

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

### Findings

#### Summary

Devon and Cornwall Police Authority has been planning for the new PCC arrangements through a transition board, which was established in July 2011. The chief executive of the authority oversees transition arrangements, acting as the senior responsible officer supported by the authority treasurer in the role of project manager.

The transition plan is divided into several workstreams, each of which is led by an officer of the authority staff, who drives the work and monitors the risk and then reports this to members of the authority both informally on an ongoing basis, and more formally at the transition board to make sure that progress is on track. The authority, closely supported by the force, is accelerating preparations for the transition to PCCs as the November elections draw nearer.

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<sup>1</sup> Meetings with police authorities took place between April and June.

The authority is managing the risks associated with conducting both business as usual and the transition arrangements; it remains committed to succeeding in both of these areas. To help deliver this, it has streamlined the meeting cycle in order to provide authority members and authority staff with extra capacity. Police authority members are to be commended for their continuing commitment and professionalism.

### ***Ensuring business as usual until November 2012***

The authority has rationalised the meetings cycle, which will free up some staff time so that they can concentrate on the activities outlined in the transition workstreams. The authority is committed to delivering the arrangements for transition, and is continuing to make necessary decisions in the interests of efficiency and effectiveness (for instance, around collaboration on forensics and e-commerce projects with the other four south west police forces), rather than putting these off until the PCC is in place.

The authority and force have completed a due-diligence exercise to ensure the integrity of records relating to assets, property, and liabilities of the authority in order so that they can transfer seamlessly to the PCC. A shadow joint audit committee, comprising members independent of the police authority, will be in place from July 2012 to prepare for the handover of governance responsibilities in November and to consider proposals for new ways of working in the lead up to the PCC elections.

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

Devon and Cornwall police authority has a clear project plan, with workstreams that follow the national guidance developed by the Association of Police Authorities (APA). A different officer of the authority has responsibility for each workstream, monitoring the risks and ensuring that progress is made and activities completed. Both internal and independent gateway-type reviews have been conducted on behalf of the authority in order that the Transition Board can monitor progress of the transition project. Transition risk registers are in place for both the authority and force and are reviewed regularly.

The authority has reduced the meetings cycle and slimmed down committee structures, so that some staff time can be freed up both for transition work and to ensure it can deliver business as usual (this has previously been a concern for it). A small budget has been allocated for any transition costs, but so far costs have remained low.

### ***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. The authority and force are jointly working with partners in preparing the evidence base for the police and crime plan (which the new PCC will need to publish by early 2013), and intend to have a draft template ready by October 2012.

The authority is also preparing plans for the design of the office of the PCC. Due diligence checks are taking place (led by the treasurer of the police authority), and new ways of working and decision making processes are being evaluated ready for the incoming PCC.

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

Partner agencies (including those from the health, criminal justice, business, and voluntary sectors, and local authorities) have been involved in the authority's transition plans through the PCC transition advisory and consultative group, which first met in March 2012 to initiate effective engagement with partners through transition. The police area returning officer who is responsible for the overall conduct of the election of a PCC for the police force area, is closely involved with the authority and its transition arrangements, and attends the meeting of partner agencies. The chief executive of the police authority has met separately with partners and local authority members. The police authority is scoping (with other agencies with whom the PCC will have to work in future) the commissioning role of the PCC and the opportunities or challenges that may arise.

The authority has an internal and external communications strategy in place, and listens closely to any staff concerns. A PCC induction pack is being prepared for Devon and Cornwall PCC candidates.

### **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.