

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

Findings

Summary

Greater Manchester Police Authority (GMPA) 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.

GMPA remains fully committed to ensuring business as usual and has identified the key decisions that need to be made between now and November 2012. In addition, the police authority has already been developing some options for the PCC to consider when he or she is deciding how to operate.

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

Ensuring business as usual until November 2012

GMPA is committed to ensuring that business as usual is maintained until November 2012. Internal committee structures have been streamlined in order to ensure that transition planning can take place in parallel with regular authority business.

There is a clear governance structure for the transition period and the key decisions that are required during this time have been identified.

Police authority members continue to engage with local communities, as well as monitoring the service the force is delivering to the public.

Plans for managing the transition to PCCs

Greater Manchester has a clear transition plan, which is being managed through an established transition board. This board is overseen by a steering group, and includes representatives from the police authority and force, as well as from some partner agencies.

Partners are being kept engaged in the transition process through the regular meeting structures already in existence as well as through a number of PCC-specific meetings and seminars.

Key risks have been identified and action taken to mitigate these. Clear links have been made between the risks and the impact they might have on the handover process.

Arrangements to secure a seamless handover to PCCs

It is important that the incoming PCC is able to work effectively as soon as they are elected. 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 is developing a range of options for governance, accountability and decision making for the PCC to consider, as well as identifying the biggest risks currently facing the force and authority. HMIC will follow the progress of this work over the summer.

How stakeholders are involved in the transition process

The police authority places a strong emphasis on engaging with other partner agencies. These include criminal justice agencies and the voluntary sector – and in particular, local authorities. GMPA has a strong relationship with the Association of Greater Manchester Authorities and is committed to ensuring they remain fully involved in the transition process.

Work is ongoing to identify the legal and financial changes to partnership arrangements that will exist once the PCC is in post. Plans for how to brief prospective PCC candidates are being developed to ensure a consistent, unbiased approach.

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.