

WEST MIDLANDS FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

AUDIT AND RISK COMMITTEE

7 JUNE 2021

1. AUDIT PLAN 2020/2021

Joint report of the Chief Fire Officer and Treasurer

RECOMMENDED

THAT the Committee approve Grant Thornton's Audit Plan (Appendix A) to enable the delivery of the audit of financial statements and the value for money conclusion 2020/21.

2. PURPOSE OF REPORT

The purpose of the report is to seek Committee approval of Grant Thornton's Audit Plan. The plan (Appendix A) sets out the audit work Grant Thornton will undertake in respect of the audit of the Authority's financial statements and the delivery of its value for money conclusion on the Authority's arrangements to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The Audit Plan 2020/21 sets out the audit work that Grant Thornton propose to undertake and the key deadlines and milestones associated with the delivery of this work. The plan has been developed using a risk-based approach and considers the risks relevant to both the audit of accounting statements and the value for money conclusion.
- 3.2 The Code requires Grant Thornton to consider whether the Authority has put in place proper arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources. This is known as the Value for Money (VFM) conclusion.

The National Audit Office (NAO) has issued guidance for auditors on value for money work for 2020/21. The guidance states that for local government bodies, auditors are required to give a conclusion on whether the Authority has proper arrangements in place.

- 3.3 The Accounts & Audit Regulations 2015 require that the accounts be submitted to Members for approval by the end of July. However, for 2020/21 (and 2021/22) the Regulations have been amended by the Accounts & Audit (Amendment) Regulations 2021, with the deadline to publish the audited accounts being pushed back from 31 July 2021 to 30 September 2021.
- 3.3 The plan sets out the key phases and activities for the delivery of the audit work. All reports arising from this audit work will be discussed and agreed with appropriate officers prior to submission to Members.
- 3.4 Representatives from Grant Thornton will be in attendance at the Audit and Risk Committee.

4. **EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

In preparing this report an initial Equality Impact Assessment is not required as the matters contained in this report do not relate to a policy change.

5. **LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

The production of the Audit Plan complies with the statutory requirements set out within the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 and in accordance with the Code of Practice issued by the National Audit Office.

6. **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

The scale fee for undertaking West Midlands Fire and Rescue Authority's external audit work for 2020/21 was set at £45,500.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

None.

The contact officer for this report is Wayne Brown, Deputy Chief Fire Officer, 0121 380 6907.

PHIL LOACH
CHIEF FIRE OFFICER

MIKE GRIFFITHS
TREASURER