

## Case Study: Sussex Police

# Better together

## CIPFA Closedown improves teamwork and efficiency

When it took on the CIPFA Closedown software solution, often known colloquially as 'Big Red Button', Sussex Police's finance department had a demanding set of expectations for it. As Corporate Finance Manager Miranda Kadwell says, 'We had four broad aims to begin with: to improve and simplify the preparation of the annual statements of accounts, ensure compliance, help training and information-sharing within the team, and improve the alignment with Surrey Police, who are also introducing CIPFA Closedown'.

### Valuable automation

Miranda had also identified specific areas where a software solution could add value. 'Updating the financial statements and supporting notes after ledger changes are made presents a big risk for both Forces. It depends heavily on individual expertise to understand and update all related areas of the statements and notes. It's also a difficult and time-consuming skill to teach to others, so being able to automate this area is very valuable. We were also attracted by the potential for highlighting inconsistencies within the accounts and notes, both to protect against accidental errors and to help training across the finance team.'

### Easier delegation and review

The Sussex Police finance team used CIPFA Closedown to prepare their draft and final accounts for 2017/18, employing it to help distribute tasks across the team and also to run off notes before running the whole set of accounts. This made it possible to delegate tasks and ensure adequate review. It was also used to review the full trial balance, as Miranda notes: 'Because we had to map across to the CIPFA closedown codes, this also made us review against the various disclosures in the accounts and other returns, for example CIPFA Actuals, CLG RO return, Home Office Pensions Return and the Police Pension accounts.' The solutions built-in guidance was useful, too: 'The guidance on the notes was really useful to help people understand how the accounts link between main statements and notes.'



### CIPFA Closedown solution:

- Helped the finance team achieve it's objectives
- Mapping of ledgers saves time
- Improved efficiency and expertise
- Allows for a greater sharing of resources
- Helped Sussex and Surrey Police move towards a common way of working
- Enabled greater understanding of CIPFA compliance

## Less time, more understanding

To date, using CIPFA Closedown has helped the Sussex Police finance team meet its objectives, improving the team's efficiency and expertise. In particular, the mapping of ledgers to the financial statements saves time and takes pressure off individual team members, as well as supporting the Force's ERP project. The solution led to 'greater understanding within the team of CIPFA compliance and issues related to preparation of the annual accounts.' All changes to the Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the UK are automatically built into the solution each year.

## Simplifying pensions

It has also been helpful in specific areas such as IAS19 pensions figures: 'We completely revised the way we enter the figures from our actuary reports into our accounting system (SAP) to facilitate efficient pensions reporting within the accounts directly from the trial balance. This avoids the need for additional analysis and reconciliation between the accounts disclosures, trial balance and

actuary reports. And it helps the external audit team because it's so quick and easy to check the figures in the accounts against the trial balance and hence the actuary reports.'

## Closer alignment

Overall, CIPFA Closedown is helping to move both Sussex and Surrey Police towards a common way of working. Sussex Police are now more closely aligned with Surrey in terms of look and feel of the annual statements of accounts and have a common platform to look at further ways to align the process via some of the coding work completed for CIPFA Closedown.

CIPFA Closedown work contributes to Sussex and Surrey Police input to the 'Achieving Financial Excellence in Policing' pilot programme supported by CIPFA.

To find out how we can help with your accounts closedown visit: [www.cipfa.org/closedown](http://www.cipfa.org/closedown)

## Accounts closedown solution – fast, smart and compliant

CIPFA can relieve you of the time-consuming burden of delivering accounts so you can free up your indispensable finance resource to add value in business partnering and financial planning. By closing your accounts sooner you can dramatically reduce costs and your valuable trained finance staff can be better focused.

Our specifically designed and Code-compliant accounts software solution is known as CIPFA Closedown. This licensed software application has been designed and built by our local authority experts and our global accountancy software specialist partner.

Additionally, CIPFA has expert consultancy and advisory support that can be provided at each stage of the process towards achieving your objectives.

[www.cipfa.org/closedown](http://www.cipfa.org/closedown)

### Benefits of CIPFA Closedown solution

- peace of mind solution
- removes significant cost
- better utilises skilled resource to add value elsewhere
- complies with Code of Practice legislation without concern
- saves huge amounts of time.

### Further help: Closedown workshops

Short, timely and convenient workshops in January and February for accountants involved in closing accounts across local government and police in England, Scotland and Wales.

Find out more: [www.cipfa.org/closedownevents](http://www.cipfa.org/closedownevents)



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