

SHROPSHIRE COUNCIL AUDIT SERVICES

FINAL INTERNAL AUDIT REPORT

PAYROLL 2016/17

Assurance Level	Good
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Customer	West Mercia Energy
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Distribution	Nigel Evans - Director
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Auditors	Emily Swinnerton
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Fieldwork dates	13 th and 14 th September 2016
Debrief meeting	14 th September 2016
Draft report issued	28 th September 2016
Responses received	13 th October 2016
Final report issued	13 th October 2016

Introduction and Background

1. As part of the approved internal audit plan for 2016/17 Audit Services have undertaken a review of Payroll.
2. This audit has been conducted in accordance with the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards.
3. Audit Services would like to express their thanks to the officers who assisted during the course of the audit.

Scope of the Audit

4. The scope, incorporating the objectives of the audit, was agreed with key contacts at the commencement of the audit.

Follow up of the previous recommendations and audit of the payroll control process, including overtime claims, travel and subsistence expenses and the reconciliation process in place for transferring payroll costs into the Sage nominal ledger, using established documentation and testing.

The Payroll and Human Resources function within West Mercia Energy is an administrative and authorisation process with the actual payroll calculations, statutory deductions and payment being carried out by Shropshire Council and recharged on a monthly basis.

5. Audit work was undertaken to give assurance on the extent to which the following management control objectives are being achieved:
 - To ensure that previous recommendations have been implemented.
 - There are adequate segregation of duties in place.
 - Payroll data is correctly transferred and accurately processed.
 - Permanent and temporary variations to the payroll are valid, appropriately authorised, and processed accurately.
 - Travel and subsistence is appropriately controlled and actioned in a timely manner.
 - Management information is produced in an accurate and timely manner and subject to review.
 - Workforce requirements and costs are appropriate to the tasks undertaken and the policies of the organisation.
6. The audit was delivered on time and within budget.

Audit Opinion

7. An opinion is given on the effectiveness of the control environment. This indicates the level of assurance that can be given based upon testing and evaluation of the system. This opinion will be reported to the Audit Committee and will inform the Annual Governance Statement which is included in the Annual Statement of Accounts. There

are four levels of assurance; Good, Reasonable, Limited and Unsatisfactory.

As a result of the evaluation and testing of the controls that are in place in the areas examined, from work undertaken Audit Services are able to give the following assurance opinion:

Good	There is a sound system of control in place which is designed to address relevant risks, with controls being applied consistently.
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8. Responsibility for the maintenance of a sound system of internal control rests with management. The audit process is designed to provide a reasonable chance of discovery of material weaknesses in internal control by means of sample testing. It cannot however guarantee absolute assurance against all material weaknesses, the overriding of management controls, collusion, or instances of fraud or irregularity.
9. Audit recommendations are rated Fundamental, Significant, Requires Attention or Best Practice according to their level of priority. Details are included in the Exception Report provided to management and the Action Plan attached at **Appendix 1**. Implementation of these recommendations will serve to address the risks identified and enhance the procedures that are currently in place. The following table summarises the number of recommendations made in each category:

Total	Fundamental	Significant	Requires Attention	Best Practice
3	0	0	2	1

10. The review identified the following areas where appropriate management controls were in place and operating satisfactorily and, upon which, positive assurance can be given:

✓	To ensure that previous recommendations have been implemented.
✓	There are adequate segregation of duties in place.
✓	Payroll data is correctly transferred and accurately processed.
✓	Permanent and temporary variations to the payroll are valid, appropriately authorised, and processed accurately.
✓	Travel and subsistence is appropriately controlled and actioned in a timely manner.
✓	Management information is produced in an accurate and timely manner and subject to review.
✓	Workforce requirements and costs are appropriate to the tasks undertaken and the policies of the organisation.

11. Recommendations accepted by management at the previous audit have been reviewed and are detailed below:

Number of recommendations accepted by management at the last audit	2
Recommendations implemented	1
Recommendations partially implemented	0
Recommendations superseded	0
Recommendations not actioned	1

Reasonable progress has been made in the implementation of previous recommendations. Recommendations which remain outstanding are included in the attached Exception Report and Action Plan.

Audit Approach

12. The approach adopted for this audit included:
- Review and documentation of the system.
 - Identification of key controls.
 - Follow up of previous recommendations.
 - Tests of controls to confirm their existence and effectiveness.
 - Evaluation of the controls and identification of weaknesses and potential risks arising from them.
13. Internal Audit report by exception; the exception report provided to management identifies only those areas where control evaluation and audit testing revealed control weaknesses and/or errors. Recommendations to improve controls or enhance existing practice are detailed against each exception and the associated risk, and are also included in the Action Plan at **Appendix 1**. A more detailed report covering all of the work undertaken can be provided on request. This will be, available in a working paper format.
14. In accordance with the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards, recommendations will be followed up to evaluate the adequacy of management action that has been taken to address identified control weaknesses.

Ceri Pilawski
Head of Audit

APPENDIX 1**ACTION PLAN FOR PAYROLL 2016/17**

Rec Ref.	Rec No.	Recommendation	Rec Rating	Accepted Yes/No/Partially	Management Response	Lead Officer	Date to be Actioned
2.1	1	Individual policies within the staff handbook should be dated as approved, include appropriate version control and include a date for update and review. (Updated from recommendation made and agreed in 2013/14 and 2015/16).	Requires Attention	Yes	Agreed - the three policies highlighted, which were marked with a last updated date, have now also a version number.	Julie Wassall	Completed
2.2	2	Claims for additional hours should be completed and submitted by employees in a timely manner.	Requires Attention	Yes	Agreed	Nigel Evans	13/10/2016
3.1	3	Copies of all payroll forms should be held on personnel files, in the event of a query at a later date.	Best Practice	Yes	Agreed	Jo Pugh	13/10/2016