

## About the Council

The Council is made up of 42 councillors who represent the following political parties:

- Independent 28
- Labour 13
- Minority Independent 4
- Save Us Now 1

The Council spent £148.1 million on providing

Blaenau Gwent County Borough has 6 (13%) of its 47 areas deemed the most deprived 10% of areas in Wales, this is the 6th highest of the 22 unitary councils in Wales.<sup>1</sup>

Blaenau Gwent

Since the Spring of 2020, the ongoing pandemic has affected our audit work. We recognise the huge strain on public services and have reshaped our work programme, and found new ways of working to reduce its impact on public bodies' response to COVID-19, while still meeting our statutory duties.

## What we found

Each year we audit the Council's financial statements.

- The Auditor General gave an unqualified true and fair opinion on the Council's financial statements on 3 March 2021.
- Whilst our audit opinion was unqualified, we have included an Emphasis of Matter paragraph (as with all councils in Wales) as per ISA706 within our Auditor's Report. This is in relation to material valuation uncertainties regarding the Council's property assets and also Pension Fund property assets, as a result of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- The Council's Annual Governance Statement and Narrative Report were

- In addition to the Auditor General's responsibilities for auditing the Council's financial statements, he also has responsibility for the certification of a number of grant claims and returns. Our work to date has not identified any significant issues.
- Key facts and figures from the 2019-20 financial statements can be accessed [here](#).

The examination tha(m)-3.9 (i)0.5(n)-12.BJEMC ET\$pan .2 (i)-5.1 (n Td us)-8 (.)]Tc 0.02.9 (i)0.5fo-12.2 (1.1 (i)-ET\$pan)]J\$pan



As well as local work at each council, each year we also carry out studies across the local government sector to make recommendations for improving value for money. Since the last annual improvement report we have published the following reports:

We considered the effectiveness of the new 'front door' to social care, looking specifically at services for adults. We found that whilst councils are preventing social-care demand, information, advice and assistance are not consistently effective. The full report can be viewed [here](#).

We inspected how Public Service Boards are operating; looking at their membership, terms of

ste. (r)-62.3 ()3.caenc.1 ( )-12.2tte f hereUero(g aMCgr(g a2aras)(e)-0ss)(e8 (r))-0 iPn i(g at)-mpl ase9araseg aMCtg aMCg tg  
sencngsngs to.1 (he.3 ( param (e f)-13T-8 (2)-h.s)-8 (s) (l)3.2 (2 (n)-12 )-12.1 )-6.44arap.3 (er)-63.1 (t)- (n be v)-20 (i)- -2.2 (t)b

This report draws on five reports published between 2019 and today looking at how local authorities are responding to the challenge of implementing new legislation. Implementation is a complex task which needs to be fully thought through by the Welsh Government and the Senedd whenever they bring forward and make any new legislation. The paper highlights the difficulties faced by local authorities and their public sector partners in implementing their new responsibilities. The full report can be viewed [here](#).

The Auditor General is independent of government, and is appointed by Her Majesty the Queen. The Auditor General undertakes his work using staff and other resources provided by the Wales Audit Office, which is a statutory board established for that purpose and to monitor and advise the Auditor General. The Wales Audit Office is held to account by the Senedd.

The Auditor General audits local government bodies in Wales, including unitary authorities, police, probation, fire and rescue authorities, national parks and community councils. He also conducts local government value for money studies and assesses compliance with the requirements of the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009.

Beyond local government, the Auditor General is the external auditor of the Welsh Government and its sponsored and related public bodies, the Senedd Commission and National Health Service Wales. The Auditor General is also the external auditor of the National Health Service for Wales. The Auditor General is also the external auditor of the National Health Service for Wales. The Auditor General is also the external auditor of the National Health Service for Wales.