

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

### Findings

#### Summary

West Midlands Police Authority has put in place clear and detailed plans for managing the handover to the PCC. There are clear governance structures in place and a transition programme board with representatives from both the force and the authority. Partners are involved in the transition and the authority is making the public aware of what the changes will mean to them.

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 adopted a pragmatic approach to this transition, which includes maintaining current standards and leaving a positive legacy. The authority acknowledges that there are a number of issues that cannot be finalised until the PCC takes office (for example the transfer of staff and assets). 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.

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

The authority has made a clear commitment to maintaining business as usual throughout the transition period and will continue to monitor and scrutinise the policing plan. It has identified key decisions that need to be made in the next few months (for example the implementation of the force change programme and decisions on collaboration with Staffordshire Police) and is taking action to ensure these will progress as planned. The authority will also continue the programme of meetings with local authorities, Community Safety Partnerships, children's trusts and other key stakeholders.

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

The police authority is planning the transition with active support from the force, which is represented on the transition programme board. Actions are clearly recorded, endorsed and progressed. Key risks have been identified within the plans and appropriate actions taken to manage them.

The police authority has clearly stated that it will continue to monitor the force's performance throughout the transition period.

## ***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. To help with this, the authority is developing a range of options for governance, accountability and decision making for the incoming PCC to consider, and preparing briefing documents for the handover period. This includes preliminary work to assist the PCC to make decisions on the 2013/14 budget, producing the police and crime plan and the creation of the PCC office and support arrangements.

Birmingham City Council will host the police and crime panel. Arrangements for this are well underway and are being monitored by the authority.

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

The police authority has continued to engage with other partners in a number of areas, including local authorities, criminal justice agencies, young people, victims of crime and the voluntary sector. A detailed plan ensures that communications about the transition to PCCs are comprehensive and consistent (both within the force and to local communities).

## **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.