



Gayna Jones, Chair
Design Commission for Wales (DCFW) LTD
4th Floor, Cambrian Buildings
Mount Stuart Square
Cardiff Bay
Cardiff
CF10 5FL

5th May 2023

Dear Gayna

Remit letter for the Design Commission for Wales - 1 April 2023 – 31 March 2024.

I am writing to set out the agreed objectives for the Design Commission for 2023-2024.

I would like to begin by thanking you and the team for your work over the past year. I note the activity that DCFW has undertaken to improve its workforce resilience and increase its capacity. This is an important undertaking in order for the organisation to take forward its ambitious work programme for the year ahead.

Strategic Objectives

The [Programme for Government 2021-2026](#) and the [Co-operation Agreement 2021](#) set out the Welsh Government's agenda for the current Senedd session, supported by its Well-being objectives. I would expect the work of DCFW, in pursuance of its objectives in championing the role of design in the built environment, to contribute to achieving the actions set out in these documents and any Government strategy documents that may supersede these during this 6th Senedd period 2021-2026.

DCFW makes an important contribution to the delivery of the Welsh Government's Programme through championing good design in our built environment, helping to make better places where people want to live and work. I would expect the DCFW to continue to support the delivery of sustainable development, the creation of sustainable communities and the tackling of climate change.

I would like DCFW to deliver the following strategic objectives between 1 April 2023 and 31 March 2024:

- Support the development and implementation of the policies of the Welsh Government including Planning Policy Wales, Technical Advice Notes and the national development framework – Future Wales: the National Plan 2040, insofar as they relate to placemaking, design and architecture;



- Promote the highest standards of development so as to support and promote inclusive design, sustainable development and climate resilience, in accordance with the Planning (Wales) Act, the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act and the Equalities Act.
- Continue to embed placemaking across the development sector through the implementation of the *Placemaking Wales Charter*. I expect DCFW to continue to play a facilitating role, in partnership with the Planning Directorate, in driving this work forward, particularly through regular engagement of Charter members. DCFW should consider how the partnership can be used to continue to promote placemaking, including incorporating the Partnership in its calendar of events. FW plays a pivotal role in the delivery of the Placemaking agenda across Wales supporting and advising local authorities to help ensure the principles of the Placemaking Charter are turned into practice at an operational level.

DCFW's enhanced advisory role to support Placemaking Plans being created using grant funding from the Transforming Towns programme is also recognised. Colleagues from our Regeneration Team are leading on this work and I understand you are liaising separately on this work.

The promotion of Active Travel and integrated transport is an important element of placemaking and the Welsh Government's wider planning and transport policies.

The Active Travel Board (ATB) was initially established to coordinate activity to support the effective implementation of the Active Travel (Wales) Act 2013 and is being reformed in 2023/24 with a greater emphasis on a challenge and scrutiny function. DCFW has agreed to take on the role of secretariat of the ATB, including supporting its chair, liaising with members and co-ordinating the outward-facing communications of the Board. A budget of up to £42,000 to cover this function is available to undertake this work. In addition, up to a further £10,000 has been set aside to cover other costs of the Board, including T&S and potentially loss of earnings payments for new independent members, as well as up to a further £10,000 for securing technical expertise as required to support the Board's scrutiny function.

In addition, we have identified DCFW as a potential organisation to support the Welsh Government's work to update Manual for Streets and/or develop a Wales-specific replacement guidance on planning, designing and delivering streets and highways. Further discussion on this project will be held this year which will include collaboration with other organisations working in this sector.

DCFW will also complete the publication of an updated version of "Designing Wind Farms in Wales" (October 2012). This new guidance *Designing for Renewable Energy in Wales* has been identified by the Minister for Climate Change as an important supplement to Future Wales policies 17 and 18, and the updated guidance will make an important contribution to their effective delivery. A budget of £20,000.00 for this financial year has been made available to you to support the final stages of this work.

In addition, it is important that DCFW continues to promote design excellence in the context of delivering 'strategic placemaking' whereby influence over site location and selection is considered at the most appropriate opportunity to maximise sustainable transport and design options. DCFW should use the next year to develop their service provision in this area, frontloading its offer to deliver strategic placemaking during the early preparatory and strategic site selection stages of local development plans.

Finally, this year will see a fresh Public Appointments process for a new Chair and 3 Commissioners to the DCFW Board. This process will need to be completed by April 2024. DCFW will be requested to provide assistance in identifying role specifications, promoting the opportunities available and supporting the recruitment process.

DCFW's targets for the 2023/24 period will remain as follows:

- 22 Design Review days including a minimum of 4 days in north Wales (where demand requires)
- 8 professional development sessions planned and delivered
- 350 built environment professionals / Local Authority members attending training / seminar events

Targets and performance measures for the Active Travel Board secretariat function will be agreed separately with the ATB Chair and WG transport officials

Performance against these targets and toward DCFW's company Objects alongside the items set out above will be reflected in your annual plan. The plan will be submitted by the end of September 2023.

Wellbeing of Future Generations Requirements

The Welsh Government requires all of its public bodies to work in line with the sustainable development principle (five ways of working) set out in the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act 2015.

You will be required to report to your partnership team how DCFW is using the five ways of working, how it is contributing to achieving the seven wellbeing goals, and how your approach is progressing year on year.

Funding

Confirmation of funding for the year 2023/24 is set out in the annual funding confirmation letter. Please note that this indicative funding could decrease or increase according to several factors, including:

- A change in Government priorities or ministerial portfolios
- Budget fluctuations
- Outcomes of Tailored Reviews, which each Public Body is required to participate in at a maximum 5-yearly interval. More information on Tailored Reviews can be found in your framework document.

Oversight Arrangements

I am responsible for heading up your Welsh Government partnership team and your normal point of contact within the team is Stuart Ingram. We will contact you shortly to arrange a meeting to discuss oversight and reporting arrangements which will continue to include quarterly activity reports and meetings. Welsh Government operates a risk-based approach to oversight, working with its public bodies to identify the appropriate level of oversight and monitoring for the individual organisation.

The partnership team will undertake periodic assessments of the risk assurance available to them and will also consider on an annual basis the need for a Tailored Review of the organisation.

This letter should be considered in conjunction with the Framework document and annual funding confirmation letter.

I look forward to working with you again this year.

Yours sincerely



Neil Hemington
Chief Planner
Deputy Director Planning Directorate
Welsh Government

On behalf of
Julie James MS
Minister for Climate Change
One of the Welsh Ministers