

Bartleet House, 165a Birmingham Road,
Bromsgrove, Worcestershire B61 0DJ
Direct Line: 01527 882002 Fax: 01527 882005
Email: Drusilla.sharpling@hmic.gsi.gov.uk

Drusilla Sharpling, CBE
Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary

28 September 2012

Mr Rob Garnham
Chair – Gloucestershire Police Authority

Mr Andy Champness
Chief Executive – Gloucestershire Police Authority

Dear Rob and Andy,

HMIC Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) Budget Preparedness Visits

Thank you for the time the police authority spent with the HMIC team on 13 September 2012. The meeting presented an opportunity for you to provide an overview of your budget development process for 2013/14, the funds identified for transition and the development of potential models of governance, decision making and accountability.

I am writing to provide you with a summary of the discussions and to highlight any areas that emerged for further consideration.

Budget setting process

You are taking a 'business as usual' and well established approach to your 2013/14 budget setting process. Your medium term financial strategy was refreshed in February and a series of budget planning assumptions made in July informs the plan for the next three years to 2015/16. You will prepare a draft budget paper when the grant settlement is known in November and the strategy will be revisited and a detailed version will be available later in the year.

You are engaging with stakeholders and prospective PCC candidates to brief them on the budget outlook and you have more events of this type planned in the next couple of months. You are meeting with the police and crime panel in September to discuss the budget setting process and how this supports the development of the police and crime plan.

Preparation of scenarios to support the PCC in setting the budget

You have prepared high level scenarios for the incoming PCC to consider in order to assist with setting the budget and these will continue to be developed and refreshed as more information is made available.

Workforce and service impact

You described your current workforce plans which are progressing as planned and while you are not expecting any changes to your workforce projections for the next two years you will be reassessing the position once more detail is known on the financial outlook. Similarly, none of the high level scenarios you have explored are expected to result in major changes to existing service delivery plans although you acknowledge that once more information on the next comprehensive spending review is available this may change.

The authority is continuing to pursue options for collaborating with others as a means of increasing efficiency and reducing costs.

Forward planning: governance and the Office of the PCC (OPCC)

You have set aside a small transition budget to take account of any one off costs and the provisional budget for the OPCC is anticipated to remain broadly the same and will allow enough flexibility for the incoming PCC to decide on their own arrangements.

You have identified the principles for how the OPCC will operate and comprehensive arrangements are being put in place for when the PCC takes up office. You have considered staffing requirements and identified areas where further support may be needed such as commissioning services.

The authority has begun to work with partners on workshops for evaluation and needs analysis to inform commissioning. For day one, the commissioning and development manager is pulling together partner information as a community intelligence resource.

You are now focusing on drafting your schemes of consent and delegation and are using national guidance to assist you with this. The approach is to build a scheme of governance with different sections for consent and delegation, standing orders and financial regulations.

You have yet to set up an interim joint audit committee and this is work in progress.

You are still in the process of developing a range of options for how the PCC will hold the Chief Constable to account and are drawing on guidance issued by the Association of Police Authority Chief Executives and the Association of Police Authorities to assist you with this. You are fully aware of the range of options you will be developing.

In summary, you have a well established budget development process which is based on prudent assumptions and takes account of some high level funding scenarios. You are also developing a range of options for the PCC to consider once in post to assist them in delivering their statutory functions.

Your plans for how the OPCC will operate to support the PCC in delivering their statutory functions are developing. While your governance options for how the PCC might hold the Chief Constable to account are still work in progress, you have a clear idea of what the options are and are using national guidance to assist in developing these further. You fully understand that it will be a matter for the PCC which, if any, options they choose to adopt.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the police authority for its continuing commitment to plan and prepare for the transition to a PCC.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Drusilla Sharpling'.

Drusilla Sharpling
HM Inspector of Constabulary
Wales and Western Region

Copied:
Mr Michael Matthews
Chief Constable – Gloucestershire Constabulary

Ms Louise Gill
HMIC Liaison Officer