



DESIGN
COMMISSION
FOR WALES
COMISIWN
DYLUNIO
CYMRU

Annual Report

2019/20 & 2020/21

1 April 2019 – 31 March 2021

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Highlights

- We better understand our strengths and where best to use them to greatest effect
- Our prioritisation of core business, based on our understanding of our context and set out in our annual planning documents continues to be a key strength at the heart of our operational resilience
- Our non-treasury income generation increased as a result of our prioritisation during 2019/20 although this reduced in 2020/21 due to the Coronavirus Covid-19 pandemic
- Large scale, ambitious projects and relationships present major opportunities for positive, systemic change and impact through design and place-making
- A broadly renewed focus on outcomes that represent public value has further strengthened our collaboration with influencers and decision makers across national and local government has resulted in an increase in our client support programme
- Improved communications and investment in the Welsh language; using our research, analysis and expertise to improve profile and awareness with bilingual content. This is strengthening our work with Government bodies including Transport for Wales, Treasury, Schools and the Innovative Housing Programme.

Key achievements

| Core activity | 2019/2020 | 2020/2021 |
|--|-----------|-----------|
| Design Review Days | 21 | 22 |
| Schemes reviewed | 75 | 63 |
| Additional written consultation | 7 | 6 |
| Professional Development/Client Support/Training | 4* | 12 |
| Events and seminars delivered | 24 | 0* |
| Built environment attendees | 571 | 250 |

*Denotes workstreams affected by cancellations from March 2020

| 2019/20 budget | | 2020/21 budget | |
|-----------------|-------------|-----------------|-------------|
| Revenue | £360,000.00 | Revenue | £360,000.00 |
| In-kind support | £82,862.00 | In-kind support | £82,325.00 |

Design matters because it is a process for:

- Creative problem solving, ingenuity and innovation
- Nurturing skills, using talent
- Adding value
- Enhancing quality of life
- Getting things right



Customer experience
User experience



Social value
Beyond users to wider community



Placemaking
Identity of place and wider context



Capital Cost
Investment up to bringing projects into operation



Whole Life Cost
Maintenance and operation



Environmental
Carbon footprint and sustainability

Foreword from the Chair



It is my privilege, as Chair of the Design Commission For Wales, to introduce our Annual Report for the two years from 1st April 2019 through to 31st March 2021.

We are placing the report on record in the context of the impact of the Covid-19 global pandemic and associated wide-ranging public health measures. We are grateful to the Welsh Government for providing guidance to allow for the impact of delay to be considered in reporting functions and submission of annual reports hence this report covers 2019/20 and 2020/21.

The Commission's awareness of the increasing health and well-being risks to its team and operations meant that it took action to close its office premises with effect from 16th March 2020. All key services moved on-line and the Commission staff team have since been operating from their homes.

In this context we appreciate even more our close and constructive working relationship with the Welsh Government. This facilitates the work of the Commission as we respond to the framework they set us. It also supports us to ensure we pursue our company objectives and, as Directors of a limited company, to execute our responsibilities in governance and strategic direction.

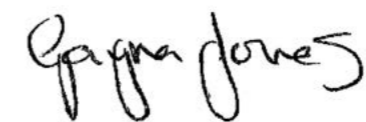
The Commission continues to pursue its core purpose to promote good design across all sectors in support of sustainable development and good place-making. We have had a very busy year overall and continue to play a substantial role in several nationally strategic initiatives such as support for a place-led planning policy agenda, which identifies the critical role of good design in sound place-making, and in addressing the objectives of the Well-being of Future Generations Act.

This continuing work, major projects and our strategic relationships are noted in our Framework Letter and Funding Agreement for 2020-21 and we look forward to embracing the forthcoming term of government arrangements. We will use all these opportunities to further promote the value of good design and place making in Wales.

I especially want to thank Julie James MS Minister Housing and Local Government for her support and enthusiasm for our work. We have quickly developed a very constructive relationship which we value highly. We have a positive and robust relationship with our Partner Team in the Welsh Government Planning Directorate and appreciate their help, funding, constructive scrutiny and collaboration. More recently this has also been extended to the Economic Infrastructure team and through our work with Transport for Wales.

I am grateful to my fellow Commissioners, who give their time freely and generously. We express our thanks to Trevor Skempton who stepped down in 2020 after three full terms and an extraordinary contribution to the Commission. Ewan Jones and Philip Jardine also reached the end of their terms in March 2021. We thank them both for the significant contribution that they have made as Board members of the Commission.

We are fortunate to have an excellent staff team, the contribution of private sector design professionals through the Design Review Panel and the contributions of many partners and professional bodies. 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
31st March 2021

Overview from the Chief Executive



My sincere thanks to our Chair, the Board of Directors, our team of staff and the advisors with whom I have the pleasure to work. They make possible the scope and reach we extend, throughout Wales. We continue to value our relationship with the Welsh Government Ministers, officials and partners in the Planning Directorate with whom we collaborate to help make Wales a better place.

This report looks back at our performance over the last two years from 1 April 2019 to 31 March 2021. It also includes a new term of government framework, that became effective from 1st April 2020, allowing for a year of transition to the next full term of Government.

The activities outlined in this report are informed by service users and stakeholders across the design, planning and development sectors and by our understanding of our resources and operating environment. Our activities directly address the requirements of our Welsh Government Funding and Framework letter, in the context of our company Objects and Powers. They are aligned to our commitment to promoting design excellence for enhanced, high quality environments throughout Wales.

As we record our performance in the past two years, we look ahead drawing on strategic analysis that examines our operating environment, resources and knowledge of the multi-sector factors that influence and shape the built environment. We consider external, public and private sector influences, policy and legislation as well as rapidly changing workforce patterns, skills and expectations. This informs our approach to opportunities such as nationally strategic projects of scale and the importance of place-making that responds positively to the Well-Being of Future Generations Act, now fully integrated with Planning Policy Wales 10. In examining influences in our wider operating sphere, we remain committed to raising awareness of the role good design plays in climate responsiveness, resource efficiency and decarbonisation.

Large scale, long term opportunities continue to be apparent in Wales particularly in transport, wider connectivity, energy and other economic infrastructure. We continue to help identify and secure opportunities to embed design quality and place-making for positive, long-term public good. The increase in demand for our client support programme means we can make more of our expertise available to help commissioning bodies, particularly in the public sector, become better informed, better placed and better equipped clients. Our practical experience and knowledge of trends across sectors and of barriers to effective

place-making and high-quality design outcomes, means that we can add value at the earliest stages, helping to reduce cost and risk whilst also maximising the potential for long term public value. Our expertise means we are realistic about the challenges and that across the piece, skills and culture change remain the greatest barriers.

The Covid-19 pandemic has shone a blistering spotlight on just how important the quality of our environment really is. We will be living with the impact of the virus indefinitely. Restrictions may continue to ease but things will change – some permanently.

We have known for centuries what it takes to design places that prioritise people. However, the harsh, virus-powered spotlight has illuminated just how far away from this we have moved in recent decades. It reminds us that these are our homes, schools and healthcare; our places and our neighbourhoods. They are more than 'property'. We are reminded that good urban design and architecture for places that are well connected, distinctive, able to encourage cohesion and provide homes that contribute to healthy communities are needed more than ever. Without these people cannot thrive.

In this context demand for our advice and input is high. The accelerated pace of change triggered by the circumstances of the pandemic brings innovation as well as challenge. Now more than ever we need greater involvement and engagement for our town centres, our approach to homes, neighbourhoods and green spaces. We continue to advocate strongly for the achievement of better outcomes and greater long-term public value from significant public investments now and for future generations.

We look forward to further collaboration with the Welsh Government, our partners, colleagues and stakeholders, across sectors and professions. We will continue to galvanize ever greater support for the collective responsibility we all share to help promote well-designed, healthy and sustainable places everywhere, for everyone.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Carole-Anne Davies'.

Carole-Anne Davies
Chief Executive
31st March 2021

About us

The Design Commission for Wales promotes good design for a Wales that is simply a better place.

The Commission is a private 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. We receive funds from the Welsh Government to carry out activities in pursuit of the Objects of the Company as set out in its Memorandum of Association.

The Commission promotes the importance of good design using three distinct but related services:

Client support and training

We focus on long-term, strategic items, place-making and securing design quality through the planning process, helping clients to raise their aspiration and support their ambition; identify their requirements and clearly communicate them, develop the brief and secure high quality, integrated design teams.

National Design Review Service

We encourage early consultation on proposals throughout Wales, adding value by providing long term, strategic design advice, expert resources, support and constructive challenge.

Events, publications and networks

We help explore relevant issues, raise awareness, stimulate collaboration, and wider debate and communicate the benefits of good design.

Our Objects

Our company Objects as the Design Commission for Wales 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.

Our approach

We involve colleagues in architecture, urban and landscape design, civil and structural engineering, planning and policy professionals who are involved in shaping the countryside, cities, towns, and villages of Wales.

We collaborate with stakeholders across professional membership bodies, local authorities, clients, and commissioning bodies, in planning, regeneration, energy and infrastructure, making our expertise available throughout Wales.

We promote good design and communicate its benefits, adding value and contributing to the conditions necessary for a better quality environment. It is this approach that supports well-being and quality of life for the people of Wales.

What we mean by good design

Good design is essential for good place-making, sustainable development, social inclusion and long-term public value. It maximises efficient use of land and other resources, contributes to a skilled workforce and delivers better environmental quality for an enhanced quality of life. A well-designed built environment gives people choices for travel and transport, provides ease of access to opportunities for healthcare, education and work, it is inclusive and easy for everyone to use, it is full of places that are pleasant and enjoyable to live in.

Good design:

- Simplifies complexity
- Makes places, products and buildings more attractive
- Focuses on ease of use, accessibility and inclusiveness
- Uses resources and energy efficiently
- Reduces risk, waste and cost due to error or unplanned change
- Adds value and enhances public good

Our values

Our values are openness, transparency, and mutual respect in a culture where knowledge is shared with all our stakeholders. Our values characterise the kind of organisation we strive to be. We nurture a positive, professional, and creative culture and work to continuously improve the efficiency and quality of our services.

The Design Commission is an expert organisation, where each team member is valued and can thrive through creativity, competence and confidence. Professional and personal development and the enhancement of leadership capability enrich our team, strengthen our performance and the quality of the services we provide.

Our relationship with the Welsh Government

We work closely with our partners in the Welsh Government, reporting quarterly to them, and at our quarterly Board Meetings and in our financial year-end reports.

The Welsh Government targets for 2019-20 and 2020-2021:

- **22** Design Review Days including four days in North Wales (where demand requires)
- **Eight** Professional Development Sessions planned and delivered
- **350** Built Environment Professionals/Local Authority Members attending CPD/training/seminars/events

Performance against targets 2019/20:

- Design Review Days Achieved **21** Days
- Total schemes taken through core Review **75**, including **36** Innovative Housing Programme Specific Reviews with an additional **7** desktop responses.
- Professional Development/Client Support/Training Sessions delivered **4***
- Events and seminars **28**
- Built environment attendees **571**

*Denotes workstreams affected by cancellations in March 2020.

Operating with a reduced staff team of two full-time and one part-time in 2019-20, the Commission was unable to accommodate the human resources and direct costs for an extensive physical presence in North Wales in this period. This is the first time in our history we have been unable to meet this objective.

However, we provided written or electronic consultation and comment for significant proposals in Flintshire and Conwy North Wales and Pembrokeshire in West Wales. Moving all services online from March 2020 has also seen a significant increase in authorities and clients from all parts of Wales using our services.

Performance against targets 2020/21:

- Design Review Days Achieved **22** Days
- Total schemes taken through core Review **63** including **25** Innovative Housing Programme Specific Reviews and in addition to **6** written/desktop responses
- Professional Development/Client Support/Training Sessions delivered **12** with a total of **250** attendees
- Events and seminars **0***



Julie James MS, Minister for Housing and Local Government said:

“The Design Commission for Wales plays a crucial role in championing good design for our built environment. Now more than ever, we need to ensure that strategic placemaking delivers the best outcomes for future generations. The Commission can help to ensure that local development plans achieve this for the benefit of all.”

Design Review Days achieved (target: 22)

2019/20:
21
2020/21:
22

Attendees (target: 350)

2019/20:
571
2020/21:
250

Sessions delivered (target: 8)

2019/20:
4
2020/21:
12

Analysis

We regularly test our operating environment by carrying out strategic analysis. The findings of this define and inform our strategic scope, planning and operational activity.

Our analysis considered our organisational strengths, challenges, opportunities and trends, identifying external and internal influences on our strategic scope and operational capacity.

Our internal and external environments were again found to be far less predictable than at any time since the global financial and structural changes of 2008 – 2011 or during our most extreme internal challenges for the staff team and organisational relocation of 2013 and reduced human resources through 2018/19. Influences of a political, economic and environmental nature continue to increase in their complexity, coupled with a sense of urgency, particularly with regard to the changing climate and the use of finite natural resources. The impact of the Coronavirus Covid-19 pandemic could not have been foreseen by us. In this context we are, overall, content with performance looking back and with our ability to continue with frequent and high quality activities and services for the future. We nevertheless recognise continued risk.

Image 1: Preparing for Innovative Housing Programme Design Review at DCFW office 2019/20
Image 2 & 3: Placemaking Wales Partnership development and stakeholder workshops at DCFW 2019/20



Our risks

- The Covid-19 pandemic continues to challenge communities and organisations throughout the world. Travel restrictions and social distancing measures are having an impact on our ability to work face-to-face. Internal resource is under pressure as are our network of private sector volunteers who do their own business pressures may not have capacity to support the Design Commission at the same levels as we previously enjoyed.
- The UK's exit from the European Union/European Economic Area (EU/EEA) – its impact on business confidence, investment, development and the wider economy and the attendant uncertainty which continues to surround this constitutional change.
- Consequential impact of the above on a Wales/UK/pan-European workforce/labour in built environment sectors, procurement, and reciprocal recognition of professional qualifications in the design industries and the nature of new arrangements for business, workforces remain uncertain.
- A new 'term of Government' framework arrangement for the Commission has been secured but it signals changes yet to be fully understood and worked through with our partners in Welsh Government. Many of these changes are opportunities but they come at a time of unprecedented change and disruption, a Welsh Government election in 2021 and a new public appointments process for the Commission's board of directors.
- The impact of the integration of well-being and other legislation with Planning Policy Wales has so far been positive although it has increased workload and the scale of expectation placed on the Commission. The first report of the Future Generations Commissioner for Wales highlighted our effectiveness and made positive recommendations, but we have yet to see how these become manifest.
- Human resources remain finely balanced with a smaller, busier team and high demand. At the same time, we are faced with challenges in terms of retention and development of skills and continued strengthening of a diverse and inclusive workforce and succession structure.
- Online and remote working has major advantages in terms of reach and greater access to activities and services, however we continue to monitor its effect on the health and well-being of our team.

Our opportunities

- Changes in the Welsh Government, a new Minister with whom the Commission now works, the seventh in its lifetime, continue to have a positive impact, strengthening the relationship across the piece and with the First Minister, as well as the Permanent Secretary's department and the Assembly Commission.
- The impact of the integration of well-being and other legislation with Planning Policy Wales.
- Our involvement and strategic influence on Planning Policy Wales 10 and its place-making emphasis continues to be positive.
- The consolidation of large scale, long term, strategic infrastructure opportunities and emerging relationships and client support is increasingly positive and valued.
- Renewed Welsh Government recognition of the public value of design quality and good place-making and work by the Wales Audit Office better emphasises the value of good design.
- The climate emergency and decarbonisation agenda demands design excellence.
- The forthcoming appointment of four new Commissioners; bringing fresh ideas and new energy to the existing team.
- A strengthened capacity in a return to a full staff team, with strictly limited and specific consultancy support.
- The resolution of fixed budgetary and overhead cost related concerns.
- Increased awareness and action toward better diversity in our own work and in the sectors where we operate, providing a stronger sense of collective efforts toward removing barriers to equality of opportunity. Our role was highlighted in the Welsh Government launch of its Equalities & Diversity Strategy.
- A strengthened profile achieved through more proactive communication, well-attended events and projects.
- A closer, stronger, collaborative and constructive working relationship with the office of the Future Generations Commissioner for Wales.

Looking forward

Whilst we continue to note significant uncertainties in our operating context, we are able to sustain high quality services and identify opportunities for the future. As a result of our analysis we are better equipped to examine our performance in the previous two years and make informed decisions for the year ahead.

We have been fortunate to be able to hold detailed conversations with partners in our sponsor directorate and have, in addition to effectively pursuing our company objectives, been able to:

- Positively resolve historic budget constraints and pressures, achieving no budget reduction this plan period.
- Address human resource constraints and return to a full team.
- Resource a fourth year of expert input into the £90m major investment accompanying the Innovative Housing Programme.
- Continue meaningful conversations and client support we began last year, with both Government and external multi-sector partners regarding opportunities for large scale, economic infrastructure.
- Secure a client-side relationship with national bodies including Transport for Wales, 21st Century Schools MIM, National Museum Wales.
- Collaborate with our Partners in the Directorate to lead the development and shape of a national place-making partnership, planning policy related projects and a new national Place Charter launched by the Minister in 2020.
- Invest in our communications with a new website, improved profile and a commitment to bilingual content.

Images: Masterplanning training and development workshops Flintshire 2019/20



Our performance

The Commission is reporting as part of our framework agreement with the Welsh Government. In considering this activity and performance it should be noted that:

- Our services are promoted and delivered throughout the whole of Wales, with an independent expert stance.
- We are not a membership organisation or professional body. We recognise the multi-disciplinary nature of the built environment and the breadth of design, planning and placemaking activity.
- We do not represent the interests of any single profession.
- We focus on the long-term public value than can be achieved through the creative problem solving which sits at the core of excellent design and development practice, underpinning sound place-making.

The Commission holds:

- A multi-disciplinary remit for the whole of the built environment in Wales.
- An expert, multi-disciplinary, multi-sector team delivering specialist services.
- A depth and breadth of knowledge, experience and relationships.
- The ability to attract and retain the commitment of skilled professionals.
- Capacity to stimulate and help sustain Wales-wide collaborative networks.

We provide advice on small scale day to day developments, residential and neighbourhood proposals, masterplans and development briefs; larger scale major developments and long-term national infrastructure projects, including transport, road, tidal, wind and other renewable energy projects.

We place written independent comment on the public record and promote good design through training and seminars, awareness raising and client support as well as through engagement via our national Design Review Service.

We use all our platforms to publish and share our learning, expertise and experience of live development practice contributing to debate and with a view to influencing positive change. Our experience means that we are well placed to help shape the opportunities for well-designed, well-located and timely development and to promote the value of good design for sustainable place-making.

Figure 1
Number of schemes reviewed

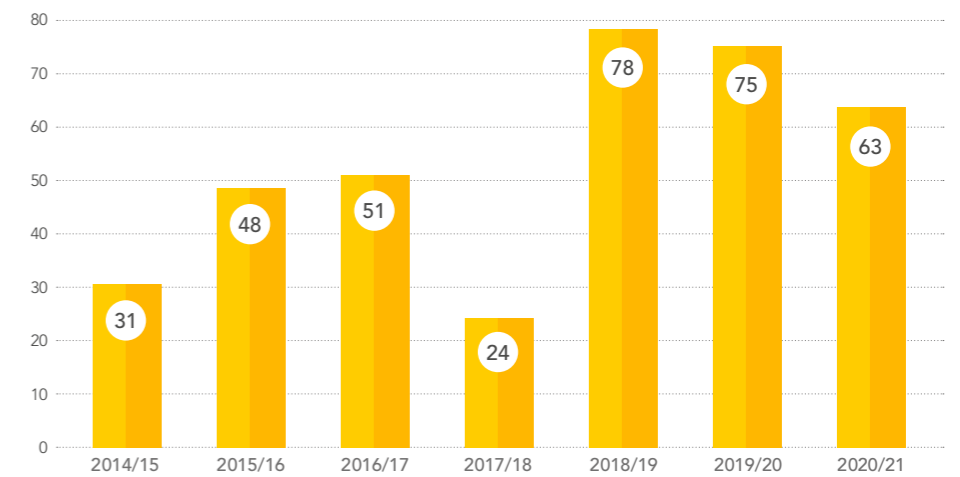


Figure 2
Comparison of schemes

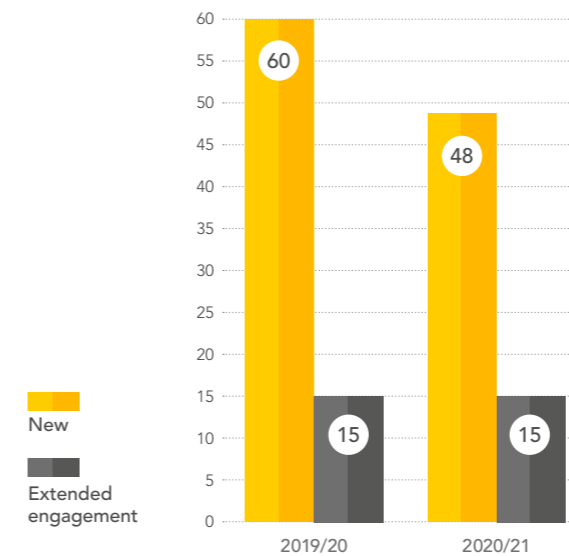
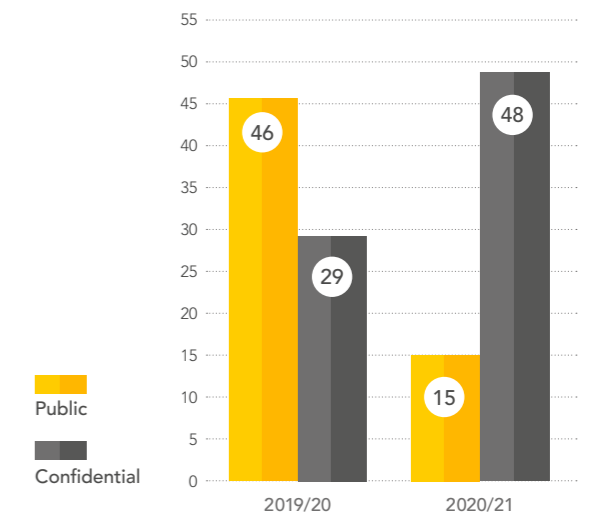


Figure 3
Status at time of consultation with DCFW



Emerging trends

The data shows an increase in early and sustained engagement through strategic review – a desirable trend which we have prioritised and promoted for several years. Early confidential consultation with the Commission in line with our promotion of the service, provides critical early opportunities to work strategically and add value.

We are still deeply concerned about the quality of new homes, their location and their full consideration and integration with place-making. We continue to champion the need for good housing quality and a place-led approach, supported by the requirements of national planning policy. Allied to this we know from experience in practice that perhaps the single most influential barrier to good design, place-making and connectivity is the impact of outdated highway design and advice and its role in local authority development and planning decision-making. We continue to challenge this and to support and advocate high quality, value adding design and innovation at every opportunity.

Key sectors

Healthcare and education remain sectors of the public estate that draw upon our services least. Whilst we have forged a new and meaningful relationship at national level with the 21st Century Schools MIM (Mutual Investment Model) revenue investment programme, and with some health authorities – these two areas of the largest public investment remain a key concern. We continue to try to address this and find ways to secure greater input into such a large area of public investment. Procurement processes, the limitations of investment requirements and the complexities of approaches to education projects present key challenges. Some tourism related projects do not yet benefit from a place-led approach or from the early input and support of the Commission. Their perceived economic benefit overwhelmingly outstrips matters of design quality and place-making, decarbonation and climate responsiveness.

Over recent years, we have observed a wide range of varying practice and professionalism in public sector and local authority decision making and have identified and shared persistent trends in barriers to good design and place-making.

Greater investment in officer and member training would assist quality of decision making in local authorities, particularly with a view to strengthening understanding and practical commitment to place-making. Far greater strategic skills and better practice are needed if Wales is to respond to the opportunities of place-led development planning at local and national level the Future Wales National Plan <https://gov.wales/future-wales-national-plan-2040> the formation of which the Commission contributed to in no small part.

We continue to emphasise the importance of the design process in achieving the wider public benefits of infrastructure and tourism strategies, local authority strategic partnerships and across capital and city regions. A further systemic opportunity lies in the application in practice of the requirements of the Well-being of Future Generations Act Wales. Its focus directly supports good placemaking and strategically aligns with the work of the Design Commission.

Perhaps predictably, use of our services is highest in the areas of greatest development concentration in Wales and this is reflected by local authority and by location, however the Welsh Government, national energy and transport infrastructure are pan-Wales. A combination of volume of development work varying year by year, available skills and the resources needed from the Commission are also factors. However, through technological or other means we have been able to extend reach and provide input and support in a cost effective and resource efficient manner. We are also able to welcome more of the smaller local authority areas drawing upon our services particularly where planning and regeneration resources are constrained.

Geographical spread – by Local Authority

| DR data per Local Authority | 2019/20 | 2020/21 |
|------------------------------|-----------|-----------|
| Blaenau Gwent CBC | 0 | 0 |
| Brecon Beacons NPA | 0 | 0 |
| Bridgend Council | 0 | 2 |
| Caerphilly CBC | 0 | 4 |
| Cardiff Council | 11 | 13 |
| Carmarthenshire Council | 4 | 0 |
| Ceredigion Council | 1 | 2 |
| Conwy Council | 2 | 1 |
| Denbighshire Council | 2 | 3 |
| Flintshire Council | 3 | 1 |
| Gwynedd Council | 3 | 1 |
| Ynys Môn/Anglesey Council | 3 | 2 |
| Monmouthshire Council | 2 | 1 |
| Merthyr Tydfil CBC | 1 | 0 |
| Neath Port Talbot CBC | 4 | 1 |
| Newport Council | 3 | 4 |
| Pembrokeshire County Council | 2 | 3 |
| Pembrokeshire Coast NPA | 2 | 2 |
| Powys Council | 2 | 2 |
| Rhondda Cynon Taf CBC | 5 | 3 |
| Snowdonia NPA | 1 | 1 |
| City & County of Swansea | 10 | 9 |
| Torfaen CBC | 2 | 3 |
| Vale of Glamorgan Council | 5 | 1 |
| Wrexham Council | 1 | 0 |
| Welsh Government | 6 | 4 |
| Total | 75 | 63 |

Engagement

Our engagement with multi-disciplinary built environment professionals through attendance at our workshops, seminars, and events consistently out-performed our targets until the Covid-19 pandemic restricted face-to-face events, workshops and seminars.

However, we continue to record delegate attendance figures and report on these at quarterly meetings, where we have devised, led or fully resourced an event, workshop or seminar. Where we lead a workshop in a partner event we record only the delegates at our particular session. When we are partners, we do not record delegate figures as our own.

2019/20

The Welsh Government target for engagement for this period was **350** multi-disciplinary professionals attending.

- The Design Commission devised, led or fully resourced **28** events in 2019/20, across a range of topics and audiences and with varying partners.
- The total number of delegates attending events in 2019/20 was **571**.



2020/21

The Welsh Government target for engagement for this period was **350** multi-disciplinary professionals attending.

- The Design Commission was unable to deliver more public or multi-sector face to face events in 2020/21 and so delegate numbers could not be recorded.
- However, we devised led and delivered **12** client, professional development and training seminars online, attended by a total of **250** delegates across disciplines and sectors.



Wider engagement and professional development

Since 2017 the Design Commission has opened its Design Review Service to observers for the purposes of Professional Development and Learning. A range of people have attended and recorded CPD hours and benefits. This is a unique service and members of the Planning Inspectorate, Public Health Wales, Local Authority Officers, clients, students and members of the public have taken advantage of the opportunity. In 2019-20 formal full day CPD observation opportunities were used by 13 professionals across a number of reviews. This excludes informal observers such as A Level work experience students and doctoral researchers. Due to the impact of Covid-19 our reach on this front was severely restricted and we were unable to accommodate observers for CPD. We aim to resume this in the coming year.

Further circumstances beyond our control such as the cancellation of the National Eisteddfod affected our support for the National Eisteddfod Gold Medal for Architecture – a small financial grant including the DCFW Architecture Scholarship for young talented designers from Wales and the exhibition associated with both awards. The festival was cancelled in 2020 and won't be going ahead in 2021, however we plan to continue our support in 2022.

Collaborating with and supporting clients

Work commissioned by Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council continued with client support from the Design Commission on the Crucible project and subsequent Cyfarthfa plan. Our design charette in October 2017 initiated the project and generated additional project income for our long term client support leading to the public launch of the Cyfarthfa Plan on 12th January 2021. This comes alongside support for considerations on strategic sites in Rhondda Cynon Taf, Bridgend regeneration and Flintshire strategic master-planning as well as the nationally significant projects arising from Metro and our work with Transport for Wales.

We also provided support to Cardiff University in 2019/20 before becoming involved with Velindre Hospital Trust in 2020. The Welsh School of Architecture formed part of our portfolio in 2020/21; a reflection of the breadth of our reach and our ability to help shape transformational projects across Wales.

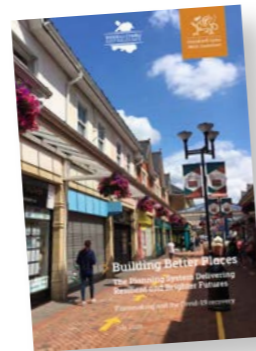
The Commission also continues to provide in-kind support to the Placemaking Wales Partnership which promotes the Placemaking Wales Charter and placemaking in practice. We collaborate with professional membership bodies including the RTPI Cymru and the RSAW through their spring and autumn conferences, the RSAW Wales Festival of Architecture and a range of events and seminars. The Commission is closely involved with the Landscape Institute nationally and in Wales, providing judging capacity and collaborating for a more diverse industry. Whilst financial awards cannot be made to these bodies, we remain committed to in-kind support and continued collaboration. A close working relationship has been established with the office of the Future Generations Commissioner for Wales.

Our impact

Take a look at some of our work over the last two years:

Building Better Places

In July 2020, we welcomed the publication of Welsh Government's publication of Building Better Places. With a commitment to good placemaking, the document sets-out the Welsh Government's planning policy priorities to assist in taking action toward recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic. Importantly, it details how the planning system can help deliver a more resilient and brighter future for Wales.



South East Wales Transport Commission

The South East Wales Transport Commission published its interim report in July 2020 on how to reduce congestion, aid connectivity and demonstrate the need to consider transport and land-use planning comprehensively.



Having designed and facilitated a collaborative Transit Orientated Development (ToD) charette in October 2019 we continue to work closely with the Welsh Government, the Cardiff Capital Region, local authorities and Transport for Wales to help ensure that future investment in placemaking is well coordinated and aligned with the promotion of active travel and public transport as critical elements for success.

Placemaking Charter

With the support of our partners we were delighted to launch the Placemaking Charter in September 2020. It was developed by the Design Commission for Wales working closely with the Welsh Government in collaboration with the Placemaking Wales Partnership – a multi-disciplinary group representing professions and organisations working within the built and natural environment.



The Charter builds on the focus on Placemaking in policy and practice in Wales and aims to provide a common understanding of the range of considerations that go into placemaking. The charter outlines six placemaking principles that cover the range of considerations that contribute to establishing and maintaining good places. The Design Commission also developed and published its Placemaking Guide in support of good practice and as a resource for practical placemaking.



The Cyfarthfa Plan

Plans to transform Merthyr Tydfil's Cyfarthfa Castle and environs into an international quality museum set in an expanded 100-hectare public park were approved unanimously by Merthyr Tydfil Council in November 2020. The Commission worked closely with the local authority to provide almost four years client support and project mentoring to bring the masterplan to fruition.

A formal launch of the 20-year Cyfarthfa Plan followed in January 2021, celebrating the work of the multi-disciplinary team that has been led by the internationally renowned Ian Ritchie Architects and supported by the Design Commission. A new company has now been formed – The Cyfarthfa Foundation - to take the scheme forward. This is currently seeking charitable status.



Places for Life 2

With the endorsement of Julie James MS and Hannah Blythyn MS, we published Places for Life 2 in January 2021. Featuring a series of articles from renowned architects, designers and built environment professionals, the publication is the second in a series that originate from our first conference held in 2016, the purpose of which was to address housing and the quality of the places we create to live.

Reimagined

Artists, architects and lovers of buildings and places were invited to contribute to a new forthcoming publication, with drawings that reimagine, reinvent or reinterpret the lives and stories of some of Wales' most beautiful, often forgotten structures. Submissions included an abstract of up to 400 words accompanied by two sample sketches that demonstrate how they can now be worked up to beautiful drawings for inclusion in a very special publication that will be launched later in 2021.



Meeting the needs of future generations

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, as an organisation we practice the five ways of working and respond to its seven goals, and consider that 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 and in support of the Act, its key themes, goals and five ways of working. We seek **long-term** public benefit, taking early action and providing advice to **prevent** problems arising, **integrating** our services across sectors and disciplines, and **collaborating** with our partners and stakeholders to promote greater participation and **involvement** in good design and place making through collaborative and systemic action.

By acting in this way and continuing to strengthen our co-production business model, we are also able to promote and support the seven well-being objectives 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 responsive Wales

The Commission routinely promotes good sustainable design; well-connected, well-designed, attractive, inclusive, and safe neighbourhoods that help support cohesive communities and sustainable places. Well-designed environments, transport systems, blue-green infrastructure, high performing buildings, well connected settlements, active town and streetscapes are all vital for climate responsiveness and de-carbonisation. They are distinctive, culturally rich places where people can thrive and prosper.

That's why we welcomed the publication of the first Future Generations Report 2020; championing effective planning, design and development of our places, systems and infrastructure to address long-term challenges and ensure well-being. We consistently promote the mainstreaming of sustainable development strategies for resource and energy efficiency and high performance in all projects to enhance added value. We work closely with the office of the Future Generations Commissioner for Wales making our expertise available in support of the legislative requirements and in pursuit of a Wales that is a better place.

Publicly funded regeneration and infrastructure projects, schools and healthcare must be efficient and of the highest quality, if we are to meet expectations now and for future generations. In these projects the costs of poor design are multiplied through the negative impact on attainment, health and recovery, well-being, and safety. The well-being and quality of life available to our communities in Wales that must be a priority and the public purse should not inherit the costs of poor design.

The Mutual Investment Model (MIM) procurement and joint ventures and other forms of Private Public Partnerships (PPP) are important means of delivering improved health and educational facilities. However, their capacity to deliver better design and improved construction quality and performance must be a key objective. This capacity must be strengthened and protected if public projects are to be sufficiently ambitious and to fully contribute to realisation of the aims of policy and legislation in Wales. In particular they must address the objectives of the Well-being of Future Generations Act and place-led policy. Assets which ultimately return to the public balance sheet must be of sufficiently high quality to capture public value in the long term.

Design practices are important employers and are vital for entrepreneurship, skills and innovation in the Welsh economy. Such talent needs scale, ambition and scope of projects which aspire to the highest quality so that their opportunities and profile at home and abroad can be strengthened. Design and planning policy along with well-being legislation in Wales is sufficiently ambitious and forward looking to create the conditions for high quality beautiful and enjoyable places. That aspiration and ambition needs the right skills and the best of our emerging design talent to deliver and ensure fitness for the future.

Images: Site visit day 16th April 2019 at Cyfarthfa for potential bidding teams for The Cyfarthfa Plan



The Cyfarthfa Plan – a case study

Background

As an industrial, political, and social icon of Welsh history, Merthyr Tydfil was synonymous with innovation in the late 18th and 19th centuries, transforming from a small hamlet into Wales' largest town with the creation of the world's largest centre of iron production.

Merthyr's story as the 'crucible of the industrial revolution' provides a springboard from which to address the challenges of the 21st century. Today's vision is one of transformation; working in harmony with nature to celebrate our heritage for the benefit of future generations.

Getting started – the *charette*

On 21st October 2017 at Cyfarthfa Castle, Merthyr Tydfil, the Design Commission for Wales, and the Welsh School of Architecture at Cardiff University convened for Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council, a multi-disciplinary team and broad range of stakeholders to scope the possibilities for transformation within the town and surrounding landscape.

This bold visioning exercise sought ways of making of Merthyr's heritage assets something greater than the sum of their parts, underlining their true international significance. The idea to approach the Council and offer this large-scale creative brainstorm grew from a conversation that was reflected in a letter written and signed by these three creative collaborators.

As an intense day of ideas generation, the *Charette* was devised, facilitated and delivered by the Design Commission for Wales. With the support of Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council, Merthyr Leisure Trust and Merthyr Heritage Trust, the event brought together over 60 creative minds including local people, architects, planners, heritage specialists, landscape architects and artists to help shape a vision for the future.

Of critical importance was how we engaged members of the community. From the outset, our approach was one of open and transparent involvement to ensure that everyone had the opportunity to contribute. This continued throughout the masterplanning work when the design team were appointed.

Together, we considered how Cyfarthfa Castle, its extended landscape and built heritage might become an international quality visitor destination and experience, better promoting its already palpable sense of place. We looked at the new ways in which these central assets could be connected to the town and beyond to catalyse regeneration and tourism, maximise impact and return real public benefit. The findings from the charette were highlighted four strategically integrated areas, published in *Crucible*, the report that emerged from the charette:



1. A cathedral for our industrial heritage
2. Weaving a connected landscape
3. Beyond Cyfarthfa – Beyond Merthyr
4. A year-round framework for events

The strategic appraisal

Following the *charette*, Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council accepted all the findings and recommendations of the *Crucible* report. The Design Commission continued to support the Council by writing the brief for a masterplan to be developed, based on the findings and for an appointment process to secure a multi-disciplinary design team to lead the masterplan process.

Following open tender, a multi-disciplinary team led by Ian Ritchie Architects were appointed in August 2019 to undertake a strategic appraisal of Cyfarthfa Park and its context within Merthyr Tydfil and the wider valleys region of South Wales as part of a masterplanning exercise. The Design Commission for Wales provided client support to Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council for the appointment process with design-led brief and tender guidance that attracted significant global interest.

A project working group with partners from the Design Commission for Wales, Merthyr Council and the project champion Geraint Talfan Davies was established to steer the strategic appraisal and tender process. This included the opportunity for bidders to ask questions and attend a site visit

where we were all present to take questions and walk the site before the formal tender process was completed and evaluated.

All bidding teams needed to include architects, engineers, cost consultants, landscape architects, business planners and public engagement specialists. Seven international teams were selected for interview by the Design Commission for Wales' expert panel over a two-day period.

The Commission's expert interview panel 'mirrored' the expertise that would be needed meaning that the interview panel had the same understanding and expert experience as the teams being interviewed. Officers of the Council from procurement and regeneration were also members of the interview panel.

Ian Ritchie Architects were confirmed as the successful bidders in August 2019, and they began a 12-month study. This was focussed on imagining ways to reinvigorate the historic assets within the Merthyr area and imagine outstanding complementary and contemporary ideas which would elevate the park and reenergise the area and the people's pride in their history, culture, and environment.

We are very pleased to have worked with the Ian Ritchie team and the people of Merthyr Tydfil to deliver a comprehensive study that provides a framework for a programme of transformation over the next 20 years; presenting a synthesis of the past, present and future through old and new physical interventions.



Developing the vision

The design team began the work of deepening the understanding of how ambitious, visionary and potentially transformational projects can be and how many have successfully been delivered internationally – many of them in former industrial centres like Merthyr Tydfil and the Cyfarthfa area. Several examples were published by the Design Commission to help support and inform this work.

By late autumn 2019 news filtered through of a respiratory virus circulating across the globe. By early 2020 Coronavirus Covid-19 was affecting all our working lives, but the Ian Ritchie team still delivered a significant programme of engagement that included large numbers of stakeholders, community groups and individuals. This included workshops and briefings to ensure that the consulting was as wide as possible – albeit that much had to be conducted online due to travel restrictions.

The team also continued to meet formally and informally with the Design Commission for Wales – with the same 'mirror' expert team, presenting findings and early thoughts at 'strategic design reviews' for each stage. These were a requirement of the original brief and were used to support Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council so that they could fully consider, understand, and scrutinise findings for each stage before they were 'signed off' and the next stage was embarked upon. These strategic reviews were also supplemented by regular contact between the Design Commission for Wales, the design team, and the working group. This meant that we stood firmly alongside the Council and brought our expertise to the project at every stage.

The Cyfarthfa Plan

The resulting work carried out by Ian Ritchie Architects is [the Cyfarthfa Plan](#) - a visionary plan and working document that sets out a route to transform Merthyr Tydfil's Cyfarthfa Castle into an international quality museum and visitor attraction, set in an expanded 100-hectare public park. It is expected to draw more than half a million visitors each year.



Unanimously approved by Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council in November 2020, the Cyfarthfa Plan was formally launched online on 12th January 2021 attended by more than 80 key stakeholders, supported by the Design Commission for Wales, and hosted by the Council.

The published report sets out a three-pronged plan for the castle and a 'Greater Cyfarthfa Park' that will celebrate Merthyr Tydfil's unique history and heritage, as a spur to social renewal along with a route to celebrate and heal the natural environment, providing a beautiful setting for recreation, education and scientific advance and an engine of creativity that embraces the whole community.

The Cyfarthfa Plan sets out a menu of more than 70 possible supporting projects split into 'must do', 'should do' and 'could do' categories. Among the key proposals are:

- Almost doubling the size of the current Cyfarthfa Park, extending it westwards to take in both sides of the river Taff, 'healing a wounded landscape'.
- Renovating Cyfarthfa Castle – home to the Crawshays, the famous 19th century ironmasters - and creating new exhibition galleries that will celebrate the industrial and social history of Merthyr Tydfil and Wales.

- Rescuing the 200-year-old Cyfarthfa furnaces west of the Taff, a scheduled ancient monument of world importance, but currently endangered.
- A new 'Iron Way' - a dramatic high-level walkway connecting the castle and the furnaces, to echo the 19th century aqueduct that spanned the valley.
- A new 'Glass Way' entrance through the park to the east the castle - incorporating two giant greenhouses – the largest is 50 metres in diameter - to echo the castle's vanished 19th century greenhouses.
- Developing the important Pandy Farm buildings opposite the entrance to the castle
- An eight-acre community growing space – that could also supply produce to new outlets at the castle – together with the creation of richly bio-diverse meadows.

The plan places a strong emphasis on education. It proposes a 'co-creation centre' at the castle to extend the castle's education and outreach programme, while also reserving a site at the confluence of the Taff and Taf Fechan rivers for a possible new environmental institute that could be linked to higher education.

Introducing The Cyfarthfa Foundation

The Cyfarthfa plan is a multi-layered strategic masterplan for the Cyfarthfa heritage area, Merthyr Tydfil and beyond, to be implemented over the next 25 years. It will build on the vision arising from the initial design Charrette held by the Design Commission for Wales in 2017.

A new special purpose vehicle has now been established to deliver the Cyfarthfa Plan. The Cyfarthfa Foundation, the new company soon to achieve charitable status is chaired by Geraint Talfan Davies with Councillor Geraint Thomas and Councillor Lisa Mytton as Directors along with Rowland Davies, formerly of Geldards and Helen Protheroe of the Royal College of Art – all founding Directors focussed on delivery of the plan.

The Welsh Government has awarded funding of £1.2 million to the foundation to progress the project to include:

- Continuing historic archive studies to assess what contribution information and materials held in them could make to presentation and interpretation of the proposed visitor attraction
- Engaging with local residents to ensure the site builds on the renewed focus on utilising green spaces and community venues to support healthy lifestyles and well-being to cement a bottom up, community led, long term approach to regeneration'
- Initiating urgent repairs to the historical assets of Cyfarthfa in line with all appropriate local authority, Cadw and Welsh Government policies and procedures
- Establishing a strong, diverse, and representative Foundation Board and core staff to realise the multi-faceted vision set out in the masterplan.

The Design Commission for Wales is delighted to be providing continued client support to the Cyfarthfa Foundation as it moves through the sequence of delivery of the Cyfarthfa Plan.

Resources and priorities

The Design Commission is fortunate to have the support of the Planning Directorate and to have received notification of the allocation of an annual revenue budget of £360,000 (1 April 2019-31 March 2020 and 1 April 2020 – 31 March 2021) addressing fixed overheads and operating costs. The financial data shown here includes all overheads for the period. Support from the Directorate has been critical to maintaining and enhancing operations. Consequently, we have been able to return to a full team and to address rental and service charge overheads as well as pension increases that are beyond our influence.

We have been able to marry our duty toward the company objects with the requirements of the framework agreement including promoting place-making, providing training and input into wider planning initiatives, placemaking and policy developments.

Balanced budget 2019-2020 and 2020-21

| DCFW Balanced budget for 2020/2022 | 2019/20 | 2020/21 |
|------------------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| Premises/office space | £57,700.00 | £64,100.00 |
| Assets/equipment | £2,550.00 | £2,050.00 |
| Employment costs | £247,400.00 | £248,300.00 |
| Administration | £5,950.00 | £6,900.00 |
| Publications/website | £6,500.00 | £10,200.00 |
| Professional fees | £16,150.00 | £2,000.00 |
| Expenses | £6,000.00 | £8,000.00 |
| Design Review Service | £8,000.00 | £6,000.00 |
| 3rd Party Grant Support | £5,000.00 | £5,000.00 |
| Miscellaneous expenses | £2,750.00 | £2,750.00 |
| Revenue project expenditure | £2,000.00 | £4,700.00 |
| | £360,000.00 | £360,000.00 |

Strategic objectives for 2021/22

Our performance demonstrates the extent of our reach, our partnerships and the value of multi-sector collaboration.

Our company Objects allow scope for the promotion of good design in any manner. Our remit letter and funding framework strengthen this scope and place further requirements for strategic projects and additional work to be carried out to meet the objectives and terms of the Welsh Government and national strategies. Bringing our knowledge of real, day to day practice to inform our priorities, we operate within these parameters.

Critical initiatives for Wales, carrying the most significant public investment also hold the greatest place-making opportunities. Our core service areas will therefore continue to be aligned and prioritised toward identifying, supporting and promoting design excellence for public value through sustainable place-making in the following areas and strategic initiatives:

- In **projects of strategic significance** including energy, transport, and development plan areas/sites. Connectivity, movement and transportation projects across Wales which are vital to harnessing economic and social value – our relationship with Transport for Wales is pivotal to this, as is the work responding to the findings of the SEWTC, the emerging transport strategy and our evidence to the NICFW.
- In support for opportunities that integrate good design and **a place-led approach to the public estate** in health and education as well as neighbourhoods and new settlements, particularly those with Welsh Government influence, ownership or investment.
- Where **forms of innovation** can be identified, supported and deployed at scale not least toward the decarbonisation agenda, in new housing and in wider regeneration projects and strategically important sites.
- Where good practice can help **rural communities** to benefit from distinctive, living landscapes that support social and cultural value where people can prosper.
- Where **good practice and resources** can be created, identified, shared and promoted in the interests of good design and place-making.
- Where **talent is nurtured** and can thrive.

Framework requirements

We have a new Welsh Government Framework and Remit letter for 2021-2025 that requires the Commission to prepare for increased upstream and delivery working. This is welcome and we look forward to receiving more detail and clarification of what this will mean for services and resources.

In the meantime, we will continue to deliver targeted, highly skilled and experienced input and invest in practice and industry research analysis capacity. This will help to inform strategic planning and placemaking skills as likely to be required by the Welsh Government in line with their focus on strategic placemaking.

Integration

We recognise the limitations of our resources and the need to integrate priorities with the demands of our company objects, our funding framework, commitment to collaboration and the need for non-treasury income generation. Nevertheless, having engaged positively with the Planning Directorate and achieved a positive budget outcome with their support, we believe this strategic approach best serves that integration.

We look forward to shaping our Term of Government plans and to developing the upstream strategic advisory services for local development planning. This is as noted by Julie James MS, by our partners in the Planning Directorate and as a result of the supportive statements in the first report of the Future Generations Commissioner for Wales.

Partnerships and networks

We remain committed to in-kind support and collaboration with an active design community, through stronger partnerships between the Commission and professions and close collaboration with the Royal Town Planning Institute Cymru (RTPI Cymru), the Landscape Institute Wales and the Royal Society of Architects in Wales (RSAW). We also continue to develop a flourishing circle of talented design activists through our expanding HATCH network. We continue to experience strong demand for services, and we are encouraged by last year's achievements.

We are committed to public facing activities and services, to promoting resources which help others to understand, engage and get involved in shaping the world around them.

We will continue to work alongside the Welsh Government in promoting design excellence and implementing the place-making agenda. We continue to galvanize our networks and strive to better communicate the benefits of good design, underpinning all our activities with expert and strategic design advice continuously learning from real-world practice examples.

Stakeholders

All our activities continue to be monitored and reported on a regular basis as required in our own processes, through our Board of Directors, and through regular meetings with and reporting mechanisms of the Welsh Government.

We will deliver our activities and core services, as detailed in this plan, always responding to our objectives our strategic aims and the Welsh Government requirements and Programme, and to meet the needs of our stakeholders including:

- The public
- The Welsh Government and our sponsor Directorate partners
- 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 collective responsibility and that we cannot achieve our vision alone. We will continue to work with our partners in the professional bodies and our wider stakeholders whilst we respond to Welsh Government targets and quarterly reporting requirements including the provision of data as required by our funding framework.

Resource and cost efficiency

The Design Commission for Wales delivered its programme for 2019/20 and 2020-21 in most areas meeting or exceeding targets set by the Welsh Government specific to its remit and in the context of the impact of the pandemic. We will deliver our activities via our three service areas in 2021/22 to the extent that our resources allow and will maximise the impact of those resources wherever possible and maintaining cost efficiency.

We will maintain strict financial controls upholding our sixteen-year track record of 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 Objects, remit, and vision.

Our activities will be delivered in line with our strategic aims, our framework and our 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.

Our Board

With a remit spanning the whole of the built environment in Wales, we are an expert, multi-disciplinary team.

We are not a membership organisation or professional body and we do not represent the interests of any single profession. Chaired by Gayna Jones, our Board consists in total of six Commissioners. In April 2021 we expect this to increase to eight. All are valuable Directors, providing additional resource and comprising committed, skilled, and enthusiastic individuals who are respected and well informed.



Gayna Jones

Gayna is a graduate of Aberystwyth University, with private, public and voluntary sector experience throughout her career. Starting in human resources in a Unilever company, she went on to work for Women's Aid, finally settling into a career in housing. After a decade as Chief Executive of a Housing Association, she established her own housing consultancy. Gayna has also served as a local authority councillor, was the first independent member appointed to the Regulatory Board for Wales, and was appointed a Commissioner on the Board of the Design Commission for Wales in 2010. Gayna is a fellow of the Chartered Institute of Housing (FCIH) and a Fellow of the Royal Society of Arts (FRSA).



Ian Carter

Ian is Group Director of Development and Asset Management at Cynon Taf Community Housing Group and leads their asset management, maintenance, planned investment and development functions. He is a chartered town planner and qualified urban designer, receiving his Honours degree in City & Regional Planning and Masters in Urban Design from Cardiff University. Ian worked in the private sector and subsequently in Newport City Council's Major Applications team as Principal Urban Designer, before joining Newport City Homes and leading their ambitious regeneration programme for the Pillgwenlly area of Newport. Ian has long experience of, and is a passionate advocate for the Commission and its Design Review Service.



Elinor Gray-Williams

Elinor is a Chartered Architect and RIBA Specialist Conservation Architect. She joined Donald Insall Associates in 2007 after completing the SPAB Lethaby and Plunket Scholarships. Elinor leads the Conwy office of the firm and is an experienced historic buildings architect with a strong commitment to Wales and its heritage. Elinor enjoys the challenges of designing new buildings and interventions within historic settings, and works creatively to maximise opportunities for sustainability.



Philip Jardine

Phil is a partner and Divisional Director of the Built Environment division, Blake Morgan. He has considerable experience of large-scale public and private development work, joint ventures, regeneration projects and property transactions particularly relating to the governmental, health and education sectors.



Ewan Jones

Ewan is a partner at Grimshaw extensively involved in their transport and civil engineering work, masterplanning and commercial projects. He works closely with major developers and leads the practice's London office building projects. Following completion of 25 Gresham Street, now Lloyds-TSB's head office, he gained planning consent for redevelopment of the former London Stock Exchange site and led design of The St. Botolph Building for Minerva. Ewan is also a co-Chair of DCFW's Design Review panel.



Fiona Nixon

Fiona is Head of Estates Projects at Swansea University. After graduating from the Welsh School of Architecture, she spent several years in private practice in Glasgow working primarily on research facilities for the HE Sector. She joined Swansea University in 1994. In her current role, she manages a complex programme of projects across the University estate. Fiona is a strong advocate of collaborative working across the construction industry, and has extensive experience of procuring and managing consultant and contractor frameworks.

Appendix 1

Governance Statement

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 always 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 are 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. They are correctly and appropriately addressed and listed on the DCFW website and other company information.

Appendix 2

Equalities, Welsh Language, and the Well-being of Future Generations Act

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 to achievement 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 was case studied by the Welsh Government's Fairer Futures Division as a model of good practice. Our recruitment processes and our approach to the board level Public Appointments, allow for familiarisation, shadowing, and training opportunities. We continue to find ways to enhance this approach. The case study can be found on our website: <https://dcfw.org/board-diversity-case-study-report/>

The Commission continues to pursue its commitment to greater inclusion, equality, and diversity. In our aim to reflect the reality of a diverse world, we continue to develop all aspects of governance and operations. We aim to promote opportunities through a range of platforms and underrepresented groups, providing appropriate induction, shadowing, training, and mentoring opportunities at all levels.

As we promote good design across sectors, we continue to seek well-designed buildings and places that are inclusive, accessible, and safe for everyone to use. Inclusivity is among the most powerful tools we have to help create good places and to draw upon the widest talent pool available to us.

Wales is a bilingual nation and we are keen to maximise 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, where resources allow. 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. We continue to enhance our approach in our day to day activities all our communication platforms wherever possible.

Appendix 3

Note on financial and human resources

All revenue 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 from the Commission and may outline additional and separately funded capital projects. All such projects are outlined in detailed scoping documents and agreed in advance by the Planning Directorate and administrated appropriately to facilitate project delivery.

The financial information presented in this plan, represents total income, including committed project funds, showing the budget position at the beginning of the financial year 1 April 2019 - 31 March 2020 and 1 April 2020 - 31 March 2021.

The additional contribution in-kind from private sector professionals from private practice is substantial at £165,187 or 23% of DCFW's annual turnover (Fig. A below).

This private sector commitment supports the unique business model of DCFW and significantly contributes to the underwriting 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.

The small core staff team is supported by additional capacity in the form of these private sector 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, community engagement, energy infrastructure including coastal and on/offshore wind, as well as engineering, planning and transport.

Industry experts serving as panellists are unpaid and appointed by competitive interview, 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, events, seminars and the delivery of expert design comment and client facing advisory work.

Panellists are unpaid for their contribution to Design Review services, receiving only reimbursements for expenses directly incurred during 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. This means our national strategic Design Review Service is available free of charge to all users, is of the highest quality and is now unique to Wales and in the UK.

The value of the regular and repeated commitment of the Design Review Panel members, largely drawn from the private sector, has been calculated and can be understood from Figure a) below. The value 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 panellists who contribute to the reviews on transport and energy as well as Developments of National Significance (DNS) and also Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects (NSIPS) decided by the Planning Inspectorate <https://infrastructure.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/projects/Wales/>. 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. Uniquely in the UK, it is also open for attendance for professional development and training purposes. The Commission's Design Review service has a reputation for quality, integrity, expertise and robustness.

Our risk assessments prioritise that reputation and its dependence on high standards and the ability to attract skilled Board members, staff and experienced, committed 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.

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.

Fig a.
Private Sector in kind support 2019-20.

| 2019/20 Date | Meeting | No of DRPM | Panellists | Total hours | Representative cost |
|--|-------------------------|------------|---------------------|-------------|---------------------|
| April | | | | | |
| 11 th | Design Review | 3 | CK/CJe/CJo | 15 | £1,200.00 |
| 25 th | IHP Design Review | 3 | JB/AW/KD | 21 | £1,925.00 |
| May | | | | | |
| 2 nd | IHP Design Review | 2 | TA/JY | 10 | £1,250.00 |
| 22 nd | IHP Design Review | 3 | AL/JH/RW | 18 | £2,100.00 |
| 30 th | IHP Design Review | 3 | JB/JA/MT | 18 | £2,100.00 |
| June | | | | | |
| 4 th | Mumbles workshop | 1 | AL | 8 | £1,200.00 |
| 9/10 th | Flintshire workshop | 1 | SR | 20 | £3,000.00 |
| 13 th | Design Review | 4 | TA/LS/SP/MK | 25.5 | £3,900.00 |
| 19 th | IHP Design Review | 3 | JVS/MA/CJ | 25.5 | £3,825.00 |
| 21 st | IHP Design Review | 3 | AL/CJe/SS | 25.5 | £3,825.00 |
| 26 th | IHP Design Review | 3 | SR/ER/AW | 25.5 | £2,112.00 |
| July | | | | | |
| 3 rd | IHP Design Review | 3 | JB/TA/JY | 22.5 | £2,625.00 |
| 5 th | IHP Design Review | 2 | LS/CJe | 15 | £2,250.00 |
| 11 th | Design Review | 6 | JVS/AW/JY/MGJ/SS/HK | 48 | £5,200.00 |
| August | | | | | |
| 6 th | Design Review | 4 | EJ/SR/MA/JA | 12 | £1,500.00 |
| 15 th | Design Review | 5 | KD/SS/RW/MGJ/AW | 35 | £3,675.00 |
| 22 nd | Redrow client support | 1 | MT | 8 | £1,200.00 |
| 28 th | Velindre workshop | 4 | TA/SR/MA/AS | 48 | £6,000.00 |
| September | | | | | |
| 19 th | Design Review | 6 | CK/AL/MK/AK/JL/NW | 54 | £5,600.00 |
| 27 th | WG Assembly workshop | 2 | SS/AS | 16 | £2,000.00 |
| October | | | | | |
| 17 th | Design Review | 5 | KD/SC/WM/JH/CJe | 40 | £4,200.00 |
| November | | | | | |
| 21 st | Design Review | 5 | KD/JB/AW/TA/RW | 40 | £4,200.00 |
| December | | | | | |
| 5 th | GHA Event | 1 | LS | 1 | £1,200.00 |
| 11 th | Cosmeston Farm workshop | 2 | TA/KD | 16 | £2,000.00 |
| 12 th | Design Review | 5 | KD/SR/SP/NW/JL | 33 | £3,575.00 |
| January | | | | | |
| 23 rd | Design Review | 4 | EJ/SS/MT/CJe | 16 | £2,400.00 |
| February | | | | | |
| 13 th | Design Review | 4 | KD/SP/BS/SS | 30 | £4,125.00 |
| March | | | | | |
| 19 th | Design Review | 4 | JVS/AK/MGJ/SS | 34 | £4,675.00 |
| Total = 23% of DCFW Annual Turnover | | | | | £82,862.00 |

Fig a.
Private Sector in kind support 2020-21

| 2020/21 Date | Meeting | No of DRPM | Panellists | Total hours | Representative cost |
|--|------------------------|------------|-------------------|-------------|---------------------|
| April | | | | | |
| 1 st | DR Chair's meeting | 5 | EJ/SR/CK/KD/JVS | 5 | £700.00 |
| 2 nd | Design Review | 3 | JVS/MGJ/SS | 27 | £3,375.00 |
| 22 nd | Valleys Hub meeting | 2 | SS/TA | 2 | £300.00 |
| 23 rd | Design Review | 6 | EJ/CJ/SS/NW/SP/KD | 54 | £5,400.00 |
| 30 th | Design Review | 2 | SR/CJ | 6 | £1,250.00 |
| May | | | | | |
| 14 th | Design Review | 4 | CK/MT/CJ/SS | 22 | £3,300.00 |
| 28 th | Design Review | 2 | EJ/SP | 8 | £2,100.00 |
| June | | | | | |
| 11 th | Design Review | 5 | EJ/TA/SP/JY/KD | 37.5 | £4,875.00 |
| July | | | | | |
| 16 th | Design Review | 5 | SR/EJ/CJ/SP/KD | 35 | £4,900.00 |
| 31 st | Design Review | 5 | CK/SP/SS/MT/KD | 30 | £4,200.00 |
| August | | | | | |
| 6 th | Design Review | 3 | AL/KD/JVS | 25.5 | £3,400.00 |
| September | | | | | |
| 2 nd | Academy of Urbanism | 1 | TA | 2.5 | £375.00 |
| 8 th | IHP Design Review | 3 | JVS/AW/SC | 27 | £2,700.00 |
| 15 th | IHP Desktop reviews | 3 | KD/SC/CJ | 45 | £4,500.00 |
| 16 th | IHP Design Review | 3 | AL/MA/TA | 28 | £4,050.00 |
| 17 th | Design Review | 4 | SS/T | 34 | £5,100.00 |
| 21 st | IHP Design Review | 2 | SR/MGJ | 18 | £2,025.00 |
| 22 nd | IHP Design Review | 3 | LS/JL/SS | 27 | £3,600.00 |
| 23 rd | IHP Design Review | 3 | CK/RW/AS | 27 | £3,150.00 |
| October | | | | | |
| 15 th | Velindre workshop | 4 | EJ/SR/AB/TA | 14 | £2,100.00 |
| 22 nd | Design Review | 3 | AL/AW/RW | 15 | £1,625.00 |
| 23 rd | Parc Llanhilid meeting | 1 | MT | 2 | £300.00 |
| November | | | | | |
| 11 th | Design Review | 2 | JVS/SS/EJ | 9.5 | £2,175.00 |
| 12 th | Design Review | 4 | KD/TA/MGJ/NW | 36 | £3,825.00 |
| 24 th | Velindre Hosp workshop | 4 | TA/EJ/SR/AB | 10 | £1,500.00 |
| December | | | | | |
| 10 th | Design Review | 3 | JVS/SS/LS | 24 | £3,600.00 |
| January | | | | | |
| 21 st | Design Review | 4 | EJ/TA/KD/SS | 32 | £4,400.00 |
| February | | | | | |
| 18 th | Design Review | 6 | SR/EJ/MA/AW/JL/NW | 36.5 | £4,750.00 |
| March | | | | | |
| 18 th | Design Review | 4 | AL/CJ/JH/KD | 22 | £3,500.00 |
| Total = 22.8% of DCFW Annual Turnover | | | | | £82,325.00 |

NB – Figure a) above accurate at time of writing and subject to change due to additional reviews scheduled before 31 March 2021.



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