

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

## Findings

### Summary

There is an established joint police force and police authority transition board in North Wales, with the six local authorities represented by the chief executive of Conwy County Council. This arrangement ensures that local partners are actively involved in the change. The authority is engaging with local people to help them understand what these changes mean to them. Police authority members are to be commended for their continuing commitment and professionalism.

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

The authority is fully committed to maintaining business as usual and seeks to strengthen this approach by redesigning and reducing their committee structures. This will make it more straightforward to lead the force through November's elections (and beyond).

Risks are closely monitored and managed by the transition board; however recent changes to North Wales Police (following an increase in crime) have meant that the authority needs to focus more attention on helping to bring down offending.

Arrangements are well underway to provide a police and crime panel, which will be hosted by Conwy County Council.

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

The police authority has shown determination to maintain a business as usual approach until November. This includes a reduction in internal committee structures, aimed at making it easier both to plan for the transition, and to monitor and scrutinise police performance.

Despite the recent loss of the authority's chief executive, important decisions are still being taken (for instance, on collaboration and workforce reductions). The Chief Constable is committed to providing additional support to the authority so that they have the capacity they need to manage the transition.

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

North Wales has an established joint police and police authority transition board where local authority chief executives are represented by Conwy County Council. The introduction of a single plan across all agencies to manage funding for community safety and for service commissioning will ensure the PCC is provided with simple and coherent plans and options for the early months in office. Partners are kept well informed of progress and of issues that may affect them in the change to PCCs.

Key risks have been identified and graded for importance with evidence of action taken at the transition board to mitigate these. Any outstanding risks will be highlighted in the legacy statement (handover report) which is currently being developed.

### ***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. However, a number of options will be contained in the legacy statement and draft police and crime plan, to allow the PCC to decide and plan activity within the first few months.

North Wales shares knowledge and expertise with all Welsh forces and have been involved at a national level to ensure that, for example, financial plans and reports are detailed and in line with legal requirements. HMIC will follow the progress of this work through the summer.

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

North Wales Police Authority places a strong emphasis on engaging with other 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). Plans for briefing prospective PCC candidates are transparent and are shared with staff to ensure a consistent approach.

### **Next steps**

HMIC will continue to monitor the transition to PCCs, with a focus on the arrangements that will enable PCC candidates to work effectively from day one.