

Derbyshire 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 Derbyshire. A thematic report, *Preparing for Police and Crime Commissioners*, is available from www.hmic.gov.uk

Findings

Summary

Derbyshire Police Authority's planning for transition is effective. The commitment of members to ensuring effective governance through to transition is strong, and key decisions have been identified. Police authority members are to be commended for their continuing commitment and professionalism. Stakeholder engagement is also positive. However, responsibility for the development of the options for how the PCC will hold the force to account needs greater clarity, and the full authority should have oversight of this.

Plans to provide the PCC with a handover report describing the ongoing risks, key decisions that need to be taken and the accountability framework is good practice.

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

Ensuring business as usual until November 2012

Police authority members are committed to ensuring that business as usual is maintained until November. Internal committee structures are continuing and there will be an additional full police authority meeting before transition, designed to approve a comprehensive business handover to the incoming PCC. Key decisions to be made between now and November have been identified and will be taken, such as those involving regional collaboration agreements.

Plans for managing the transition to PCCs

Derbyshire Police Authority has a shared transition plan with the force. It is being effectively implemented and there is appropriate project management in place. The transition plan is being managed across two boards, one for the force and one for the authority, with guiding principles for determining each board's responsibilities. This is an unusual approach which requires good governance to ensure transitional arrangements are consistent across both the police authority and the force.

The transition plan is broken down into work streams, which are progressed by named individuals. Key risks have been identified and action is taken to mitigate them; progress is monitored through the police authority transition board.

A plan for candidate engagement is in place, and is being shared with staff to ensure a consistent approach.

Arrangements to secure a seamless handover to PCCs

It is important that the incoming PCC is able to work effectively from day one. It will be for them to decide how they wish to run their office, hold the force to account and engage with the public to identify local priorities. A range of options for governance, accountability and decision making are being developed for the incoming PCC to consider. The development of options is at an early stage. HMIC is concerned that in Derbyshire the responsibility for developing the options is unclear. The full police authority should have oversight of the proposals as they are finalised.

The authority will provide the incoming PCC with a handover report that will describe the ongoing risks and the rationale for key decisions that have been taken recently. This will be helpful in enabling the PCC to understand any ongoing issues and is good practice.

How stakeholders are involved in the transition process

Derbyshire Police Authority is working closely with partners across the county to ensure they are involved in the transition process. A communications strategy has been developed and engagement is taking place internally with the force and externally with local authority and criminal justice partners. This includes a monthly newsletter to partners, a letter to all staff and authority attendance at briefings given by chief officers.

Next steps

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