

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

Findings

Summary

Merseyside 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 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 still being 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. For instance, it continues to scrutinise and be actively engaged in the plans for achieving the savings required by the 2010 Spending Review. Its regular cycle of internal committee meetings that scrutinise and oversee expenditure, performance and delivery against the annual policing plan will be retained while details of the new arrangements are worked out.

Key decisions that have to be made in the next few months have been clearly identified, and include protocols for regional collaboration to provide forensic services and public order training.

Plans for managing the transition to PCCs

Merseyside has a clear transition plan. This is being managed through an established transition committee (which includes both police authority and force representatives).

Key risks to the plan have been identified, with action taken to mitigate them. Clear links have been made between the risks and the impact they may have on the handover process.

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; and the authority is working to ensure that there are sufficient capable staff to support him or her in this role.

It is also working to produce an induction pack for the incoming PCC, which will include details of the authority's committees and how they operate. The pack will also include areas of work that will need to be carried forward. 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 transition committee membership does not include any key stakeholders. However, the authority is in discussions with a number of partners including community safety partnerships, youth offending teams, criminal justice boards and the city region cabinet as they work to put in place a single approach to how services will be commissioned from the PCC. Partners have been kept informed through ongoing individual meetings and discussions.

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.