

# Cumbria 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,<sup>1</sup> 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 Cumbria. A thematic report, *Preparing for Police and Crime Commissioners*, is available from [www.hmic.gov.uk](http://www.hmic.gov.uk)

## Findings

### Summary

Cumbria Police Authority has already put in place detailed plans for managing the handover to PCCs. Police authority members are to be commended for their continuing commitment and professionalism. This includes 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 has identified the key decisions that need to be made between now and November. It has also already begun to develop some options for the PCC to consider as he or she decides how to operate (although these are not yet fully developed).

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<sup>1</sup> Meetings with police authorities took place between April and June.

### ***Ensuring business as usual until November 2012***

The police authority is committed to ensuring that business as usual is maintained until November. The committee's cycle of meetings will remain in place, which will ensure that it maintains its focus on the reduction of crime and anti-social behaviour and the delivery of financial savings through a major programme of change.

The authority has identified the key decisions that will have to be made in the next few months. These include determining the structure for the first police and crime plan.

### ***Plans for managing the transition to PCCs***

Cumbria has a clear transition plan, which is being managed through an established transition board. This board includes representatives from the police authority, force and partner agencies, which provides a good balance of knowledge, skills and experience.

Key risks to the plan have been identified and actions have been taken to mitigate these, again overseen by the transition board. A contingency fund has been set aside to ensure any costs associated with transition are properly identified and managed.

### ***Arrangements to secure a seamless handover to PCCs***

Cumbria Police Authority is developing an information pack for the incoming PCC. This will include an outline of the authority's committees and their work, as well as details of those areas of business that will need to be progressed and resolved following the election. Plans are also being developed for the PCC's early days in post. These include offering meetings with authority members and local leaders, which will help the incoming PCC to better understand the policing issues across the county.

The authority is also working to ensure there are sufficient and capable staff in place for the PCC to fulfil their role when they take up office. This is important to ensure the PCC is able 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 shared with staff to ensure a consistent approach.

### ***How stakeholders are involved in the transition process***

The police authority has placed a strong emphasis on engaging with other partners throughout the transition process. These partners include organisations that have an interest in reducing crime, community safety and the new policing landscape (such as the six district councils in Cumbria, the county council, criminal justice agencies, and voluntary sector organisations).

### **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.