

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

### Findings

#### Summary

Gloucestershire Police Authority has an established transition board that oversees the delivery of the transition plan to PCCs. Membership of this board includes partner agencies, and representatives of the police authority and constabulary. Gloucestershire Constabulary also has its own PCC transition board, chaired by the deputy chief constable. The boards are working closely together so that all measures are put in place to ensure a seamless transfer. Police authority members are to be commended for their continuing commitment and professionalism.

The authority's transition plan is supported by sound planning assumptions and risk management principles, and the chief executive leads on its implementation. The authority is maintaining a business as usual approach leading up to the November elections, and so continues to scrutinise wider performance of the constabulary and make key decisions, including the appointment of senior police officers.

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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 authority is committed to ensuring a business as usual approach, with no change to how it monitors the constabulary (on areas such as crime rates and restorative justice outcomes). The authority recognises that key decisions will need to be made before a PCC takes office and is pressing ahead with these now. This includes work to progress the estates strategy to support the medium-term financial plan that has previously been agreed by the authority.

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

Gloucestershire Police Authority has a clear transition plan. This is divided into workstreams – some of which are owned jointly with the force. There are two boards, the authority's transition board and the constabulary's transition board, which both monitor the progress of the activities within the transition plan and reviews any risks as the plan moves forward and gains momentum. Each of the risks identified by the authority and force are contained within a risk register and are actively managed, with actions to reduce them in place. The transition plan is supported by a number of planning assumptions and risk management principles. The authority has set aside a small budget to cover any unforeseen transition costs that may arise.

The transition plans include arrangements for the briefings of potential PCC candidates. There is also a communications plan to inform both constabulary and police authority staff of the changes and what this means for them.

## ***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. Ensuring a seamless handover to a PCC remains a key objective of both the authority's project plan and the 2012/13 local policing plan for Gloucestershire. Initial staffing for the office of the PCC have been agreed and the necessary resources are being put in place.

The PCC will have to draft a police and crime plan for Gloucestershire by March 2013. To help him or her do this, the authority and constabulary have reviewed all ongoing work, and are preparing an induction programme. They are also putting together a comprehensive set of information to explain the day-to-day functions of operational policing and the different parts of the constabulary's business areas.

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

Gloucestershire Police Authority has engaged and met with a number of partners, including community safety partners, community safety coordinators, offender managers, and the Gloucestershire Assembly of Voluntary and Community Action. The authority has also delivered presentations on the changes that a PCC will bring to all district councils. The authority has engaged specialist consultants on work to set out the current commissioning arrangements across the county. It planned an event with key partners to outline how the PCC's role in commissioning services may affect them.

### **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.