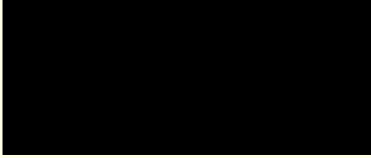




Simon Foster
West Midlands Police and Crime Commissioner



Wednesday, 19 October 2022

Dear Simon,

As I speak to residents in the North of my constituency in Chelmsley Wood, Kingshurst and Fordbridge, Smith's Wood and Castle Bromwich I am regularly informed about anti-social behaviour and other crimes. Residents are frustrated that they do not feel they are protected from these crimes. I think our police officers are some of the best law enforcement professionals in the country and I am pleased that our government has backed them by increasing funding to West Midlands Police and also committing resources to securing a further 1200 police officers since 2019.

However, communities need to feel protected and this means having more officers and visible deterrents. While I understand you have decided to move resources to Chelmsley Wood Police Station, my constituents are concerned that there is no front desk or public access to report crimes. In fact, the failure to commit to keeping a fully functional police station in Solihull means the borough of Solihull would have no front-facing desk open to the public. The lack of accessibility for my constituents undermines public faith in our policing and is simply not good enough.

This closure is a stark contrast to the government's planning recruitment of 20,000 new police officers and the funding they have committed to policing. 867 of these police officers will be in the West Midlands. The Home Office is also providing an extra £540 million by 2024-25 to complete the recruitment of these new officers. This will take the total to 148,000 officers by 2023, representing a 16 per cent increase on 2019. The funding package includes an additional £550 million of Government funding to PCCs.

The proposed closure of Solihull Police Station and the lack of public-facing facilities at Chelmsley Wood Police Station is inconsistent with the level of funding and support that the government has introduced.

Chelmsley Wood Police Station urgently needs a front desk.

I look forward to your response.

Yours sincerely,

Saqib Bhatti MBE MP