

# DESIGN FOR INNOVATION IN WALES: INDUSTRY, SERVICES & SOCIETY

## Manifesto

The world is changing faster than ever. And there are unprecedented crises – economic, social, health and environmental. As a creative and dynamic nation, we have the opportunity to be at the forefront of meeting those challenges in Wales.

But how?

**Through innovation driven by design.**

Design is a strategic discipline that can bring about positive and practical changes to our lives. By looking at things differently, design solves problems and transforms ideas into something tangible and viable. In the Council of the EU, innovation is recognised as the means to address a whole range of challenges: ‘The Council invites the Commission and Member States to give special attention to design considering its leverage effect on innovation performance, taking into account economic, social and environmental sustainability aspects and stresses the need to establish platforms for exchanging knowledge, experiences and best practices on design issues as a competitive advantage for European companies.’<sup>1</sup>

As this policy remit expands, design proves it can realise ideas and add value to all aspects of our society. If Wales is to embrace design, it is imperative to engage with this EU policy.

Design can convert social concerns into economic opportunities. This can be seen across our three areas of focus - industry, services and social innovation:

- In **industry**, design enables companies to develop competitive products and services that respond to consumer expectations and also promote a culture of sustainability and innovation. This is evident in Sir James Dyson’s ‘Ingenious Britain Report’, commissioned by the Conservatives, which makes proposals to boost British industry and technology.
- **Public services** can become sustainable through design by taking a user-centred approach, designing in better value, greater efficiency and accessibility.
- **Social innovation** is where a design process is applied to engage people in exploring local challenges. Design allows people to participate and implement solutions to improve social cohesion.

Design is already happening in Wales and accounts for the greatest proportion (22%) of Wales’s creative industries (this is mirrored in the UK economy too). The creative and cultural industries contribute £465M to the Welsh economy, of which 36% comes from design.<sup>2</sup>

But this does not go far enough. Despite such encouraging figures, businesses in Wales take limited advantage of design; only 17% use product and industrial design in their business.<sup>3</sup> In the public sector design is used mainly for communication; its strategic potential to develop efficient systems, services, products and process is ignored.

Many countries across the globe have embraced design at policy level. If our nation is to excel as a competitive economy, create user-centred products and services and embrace social innovation, the National Assembly and Welsh Assembly Government must act now to harness the power of design for innovation.

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<sup>1</sup> Conclusions on Creating an Innovative Europe. Council of the European Union, 26 May 2010, p. 4.  
[http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms\\_Data/docs/pressdata/en/intm/114637.pdf](http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_Data/docs/pressdata/en/intm/114637.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> Creative and Cultural Industries Economic and Demographic Footprint. Creative and Cultural Skills, 2008 (Available from:  
<http://www.ccskills.org.uk/Industrystrategies/Industryresearch/tabid/600/Default.aspx>)

<sup>3</sup> The Value of Design Factfinder Report. Design Council, 2007, p. 97

## Definitions

**DESIGN** 'Design is what links creativity and innovation. It shapes ideas to become practical and attractive propositions for users or customers. Design may be described as creativity deployed to a specific end.'

*Cox Review of Creativity in Business: Building on the UK's Strengths. HM Treasury, 2005, p. 2.*

**INNOVATION** 'The implementation of a new or significantly improved product (goods or service) or process, a new marketing method, or a new organisational method in business practices, workplace organisation or external relations.'

*Guidelines for Collecting and Interpreting Innovation Data (Oslo Manual), OECD, 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition, 2005.*

## Recommendations for Action

How can we secure the vision of a design-led Wales? Our tangible and realistic recommendations are as follows:

### **Immediate actions**

Encourage individual Assembly Members to form a cross-party group for design and innovation, in order to:

- Create a platform and bring together stakeholders
- Map design stakeholders across Wales.

### **The group's key responsibilities**

- Develop a vision of design in Wales
- Drive design into public procurement
- Ensure design is included in future innovation policies
- Co-ordinate an annual design summit.

### **Long-term goals**

- Engage the wider community with design
- Develop an export programme to sell Welsh design in Wales and abroad
- Realise the Welsh design sector's potential and raise their capability to address the skills gap
- Pilot design-led schemes in public services.

## OUR PETITION: Design for Innovation in Wales

We call upon the National Assembly for Wales to urge the Welsh Assembly Government to consider the potential significant role for design in future innovation, public service and social enterprise policies and programmes.

This is in the light of increased commitment to design programmes by other nations around the world and in preparation for a new Innovation Policy due to be published by the European Commission. This imminent new policy is likely to include a broader definition of innovation that embraces services in the public & private sectors and social enterprise on equal terms with traditional research and development (R&D).



### **Design Wales**

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Response from the Deputy Minister for Science, Innovation and Skills

**Lesley Griffiths AC/AM**

Dirprwy Weinidog dros Wyddoniaeth, Arloesi a Sgiliau.  
Deputy Minister for Science, Innovation and Skills



Llywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru  
Welsh Assembly Government

Eich cyf/Your ref:P-03-307  
Ein cyf/Our ref:LG/00405/10

Christine Chapman AM  
Chair - Petitions Committee  
National Assembly for Wales  
Cardiff Bay  
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7<sup>th</sup>

December 2010

*Dear Chris,*

Thank you for your letter of 10 November concerning petition P-03-307: Design for Innovation in Wales.

The Welsh Assembly Government and the National Assembly for Wales have recognised the importance of design in technology and innovation. The general direction outlined in Innovation Union, which is one of seven flagship initiatives designed to implement the Commission's Europe 2020 Strategy, is consistent with our objectives as set out in Economic Renewal: a new direction. Through this refocused policy direction we will continue to encourage and support businesses and academia in Wales to invest in research and development, innovation and design.

Our proposals to simplify access to EU research and innovation funding for Small and Medium-sized Enterprises fully recognise the importance design plays in innovation and remove barriers for entrepreneurs, all of which are consistent with our policy.

Additionally, we are involved in the pan-European INTERREG IVC Sharing Experience Europe design programme, a network that aims to integrate design into innovation policies at regional, national and European levels.

In line with Innovation Union, we are investing to improve links between academia and business with our Academic Expertise for Business Programme (A4B), which is being part-funded by the European Regional Development Fund. Through A4B we have provided funding for a three year knowledge transfer centre project for service design and innovation. This project extends the scope of the design support currently offered by our Business Innovation Team and is complimentary to the other A4B projects of the National Centre for Product Design and Development Research (PDR)/UWIC. It will provide a comprehensive support programme for industry through activities including promotional seminars, intensive workshops, one to one support and on-line resources.

Within public service innovation we look to encourage a broad range of techniques for innovation and we believe that design should be one of many considerations to be taken into account.

Since specific references to design have not been included in the Social Enterprise Action Plan or in other social enterprise policy documents, I have asked my social enterprise policy officials to contact Design Wales and arrange a meeting to discuss any suggestions they may have regarding the promotion of design in social enterprises.

Kuno Regards  
Lesley

**Lesley Griffiths AM/AC**  
**Dirprwy Weinidog dros Wyddoniaeth, Arloesi a Sgiliau.**  
**Deputy Minister for Science, Innovation and Skills**



Christine Chapman AM  
Chair, Petitions Committee  
Welsh Assembly Government  
Cardiff Bay  
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21<sup>st</sup> February 2011

**RE: P-03-307 Design for Innovation in Wales**

Dear Christine

In response to your letter of 14<sup>th</sup> January I can provide the following update.

In direct response to the petition we have been contacted by Welsh Assembly officials and have two meetings arranged in the very near future to discuss the role of design in economic and social development:

- 7<sup>th</sup> March – Neil Robins, Third Sector Unit, Communities Division, Welsh Assembly Government.
- 8<sup>th</sup> March – Lesley Griffiths, Deputy Minister for Science Innovation & Skills.

In addition we have been invited by Leighton Phillips to present to the Welsh Assembly Efficiency & Innovation Programme Board on 1<sup>st</sup> March to discuss a proposal for a European Commission funded project focussed on the use of design to help public services be more innovative/effective. If successful this project would also include training to help civil servants understand and manage design-led innovation projects related to public services.

Following on from the launch of our Manifesto: Design for innovation in Wales and the petition we have been in discussion with several Assembly Members keen to form a Cross-Party group to ensure that design remains on the political/policy agenda over the longer term (as highlighted within the latest European policy such as Europe 2020 & Innovation Union). We had hoped that it would be possible for a group to be established before the coming elections but it seems likely that this will only be achievable after May.

In your letter you have requested that we provide suggestions for how further action could be taken by the Welsh Assembly in relation to the effective use of design. With our on-going current discussions with various departments within the Welsh Assembly and our other commitments this will not be possible before April. I realise that this is difficult timing in relation to the elections and will gladly take your advice on whether it is best/possible to submit this to the Petitions Committee before or after the elections.

For us the petitions process has been very positive, helping us to engage with stakeholders in the design sector as well as start a dialogue with departments within the Welsh Assembly we had not previously contacted.

I would like to thank the Petitions Committee for its support to date and look forward to being able to update you on the meetings outlined above as well as providing further recommendations for the role of design in economic and social development.

Yours sincerely

Gavin Cawood  
Operations Director  
Design Wales  
PDR/UWIC