

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

Findings

Summary

Nottinghamshire Police Authority's planning for transition is sound and it has a clear approach to assessing and managing the handover to PCCs. The commitment of authority members to ensuring effective governance through to transition is particularly strong, and key decisions that need to be taken have been identified. Stakeholder engagement with key local authority and criminal justice partners is also positive. Police authority members are to be commended for their continuing commitment and professionalism.

The authority needs to make further progress to develop options by which the incoming PCC could operate from day one and in particular options for the framework by which the PCC could hold the force to account.

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. All committees continue to operate and there is regular engagement and attendance by all police authority members.

The authority is developing draft police and crime plans and intends to incorporate PCC candidate manifestos and pledges into each, pending the results of the PCC election. A policing model for how services will be delivered as the force adjusts to working within reduced finances is being developed.

Plans for managing the transition to PCCs

Nottinghamshire Police Authority has a clear transition plan which is being managed through an established transition board, with representation from police authority officers and members, the force, and wider stakeholders (such as the local authorities). Additional staff have been brought in to help to ensure the transition planning is progressed without affecting current authority business.

The Chief Constable chairs a separate implementation board and police authority oversight is managed through a joint leadership group. The Chief Executive of the police authority is the senior responsible officer for the transition programme. Any key decisions are managed through the relevant police authority committee and full authority meetings.

Arrangements to secure a seamless handover to PCCs

It will be for the PCC to decide how they wish to run their office, hold the force to account and engage with the public to identify local priorities. The police authority is carrying out a gap analysis against the current tasks and responsibilities of the authority compared to those of the PCC. This is intended to assist the authority to consider proposals for how the PCC's office could operate in practical terms from day one.

Options for how the PCC might go about holding the force to account within the new arrangements are also being progressed. Agreement on the proposed operating structure of the PCCs office and the accountability framework is key to ensuring successful transition; the authority need to ensure this is completed as a priority.

How stakeholders are involved in the transition process

The police authority places a strong emphasis on engaging with other partners. A communications strategy has been developed and engagement is taking place within the force and with key local authority and criminal justice partners. This includes offers of briefings and presentations to partners; as well as monthly newsletters.

Plans for engagement with PCC candidates are in place and these are supported by a dedicated internet site which provides background information.

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.