CHIEF CONSTABLE OF STAFFORDSHIRE POLICE

Key Financial Controls

FINAL

Internal audit report: 4.18/19

5 December 2018

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Final report issued	5 December 2018	Client sponsor	John Bloomer, Chief Finance Officer	
		Distribution	John Bloomer, Chief Finance Officer	

1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 Background

We have undertaken a review of Key Financial Controls for the Chief Constable of Staffordshire as part of our annual internal audit plan for 2018/19. The purpose of our review was to provide assurance that the internal control processes and operational structures around the key financial controls were appropriately designed and were operating effectively.

Our review has specifically focused on those key financial controls around General Ledger, Accounts Payable and Accounts Receivable.

1.2 Conclusion

The Force should focus on implementing the actions included within this report, together with the high and medium priority actions included within our Financial Management report (01.2018/19) and continue with the direction of travel in improving the financial outturn. We would suggest that we follow up the management actions included within this report at the same time as we follow up the actions within the Financial Management report (01.2018/19) and certainly if the outcome of our work reflects positively then this will clearly contribute and help to inform our year end opinion.

Internal audit opinion:

Taking account of the issues identified, the Force can take reasonable assurance that the controls in place to manage this risk are suitably designed and consistently applied.

However, we have identified issues that need to be addressed in order to ensure that the control framework is effective in managing the identified risk(s).



1.3 Key findings

General Ledger

A hierarchy is in place within the Finance system that assigns authorisation limits to specific roles within the Organisation, with specific responsibilities of the postholder(s). Although the hierarchy is currently under review, due to the restructure that is taking place in Finance, we did not identify any exceptions as a result of our sample testing of those assigned access to the Finance system.

The closing balances from 2017/18 had been brought forward correctly as the opening balances for 2018/19.

From our sample of journals we were able to confirm that in all cases there was a supporting electronic record for each journal selected that contained sufficient narrative outlining the reason for the adjustment.

Accounts Payable

Purchase orders are completed for purchases and authorised appropriately. From our sample of purchase invoices selected as part of the audit we confirmed that there were completed and authorised purchase orders in place, where appropriate.

Credit notes are received and processed on a timely basis. From our sample, there were two cases where the credit note has not been processed on a timely basis but on investigation there was good reason for the delay and evidence of query and clarification.

BACS payment runs had been reviewed and authorised appropriately. No exceptions were noted from our sample testing.

Accounts Receivable

Invoice request forms are completed and processed timely by the Finance Team. No exceptions were noted as a result of our sample testing.

A Bad Debt Recovery & Write Off Policy is in place which outlines how often debts should be chased and approval for write offs. The Polciy was approved by Force Executive on 16 November 2018. Our sample testing of the chasing of bad debts did not highlight any exceptions and there was evidence of discussions/investigation, as appropriate.

We have highlighted some exceptions as a result of our audit and have agreed **two medium and six low priority management actions**:

General Ledger

As part of the restructure and the Finance system development work, roles and responsibilities will be changing in Finance. There is a risk that some of the policies and procedures in place may no longer be relevant following these changes. (Low)

We were unable to select a sample for both chart of accounts and supplier amendments due to reporting limitations within the Finance system. There is a risk that amendments may be made to the Finance system in both of these areas without prior review and authorisation. A management action has been raised to liase with Oracle to confirm whether as part of the systems work audit reports may be developed for each area. (Low)

Review of 20 control account reconciliations identified that in 13/20 cases there was no evidence of review of each reconciliation by a second member of staff and and in 1/20 cases the control account had been dated as reviewed however the name of the individual who completed the review had not been recorded and therefore we were unable to confirm whether a segregation of duties was in place. No issues were identified in regards to the supporting evidence in place for each reconciliation. In addition, similar to the control account reconciliations, in 3/6 cases review of the suspense accounts for the period August to October 2018 identified no evidence of review by a second member of staff. (Low)

Accounts Payable

A walkthrough of a supplier amendment identified that no confirmation was sought from the supplier to confirm that the requested changes are genuine using the original contact details held within the Finance system. In addition, there is no segregation of duties between the member of staff completing a check on the supplier details and the member of staff making the changes to the supplier details. (**Medium**)

Review of 10 new suppliers set up on the Finance system identified that in each case where a New Creditor Request form 1 and/or 2 had been used sections of the form had been left incomplete. (Low)

On review of the invoice grid for the Non-Pop invoices received into finance, it was noted that in nine cases either one or both of the signatures confirming the receipt of the goods/services and authorising the invoice for payment had not been dated and therefore we were unable to confirm that both of these stages had been completed prior to payment. (Low)

We were informed by the Transactional Team Leader that a folder with a list of authorised signatories and specimen signatures was in place however the folder could not be located during the review. There is a risk that non-pop invoices are processed without the appropriate authorisation in place as a complete list of authorising signatories is not in place. (Medium)

The Finance procedures in place did not cover the new supplier and supplier amendment processes. (Low)

1.4 Additional information to support our conclusion

The following table highlights the number and categories of management actions made. The detailed findings section lists the specific actions agreed with management to implement.

Area	Control Non		Agreed actions		
	design not effective*	compliance with controls*	Low	Medium	High
General ledger	(9) 2	(9) 1	3		
Accounts Payable	(7) 2	(7) 3	3	2	
Accounts Receivable	(4)	(4)	-	-	-
Total			6	2	-

^{*} Shows the number of controls not adequately designed or not complied with. The number in brackets represents the total number of controls reviewed in this area.

We also noted exceptions where an action has already been agreed within either our Financial Management report (01.2018/19) or by a recommendation made by the previous auditors which were still outstanding and being tracked internally and therefore we have not duplicated these within this report. Such items relate to:

- The approval of the Financial Regulations and therefore there is a risk that the Financial Regulations may not have been subject to review and challenge and therefore may not be reflective of correct practices.
- There is no process in place for the review and authorisation of journals prior to posting on the Finance system. Journals are an area where there is a high risk of fraud where there is a lack of control in place. Without a segregation of duties inappropriate and / or inaccurate journal entries may not be highlighted resulting in misstated Financial Statements.
- A month-end timetable is not in place and therefore there is a risk that all tasks required for the month end to close are not completed in a timely manner. The implementation of a detailed month end checklist may also help to identify areas such as; tasks which could be brought ahead of schedule and freeing up valuable month-end time, streamlining of tasks which need not be performed or removal of duplication or identify any missing tasks.
- We were informed by the Transactional Team Leader that payment performance data has not been reported and monitored in the 2018/19 year to date.

2 DETAILED FINDINGS

Categorisati	ategorisation of internal audit findings								
Priority	Definition								
Low	There is scope for enhancing control or improving efficiency and quality.								
Medium	Timely management attention is necessary. This is an internal control risk management issue that could lead to: financial losses which could affect the effective function of a department, loss of controls or process being audited or possible regulatory scrutiny/ reputational damage, negative publicity in local or regional media.								
High	Immediate management attention is necessary. This is a serious internal control or risk management issue that may lead to: substantial losses, violation of corporate strategies, policies or values, regulatory scrutiny, reputational damage, negative publicity in national or international media or adverse regulatory impact, such as loss of operating licences or material fines.								

This report has been prepared by exception. Therefore, we have included in this section, only those risks of weakness in control or examples of lapses in control identified from our testing and not the outcome of all internal audit testing undertaken.

Ref	Control	Adequate control design (yes/no)	Controls complied with (yes/no)	Audit findings and implications	Action for management and priority	Responsible owner and implementation date
Area	: General ledger					
1	Policies and procedures are in place for the managing the general ledger, covering the purchasing and creditor payment functions and for the raising of invoices, credit control, debt recovery and write off functions. These documents are available to all staff within Finance via the Finance shared drive.	Yes	No	The Transactional Team Leader provided us with a range of procedures which covered processes such as, but not limited to: Income receipting; Invoices and payments; Lloyds Link processes; Sales ledger; Cash handling policy and procedure; and Corporate credit card policy. We note that as part of the restructure roles and responsibilities will be changing within Finance. In addition, we were informed by the Transactional Team Leader that discussions have been held in relation to system developments.	Following the restructure and systems work an exercise will be carried out to review the operational procedures in place within Finance. This will include: • A cover sheet/log will be developed which details all policies/procedure in place within Finance. The log will outline the area the procedures relates to and the responsible owner; • The responsible owners will then review each of their procedures to confirm whether it is still reflective of current practice or update the procedures where necessary;	Chief Accountant 31 January 2019

Ref	Control	Adequate control design (yes/no)	Controls complied with (yes/no)	Audit findings and implications	Action for management and priority	Responsible owner and implementation date
				There is a risk that some of the policies and procedures in place may no longer be relevant following the above-mentioned changes. As part of the key controls testing we also noted that there are currently no procedures that cover new supplier and supplier amendment processes.	 The date of the review will be captured on the log if the procedures are no longer reflective of current practice; A gap analysis will be carried out by the responsible owners to identify any processes within Finance not covered by a procedure; and For the gaps identified, procedures will be developed and the log will be updated for the new documents. Finance could also consider adding in the location of the documents. Low 	
2	A chart of accounts detailing all accounts held in the accounting system is maintained within the Finance system. Amendments to the chart of accounts are required to be authorised by the Director of Finance prior to processing by the System Administrator. As part of the restructure the chart of accounts is being reviewed.	Yes	No	We were informed by the Chief Accountant that the chart of accounts is being reviewed as part of the restructure exercise which is currently underway. We were unable to select a sample of amendments made to the chart of accounts as we were informed by the System Administrator that the Finance system cannot produce a report which outlines the amendments made to the chart of accounts in the current financial year to date. The System Administrator does maintain a separate folder within his email account for all chart of account related requested. A new account request was selected for a walkthrough and our review identified the following: Details of the new account code such as, but not limited to, account description and	We will liaise with Oracle and establish whether exception / audit reports can be developed for both the chart of accounts and suppliers to identify where amendments have been made, in order for sample checking to take place to confirm the change has been requested, authorised and processed appropriately. Low	Chief Accountant 31 January 2019

Ref	Control	Adequate control design (yes/no)	Controls complied with (yes/no)	Audit findings and implications	Action for management and priority	Responsible owner and implementation date
				 account type was sent by the Chief Accountant to the Chief Finance Officer; The Chief Finance Officer authorised the request and sent the request to the System Administrator; and Review of the Finance system confirmed that authorisation of the new account code had been received prior to the account code being set up on the system. 		
3	Control account reconciliations are completed for all balance sheet codes. A reconciliation schedule is prepared with supporting documentation, including system generated reports. The individual who prepares the reconciliation signs and dates the schedule. This is reviewed and dated by a second member of staff. All discrepancies are	Yes	No	 The following sample of reconciliations was selected for review: Staffordshire Police (Chief Constable) Bank Account 31943160; Staffordshire Police Imprest Bank Account 31946560; Staffordshire Police Justice Services Bank Account 31946968; OPCC Staffordshire Bank Account 00542847; Staffordshire Police Tactical Account; Debtors; and Creditors. Review of the reconciliations completed for the above accounts for the period August to October 2018 identified the following exceptions: In 13/20 cases there was no evidence of 	All reconciliations will be reviewed and dated by a second member of staff. Low	Chief Accountant 31 January 2019
	investigated and rectified during the reconciliation process and evidence is retained of this.			 In 13/20 cases there was no evidence of review of each reconciliation by a second member of staff; and In 1/20 cases the control account had been dated as reviewed however the name of the individual who completed the review had not been recorded and therefore we were unable 		

Ref	Control	Adequate control design (yes/no)	Controls complied with (yes/no)	Audit findings and implications	Action for management and priority	Responsible owner and implementation date
				to confirm whether a segregation of duties was in place. In each case we reviewed the supporting evidence for each reconciliation and no issues were identified and for those accounts sampled, it was confirmed that the accounts appropriately reconciled.		
4	Suspense accounts are prepared by one member of staff and reviewed by another at each monthend.	Yes	No	 We were informed by the Chief Accountant that two suspense accounts are used. One is called unallocated income and the other default purchases. Review of the suspense account reconciliations for the period August to October 2018 identified the following: In 6/6 cases the suspense accounts had been reconciled, cleared to zero or where transactions were still present there was a clear description for each transaction; In 1/6 cases the reconciliations had been signed and dated as prepared and reviewed by two different members of staff; In 2/6 cases it had been signed but not dated by the preparing member of staff and signed and dated by the reviewer; and In 3/6 cases the reconciliations had been signed and dated by the preparer but not by the reviewer. 	Refer to management action raised at number 3 above.	
Area	: Accounts Payable					
5	Once an invoice is received it is matched to the purchase order and	Yes	No	For the sample of 20 purchase invoice payments selected testing identified the following:	All authorising members of staff will be reminded to date their signatures for audit purposes. Low	Chief Accountant 31 January 2019

Ref	Control	Adequate control design (yes/no)	Controls complied with (yes/no)	Audit findings and implications	Action for management and priority	Responsible owner and implementation date
	receipted on the Finance system prior to payment. Where the invoice does not have a corresponding purchase order in place (Non-pop), the invoice is signed and dated to confirm the receipt of the goods/services and signed to authorise the invoice for payment in line with the limits set out within the authorised signatory list.			 In 9/20 cases where a purchase order was in place, the invoice had been receipted prior to payment; In 2/20 cases where the payment related to an expense claim form, the form had been signed and dated by the employee and Chief of Staff prior to payment as per normal processes; In 1/20 cases the invoices were Non-pop and were signed as receipted and as authorised for payment. The Finance Team maintain an authorised signatory list within a folder which we were informed had been misplaced and therefore we were unable to confirm whether the invoices had been authorised appropriately prior to payment. In 8/20 cases the Accounts Payable Manager was able to obtain signatures from the authorised signatories during the week of the review against their limits to confirm that in these cases the invoices had been authorised in line with the delegated limits set; and In all nine of the Non-Pop invoices either one or both of the signatures confirming the receipt of the goods/services and authorising the invoice for payment had not been dated and therefore we were unable to confirm that both of these stages had been completed prior to payment. We also noted through discussion with the Transactional Team Leader that payment performance data has not been reported and monitored in the 2018/19 year to date. We were informed that the Finance system does not produce an automated report for this data. A 		

Ref	Control	Adequate control design (yes/no)	Controls complied with (yes/no)	Audit findings and implications	Action for management and priority	Responsible owner and implementation date
				recommendation has already been raised by the previous internal auditors (and is being tracked internally) to address this weakness and therefore will not be repeated here.		
6	Only Procurement Assistants can set up new suppliers on the Finance system and these are not individuals who process invoices. This process is recorded through the following forms: • A New Creditor Request (NCR1) form is completed by the member of staff who wants a new supplier set up. This form captures details such as the name of the requested, reason for set up, supplier detail and who the goods are to be used by (PCC, Police, Both). The declaration 'I confirm that I hold no pecuniary or other interest in the business of the supplier named above and no connection with the supplier that could be deemed as a conflict of interest or compromise in integrity of Staffordshire Police' is then signed and	Yes	No	A sample of 10 new suppliers set up on the Finance system covering the period 1 April 2018 to 15 November 2018 and testing identified the following: In 1/10 cases the new supplier related to a professional fee claim which is processed through the receipt of a Claim for Professional Fees form. The form included details of the supplier and bank details except for the contact telephone number which had been missed and added during the audit. We confirmed that the details on the form matched the details on the Finance system and had been entered following receipt of the notification; In 2/10 cases the new supplier related to an insurance claim. In these cases, an NCR1 form is not required. An NCR2 form had been completed and the details matched to the supplier data held on the Finance system. In both cases the 'Finance use only' areas had not been completed which includes the approval of the Finance Accountant, Procurement Officer, pay group, payment terms, supplier type, payment method, who the supplier details were entered by and who the supplier details were checked by. We were informed by the Procurement Assistant that they have not been informed that the areas need to be completed;	A procedure for the processing of new supplier details and supplier amendments will be developed. Low Furthermore, a review of the NCR1 and NCR2 forms will be carried out for the following to ensure the form: • contains only data fields that are required to be captured; • captures the name of and when the details on the form are entered onto the Finance system; • captures the name of and who checked that the details entered onto the Finance system are correct and complete; • The NCR2 form captures a signed and dated declaration for the supplier to confirm details are accurate/correct; The new procedure and forms will be shared with all relevant staff. Low	Chief Accountant 31 January 2019 Chief Accountant 31 January 2019
	dated by the requestor.					

Ref	Control	Adequate control design (yes/no)	Controls complied with (yes/no)	Audit findings and implications	Action for management and priority	Responsible owner and implementation date
	The completed form is then reviewed and approved by the Procurement Officer; • A New Creditor Request (NCR2) form is then sent to the supplier for completion. This form confirms the company details with the supplier, captures the supplier's bank details and is then approved by the Procurement Officer prior to posting on the Finance system; and • A New Creditor Request Additional Information (NCR3) form is sent out if the supplier indicates on the NCR2 form that they are part of the Construction Industry Scheme (CIS), National Police Procurement Hub or	(yes/IIO)	(yes/iiio)	 In the remaining 7/10 cases both an NCR1 form and NCR2 form had been completed. We noted the following exceptions: In 2/7 cases details on the NCR2 form had not been transferred onto the Finance system. In one case it was the VAT number and in the other it was the contact details; In 1/7 cases an old version of the NCR1 form from 2012 had been utilised; and In 7/7 cases the forms had not been completed in full. Missing details covered one or more of the following sections in each case; the nature of the products and services of the company, estimated spend per year, line manager's approval, Finance areas, Procurement Officer approval, Finance Accountant approval. Further review of the NCR2 form identified that there is also additional wording that is not required. For example, next to the payment 		
	Factored.			details section is states 'please complete if these are different to the above details' however the details are not repeated in a previous section on the form and the purpose of the form is to obtain the bank details.		
7	Amendments to supplier details can only be undertaken by the Procurement Assistants. These are completed	Yes	No	A system report could not be generated that detailed amendments to supplier details. Therefore, a walkthrough of a change to supplier details was carried out with the Procurement Assistant where we identified the following:	A form will be developed for supplier amendments which will capture the following: Details of the supplier amendment notification; Date of the notification;	Chief Accountant 31 January 2019

Ref	Control	Adequate control design (yes/no)	Controls complied with (yes/no)	Audit findings and implications	Action for management and priority	Responsible owner and implementation date
	following notification from the supplier.			 A notification was received from the supplier which outlines a change in trading name of the company and updated primary contact details within the organisation; The letter head details on the form had been ticked and marked as 'same'. We were informed by the Procurement Assistant that the letter head details are checked to the Finance system to confirm that the details match; If the details match, then the changes in the body of the letter are made to the supplier's details; No confirmation was sought from the supplier to confirm that the requested changes are genuine using the contact details held within the Finance system; and There is no segregation of duties between the member of staff completing a check on the supplier details and the member of staff making the changes to the supplier details. 	 Record of the confirmation from the supplier that the requested changes are genuine using contact details held on the finance system. This will be supported by a record of the date the action was completed and who the action was completed by; and A second member of staff will sign and date the form to confirm that the details have been entered onto the Finance system to ensure that there is segregation of duties between those who contact the supplier to seek confirmation of the change and those who make them. Medium 	
8	An authorised signatories list is not in place.	No	-	We were informed by the Transactional Team Leader that a folder with a list of authorised signatories and specimen signatures was in place however the folder could not be located during the review. There is a risk that non-pop invoices are processed without the appropriate authorisation in place as a complete list of authorising signatories is not in place.	The listing of authorised signatories and specimen signatures should be located in order to ensure that non-pop invoices are authorised and processed appropriately. Medium	Chief Accountant 31 January 2019

APPENDIX A: SCOPE

The scope below is a copy of the original document issued.

Scope of the review

The scope was planned to provide assurance on the controls and mitigations in place relating to the following risks:

Objective of the risk under review

Safeguard the Organisation's assets and interests from losses of all kinds.

When planning the audit the following areas for consideration and limitations were agreed:

As part of our review we will test a sample of key controls in the following areas:

- General Ledger;
- · Creditors; and
- Income & Debtors.

We will use the findings from the IDEA analytical review completed earlier on during the year to direct our testing, where appropriate.

Limitations to the scope of the audit assignment:

- We will undertake an assessment of the adequacy of selected aspects of the control framework in the areas for consideration and undertake limited testing to confirm its operation in practice;
- The review will not consider the strategic financial management or budget setting process as this has been subject to a separate audit;
- We will not assess the VAT compliance or VAT return for appropriateness;
- We will not form an opinion on the accuracy of the cash flow information;
- We will not circularise financial institutions to confirm the existence of bank deposits;
- Our review does not provide an opinion on the appropriateness or security of the investments or banking deposits, or the appropriateness of its investment policies;
- Conclusions are based on our assessments made through discussions with management, assessment of the current framework of controls and an initial review of relevant documentation available, either internally or externally generated;
- Our audit does not seek to replicate advice provided to you by any third parties and external advisors;
- Our work does not provide absolute assurance that material errors, loss or fraud do not exist.

Please note that the full scope of the audit can only be completed within the audit budget if all the requested information is made available at the start of the audit, and the necessary key staff are available to assist the audit process during the audit. If the requested information and staff are not available we may have to reduce the scope of our work and/or increase the audit budget. If this is necessary we will agree this with the client sponsor during the audit.

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The matters raised in this report are only those which came to our attention during the course of our review and are not necessarily a comprehensive statement of all the weaknesses that exist or all improvements that might be made. Actions for improvements should be assessed by you for their full impact. This report, or our work, should not be taken as a substitute for management's responsibilities for the application of sound commercial practices. We emphasise that the responsibility for a sound system of internal controls rests with management and our work should not be relied upon to identify all strengths and weaknesses that may exist. Neither should our work be relied upon to identify all circumstances of fraud and irregularity should there be any.

Our report is prepared solely for the confidential use of Chief Constable of Staffordshire, and solely for the purposes set out herein. This report should not therefore be regarded as suitable to be used or relied on by any other party wishing to acquire any rights from RSM Risk Assurance Services LLP for any purpose or in any context. Any third party which obtains access to this report or a copy and chooses to rely on it (or any part of it) will do so at its own risk. To the fullest extent permitted by law, RSM Risk Assurance Services LLP will accept no responsibility or liability in respect of this report to any other party and shall not be liable for any loss, damage or expense of whatsoever nature which is caused by any person's reliance on representations in this report.

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