

First Wiltshire Police and Crime Commissioner due to be elected in November

Introduction

The first ever Police and Crime Commissioner for the Wiltshire Police area will be elected by residents on Thursday 15 November 2012. The commissioner will be responsible for overseeing the Force on behalf of residents, replacing Wiltshire Police Authority (WPA).

Police and Crime Commissioners are being introduced in an effort to increase the public accountability of the police service. The Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011 sets out how this will be achieved through the introduction of Police and Crime Commissioners in each force area of England and Wales.

Roles and responsibilities

The role of the Police and Crime Commissioner is to be the voice of the people and hold the police to account. This includes:

- Securing efficient and effective policing for Wiltshire and Swindon
- Setting a Police and Crime Plan
- Setting the budget and precept for policing
- Hiring and firing the Chief Constable
- Holding the Chief Constable to account
- Engaging with the public
- Commissioning community safety and criminal justice work with partners

Chief Constable remains responsible for operational matters

The Chief Constable will remain responsible for the direction and control of the police force and day-to-day operational matters. This includes:

- Discretion to investigate or ask for an investigation into crimes and individuals
- Decisions to balance competing operational needs under the framework of priorities and aims set by the PCC
- Operational decisions to reallocate resources to meet immediate demand
- Deciding on officers' specific duties and responsibilities to meet the aims set by the PCC

Transition from Wiltshire Police Authority to a Police and Crime Commissioner

Wiltshire Police and Wiltshire Police Authority are working to ensure the transition from a police authority to a Police and Crime Commissioners is as smooth as possible. This is being led by an internal Joint Strategic Board.

Wiltshire Police Authority and Wiltshire Police are making a number of changes to test procedures in readiness for when the Police and Crime Commissioner takes office. This includes briefing the WPA Chairman who will then account to a full authority meeting as would the Police and Crime Commissioner to the Police and Crime Panel.

Police and Crime Commissioner scrutiny

The Wiltshire Police and Crime Commissioner will be scrutinised by a Police and Crime Panel made up of Wiltshire Council and Swindon Borough Council councillors, plus two independent members. The two councils are responsible for setting up and maintaining the panel. At the time of writing the panel was acting in a shadow capacity, with the appointment for two independent members imminent.

Working with partners

As well as a core policing role, Police and Crime Commissioners will have a remit to cut crime. They will have commissioning powers and funding to enable them to do this. From

2013-14 they will be able to commission work from any organisation they consider supports their community safety priorities.

Police and Crime Commissioners will work with a wide range of partners, from community safety and youth justice to health, safeguarding and civil contingencies. A Partnership Board for Wiltshire and Swindon has been established in anticipation of this role. Police and Crime Commissioners will also work with other Police and Crime Commissioners on cross border and national issues.

More information - you can read more about Police and Crime Commissioner on these websites:

Wiltshire Police Authority PCC section - www.wiltshire-pa.gov.uk/pcc

Home Office - www.homeoffice.gov.uk

Association of Police and Crime Commissioners - www.apccs.police.uk