

Rich Cooke held the position of West Midlands Branch Chair previously from 01/06/2018 to 05/08/2019.

In his nomination, he stated:

The Chair of our Branch Board is the person who speaks on your behalf to the Chief Constable and to the public. West Midlands Police is the second largest Force in England & Wales. I believe it is vital that we have a strong, visible and distinctive voice representing our officers locally and nationally. I believe I have a proven track record of robustly representing my colleagues in public and private.

I am an officer of 21 years service, mostly spent in uniform frontline roles, but also with experience in Contact, Intelligence, and CID. I live in Staffordshire, and am married with three children and the family dog, Vinnie.

All my career I have found myself questioning practices which didn't seem to make sense, and often being the spokesperson for my colleagues when there seemed to be an unfairness or injustice. This led me to putting myself forward as a Federation Rep about 9 years ago. In 2018, I was proud & honoured to be elected by my colleagues as their Branch Chair. This was a role I embraced with passion and vigour and I was described as the most visible and engaging Chair in living memory. Since that time I have continued to campaign to highlight issues of officer safety, and continuing to campaign for pension justice for all officers detrimentally affected by the discriminatory government reforms of 2015.

The key issues I will push as Chair are:

*Greater openness & transparency in the decision making processes within your Federation so ordinary members can easily see and hear what their elected reps are saying & how they are voting on issues.

*Promoting greater activism and risk taking in our approach to challenging the government on big issues like our pay and pensions.

*Within West Midlands I want to find ways of giving back a large proportion of our cash reserves to members, while maintaining a sensible level for a rainy day. I want to conduct a major piece of work involving a wide range of colleagues, to understand our options and implement a plan to leave a lasting legacy for the ongoing welfare of our officers.

Now is a crucial time for West Midlands Police with the Commonwealth Games next year and a potential change of Chief Constable on the horizon. Nationally, it feels like we are under constant attack, with lazy media commentary laying many of the ills of society at our door. While we all have a responsibility to do our best. I will challenge the prevailing consensus that seeks to label us, when every day all we do is try and help those in need. I will not stand for our rights and reputation being trashed based on over hyped headlines. I am proud to be a Police Officer and will promote our service and self sacrifice in everything I do in a professional and measured way on your behalf.