

Reference: IR761

Date issued: 9 December 2020

Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council Annual Accounts

I am writing in response to your request for information in which you requested information regarding Blaenau Gwent Borough Council's Annual Accounts.

I can confirm that the Auditor General for Wales (Auditor General) has given audit opinions on the accounts of Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council for the financial years 2016-2017, 2017-2018, 2018-2019. The audit of the Council's 2019-20 accounts is ongoing.

The Auditor General has qualified his opinions on the Council's 2016-2017 and 2017-2018 accounts due to concerns over the lawfulness of pension contributions paid by the Council to the Local Government Scheme. The pension contributions related to the roles undertaken by two Council officers as directors of Silent Valley Waste Services Ltd (Silent Valley), a company wholly owned by the Council. The Auditor General has given an unqualified opinion on the Council's 2018-2019 accounts.

Whilst the Auditor General's auditors have completed sufficient audit work to enable the Auditor General to give audit opinions on the Council's 2016-2017, 2017-2018, 2018-2019 accounts, the audit for these years have not been completed and will not be certified as complete until all audit work has been completed, and if necessary reported on. The Auditor General's auditors are continuing to examine matters relating to the Council's relationship with Silent Valley. However, before giving his opinions on the Council's accounts, the Auditor General satisfied himself that the outcome of any outstanding audit work did not have the potential to further affect the opinions he was proposing to give.

As regards the availability of the Council's audited accounts for 2016-17 to 2018-19, I understand that these will be available on the Council's website shortly.

If you have any queries, or questions about my handling of your request, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely,
Information Officer