













WMPCP West Midlands Police and Crime Panel

WMPCP Office Scrutiny Office Birmingham Council House Victoria Street Birmingham B1 1BB

Mr Bob Jones West Midlands Police & Crime Commissioner Lloyd House Birmingham B4 6NQ

cc. Jacky Courtney, Chief Executive, Office of the Police & Crime Commissioner

28th January 2013

Dear Bob

West Midlands Strategic Policing and Crime Board

Can I thank you for providing us with information on your proposed Strategic Policing and Crime Board as set out in your letter to me dated 2 January 2013 and for inviting Panel involvement.

The Panel considered your options and understood your need for additional support for the large geographical area which you cover. However, Members also had serious concerns about your approach which they asked me to raise with you.

- 1. We would be interested to know how you came to the conclusion that the Strategic Board was the most appropriate proposal.
- 2. Your decision report notes that total costs for the Police and Crime Commissioner, Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner and Strategic Board Members are, at £291,895, lower than the equivalent costs of the Police Authority. The Panel queried, nonetheless, if this represented value for money, particularly as there were formerly 17 members of the Police Authority representing all geographical and political spectrums.
- 3. You wish each Assistant Police and Crime Commissioner (APCC) to cover two districts. I have already raised with you my views about this. The preferred approach of the Police and Crime Panel would be that you had approached each Leader and had cross party democratic geographical representation (under different terms and conditions).

- 4. One of the selling points of PCCs was meant to be their accessibility. However, Members raised concerns that liaison with the APCC represents a step removed from direct liaison with the PCC.
- 5. There was genuine concern about your appointments process for the APCCs.
 - i. Members felt that the APCCs should live or work in the areas they are to represent. If appointments are to be made on the basis of merit you will not be able to meet this aspiration if the best candidates are, say, all from Coventry.
 - ii. It is regrettable that Birmingham candidates appear excluded from this process.
 - iii. The Panel noted that applicants of any political party would able to be appointed if the decision is made solely on merit.

As a result of these concerns the Panel agreed that, at this point they would not take up your offer of involvement in the selection process nor as formal observers at Board meetings.

In part our concerns relate to the new structures which this Government has imposed upon us and which both you and I agree were unnecessary changes. I agree with your position that it is not possible for one person to represent and be accountable for the whole of the West Midlands and understand why you wish to resolve this in some way. However, it is regretful that the Panel was not able to discuss this with you prior to you advertising the posts.

I look forward to seeing you again on 6th February to discuss the precept.

Yours sincerely

Ramen. C. Cooper.

Councillor Darren Cooper Chair, West Midlands Police & Crime Panel Leader Sandwell MBC