

Cleveland Police Authority

Transition to police and crime commissioners

About this review

On 15 November 2012 the first elections outside London for police and crime commissioners (PCCs) will be held across England and Wales. PCCs will hold chief constables to account for policing in their force area on behalf of the public. New police and crime panels will scrutinise the actions and decisions of each PCC and make sure information is available for the public, enabling them to hold the PCC to account. Police authorities will cease to exist.

During early summer 2012,¹ Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC) assessed how police authorities are preparing for this change. We examined their transition plans and visited every authority to ask:

- Is the police authority ensuring business as usual until November 2012?
- Has the police authority got a plan for managing the transition to PCCs?
- Are arrangements in place to secure a seamless handover to PCCs?
- Are other stakeholders properly involved in the transition process?

This report summarises what we found in Cleveland. A thematic report, *Preparing for Police and Crime Commissioners*, is available from www.hmic.gov.uk

Findings

Summary

Cleveland Police Authority is putting in place detailed plans for managing the handover to a PCC. Police authority members are to be commended for their continuing commitment and professionalism. These include ensuring there are sufficient staff to support the new role and involving partners in key decisions.

The police authority remains fully committed to ensuring business as usual, and is reviewing the key decisions that need to be made between now and November on a case-by-case basis, deciding what should be progressed and what should be left for the PCC. It has already begun to develop some options for how the PCC might want to operate, although these are yet to be fully developed.

¹ Meetings with police authorities took place between April and June.

Ensuring business as usual until November 2012

The authority is committed to ensuring that business as usual is maintained until November – and in particular, is continuing to scrutinise force performance and financial plans. Internal committee structures have been streamlined in order to make time available so that work on the transition can carry on in parallel to regular authority work. Key decisions in the next few months will be made on a case-by-case basis (for instance, on how the first police and crime plan will be structured – which the PCC will have to draft by March 2013 – and around the establishment of the police and crime panel).

Plans for managing the transition to PCCs

Cleveland has a clear transition plan which appears to be progressing well and is being managed through an established transition board. This board includes both police authority and force representatives, which ensures a good balance of knowledge, skills and experience. Partners have been kept informed of transition plans through various (and well-attended) meetings and events.

Key risks to successful implementation of the plans have been identified, and the transition board oversees actions taken to mitigate these. A contingency fund has been set aside to ensure costs associated with the transition are properly identified and managed.

Arrangements to secure a seamless handover to PCCs

Cleveland Police Authority is developing an information pack for the incoming PCC, which will include legacy statements about decisions made by the authority's committees, as well as areas of business that will need to be progressed and resolved. The authority is also putting together a range of options for the PCC to consider around how he or she might want to arrange governance, accountability and decision making.

In addition, the authority is progressing plans to make sure that the PCC has sufficient, capable staff to support their new role. This is important in helping to allow the PCC to work effectively from day one. HMIC will follow the progress of this work through the summer. Plans for briefing prospective PCC candidates are transparent and are being shared with staff to ensure a consistent approach.

How stakeholders are involved in the transition process

The authority has recently appointed a local authority and partner liaison officer, and holds regular meetings with senior representatives of various organisations which have an interest in reducing crime and community safety. This should help to ensure that partner agencies remain engaged throughout the transition process.

In addition, joint events and ongoing work to identify the financial implications for partnerships, post-transition, are proving valuable in developing and sustaining good relationships. The recent appointment of a local authority and partner liaison officer and regular meetings with senior representatives from partner agencies is helping to further develop good relationships

Next steps

HMIC will continue to monitor the transition to PCCs, with a focus on the arrangements that will enable PCCs to work effectively from day one.