for 2023-24. Today the Police Grant Report (England and Wales) 2023-24 has been laid in Parliament and the Parliamentary vote is expected to take place shortly.

Thank you for your continued engagement and collaboration throughout this process, including sharing your views during the consultation process. Following a review of all responses received, this settlement remains unchanged from that set out at the provisional police funding settlement published on 14 December 2022.

The 2023-24 funding settlement will provide up to £17.2 billion of funding for the policing system, an increase of up to £287 million on the 2022-23 settlement, including funding from local council tax (precept), and funding for national priorities. Funding available to Police and Crime Commissioners (PCCs) will increase by up to £523 million, a 3.6% cash increase with all forces receiving at least a 3% increase.

This increase is broken down as follows:

- A £174 million increase in Government grant funding to PCCs. This consists of £100 million announced at Spending Review 2021 to ensure the maintenance of the Police Uplift Programme, £140 million announced by the Home Office in July 2022 to support forces with the cost of the police officer pay award and removes £69 million of funding provided for National Insurance contributions, following the reversal of the Health and Social Care Levy. This funding will be allocated according to funding formula shares.
- Up to £349 million additional funding from the council tax precept, based on current forecasts. The Government is enabling PCCs to increase precept by up to £15 for a Band D equivalent property without the need for a local referendum. Council tax levels are a local decision and elected Police and Crime Commissioners will rightly want to consider what they are asking people to pay to fulfil their strong desire to keep our streets safe.

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Also included in this settlement are:

- £1.1 billion for national policing priorities, both resource and capital funding, with continued investment in serious violence and drugs programmes that prevent crime and help keep communities safe, funding to improve the criminal justice system and support victims through a national operating model for rape investigations and victim satisfaction survey, and ongoing investment in the Major Law Enforcement programmes to ensure police forces have effective technology systems.
- The City of London Police precept grant (£6.4 million), the National and International Capital City (NICC) grant (£190.2 million) and the pensions grant (£142.6 million).
- The settlement also includes funding for Counter-Terrorism Policing of £1.0 billion. Forces will be notified separately of their allocation, and these will not be made public.

Under this settlement, **West Midlands** will receive a maximum of **£718,415,732** in funding next year, which is an increase of up to **£22,827,149**. This is broken down as:

- **£526,967,333** in Core Grant from the Home Office
- Up to **£16,789,991** from the ringfenced grant for the officer uplift, subject to recruitment progress
- **£19,025,734** from Council Tax Freeze grants
- **£6,964,852** from the Pensions grant
- Up to **£148,667,822** from precept

The Police Grant Report (England and Wales) 2023-24 is available online, alongside a Written Ministerial Statement which details the full settlement. To aid forces with cash-flow management, we will pay out in full at the start of the financial year the following grants: National and International Capital City grant, the Welsh Top-Up grant, Legacy Council Tax Freeze grants, and the Local Council Tax Support grant. This is for financial year 2023-24 only, and will be reviewed at the 2024-25 police funding settlement.

We would like to thank those of you who responded to the consultation on the police settlement. Many responses welcomed the settlement and praised the close collaboration between the Home Office and Policing. Several responses raised the issue of no specific capital grant for policing in 2023-24. As last year, PCCs will receive all core funding as resource, offering maximum flexibility whilst still providing options for investing in critical infrastructure and alignment with wider local government funding. Forces also stated support for the work underway on the Funding Formula Review. We are preparing to publish a first public consultation, which will set out the broad principles of the Review and consult on the purpose, structure and components of a new formula.

Recruitment

As we set out in our letter of 14 December, we are providing funding increases to enable forces to maintain overall officer headcount, comprised of your agreed Police Uplift baseline plus force level allocation of the 20,000 additional officers. Thanks to your hard work, policing is expected to achieve the additional 20,000 officers by March of this year, which is a fantastic achievement and will mean we have the highest number of officers

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servicing communities across England and Wales on record. But hitting this milestone is not the end; we want to ensure that those numbers are maintained for 2023-24.

The 2023-24 PUP ringfence grant will be used to ensure that there is a clear incentive on forces to maintain their officer numbers, as the public expects, without imposing conditions that are prohibitive to doing so. We recognise that the 2023-24 PUP ringfence grant is larger than in previous years, emphasising the importance of maintaining officer numbers beyond March 2023. We also recognise that forces plan recruitment in advance, and therefore can confirm that the funding will be released on a bi-annual basis, following the publication of police workforce statistics, and will be based on officer headcount in forces as at 30th September and 31st March. Should forces not meet the necessary requirements to claim the funding available at the mid-year point, this funding will not be available to forces at the end of the year. The Home Office will continue to engage with policing on the grant details, to be able to share these at the forthcoming Police Uplift Programme Gold event.

Efficiencies

We would also like to thank you for responding to our request asking you to set out how you will be reprioritising within your budget, delivering efficiencies, and driving productivity improvements in your local area. We recognise that increased pressures will be a concern for many forces, and there may be some challenging trade-offs at a local level to set a balanced budget. The Home Office will continue to work closely with sector representatives to assess these pressures and we remain committed to ensuring that the police have the resources they need.

The Home Office is keen to support and facilitate the sharing of best practice across forces, and officials are engaged with the NPCC and APCC Finance Leads on how best to do this. As outlined in our letter of 14 December, we are committed to supporting forces in identifying areas to drive productivity improvements, including through the Operational Productivity Review, led by Sir Stephen House and we encourage you to continue to engage in the Review, with the NPCC and Home Office officials.

We would again like to thank you for your continued collaboration throughout the settlement process and look forward to continuing to work with you over the coming year.



Rt Hon Suella Braverman KC MP
Home Secretary



Rt Hon Chris Philp MP
Minister of State for Crime, Policing and Fire

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Annex A – Total Police Funding to Police Forces 2023-24

Police Force	2022-23			2023-24			Cash Increase	% Increase
	Government Grant	Precept	Total	Government Grant	Precept ¹	Total		
	£m							
Avon & Somerset	217.3	144.8	362.2	221.2	155.1	376.3	14.2	3.9%
Bedfordshire	84.2	53.1	137.3	85.7	57.1	142.8	5.5	4.0%
Cambridgeshire	97.9	76.3	174.2	99.7	81.6	181.3	7.1	4.0%
Cheshire	141.5	91.2	232.8	144.1	98.1	242.2	9.4	4.0%
City of London	74.5	-	74.5	76.9	-	76.9	2.4	3.2%
Cleveland	113.4	43.6	157.0	115.5	46.5	161.9	4.9	3.1%
Cumbria	79.8	49.1	128.9	81.2	52.2	133.4	4.6	3.6%
Derbyshire	133.7	82.3	216.0	136.1	88.1	224.3	8.2	3.8%
Devon & Cornwall	223.8	153.2	377.0	227.8	164.2	392.0	15.0	4.0%
Dorset	81.2	77.9	159.1	82.6	83.2	165.8	6.7	4.2%
Durham	105.7	42.8	148.5	107.6	46.0	153.6	5.1	3.4%
Dyfed-Powys	62.9	66.8	129.8	64.1	70.6	134.8	5.0	3.9%
Essex	212.6	143.3	355.9	216.4	154.7	371.1	15.3	4.3%
Gloucestershire	73.5	66.2	139.8	74.8	70.5	145.4	5.6	4.0%
Greater Manchester	537.3	177.7	715.1	547.2	191.4	738.6	23.5	3.3%
Gwent	91.0	68.1	159.1	92.7	71.9	164.6	5.5	3.4%
Hampshire	242.5	167.4	409.9	246.9	179.9	426.8	16.9	4.1%
Hertfordshire	145.9	102.2	248.1	148.4	110.3	258.7	10.6	4.3%
Humberside	152.7	71.1	223.8	155.4	76.1	231.6	7.8	3.5%
Kent	230.5	148.6	379.1	234.6	160.1	394.7	15.6	4.1%
Lancashire	237.3	106.4	343.7	241.6	114.3	355.9	12.3	3.6%
Leicestershire	140.2	86.5	226.6	142.7	92.5	235.2	8.5	3.8%
Lincolnshire	80.5	65.9	146.4	81.9	70.2	152.1	5.7	3.9%
Merseyside	310.3	89.8	400.1	315.9	96.5	412.5	12.4	3.1%
Metropolitan Police	2,392.1	849.5	3,241.6	2,434.3	905.0	3,339.2	97.6	3.0%
Norfolk	108.7	87.8	196.4	110.6	93.3	203.9	7.5	3.8%
North Wales	91.4	93.9	185.2	93.1	98.8	191.9	6.7	3.6%
North Yorkshire	94.1	86.6	180.7	95.8	92.1	187.9	7.2	4.0%
Northamptonshire	90.8	70.2	161.1	92.4	74.8	167.3	6.2	3.8%
Northumbria	281.0	61.8	342.8	286.2	68.6	354.8	12.0	3.5%
Nottinghamshire	167.6	83.3	250.9	170.7	89.1	259.8	8.9	3.5%
South Wales	200.4	152.1	352.5	204.3	160.4	364.7	12.2	3.5%
South Yorkshire	233.8	81.6	315.4	238.1	88.0	326.1	10.7	3.4%
Staffordshire	145.2	88.3	233.5	147.8	94.6	242.4	8.9	3.8%
Suffolk	86.7	64.2	150.9	88.2	68.8	157.0	6.1	4.1%
Surrey	124.4	150.8	275.2	126.6	160.1	286.7	11.5	4.2%
Sussex	203.4	143.2	346.6	207.1	154.4	361.4	14.8	4.3%
Thames Valley	285.6	226.3	511.9	290.7	242.9	533.6	21.8	4.3%
Warwickshire	66.1	56.7	122.7	67.2	60.5	127.8	5.0	4.1%
West Mercia	149.6	113.7	263.3	152.2	121.8	274.1	10.8	4.1%
West Midlands	559.4	136.2	695.6	569.7	148.7	718.4	22.8	3.3%
West Yorkshire	394.0	147.9	541.9	401.2	159.6	560.8	18.9	3.5%
Wiltshire	77.8	64.4	142.1	79.2	69.1	148.3	6.1	4.3%
Total	9,622.3	4,932.7	14,555.1	9,796.7	5,281.8	15,078.5	523.4	3.6%

¹ If all PCCs increase precept levels by £15. Council tax levels are a local decision for PCCs, and the referendum principles in England are not a cap, nor do they force local authorities to set taxes at the threshold level.

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Annex B – Maintenance of police officer numbers post-PUP (March 2023)

Police Force	Adjusted baseline²	Additional uplift officer allocation	Officers to be maintained³
Avon and Somerset	2,835	456	3,291
Bedfordshire	1,257	179	1,436
Cambridgeshire	1,526	206	1,732
Cheshire	2,080	300	2,380
Cleveland	1,226	239	1,465
Cumbria	1,199	169	1,368
Derbyshire	1,827	283	2,110
Devon and Cornwall	3,115	469	3,584
Dorset	1,267	166	1,433
Durham	1,138	225	1,363
Dyfed-Powys	1,163	141	1,304
Essex	3,316	449	3,765
Gloucestershire	1,161	153	1,314
Greater Manchester	6,787	1,155	7,942
Gwent	1,300	206	1,506
Hampshire	2,791	518	3,309
Hertfordshire	2,077	304	2,381
Humberside	1,929	322	2,251
Kent	3,729	489	4,218
Lancashire	3,007	509	3,516
Leicestershire	1,998	297	2,295
Lincolnshire	1,020	166	1,186
London, City of	809	177	986
Merseyside	3,447	665	4,112
Metropolitan Police	31,943	4,557	36,500
Norfolk	1,677	224	1,901
North Wales	1,507	206	1,713
North Yorkshire	1,450	194	1,644
Northamptonshire	1,290	190	1,480
Northumbria	3,129	615	3,744
Nottinghamshire	2,021	357	2,378
South Wales	2,995	452	3,447
South Yorkshire	2,535	504	3,039
Staffordshire	1,648	300	1,948
Suffolk	1,224	179	1,403
Surrey	1,994	259	2,253
Sussex	2,737	429	3,166
Thames Valley	4,250	609	4,859
Warwickshire	963	137	1,100
West Mercia	2,164	311	2,475
West Midlands	6,691	1,218	7,909
West Yorkshire	5,186	852	6,038
Wiltshire	1,025	164	1,189
England and Wales	128,433	20,000	148,433

² The adjusted baseline is the baseline following Ministerially agreed in-year adjustments. For full details and for the latest figures please see [Police Officer uplift statistics - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/police-officer-uplift-statistics).

³ The headcount of officers to be maintained is the agreed Police Uplift baseline plus the force allocation of the 20,000 additional officers. This is the minimum number of police officers the force should maintain post the police uplift programme. Forces can go in excess of this headcount if recruiting officers via other funding streams.



Home Office

Policing Policy Directorate
Public Safety Group
2 Marsham Street
London
SW1P 4DF
www.gov.uk/home-office

7 March 2023

Dear Chief Constable, Police Crime Commissioner,

Maintaining officer numbers – details of the Police Officer Maintenance Grant

I am writing to you all regarding the Police Officer Maintenance Grant for 2023/24, which the Police Uplift Programme team updated your force 'gold leads' on at the recent Uplift 'Golds Summit' on 2nd March.

The grant is being put in place to support the maintenance of police officer numbers for 2023/24. I know that you are keen to understand the terms of the grant agreement to aid your planning, and we have worked at pace to get these out to you as quickly as we can. In designing the grant, we aimed to balance the Ministerial priority of maintaining officer numbers against providing forces with the flexibility needed to manage workforce planning and budgets.

The Police Settlement at the end of January set out the fact that the grant will be £275m in total and issued on a bi-annual basis subject to forces being at (or above) their maintenance level (officer baseline plus uplift allocation).

The grant will be split evenly over the year, with £137.5m (50%) paid according to officer headcount as at the 30th September 2023, and the remaining £137.5m (50%) paid based on officer headcount as at 31st March 2024. This funding will be distributed amongst forces according to existing funding formula shares.

To qualify for the full funding amount available, forces will need to be at (or above) their maintenance level at the points of the year stated above. Funding will be released at January and July, when the workforce data for 30th September and 31st March are published, respectively. If a force is below their allocation at either point (September or March), then the Home Office will withhold £40,000 per officer below maintenance at that point.



The figure of £40,000 per officer below maintenance will be withheld up to a threshold of 20 officers or 1% officer headcount (baseline plus uplift allocation) below maintenance, whichever is highest. Should a force be more than 20 officers or 1% officer headcount below maintenance, then the force will not be eligible for any of the grant available at this point.

Funding will not be rolled over from September to March, therefore if forces miss their headcount allocation target in September, they will not be eligible for the funding withheld at this point at the end of the financial year. The grant agreement will allow for consideration of extenuating circumstances, whereby Ministers may assess a force situation on a case-by-case basis.

We intend to send out the grant agreements in May.

As ever, should you require any additional support in the short term, please do not hesitate to contact the Police Uplift Programme team through your forces regional lead.

Kind regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'A. Khan'.

Amina Khan
Head of Unit,
Police Uplift Programme

Please ask for: Simon Foster
Telephone Number: 0121 626 6060
Reference: 2022-00738



Rt Hon Priti Patel MP

Sent via email to:
Ps.homesecretary@homeoffice.gov.uk

07 July 2022

Dear Home Secretary

Thank you very much for visiting the West Midlands on 29 June 2022. It was a pleasure to spend time with you at our "C3" facility and, along with Saqib Bhatti MP, on patrol with local neighbourhood officers in Chelmsley Wood. Our plans to make Chelmsley Wood the local policing base for the borough, whilst preserving a public contact police station in Solihull town centre, are key to the rebuilding of neighbourhood policing in the West Midlands.

I have given preparations for the Commonwealth Games close oversight, and we are pleased that planning for the security operation is not only on schedule but under budget. I trust you were impressed by what you heard, and assured that all the appropriate contingencies and plans are in place. However, we both need to accept that if industrial action leads to disruption to the rail network, the efficacy of any mitigations will be partial at best. I look forward to seeing you again during the Games.

Our meeting was a welcome opportunity to raise a number of matters with you, and this letter follows up on these.

Firstly, my staff have been working with the team from West Midlands Combined Authority to bring forward proposals to Home Office colleagues for a West Midlands "Trail Blazer Deal", as offered in the Levelling Up White Paper. We have committed to the process conscientiously and in good faith, but are hitting a brick wall with Home Office officials. All our proposals have been rejected. We see our proposals as very much aligned to the PCC Review Part 2 and other government policies and represent an opportunity to trial ways of working here in the West Midlands that could provide a template for elsewhere. I emphasise that all our proposals were developed jointly with Mayor Street's team and it is with his agreement that I raise them with you.

Our proposals do not impose net costs on the Treasury, but they do potentially raise income, albeit only relatively small amounts in the sum of a few million pounds. This income would support some of the wider initiatives we propose. We want to test ways of working that could be part of placing Local Criminal Justice Boards on a statutory footing. We also want to encourage effective enforcement against the drug economy and more innovative approaches to local drug harm reduction. We want to see more progress on road safety and denying criminals use of the roads. We want simplification of funding streams for victims, witnesses and support services associated with RASSO. Our thinking on these proposals is developing all the time, and I would be keen to offer a briefing to you and senior officials on them.

Secondly, I welcomed your candour in our discussion regarding the police funding formula and was encouraged by the close attention you are paying to this matter. I appreciate that the formula must balance competing priorities and implementation will not be easy. However, the core assumption that underpins the Levelling Up White Paper, specifically that the places in need of "Levelling Up" the most should get the most effort, should inform the review of the police funding formula.

You should not be persuaded by arguments about "sparsity" or "summer demand" as these would tend to favour areas with lower overall crime. The West Midlands faces the highest level of harm associated with crime in the country and yet, despite the welcome Police Uplift Programme, we will remain 1,000 officers smaller than we were in 2010, while other forces in lower crime areas are already larger than they have ever been. With all due respect this is an irrational and perverse outcome.

HMICFRS has concluded that West Midlands Police is an efficient Force, but lacks capacity in key areas, notably investigations. We are a pilot area for Operation Soteria and one of the key findings is that our Public Protection department lacks capacity. I therefore see it as key that the funding formula addresses these realities, and that it is implemented. The previous formula was never implemented, meaning that West Midlands Police lost out by up to £40m a year, or nearly half a billion pounds. It is notable that our precept is also lower than almost all other force areas thanks to decisions taken long before PCCs were introduced and the opportunity for flexibility to catch up over time would be welcome.

I welcome your commitment to using targeted funding to address specific issues such as violence reduction, county lines, improved services for victims, and drug harm reduction. However, these disparate funding streams, each with separate bidding, reporting, partnership working and delivery requirements are too often inefficient, time consuming and impose significant challenges. The recently added requirement for match funding has exacerbated the issue. My staff go above and beyond to engage as required, but you should be under no illusion that the resource requirements associated with servicing all these different funding streams are not easily manageable. A simplified approach that bundled the available funding together - perhaps in a manner analogous to the counter-terrorism grant - would be most welcome.

Thirdly, I broadly welcome the government's national "Harm to Hope" drug strategy, which aligns well to the approach set out in my West Midlands Police and Crime Plan. The national strategy, and your recently published delivery guidance, envisage the creation of Drug Harm Reduction Partnerships. These can sit at local authority or force levels. PCCs can be the Senior Responsible Officers, but this is not mandated. I would ask that you support the view that where a PCC wishes to be the SRO, there is a presumption that this will be the case.

We have an effective and mature West Midlands level Community Safety Partnership, and we want to see all partners working together. There are things that could be done best at local authority level, and other things that can be done once across a wider area. PCCs are well placed to bring partners together and look for commissioning efficiencies, but to do this they will need to be SROs and have the funding from 2023-24 follow suit. This approach already works well for community safety and violence reduction, for example, and it can work for drugs too. If the funding, and responsibility, rests solely at local authority level, opportunities for joined up working could be lost. PCCs are, of course, also best placed to ensure joined up approaches to oversight and delivery of enforcement.

Fourthly, I have named Craig Guildford, the current Chief Constable of Nottinghamshire Police, as my preferred candidate to succeed Sir David Thompson. We have been working on the succession since November 2021. I am pleased with the fairness, rigour, robustness and transparency of the process we followed. Given the challenges that exist surrounding the appointment of chief officers, my staff and I would be available to brief you and Home Office colleagues on how we went about it. Our next step is to secure the support of the Police and Crime Panel and, assuming this is achieved, we will enter a transition phase. Again, I trust there can be further discussion with you, ministerial colleagues and officials regarding Craig's plans for the force.

Finally, and since we met, I have been briefed on the planning for Operation Pelkin - the security operation for the forthcoming Conservative Party conference in October. As always, West Midlands Police are working hard to ensure the conference goes smoothly for you and all the other delegates and visitors. Coming so soon after the Commonwealth Games, I am sure that you can appreciate the challenges are greater than would normally be the case.

I was disappointed to learn that Home Office has withdrawn the previous flexibility to claim costs associated with paying officers for rest days worked during the conference. I cannot see any benefits or efficiencies arising from this change. It means that where officers work rest days, instead of having the option to be paid for them, they will have to take the accrued rest days in the subsequent twelve months, just as West Midlands Police is trying to cope with the consequences of the leave embargo imposed during the Commonwealth Games. The adverse impact on the operational capacity of West Midlands Police and the consequential impact on the people and communities of the West Midlands will be significant.

The change also means the operation will be more reliant on mutual aid from officers outside of the force, which presents logistic and operational issues that significantly increase the complexity and resource requirements associated with planning for the conference. West Midlands officers working paid-for rest days don't need to be housed, fed and transported, whereas mutual aid officers have to be found accommodation and looked after at a time when the city is full of visitors and delegates.

In addition, it is my understanding that the change will increase the net overall cost to the taxpayer associated with the conference, and increase the net cost to West Midlands Police. It was already the case that we could claim only a portion of the costs associated with planning for Operation Pelkin - imposing a net cost on West Midlands Police of over £500,000 - but the changed policy on rest days will add hundreds of thousands of pounds more to the costs that land on West Midlands Police. Biennially hosting the Conservative Party conference is of course a welcome fillip for our area, but to wilfully increase the local burden, and the overall cost, to no benefit, appears irrational and perverse. I ask that you please kindly urgently review the matter, revise this decision and reinstate the previous flexibility to claim costs associated with paying officers for rest days worked during the conference.

I look forward to hearing from you as soon as possible.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Simon Foster', written in a cursive style.

Simon Foster
West Midlands Police and Crime Commissioner

cc. Chief Constable Dave Thompson