

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

Findings

Summary

Essex Police Authority has recently put in place plans for managing the handover to PCCs. Work is now focusing on the development of a number of options for the incoming PCC to use in order that he or she may operate effectively from day one. This includes arrangements for governance and accountability.

The police authority remains fully committed to ensuring business as usual and has engaged with partners, for example local councils, to enable them to understand and prepare for the transition to PCCs.

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

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

Ensuring business as usual until November 2012

Police authority members are fully committed to ensuring business as usual continues through to transition. The police authority has retained its current committee structure, members are fully engaged in continuing to hold the force to account for performance and provide support where required. The key decisions that affect policing in Essex have been identified by the police authority and are being managed effectively.

Plans for managing the transition to PCCs

The police authority has set up a transition board which is responsible for managing the change to the new arrangements for policing under the PCC. The transition board includes representation from the police authority, the force as well as partners including local councils. The transition board reports to the full police authority committee and members are regularly updated. In order to manage the change to PCCs the police authority is working to a transition plan. The development of the plan is still at an early stage and will benefit from the recent appointment of a project manager who will have day-to-day responsibility for managing the risks and the effective transition.

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. A range of options for governance, accountability and decision making are being developed for the incoming PCC to consider. Development of these options is at an early stage and should be prioritised to ensure the PCC can operate effectively from their election.

HMIC will continue to monitor the authority's progress throughout the summer.

How stakeholders are involved in the transition process

Essex Police Authority continues to develop relationships with partners across the county. They have engaged with some important partners but recognise the need for wider consultation. Plans for engagement with candidates for the role of the PCC are in place, these will be supported by the police authority website which will provide detailed information for PCC candidates and other interested parties.

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.