

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

Findings

Summary

South Yorkshire Police Authority has already put in place plans for managing the handover to PCCs. These include ensuring partners are involved in the transition and making the public aware of what the changes will mean to them. Police authority members are to be commended for their continuing commitment and professionalism.

The police authority remains fully committed to ensuring business as usual in the run up to the election, 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).

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

Ensuring business as usual until November 2012

The police authority is fully committed to ensuring that business as usual is maintained until November. Key decisions that have to be made in the next few months have been clearly identified, and include setting crime targets for the force.

Plans for managing the transition to PCCs

South Yorkshire's transition plan is being managed through an established transition board, which includes both police authority and force representatives.

Key risks to the plan have been identified, and action taken to mitigate them. Clear links have been made between the risks and the impact they might have on the handover process. While the capacity of the police authority secretariat has reduced, arrangements have been put in place to bolster this through a secondment from the force.

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. To help with this, the authority is putting together a range of options for governance, accountability and decision making for the PCC to consider (although this is at an early stage of development). 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 places a strong emphasis on engaging with partners who have an interest in crime, community safety and the new policing landscape (such as local authorities, criminal justice agencies and the voluntary sector). Partners have been kept well informed through separate information sharing seminars which have been well attended.

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.