



DESIGN  
COMMISSION  
FOR WALES  
COMISIWN  
DYLUNIO  
CYMRU

# Annual Plan 2017-18

1 April 2017 – 31 March 2018



Ysgol Craig Y Deryn, Snowdonia NPA

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## Foreword from the Chair

It is my privilege, as Chair of DCFW, to write this foreword to our Annual Plan.

Our close and constructive working relationship with the Welsh Government facilitates the work of the Commission as it responds to the Framework they set us. It also supports us to ensure we pursue our company Objects and, as Directors of a limited company, to execute our responsibilities in setting our strategic priorities. These are:

1. Promoting better homes and neighbourhoods: The provision of well designed, well located, mixed tenure homes for good, sustainable places and neighbourhoods remains a top priority for the Commission. Place-making for cohesive communities and sustainable neighbourhoods should be a priority for local authorities and developers alike. DCFW continues to advocate a design-led, place-focussed approach. We are committed to supporting skilled, integrated, multi-disciplinary place-making teams in local authorities across Wales. We continue to promote leadership for good place-making in support of a visionary, valued and valuable planning system.
2. Nurturing talent: Wales should be a place known for its talent and innovation; a creative nation where home grown talent, and the best of the rest, can find opportunities. It must be possible that the best of our talent can practice their professions and grow their design businesses in and from Wales. Greater opportunities must be identified for all professionals engaged in the built and natural environments in and from Wales, so that we can avoid losing a significant talent pool and diminishing design-led innovation and growth potential. We should be investing in talent at home and promoting it abroad and be in a position to attract the best the world has to offer.

Increasing diversity is one of the key elements in nurturing talent and I am particularly pleased that DCFW is being used by Welsh Government in promoting diversity in public sector appointments.

3. Inspiring distinctive landscapes: Demands on our landscape are complex and can frequently conflict but we *cannot mitigate our way to good design*. Our infrastructure must be beautiful; our resources more effectively and efficiently used. The relationship between natural resources and human intervention should inform and inspire a future for design excellence in our landscape, perhaps our most valuable asset.

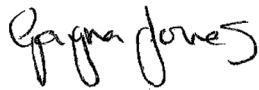
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Below these Strategic Priorities we have a series of targets and as you will see in the performance report included in this plan, we have exceeded all of them.

As for the future, we have a huge task, but are well placed to achieve it. Demand for Design Review is increasing, HATCH is helping us develop new and diverse talent, the number of people attending and the quality of debate in our conferences and seminars is changing the conversation around good design and its contribution to social value. I hope that in the coming year our emerging work on the National Development Framework and our national training programme will further help promote good quality design and place making in Wales.

I want to thank Cabinet Secretary Lesley Griffiths AM, for her support. We have a positive and robust relationship with Welsh Government Planning Directorate and are grateful for their help, funding, constructive scrutiny and collaboration.

I am grateful to my fellow Commissioners, who give their time freely and generously. We are fortunate to have the contribution of design professionals through the Design Review Panel, HATCH and the contributions of many partners. I want to thank the Chief Executive and staff team for their help and support in this my first year, and for their unquestionable enthusiasm and professionalism. The Commission punches well above its weight because of the combined effort of these people, all of whom share a vision for a Wales made better by great design.



Gayna Jones,  
Chair,  
Design Commission for Wales

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## Introduction from the Chief Executive

In presenting this plan I wish to express my thanks to our Chair Gayna Jones and Board of Directors; to Sue Jones, Amanda Spence and Jen Heal, the expert, committed and enthusiastic team with whom I have the pleasure to work on a daily basis, and to members of the Design Review Panel and HATCH, without whom it would not be possible to achieve the scope and reach we extend, throughout Wales.

We also express our thanks to the Welsh Government for their support and in particular, to Cabinet Secretary Lesley Griffiths AM and to colleagues in the Planning Directorate with whom we collaborate so closely, in pursuit of a Wales that is a better place.

We present this plan for approval by the Welsh Government for the financial year 1 April 2017- 31 March 2018 enthused by the prospect of positive change ushered in not least by The Wales Planning Act and The Well-being of Future Generations Act.

The priorities and activities outlined in this plan are informed by our service users and by stakeholders across the design, planning and development sectors. Our activities directly address the requirements of our Welsh Government Funding Framework and remit letter, in the context of our company Objects and Powers and our vision for a Wales that is a better place.

The strategic priorities outlined by our Chair, Gayna Jones and echoed throughout this plan, underpin activities which are aligned to our commitment to promoting design excellence for an enhanced environment that helps accelerate well-being across the nation.

We welcome the opportunities emerging through our work on the National Development Framework, the review of Planning Policy Wales and the launch of our national training programme. We look forward to further collaboration with the Welsh Government, our partners, colleagues and stakeholders to help promote well-designed, vibrant, sustainable places for everyone.



Carole-Anne Davies,  
Chief Executive

The Design Commission for Wales promotes good design across sectors in the public interest to help make Wales a better place.

We know that good design:

- Simplifies complexity and aids understanding.
- Uses resources and energy efficiently.
- Focuses on users, maximising ease of use, accessibility and inclusiveness.
- Makes products, places and buildings more attractive.
- Adds value and enhances public good..

The Design Commission for Wales is a company limited by guarantee (DCFW LTD), without share capital and incorporated in 2002 as a wholly owned subsidiary of the National Assembly for Wales, now Welsh Ministers, pursuant to the Government of Wales Act 2006. The Commission receives funds from the Welsh Government for its activities, carried out in pursuit of the Objects of the Company as set out in its Memorandum of Association.

These are:

- To champion high standards of design and architecture to the public and private sectors in Wales through promoting wider understanding of design issues and the importance of enhancing the built environment across all sectors, including the organisation of exhibitions, meetings, seminars and conferences.
- To promote design practice that is compatible with the scheme made by the National Assembly for Wales under Section 121 of the Government of Wales Act 1998 ("the Sustainable Development Scheme"), promoting best practice in energy efficiency, waste disposal and access to public transport.
- To promote design practice compatible with the highest standards in relation to the promotion of equality of opportunity and social inclusion.
- Whilst promoting excellence in prestige projects to have due regard also to the promotion of excellence in day to day developments such as residential estates and industrial units.



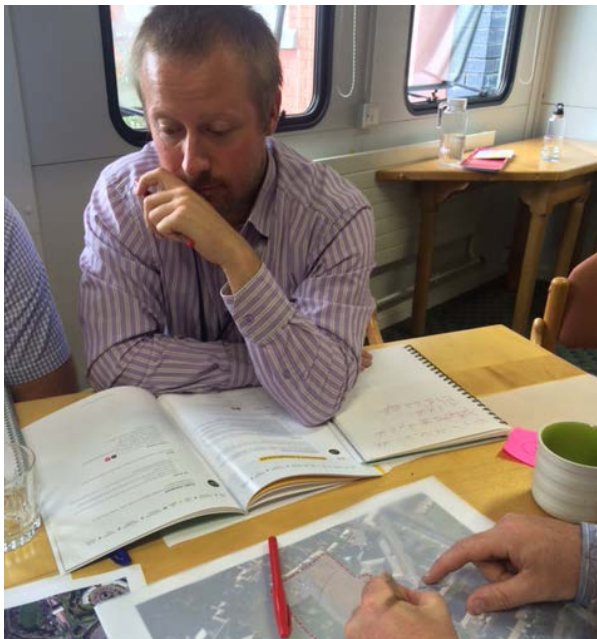
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The Commission promotes wider understanding about the importance of good design using four distinct but related approaches:

1. **Training** for local authorities with a focus on strategic items, place-making and securing design quality through the planning process.
2. **Client support** for commissioning clients provides help and guidance in identifying and understanding their needs, developing the brief and securing the right team.
3. The national **Design Review Service** encourages early consultation for plans and projects throughout Wales and provides longer term, expert resources and support.
4. **Events (including publications, seminars and HATCH networks)** help to raise awareness, stimulate wider debate and communicate the benefits of good design.

Our core services and small scale public seminars are delivered free of charge throughout Wales. Larger scale, major conferences are charged for, to cover our costs, at a delegate rate which allows maximum attendance across sectors and professions, for small businesses, students and members of the public.

We engage with colleagues in architecture, urban and landscape design, civil engineering and planning who are involved in shaping the countryside, cities, towns and villages of Wales. We collaborate with stakeholders in the professional institutions, local authorities, clients and commissioning bodies, in planning, regeneration, energy and infrastructure, making our expertise available throughout Wales.



Pembrokeshire National Park Authority Site Analysis Training



## Our Vision, Aims and Values

By promoting good design and communicating its benefits, we add value and help to support well-being and enhanced quality of life for the people of Wales. Good design makes everything better.

- Our vision is for a Wales that is a better place.
- We aim to promote good design and communicate its benefits.
- We value openness, transparency and mutual respect in a culture where knowledge is shared with all our stakeholders.

Our values are important to us. They characterize the kind of organization we are. We nurture a positive, professional and creative culture and work to continuously improve the efficiency, relevance and quality of our services.

The Design Commission for Wales is an expert organization. Our commitment to continuous learning and enhancement is at the heart of our culture. Whilst our resources are limited, our ethos of continual investment in a highly skilled team means that each team member is valued and can thrive through creativity, competence and confidence. Training, professional and personal development are all used to enrich our team and strengthen our performance.



Rhian Haf Captured Moments Gallery Walk & Talk in partnership with Ruthin Craft Centre, Bay Art and Arts Council Wales

### The Design Commission for Wales is committed to good Governance.

The Design Commission for Wales is committed to good Governance. Our Chair and Board of Directors are referred to as Commissioners. In law they are directors of Comisiwn Dylunio Cymru Design Commission for Wales, the trading name of the company limited by guarantee, without share capital, that is DCFW LIMITED Company No: 04391072, incorporated in England and Wales as a wholly owned subsidiary of the National Assembly for Wales (now Welsh Ministers). Its Registered Office is at 4th Floor, Cambrian Buildings, Mount Stuart Square, Cardiff CF10 5FL.

Commissioners are unremunerated and are appointed by Welsh Ministers through the Public Appointments process, reflecting the Nolan Committee Standards in Public Life. The Commission's Chief Executive reports to the Chair and Board of Directors at its quarterly meetings and AGM, and to the Welsh Government, through the Planning Directorate, on a quarterly basis.

The Chair and Board of Directors are guided by DCFW's Handbook for Directors. This is informed by the Nolan Principles, the Companies Act and by other relevant and current guidance.

Directors are responsible for carrying out their duties under the Companies Act, including agreeing the strategic direction, exercising their fiduciary duty by acting at all times in the interests of the success of the company, with care, diligence and skill.

The Board of Directors is supported by a Finance & General Purpose Sub-Committee with full and regularly updated terms of reference. The Commission's Resource & Finance Manager (R&FM) monitors and updates compliance matters on a regular basis and reports to the Board of Directors via the executive team papers, circulated in advance of meetings. All DCFW policies including Risk Management are regularly updated and included in the Handbook for the Board of Directors. Induction and further training is offered and provided regularly for the Board of Directors and staff team as required and as identified as necessary and valuable.

The Chair and Board of Directors, in the day to day delegation of their powers to the Chief Executive, aim to achieve the critical balance between strategic direction and operational management. The Chair and Board of Directors are mindful that whilst they delegate their powers and authority to an executive team, they do not delegate their responsibility. They exercise independent thought whilst accepting collective responsibility.

The Chair and Board of Directors are a valuable resource comprising committed, skilled and enthusiastic individuals who are respected and kept well informed. They are correctly and appropriately addressed and listed on the DCFW website and other company information.

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## **Equalities, the Welsh Language and Future Generations**

The Commission acts in accordance with Equalities Guidance and Legislation and has arrangements in place for flexibility and family friendly policies. The Commission is committed to enhancing equality and diversity in its own practice and culture and in playing its role in helping to address barriers and recognised inequalities in the wider design and built environment professions.

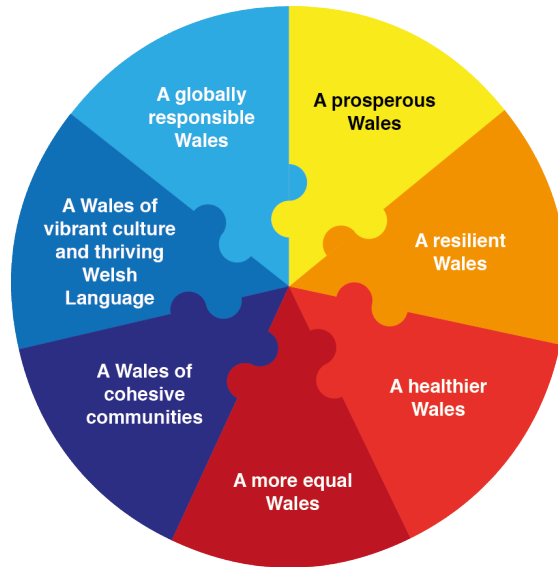
The Design Commission for Wales' recruitment process for new Commissioners, via its 2016 Public Appointments process has been case studied by the Welsh Government's Fairer Futures Division. The case study (Appendix 2) captures the process by which DCFW used its third public appointments process to strengthen the age and gender profile of its board members. Collaboration with the Planning Directorate and the Public Appointments unit, and support for the Commission's own media and engagement strategy, helped make the recruitment process the most inclusive, fruitful and diverse to date. The Commission continues to pursue its commitment to greater equality and diversity, learning from and building upon the 2016 process.

The Commission aims to reflect the reality of a diverse world and continues to develop all aspects of governance and operations accordingly, including the promotion of opportunities through platforms and underrepresented groups, providing appropriate induction, shadowing, training and mentoring opportunities at all levels. The Commission is also committed to further disseminating its training materials and resources for inclusive design in support of the Welsh Government Framework for Independent Living. In pursuing our company Objects and promoting good design across sectors, we continue to seek well-designed buildings and places that are accessible and safe for everyone to use.

Wales is a bilingual nation and we are keen to identify all opportunities to mainstream the Welsh language. As a small company operating at a scale below Welsh Language Standard thresholds, and with limited resources, DCFW is nevertheless committed to treating both languages equally and to the use of the Welsh language in our activities and in publishing and disseminating our core materials. The Commission strives to treat the Welsh language as equal to that of English and makes provision for training and other events to be conducted with facilities for the use of the Welsh language and in bilingual settings. In its commitment to mainstreaming the Welsh language it is informed by the guidance of the office of the Welsh Language Commissioner and by the requirements of our remit letter (Appendix 1). We continue to enhance our approach to these areas, in our day to day business and our refreshed 2017 website.

Good design is critical to good place-making and to the well-being and quality of life of the people of Wales. Whilst DCFW Ltd has no duty placed upon it under the Well-being of Future Generations Act (Wales) 2015. Unlocking the benefits of good design is critical for long term resource efficiency, climate resilience and well-being.

The Commission voluntarily operates in the spirit of the Act, its key themes and five ways of working. We seek **long term** public benefit, taking action to **prevent** problems arising, **integrating** our services and **collaborating** with our partners and stakeholders to promote greater participation and **involvement** in place making. By acting in this way and continuing to strengthening our co-production business model, we are also able to promote and support the seven well-being goals for:



- A sustainable Wales; A prosperous Wales; A resilient Wales
- A healthier Wales; A more equal Wales; A Wales of cohesive communities
- A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving language; A globally responsible Wales

In addition and in relation to physical developments, the Commission routinely promotes good sustainable design; well-connected, well-designed, attractive, inclusive and safe neighbourhoods that help support cohesive communities.

We mainstream sustainable development strategies for resource and energy efficiency and high performance in all projects in order to enhance added value. We are committed to seeking new opportunities to respond to the Well-being of Future Generations Act (Wales) 2015 as they arise and as we identify them through long term, collaborative and systemic action.



Wellbeing of Future Generations Act (Wales):  
The Design Commission for Wales is committed to the Act's seven goals and five ways of working, shown above.

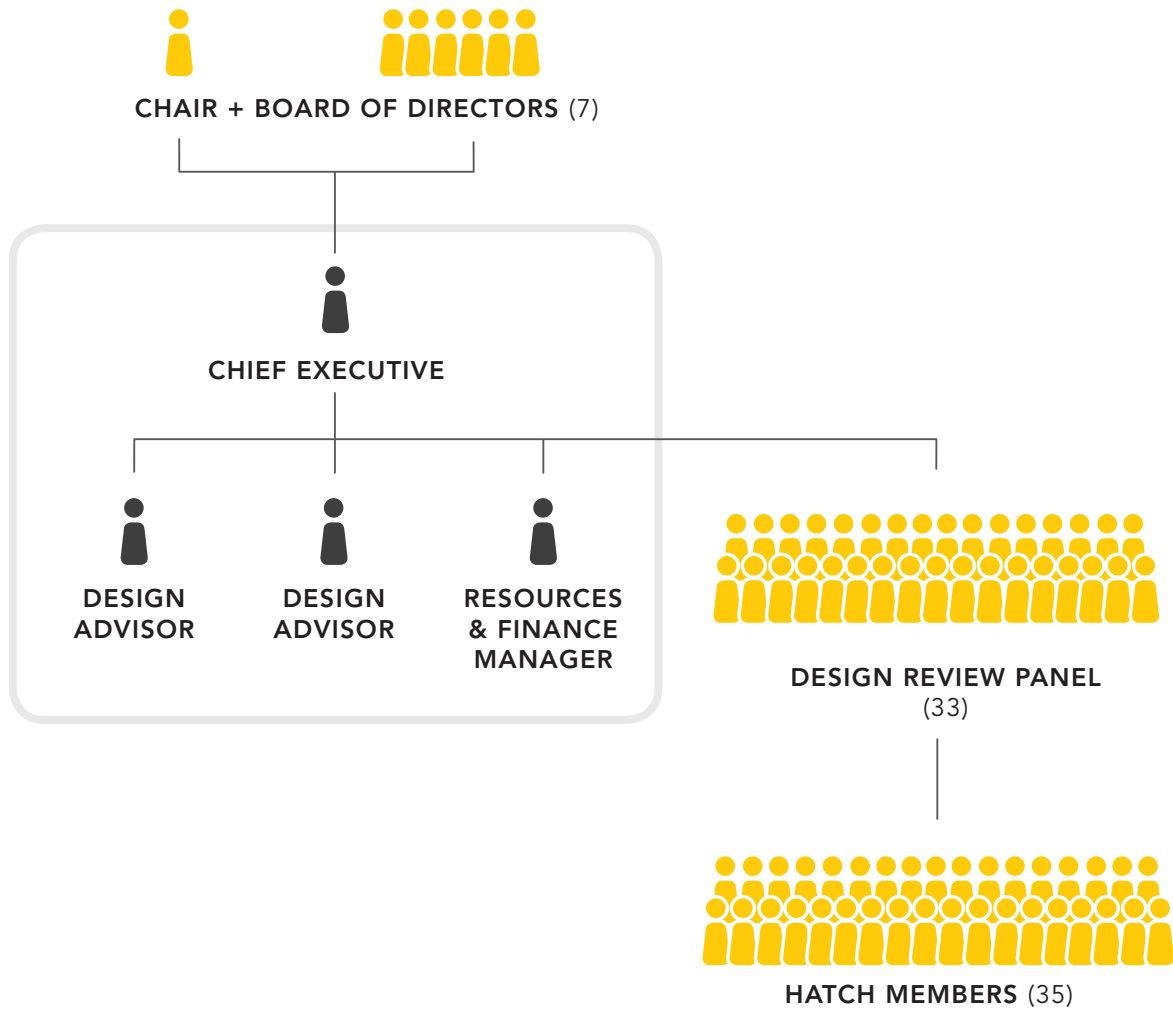


Figure 1: Organisational Chart

\*Unremunerated experts: Design Review Panel and HATCH multi-disciplinary talent network.

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## Financial resources

The Design Commission for Wales received £327,250 in the financial year 2016-17 under the terms of its funding framework and remit letter from the Welsh Government. The Commission is informed that this revenue grant will remain at standstill in the financial year 2017-18, after remaining static for several years and being reduced by 5% in 2015-16. This will place even greater emphasis on the need for efficient services and to identify and secure non-treasury income sources compatible with its remit and Objects, as outlined and encouraged in the framework agreement.

All funds are directly allocated to the Commission's overheads and activities. After fixed costs, including salaries, pension fund commitments, administration and premises, the Commission allocates financial resources directly toward its activities throughout Wales.

From time to time the Welsh Government may seek specialist assistance and expert input from the Commission and may outline additional and separately funded projects. These are identified on a case by case basis and funds are held separately in a dedicated project account and administrated appropriately to facilitate project delivery. All such projects are outlined in detailed scoping documents agreed by the Planning Directorate.

The financial information presented in this plan, represents total income, showing the budget position at the beginning of the financial year 1 April 2017 and over the plan period 1 April 2017 to 31 March 2018.

As shown above in Figure 1, P11 the Commission has a small, highly skilled, staff team of four specialists delivering all services across the whole of Wales. The team is at optimum operational capacity for current service demand and plans are being developed to augment resources in response to additional demand and new opportunities, during this plan period 1 April 2017 – 31 March 2018.

The contribution of the private sector from professionals in private practice, is substantial and is shown in Figures 2a and b of this plan. It illustrates DCFW's co-production business model and recognises the resources provided by the private sector.

This private sector commitment supports the unique business model of DCFW and significantly contributes to the underwriting of our core services, in particular the national Design Review Service and local authority training.

As a publicly funded organisation we value such partnerships and their capacity to maximise the value of public investment. Our services, delivered through the effective co-ordination of these skilled, multi-disciplinary professionals, and in collaboration with our partners, is vital to an efficient effective, high quality service, available throughout Wales.



**Fig 2a.**  
Private Sector in kind support for DCFW through Design Review Panel.

Date 2016/17	Meeting	Location	No of DRPM/ADV	Who?	Total hours	Representative cost £
<b>April</b>						
8th	Design Review	Cardiff	3	AF/MG/ER	33	£6,534.00
14th	Design Review	Cardiff	5	AF/JA/SS/ JVS/HK	45	£10,746.00
<b>May</b>						
19th	Design Review	Cardiff	5	EJ/CK/KD/AL/AK/	55	£13,134.00
20th	BFL Training	Cardiff	1	JVS	6	£882.00
<b>June</b>						
6th	Design Review	Cardiff	1	JB	5	£735.00
23rd	Design Review	Cardiff	5	JB/MA/MH/SR/ML	45	£7,992.00
29/30	North Wales Reviews	Anglesey/Conwy	3	EJ/AL/SS/	70	£20,700.00
<b>July</b>						
5th	Meeting at DCFW	Cardiff	1	AK	2	£600.00
14th	Design Review					
	Feedback mtg	Cardiff	1	JB	2	£294.00
21st	Design Review	Cardiff	4	EJ/ML/TA/AB	38	£8,493.00
<b>August</b>						
10th	Design Review	Cardiff	2	AL/CK	12	£2,682.00
18th	Design Review	Cardiff	3	JH/KD/SS	38	£9,337.00
<b>September</b>						
22nd	Design Review	Cardiff	7	MGJ/ML/RW/MH/ AF/JP	58	£11,398.00
<b>October</b>						
20th	Design Review	Swansea	5	EJ/TA/SS/ MGJ/SR	50	£10,410.00
<b>November</b>						
9th	Rightacres meeting	Cardiff	2	AK/ML	12	£2,682.00
17th	Design Review	Cardiff	6	JB/AL/ML/MA/ PR/AW	68	£13,455.00
<b>January</b>						
19th	Design Review	Cardiff	6	SR/MGJ/CJ/CK	58	£5,586.00
<b>February</b>						
10th	Design Review	Cardiff	2	TA/MK	9	£2,011.00
16th	Design Review	Cardiff	6	EJ/JB/MG/KD/ MA/HK	57	£12,739.00
28th	Design Review	Cardiff	3	SS/ML/MK	18	£4,482.00
<b>March</b>						
16th	Design Review	Cardiff	4	SR/SC/ER/AK/	24	£4,446.00
28th	Design Review	Cardiff	3	ML/MH/MA	15	£2,970.00
<b>Total cost comparison in the market</b>						<b>£152,308.00</b>
<b>= 46% of DCFW Annual Turnover</b>						

Rates calculated as per RIBA and Academy of Experts recognised fees.

Figure 2b. Value of private sector support from unremunerated Design Review Panelists and Advocates



Between 1 April 2016 and 31 March 2017, our private sector expert volunteers gave their time, experience and expertise to

**19 Review meetings**



That's a total of

**720 hours**



with some members attending several meetings - equivalent to a total of

**78 panellists**



The value of their time, underwritten by their businesses, and calculated on recognised RIBA fee rates is

**£152,308**



That's

**46%**

of DCFW's Annual Turnover



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## Resources: People

Our core team, our Design Review Panel and coordinated networks are vital to us as we respond to our remit and strategic aims, from the basis of our firm conviction that design affects everything and good design makes everything better.

As explained above the small core staff team is supported by additional capacity in the form of expert volunteers serving as **Design Review Panellists**. Members of this expert, multi-disciplinary Design Review Panel are practicing professionals, experienced in all kinds and scales of development projects. Their skills and experience span commercial property, regeneration, architecture, sustainability, urban and landscape design, energy infrastructure including coastal and on/offshore wind, as well as engineering, planning and transport.

All our expert panellists are unpaid and appointed by competitive interview conducted by an independently chaired panel, for a term of two years, subject to performance review and reappointment. The Panellists are particularly vital as they underpin the delivery of our national Design Review Service and give their time and expertise each month for a minimum of two days, more usually three. Panellists also assist the Commission in its advocacy, stakeholder engagement, events, seminars and the delivery of expert design comment and advisory work.

Panellists are unpaid for these Design Review services, receiving only reimbursements for expenses directly incurred in the course of DCFW duties. They bring invaluable expertise whilst their private practices, business partners and employers, afford them the time they give to the Commission, effectively underwriting DCFW's national programmes and activities.

The value of the regular commitment of the Design Review Panel members, largely drawn from the private sector, has been calculated and can be understood from Figures 2a and b. The value shown is informed by RIBA published recommended rates for senior partner roles in private practice, of which our panel is comprised, and by expert witness rates which are applicable to panelists who contribute to the reviews on Developments of National Significance (DNS) and also Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects (NSIPS). The value of this support is shown annually in our year-end financial reports and represents a significant figure, demonstrating the commitment of the private sector to in-kind support for DCFW's operational model and services.

Our Design Review Service is available across the whole of Wales and aims to be peripatetic and flexible. This is governed by the level of demand, timing and geographical spread of projects and by the needs of Local Planning Authorities. In the 2016-17 reviews and associated training have been held at Ynys Môn, Cardiff, Swansea, Monmouthshire, Conwy and Flintshire.

The Commission's Design Review service has a reputation for quality, integrity, expertise and robustness. In our risk assessments we have prioritized the maintenance and enhancement of that reputation. This depends on high standards and the ability to attract skilled Board members, staff and experienced, committed panellists.

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In addition to serving the Design Review Panel, a small number of panellists may on specific occasions, assist DCFW with specialist training and client activities. In these specific instances, individuals may receive honoraria in recognition of their contribution, beyond their agreed role as panellists.

The Commission consistently maintains the commitment of outstanding professionals and practitioners. We have retained excellent practitioners and attracted an equally strong field from which to make new appointments in successive years. We continue to operate an open call for expressions of interest in order to ensure succession.

We continue to strengthen HATCH, the multi-disciplinary, collaborative network we created in 2014/15. An interdisciplinary group, created and coordinated by the Design Commission for Wales, HATCH aims to strengthen collaboration across disciplines by working together to communicate the power and uphold the importance of design. Members of HATCH are younger designers who will form the future of design talent in Wales.

HATCH allows DCFW to build further capacity, to raise awareness of the value of good design and the difference it can make to individuals and communities. The network also offers professional development, supported by DCFW, to provide opportunities to...*'learn and improve skills to become better designers, enabling us to raise the standard of design in the built environment in Wales and make better places which are more sustainable'*.

HATCH also strengthens DCFW's capacity to tackle the challenges and risks faced by talented architects and designers in Wales together, bridging the gaps between disciplines. HATCH members are committed to actively upholding the strategic aims of the Design Commission for Wales, and to helping DCFW inspire Wales' future generation of designers.

DCFW's Board of Directors, staff team, Design Review Panellists and HATCH network, together represent the largest and most diverse multi-disciplinary network of expert design professionals in Wales.

They represent an active and engaged, nationwide network of talented designers and innovators who share the common aim of promoting good design to help make Wales a better place.



HATCH Site visit BBC Headquarters Central Square Cardiff

Chair, Gayna Jones (top left) and the DCFW team

The Commission delivers its services throughout Wales with an independent expert stance. The Commission is not a membership organization or professional body. It recognises the multi-disciplinary nature of the built environment and does not represent the interests of any single profession.

The Commission is differentiated by:

- Its multi-disciplinary remit for the whole of the built environment in Wales
- An expert, multi-disciplinary team, delivering specialist services
- A depth and breadth of knowledge and experience
- Its ability to attract and retain the commitment of skilled professionals
- Its capacity to stimulate and sustain Wales-wide professional networks

We provide advice on small scale day to day developments, housing and neighbourhoods, masterplans and development briefs, larger scale major developments and national infrastructure projects, including roads, tidal, wind and other renewable energy projects.

We publish written comment and promote good design through training, awareness raising and client support activities as well as through early, strategic engagement via our national Design Review Service.

We share our learning, analyses, knowledge, experience and expertise to contribute to wider discourse, inform debate and lead opinion. Our experience and understanding means that we are well placed to influence the delivery of well-designed, well-located and timely development and to promote and communicate the value of good design.



Design Review meetings in progress ©DCFV

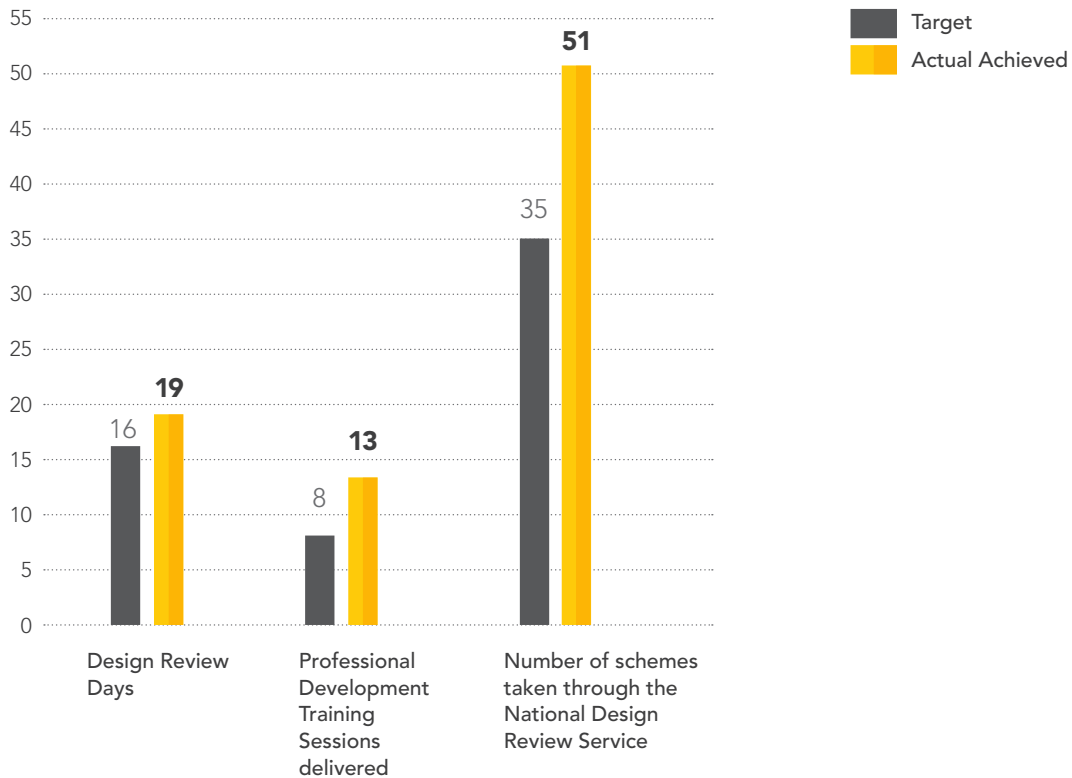
## Performance against Welsh Government Targets 1 April 2016 – 31 March 2017

In the previous year 1 April 2016-31 March 2017, the Commission delivered the following performance in relation to its Design Review Service (Figure 3), working to established Welsh Government Targets.



Design Review pre-meeting and training session at Snowdonia National Park Authority in progress.

**Figure 3**  
Performance against targets 1 April 2016 – 31 March 2017





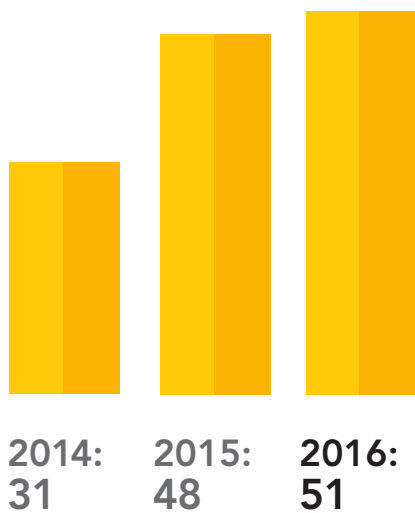
The data and trends reflect our approach to prioritizing schemes of greatest significance, irrespective of scale, and engaging at a stage where we can help secure early influence and capture opportunities for good architecture and urban design quality.

Many schemes are of national significance for energy, transport infrastructure or mixed use development and have entered into long term engagement with the Commission.

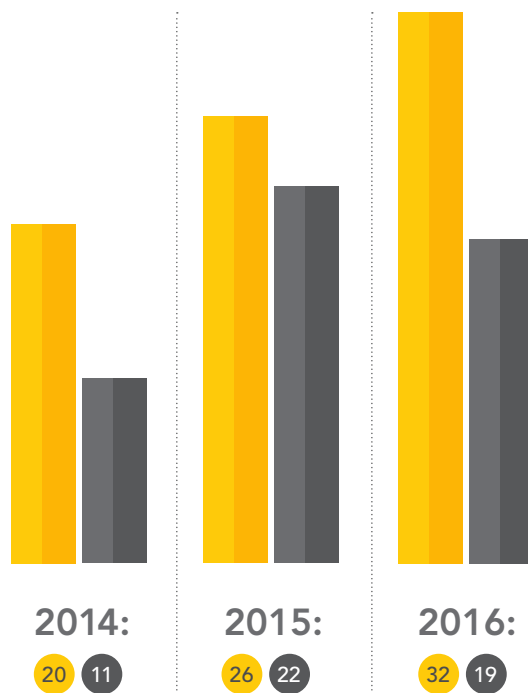
Many of the large scale residential proposals represent Strategic Sites or key regeneration programmes aligned with Local authorities and Government investment. Given their scale, they nevertheless represent significant millions. All Welsh Government targets were exceeded.

Figures 4 & 5 below show Design review data 2014/15, 2015/16 & 2016/17

**Figure 4**  
Schemes reviewed

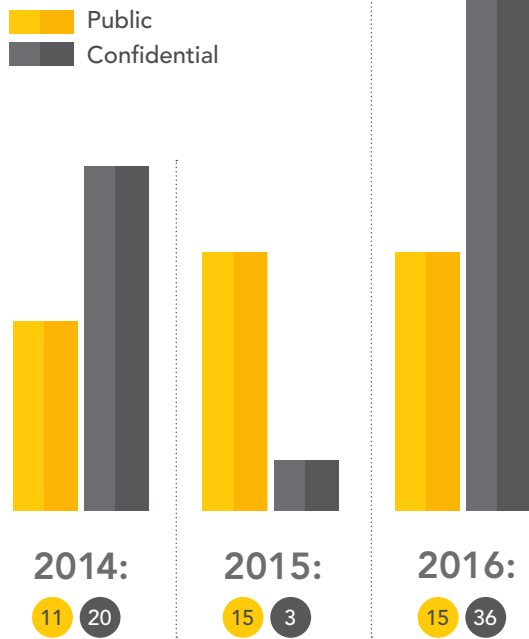


**Figure 5**  
Comparison of schemes

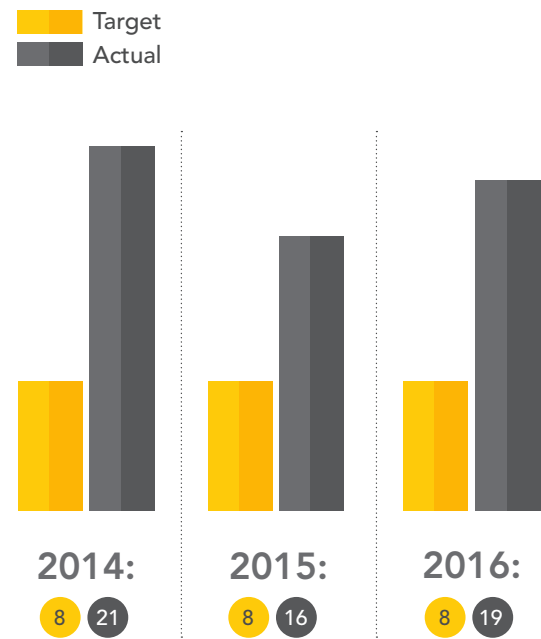


■ New  
■ Extended engagement

**Figure 6**  
Status at time of consultation with DCFW

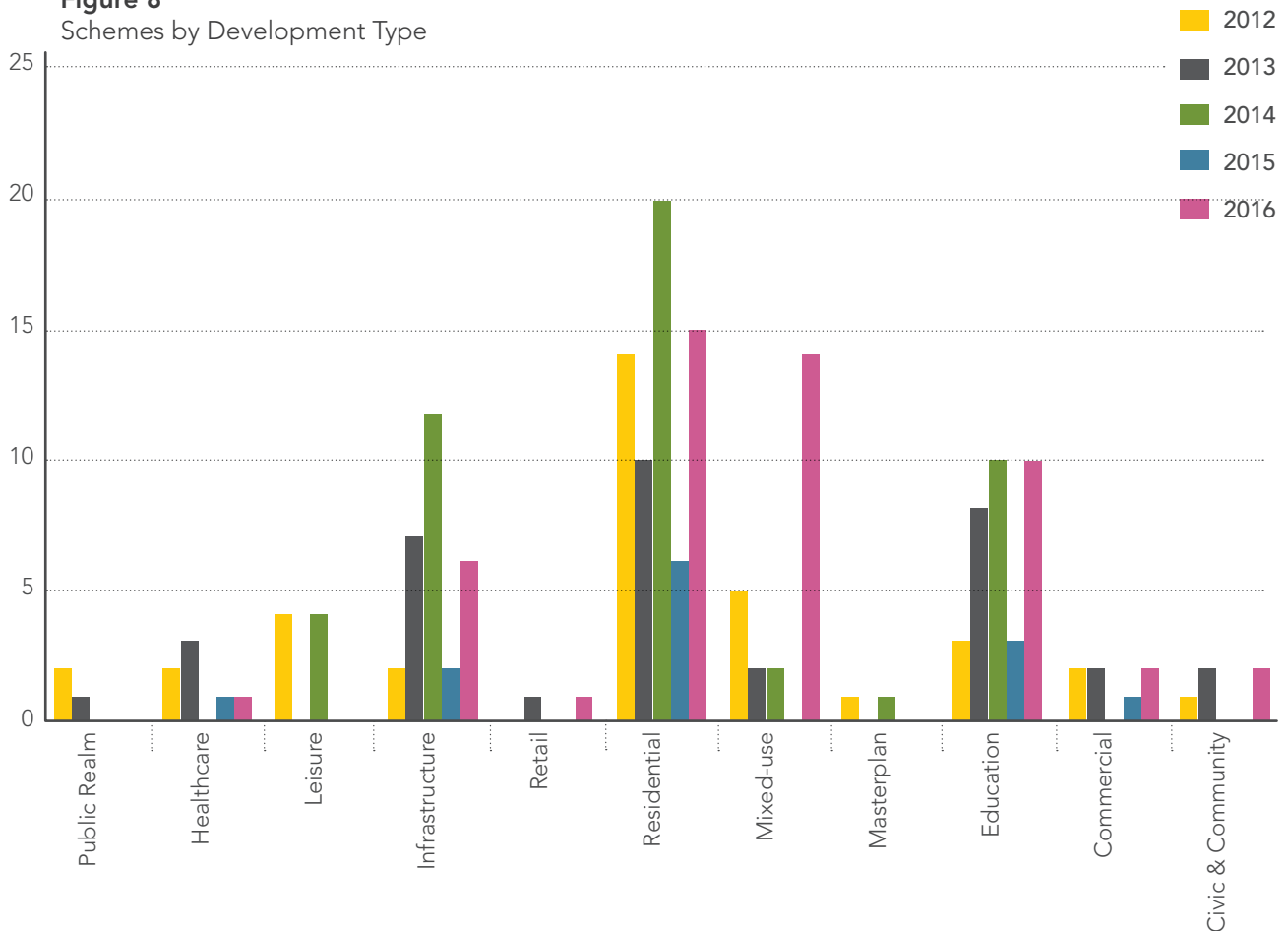


**Figure 7**  
Number of Design Review Meetings



Confidential reviews are afforded at the earliest stages only, prior to public consultation and public promotion of the scheme. Trends since 2014 show an increase in early and continued consultation with DCFW

**Figure 8**  
Schemes by Development Type

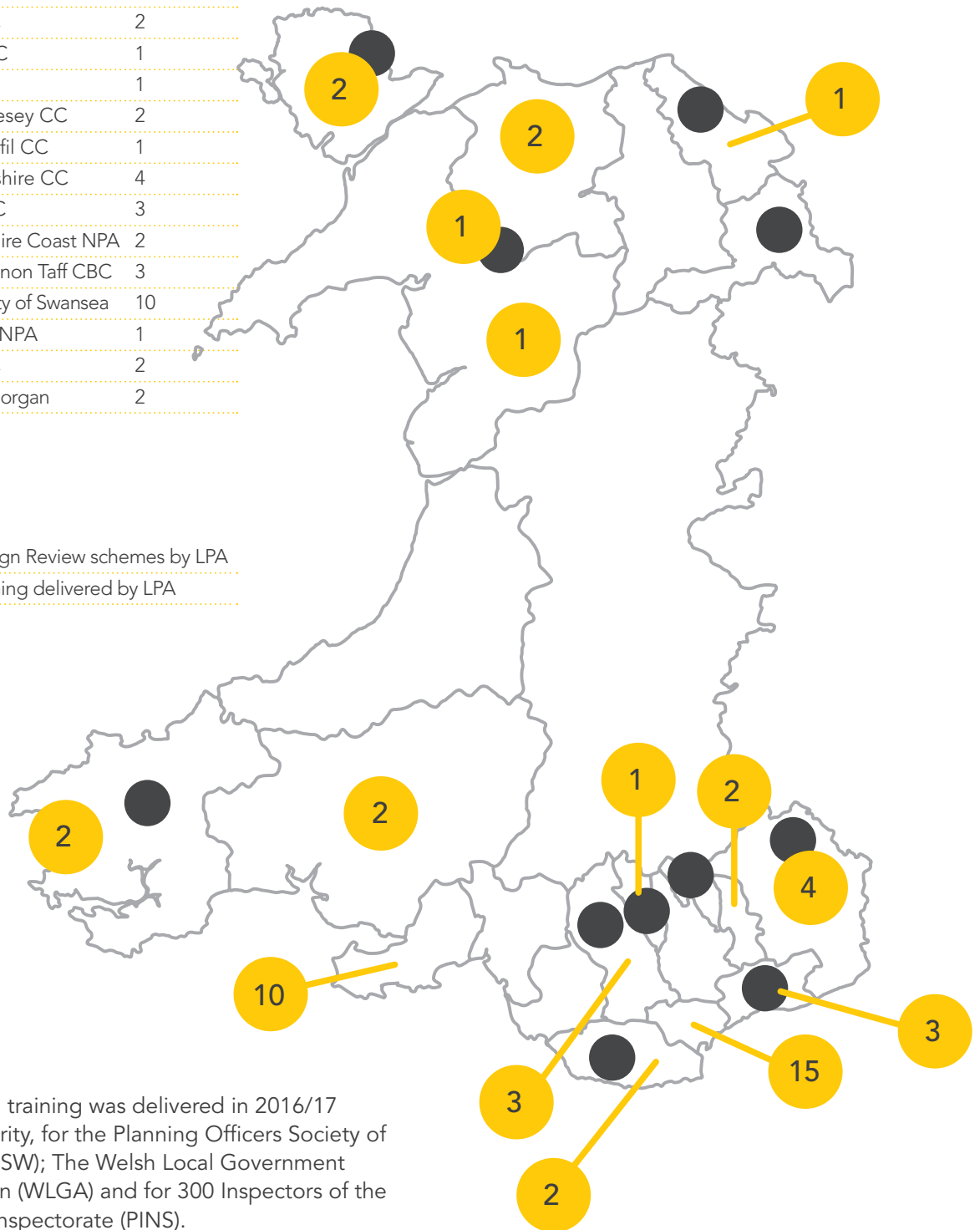


**Figure 9**  
Schemes by LPA

Wales has 22 Unitary Authorities and three National Parks. The map shows authorities that received DCFW's Design Review and training services in the period 2016-17.

Cardiff Council	15
Carmarthenshire CC	2
Conwy CBC	2
Flintshire CC	1
Gwynedd	1
Isle of Anglesey CC	2
Merthyr Tydfil CC	1
Monmouthshire CC	4
Newport CC	3
Pembrokeshire Coast NPA	2
Rhondda Cynon Taff CBC	3
City & County of Swansea	10
Snowdonia NPA	1
Torfaen CBC	2
Vale of Glamorgan	2

- 1 Design Review schemes by LPA
- Training delivered by LPA



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Following its contribution to Positive Planning Consultations which informed work on the Wales Planning Bill and subsequent Planning Act Wales 2015, DCFW prepared and submitted further comment or evidence for Welsh Government and other public sector consultations as well as publishing Guidance documents and reports:

**DCFW Publications:**

- Welsh Government Practice Guide: Site & Context Analysis - Capturing the value of a Site  
ISBN 978-1-4734-5800-0, DCFW & Welsh Government Crown Copyright 2016
- Places for Life: Creating, cherishing and enhancing the places where life happens
- Shape My Brecon Beacons: National Park Place Plan 2016
- Place Report Abergavenny 2016
- Place Report Ynysybwl 2016
- Consulting the Commission through the Design Review Service, 2016
- Design Review Essentials, 2016
- Design & Access Statements in Wales 2017 – (FINAL DRAFT at TIME of writing)
- Places for Life: Conference publication (FINAL DRAFT at Time of Writing)

These publications help us share our learning, distil our experience in assessing development quality, provide expert guidance complementing planning policy, encourage good place-making and provide tools to help address persistent barriers to capturing the value of good design in Wales.

The Commission continues to promote and accredit Building for Life 12 (BFL 12) for use in Wales. The Commission published BFL12: Wales in collaboration with Design for Homes, Design Council and the Home Builders Federation, with the support of the Welsh Government. BF12 is the industry recognised guide, now also available in Welsh language through DCFW, referenced in Planning Policy and endorsed by the Welsh Government.



Place Plans and Pilot study publications

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## Events

The Commission's large scale conferences are keenly anticipated annual calendar events. Each one highlights a key topic and explores it through the prism of design potential and practice, aiming to broaden thinking and address topics from fresh perspectives, introducing a range of experience and comparing international practice and precedent, sharing knowledge and examining different approaches. Each conference takes place at a different location in Wales.

Bringing a fresh perspective to the need for sustainable places that support cohesive communities Places for Life, our autumn conference in 2016 attracted 60 delegates. We were pleased to welcome Cabinet Secretary Lesley Griffiths AM to set the keynote and emphasise the Welsh Government's commitment to good design quality for the whole of the built environment, for neighbourhoods and sustainable place-making. Focussing on the places where life happens, the event also examined the principles of the Happy City model measures of well-being and how to apply them through good urban design and place-making.



Workshops in progress at Places for Life conference, 2016

Within its training programme DCFW delivered training sessions for 11 Local Authorities and set the keynote for the Planning Inspectorate Annual Training Event in March. The Commission devised and delivered a full day workshop 'Examining Design: A space in the City, for 300 Planning Inspectors gathered in Wales for their annual event for the first time.



Local authority training for residential design and use of BFL12 Wales.

Figure 10  
Local Authority attendance at DCFW events by department

	PLANNING	DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT	ARCHITECTURE	LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	PROPERTY	REGENERATION	PLACEMAKING	URBAN DESIGN	CORPORATE/ STRATEGIC	ACCESS	SURVEYOR	ACCESS	OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY	HIGHWAYS	CONSERVATION	TRANSPORT/ ENGINEERING	VISUAL ARTS	ENVIRONMENT
Blaenau Gwent CBC	1																	
Brecon Beacons NPA	4																	
Bridgend CBC	1					1							1		1			
Caerphilly CBC	2																1	
Cardiff Council	9	1	2			1	4		1							1		
Carmarthen CC	2															3		
Ceredigion CC	2	1	2		5													
City & County of Swansea	11	1				1		1	1						1			
Conwy CBC	4										3		8					
Denbighshire CC	2											2		1				
Flintshire CC													1	1				
Gwynedd CC	1	1											2		1			
Merthyr Tydfil CBC	1																	
Monmouthshire CC	4	2						2										
Neath Port Talbot CBC		2														1		
Pembrokeshire CC		3								1								
Pembrokeshire Coast NPA	2																	
Rhondda Cynon Taf CBC	3			2				1								1		1
Torfaen CBC	1																	
Vale of Glamorgan CC	5			1														
Wrexham CBC	3	1																
West Berkshire Council	1																	



Figure 11  
Analysis of delegates attending DCFW core events and training.

TOTAL EVENTS & ATTENDEES



11

NUMBER OF EVENTS



492

NUMBER OF DELEGATES

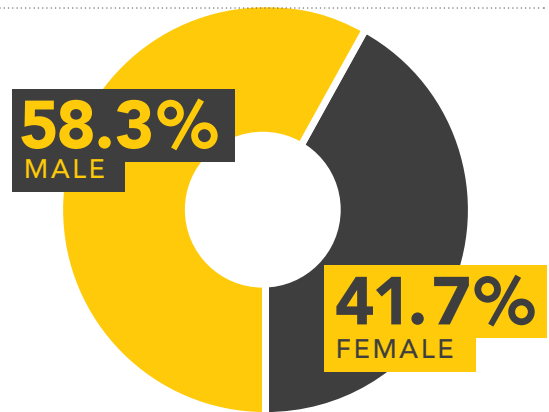
OF WHICH...



287



205



CONSISTING OF...



ARCHITECTURE/UD

96



LOCAL AUTHORITY

133



OTHER

67



LANDSCAPE

14



LAY PERSON

36

Other category includes:  
Housing associations; Guide dogs association, PR, Recruitment: Local interested societies; self-employed/freelance individuals.



CONSULTANTS

63



WELSH GOV

14



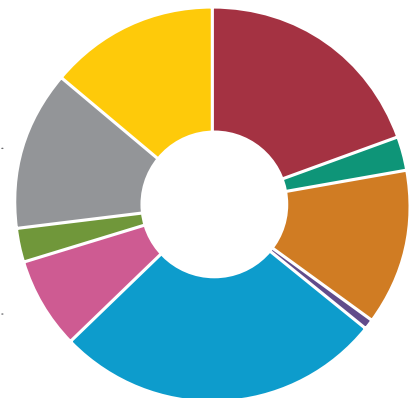
ENGINEERING

4



EDUCATION

65

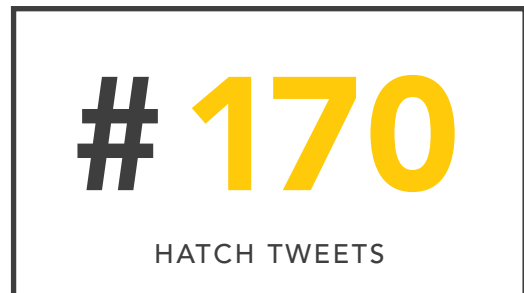
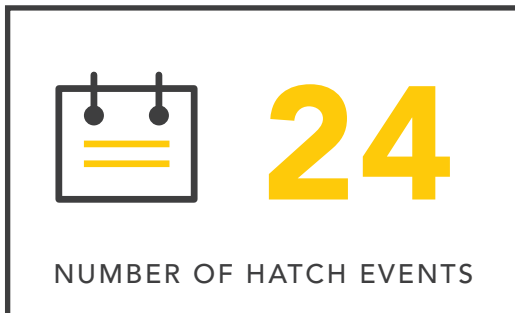
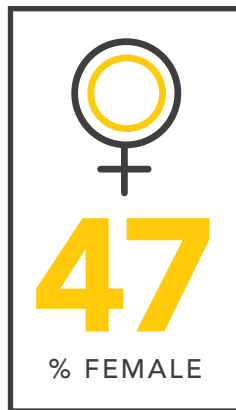
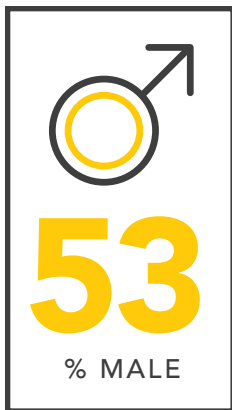
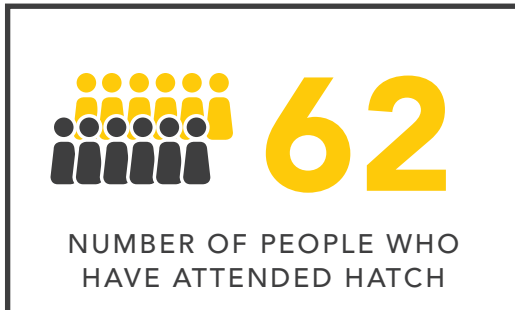


- Architecture/Urban design
- Engineering
- WG
- Landscape
- Local Authority
- Education
- Consultants
- Lay person
- Other

Figure 12

Analysis of delegates attending DCFW HATCH event programme for emerging professionals

# HATCH



DISCIPLINES REPRESENTED:

- AFFORDABLE HOUSING DEVELOPER
- ARCHITECT/ARCHITECTURAL TECHNOLOGIST/ARCHITECTURAL ASSISTANT
- ARTS CONSULTANT
- DESIGN PLANNER
- ENERGY ENGINEER

- INCLUSIVE DESIGN CONSULTANT
- LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT
- PLANNER
- PROJECT DESIGNER
- RESEARCHER
- STUDENT
- URBAN DESIGNER
- VISUALISER

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The Design Commission for Wales events, in this plan period, were well attended with delegates from a wide range of disciplines; architects, urban and landscape designers, councillors and officers, local businesses, the private and the creative sectors and consultancies. High delegate satisfaction rates were recorded and national media interest was achieved. Images and comment can be found on our website and associated Pinterest boards at [dcfw.org](http://dcfw.org)



Common Ground, IWD 2016 with RTPI Cymru and RSAW.

In March 2014, with the endorsement of the Welsh Government the Commission launched Shape My Town, a website [www.shapemytown.org](http://www.shapemytown.org) intended as a practical resource to help involve, inspire and equip people and communities to play a part in shaping their places. Shape My Town has been developed further and workshops are ongoing. Brecon Beacons National Park Authority drew on DCFW's support to develop Shape my Brecon Beacons: A place plan for the National Park published and adopted in Spring 2016 and shortlisted for an RTPI Planning Excellence Award in early 2017. The Place Plan initiative continues to be developed in partnership with Welsh Government, Planning Aid Wales and other stakeholders.



Place making and Active Travel partner event with Sustrans.

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## National Eisteddfod Gold Medal for Architecture

Since 2009, the Commission has supported the National Eisteddfod Gold Medal for Architecture which is awarded annually for outstanding architecture. Our financial and in kind support also includes the Architecture Scholarship for young designers in Wales and the exhibition associated with both awards.

The Commission hosts a pre-festival event in July each year, to announce the shortlisted entries. The event was held at Abergavenny in 2016 and attracted significant coverage following DCFW's media campaign. In recent years home grown practices have raised the game in achieving this coveted prize and raising the profile of architects, designers and projects of the highest quality throughout Wales. The awards contribute significantly to the development of talent in Wales and to our national and international profile as a creative nation. Plans are underway for the August 2017 Festival to be held on Anglesey Ynys Môn.

## Stakeholder and partner events and media

In addition to its own programme, guest presentations or keynotes were made by the DCFW team at 22 national events enhancing our profile and effectiveness as strong advocates of the value of good design across sectors. Such events seminars and publications are not attached to Welsh Government targets. They form part of the Commission's wider activity which responds to its strategic aims and priorities.

The Commission continues to provide financial grant and in kind support to partners including the RTPI Cymru Annual Planning Conference, the RSAW Spring School and Autumn Conference and the Wales Festival of Architecture. In 2016 we also supported the RTPI Wales Best Places award and collaborated with Constructing Excellence, RSAW, RTPI and to build upon the jointly delivered national inclusive design training for local authorities across Wales, in support of the Framework for Action on independent living.

In March 2016 the Design Commission collaborated with the Planning Inspectorate (PINS) providing key notes and training workshops for 300 Inspectors at their Annual Training event.



Training workshop for 300 members of the Planning Inspectorate (PINS).



Chair Gayna Jones, with Hall & Bednarczyk Architects winners of the Eisteddfod Gold Medal for Architecture 2016 for Dwr Cymru Welsh Water Centre, Llanegfedd Reservoir.



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## Media list

A snapshot of the widespread media coverage achieved in 2016-17 is shown below:

- National Eisteddfod Gold Medal for Architecture
- National Eisteddfod Architecture Scholarship
- Wales Online and the Western Mail
- Architects Journal; Building Design Online
- BBC Wales Radio Wales
- BBC Cymru Wales TV Wales Report
- South Wales Evening Post
- Cynllunio
- The Planner



Media extracts



Getting things done, Exhibition and symposium March 2016.



DCFW with the RSA launch Student Design Awards 2016

## Priorities, Budget and Activity Plan 2017-18

Our performance in the previous year demonstrate the extent of our reach and the role we play in stimulating greater awareness and inspiring better design, enhancing Wales' reputation for good place-making and well designed buildings and spaces that support cohesive communities.

Throughout Wales, awareness of the benefits of good design, design practice for innovation, for business and for a well designed built environment which enhances quality of life has risen exponentially. Everyday quality, housing, town centres, urban intensification and inclusive design, remain key concerns and it is clear to us that in Wales we must, along with others, work harder to achieve greater excellence in the everyday and to instill good local authority practice throughout the country. Our activities and priorities for 2016-17, reflect this.

In previous years we have been able to identify a more active design community, stronger partnerships between the Commission and professions through close collaboration with the Royal Town Planning Institute Cymru (RTPI Cymru), the Landscape Institute Wales and the Royal Society of Architects in Wales and others. Alongside this we note a flourishing circle of design activists, our expanding HATCH network and an increase in award winning architecture and the profile of Welsh design practice. We continue to experience high demand for services and we are encouraged by last year's achievements. However, we continue to be alert to complacency.

We remain deeply concerned about the quality of everyday homes and places and will continue to scrutinize housing quality and promote the Building for Life 12 Standard for good residential urban design, supported by the requirements of national planning and design policy for sustainable neighborhoods and places.

Our town and city centres, public spaces, transport infrastructure, utilities and amenities must demonstrate excellence. This is particularly true of publicly funded regeneration and infrastructure projects; these must be both efficient and beautiful if we are to develop the energy and climate resilience we need now and for future generations.

The Commission wishes to see better designed schools and healthcare, built to last and better able to serve children and communities throughout the nation. Capital financial cost is on balance no greater for a good building than a poor one. The costs of poor design though are multiplied in the negative impact on attainment, health and recovery, well-being and safety. It is the well-being of our communities and the public purse that will ultimately inherit the costs of poor design.



Young Planners on their Jane Jacobs Walk drying off at DCFW HQ and hearing from Neil Sinclair



Public spending remains constrained with investment only tentatively returning to locations of significant critical mass. Design practices are important employers and business and are vital for design-led innovation. Such practices need scale and ambition in projects which aspire to the highest quality so that their profile at home and abroad can be strengthened. The wider picture of planning, public services and prudent public sector investment are significant considerations, which even in straightened times, present key opportunities.

All the Commission's services are integrated and aligned to our vision for a Wales that is a better place. Against this backdrop, through our company Objects & Powers, our Welsh Government framework, our partnerships and services – Design Review, Training & Client Support, Learning Events and Seminars – we continue to pursue our strategic priorities:

- Promoting better homes and neighbourhoods for sustainable places
- Nurturing talent and highlighting its importance for growth and innovation.
- Inspiring creative landscapes for a better legacy.

**Figure 13**

Services informed by our learning and expertise are aligned to our strategic priorities and vision.



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These strategic priorities form the foundation of our activities. We remain committed to public facing activities and services, to promoting resources which help others to understand the importance of good design quality and play their part in the means of achieving it.

We will continue to support and work alongside the Welsh Government in promoting design excellence, implementing the positive planning agenda, through national policy and the opportunity presented in the National Development Framework; through new national programmes, the application of new Design & Access guidance and by harnessing the power of design in the planning process. Our activity plan shows specific detail of our activity in the coming year aligned with our remit letter and its requirements (Figure 16).

We will continue to harness the greater potential of promoting good design throughout our wider public exhibitions and events programme. We will galvanize our networks and better communicate the story of good design. We will underpin all our activities with expert and strategic design advice.

In this context, and in response to Welsh Government requirements of our remit and framework agreement and to our service demand, the Commission has set out its budget and activity plan for the period 1 April 2017 – 31 March 2018.

Wales cannot afford to slip back and risk relinquishing hard won competitive advantage derived from a better quality built environment. It must combine this advantage to greater effect with the ambition of its Future Generations Act and its aspiration for a visionary, valued and valuable planning system.

The Commission therefore continues to guard against complacency, to champion good design to find ways to capture its value, despite our own small resources and the increasing pressure placed upon them.

The national Design Review Service, training and strategic engagement programme will continue to underpin all our work and help us learn from the realities of development, decision making and design practice. Through this service and early consultation services for major projects DNS and NSIPS, we continue to work with decision makers, project teams and LPAs throughout Wales.

All activity will be monitored and reported on a regular basis as required in DCFW's own processes, through its Board of Directors, and through regular meetings with and reporting mechanisms of the Welsh Government.

## Budget 1 April 2017 – 31 March 2018

The financial data here shows all overheads for this financial year. Our Activity Plan is shown over the financial year, using a colour key which shows all our activities.

**Fig 14:**

Annual budget: Welsh Government funding

### DCFW BUDGET ALLOCATION 2017/18

Office space	£49,000.00
Assets/Equipment	£2,050.00
Staff costs	£230,000.00
Admin Support	£4,000.00
Stationery, Publications, website & subscriptions	£2,700.00
Professional fees (audit, legal & accountancy)	£11,000.00
Travel & Expenses	£6,000.00
Design Review	£6,000.00
3rd Party Grant Assistance	£10,500.00
Translation	£5,000.00
Miscellaneous	£1,500.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>£327,750.00</b>

**Fig 15:**

Annual budget breakdown of operational costs

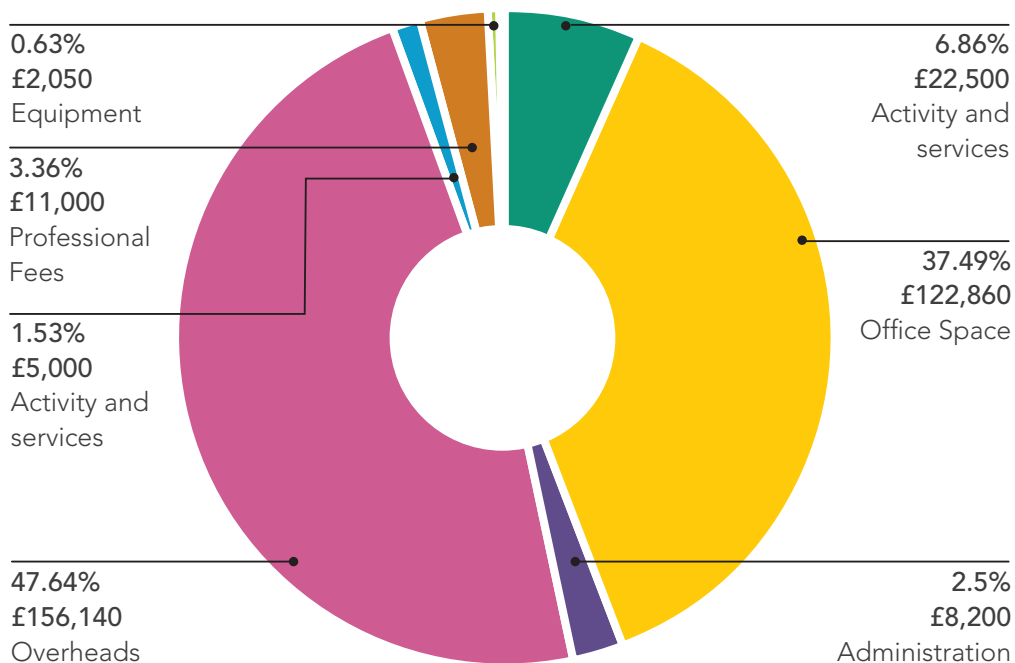


Fig 16: Activity Plan 2017-18

Calendar of Activities 1 April 2017 - 31 March 2018																																						
	S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	
APR							1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30		
MAY		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31						
JUN					1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30				
JUL						1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31		
AUG			1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31					
SEP						1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30			
OCT	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31							
NOV				1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30					
DEC						1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31		
JAN		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31						
FEB					1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28						
MAR					1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31			

Activity key

- Bank holidays
- Design Review Service meetings
- Board meetings
- Training programme design
- DCFW seminars 2017
- DCFW conference 2017
- Training Programme Applications
- Training Programme Cohort Selection
- National Eisteddfod
- 123 School holidays
- Training Feedback and review - 1 day
- DCFW - Alumni network development
- HATCH events/meetings
- NDF Events
- DCFW Development Day

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We will deliver our activities and core services, as detailed in this plan, at all times responding to our Objects & Powers, our strategic aims and the Welsh Government requirements and Programme, and to meet the needs of our stakeholders including:

- The Public
- Welsh Government and our Sponsor Division
- Commissioning bodies, clients and local authorities
- Professional institutions
- Academic and cultural partners
- Stakeholders across sectors

We value our partners and continue to work with them, recognising that we cannot achieve all of our objectives alone. We will continue to work with our partners in the professional bodies and our wider stakeholders whilst we respond to the following Welsh Government targets and quarterly reporting requirements including the provision of data regarding:

- Number and value of schemes through the National Design Review Service
- Geographical spread/by LPA and location of activities
- Number and nature of LPA training sessions delivered or planned
- Other activity linked to agreed corporate and strategic items, as set out in this plan.

The Design Commission for Wales delivered its programme for 2016-17 exceeding targets set by Welsh Government in all areas specific to its remit and strategic aims.

We will deliver our activities and services in 2017-18 to the extent that our resources allow and will maximise the impact of those resources through service and cost efficiency at every level.

We will maintain strict financial controls and monitor budgets throughout and maintain our unqualified audit opinion status on all financial controls and reports. We will seek all opportunities to increase our capacity to attract non-treasury income where it is complementary to our remit.

Our activities will be delivered in line with our strategic aims and our annual remit letter agreed with the Welsh Government. In all service areas we will meet or exceed Welsh Government targets and maintain the high quality of our services across Wales, to promote the value of good design across sectors and help make Wales a better place.



Share your  
passion for  
design.

WG  
Can you make  
DCFW design  
Review compulsory?

There are  
amazing &  
talented  
people in  
Wales / South West  
→ let's celebrate  
this!!!

Public feedback from Places for Life Conference 2016





DESIGN  
COMMISSION  
FOR WALES  
COMISIWN  
DYLUNIO  
CYMRU