

## **AUDIT AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE**

### **30 JULY 2020**

## **STATUTORY ACCOUNTS AND PENSION FUND 2019/20 – EXTERNAL AUDIT PROGRESS REPORT**

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### **Recommendation**

1. **The Chief Financial Officer recommends that the committee consider the contents of the External Auditor's Progress Report (Appendix 1) with regard progress made towards the Worcestershire County Council Statutory Accounts 2019/20 and Worcestershire County Council Pension Fund Accounts 2019/20.**

### **Background**

2. In response to an unprecedented situation relating to the COVID-19 pandemic and the need to reduce the immediate resources pressure on councils and auditors to meet statutory audit deadlines, the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 have been amended to allow the publication of the statement of accounts and public inspection of the accounts to be delayed.
3. Therefore, instead of being in a position to potentially sign off the audit the Council has received a Progress Report prepared by the Council's external auditor, Grant Thornton, on progress made and any issues arising from the external audit of the Council's and Pension Fund's financial statements.
4. Both audits are substantially complete which is an excellent achievement considering the impact on working arrangements across the Council's and Grant Thornton's teams.
5. There has been an increased focus on asset valuations and management's assessment of the key assumptions used by the Councils property valuers and actuary, together with an increased volume of transactions testing following a reduction by Grant Thornton in their assessment of the Council's materiality value.
6. It is anticipated that the remaining work including consideration of Value for Money and taking into account the financial impact of COVID-19 on the accounts will be reviewed over the next few months with updates brought to the Audit and Governance Committee at its 2 October 2020 meeting.

### **Contact Points**

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## **Supporting Information**

- Appendix: Grant Thornton Update Letter

## **Background Papers**

In the opinion of the proper officer (in this case the Chief Financial Officer) there are no background papers relating to the subject matter of this report.