



DESIGN  
COMMISSION  
FOR WALES  
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DYLUNIO  
CYMRU

28<sup>th</sup> November 2023

David Clubb  
% Planning Division  
Welsh Government  
Cathays Park  
Cardiff  
CF10 3NQ

Dear David,

Re: Climate Threat Call for Evidence

Thank you for contacting the Design Commission for Wales.

We wish to highlight the important role design can play, as a process of creative and technical innovation and problem solving, in tackling and mitigating the impacts of climate change.

Built environment practice and processes are directly responsible for some 25% of the UK's carbon footprint – this rises to 42% if we include surface transport (UKGBC, 2022); construction, demolition, and excavation work generates over 60% of total UK waste (UK Government, 2022). Materials and mineral extraction further deplete finite resources and alters environmental conditions significantly – the course of rivers, the stability of land forms, the quality of the air we breathe.

The causes and costs of avoidable construction error and wasted resources further contribute. Seven of the top ten – seventy percent – of root causes of avoidable error in construction occur in the design stages. Unnecessary waste, costly re-design and delay results in measured direct costs of avoidable error of 5% of project value, equating to some £5 billion per annum across the construction sector in the UK. When unmeasured and indirect costs are included the costs rises estimated between 10% and 25% of project cost or between £10-25 billion per annum across the sector<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup><https://getitright.co.uk/reports/strategy40/>  
4<sup>th</sup> Floor, Cambrian Buildings  
Sgwâr Mount Stuart  
Cardiff CF10 5FL

Alongside digital innovation, and faced with climate and nature emergencies, the scale of what the UK needs to design – and re-design – to achieve net-zero targets by 2050 is immense. To achieve such goals investment in design education, careers and a skilled workforce must be prioritised. Collaborating across the UK – Design Council, Design Commission for Wales, Architecture & Design Scotland, Northern Ireland Ministerial Advisory Group, RSA and many more – recently researched and published [Design Economy: People, Places and Economic Value<sup>2</sup>](#). Design industries in the UK also contribute £97.4bn in GVA to the UK economy with Wales seeing a contribution of £2billion in GVA.

Designers of many kinds bring value in many forms - shaping public spaces and services, creating good-quality homes and neighbourhoods, and playing critical roles in many disciplines, ensuring that our built environment, transport and energy infrastructure as a whole, can capture quality and wider public benefits. They represent a skilled design industry of huge economic value which is underutilised in the midst of a climate crisis that requires a complete rethink and redesign of how we address complex and combined threats.

We encourage the National Infrastructure Commission for Wales to work closely with us and recognise, as part of this call for evidence, the importance of good design and its role in responding to the climate threat.

As a small and final example in this submission we would also like to use this opportunity to highlight our new design guidance, [Designing for Renewable Energy in Wales](#), which promotes a design-led approach to renewable energy development and emphasises the importance of responding to the landscape as a guiding consideration.

We trust you find this submission help and we would be pleased to hear from you in due course.

Yours sincerely,



Carole-Anne Davies

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Ar gyfer ac ar ran y Bwrdd Cyfarwyddwyr - For and on behalf of the Board of Directors

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<sup>2</sup>[https://www.designcouncil.org.uk/fileadmin/uploads/dc/Documents/DC\\_DE\\_Eco\\_Value\\_Exec\\_Sum\\_digital.pdf](https://www.designcouncil.org.uk/fileadmin/uploads/dc/Documents/DC_DE_Eco_Value_Exec_Sum_digital.pdf)