

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

## Findings

### Summary

Northumbria Police Authority has already put in place detailed plans for managing the handover to the PCC. 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 has identified the key decisions that need to be made between now and November. It has also 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).

Police authority members are to be commended for their continuing commitment and professionalism.

---

<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 cycle of meetings will remain in place, with members continuing to scrutinise force performance, the delivery of service improvements and financial savings.

The authority has identified the key decisions that have to be made in the next few months, including ensuring the delivery of a major change programme for the force.

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

Northumbria has a clear transition plan, which is being managed through an established transition steering group and is progressing well. This group includes representatives from the police authority and force, providing a good balance of knowledge, skills and experience.

Key risks to the plan have been identified, with actions taken to mitigate these (again overseen by the transition steering group). A contingency fund has been set aside to ensure costs in relation to the transition are properly managed.

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

Northumbria Police Authority is developing an information pack for the incoming PCC. This will outline the authority's committees and their work, and also give details of those areas of business that will need to be progressed and resolved following the election. The authority is also developing plans for the PCC's first few days in post; including setting up meetings with authority members and local leaders, which will help the PCC to better understand the policing issues across Northumberland and Tyne & Wear.

The authority is reviewing its current ways of scrutinising force performance to ensure they will meet the different needs of the PCC. It is also working to make sure there are sufficient and capable staff in place to allow the PCC to fulfil the role. This will be important in allowing 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 shared with staff to ensure a consistent approach.

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

The police authority is engaging with other partners as part of the transition process. These partners include those who have an interest in reducing crime, community safety, and criminal justice including the voluntary sector. A shadow police and crime panel will meet in July with each of the six local authorities represented in accordance with political balance.

### **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.