

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

## Findings

### Summary

Wiltshire Police Authority has been planning for the new PCC arrangements since July 2011. Police authority members are to be commended for their continuing commitment and professionalism. The authority's transition plan is overseen by a joint force and authority transition board and supported by a partnership transition board. The force's project manager is also helping to apply project management processes to the transition plan.

The police authority is operating a business as usual approach leading up to November 2012, so that they can continue to fulfil their statutory functions around scrutiny of the force. However at the same time the authority is moving to new governance arrangements in preparation for the incoming PCC.

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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 intends to monitor the performance of the force by maintaining a business as usual approach. At the same time, it is adapting to meet the potential needs of the incoming PCC. In July 2012, the authority will change governance arrangements to an interim management board and authority members will report back to the chair of the authority as a 'shadow PCC'.

The authority is not putting off key decisions until the arrival of the PCC and has continued to press ahead with regional collaboration (including the national e-commerce project – which is being led by Wiltshire Police – and a planned IT project with Dorset Police).

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

The authority has a clear plan and commitment to deliver the transition to a PCC. The plan is flexible, and so allows for contingencies to be built in if required. The PCC partnership transition board includes representatives from the authority, the force, key partners and elected representatives. This board allows partners to gain a better understanding of the authority's plans and approach to transition, while simultaneously considering the impact PCCs will have on their own needs (for instance, in areas such as commissioning services to support the policing and crime plan).

The authority is assessing any risks to transition with the help of an experienced project manager from the force. They are recorded in the risk register and regularly refreshed. While the authority accepts that a number of arrangements cannot be finalised until the PCC takes office, as many as possible will be completed as part of the overall plan.

### ***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. The authority's project plan includes an initial staffing structure, which continues to be reviewed as the overall plan develops. The new interim management board and reporting structures (due to be put in place in July 2012) will help prepare both force and police authority staff to adapt to different ways of working from November 2012.

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

The authority and force are engaging with local communities to inform them about the role of the PCC, with a dedicated PCC webpage in place. Key partners are involved with the authority's transition arrangements through the partnership transition board. While partners may not yet fully appreciate the changing arrangements and the responsibilities of a PCC (such as commissioning) they are fully engaged with the police authority and its approach to transition.

A joint protocol between the force and the authority is being developed to update prospective candidates. This includes explaining operational independence and preparations for induction to the PCC role.

Local authority plans are progressing for the establishment of the police and crime panel, which will be hosted by Wiltshire County Council.

### **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.