

Agenda – Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport, and International Relations Committee

Meeting Venue:

Committee Room 3, Senedd

Meeting date: 14 September 2023

Meeting time: 09.30 – 13.00

For further information contact:

Lleu Williams, Committee Clerk

0300 200 6565

SeneddCulture@senedd.wales

Pre-meeting registration

(09.15 – 09.30)

1 Introductions, apologies, substitutions and declarations of interest

(09.30)

2 Papers to note

(09.35)

During the summer recess, papers to note were published on a fortnightly basis. Papers to note for the meeting can be accessed via the link below:

- [Papers to note](#)

3 Motion under Standing Order 17.42 to resolve to exclude the public from items 4, 5, 7, 8, 9 and 10 of the meeting

(09.35)

4 Challenges facing the creative industry workforce in Wales: consideration of the draft report

(09.35 – 10.00)

(Pages 1 – 51)



Attached Documents:

- Briefing note: Challenges facing the creative industry workforce in Wales
- Draft report: Challenges facing the creative industry workforce in Wales

5 Wales–Ireland relations: consideration of the draft report

(10.00 – 10.25)

(Pages 52 – 99)

Attached Documents:

- Briefing note: Wales–Ireland relations
- Draft report: Wales–Ireland relations

Break

(10.25 – 10.30)

6 National contemporary art gallery: Ministerial evidence session

(10.30 – 11.30)

(Pages 100 – 173)

- Dawn Bowden MS, Deputy Minister for Arts, Sport and Tourism, Welsh Government
- Jason Thomas, Director Culture, Sport and Tourism, Welsh Government
- Ian Williams, Deputy Director Culture & Sport, Welsh Government
- Marcus Hill, Head of Capital Projects, Welsh Government

Attached Documents:

- Research brief and key issues paper: National contemporary art gallery
Evidence from the Deputy Minister for Arts, Sport and Tourism:
National contemporary art gallery
 - Annex 1: Considerations for an Anchor Site: National contemporary art gallery

- Response from Cardiff Council: National contemporary art gallery
- Response from the Cyfarthfa Foundation and Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council: National contemporary art gallery
- Response from Newport City Council: National contemporary art gallery
- Response from Swansea Council: National contemporary art gallery

Break

(11.30 – 11.35)

7 National contemporary art gallery: consideration of evidence

(11.35 – 12.00)

8 National contemporary art gallery: updates from inquiry engagement

(12.00 – 12.15)

(Pages 174 – 187)

Attached Documents:

- Engagement findings: National contemporary art gallery

9 National contemporary art gallery: consideration of key issues

(12.15 – 12.35)

10 Forward work programme

10.1 Public service broadcasting in Wales: consideration of the scoping paper

(12.35 – 12.45)

(Pages 188 – 190)

Attached Documents:

- Scoping paper: Public service broadcasting in Wales

10.2 Consideration of the forward work programme for autumn 2023

(12.45 – 13.00)

(Pages 191 – 195)

Attached Documents:

- Forward work programme: autumn 2023

Document is Restricted

Document is Restricted

Agenda Item 5

By virtue of paragraph(s) vii of Standing Order 17.42

Document is Restricted

By virtue of paragraph(s) vi of Standing Order 17.42

Document is Restricted

Agenda Item 6

By virtue of paragraph(s) vii of Standing Order 17.42

Document is Restricted

Ministerial Evidence submitted to support the Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport, and International Relations Committee inquiry on plans for the National Contemporary Art Gallery for Wales

Introduction

This paper provides evidence to inform the Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport, and International Relations Committee inquiry on plans for the National Contemporary Art Gallery for Wales. It provides evidence against the four key areas set out in the terms of reference for the inquiry by the committee.

1 Delivery of the Welsh Government's plans for a National Contemporary Art Gallery for Wales.

The model for the National Contemporary Art Gallery for Wales (NCAGW), consists of the following elements:

- a) A network of galleries across Wales providing free access to the national collection and bringing contemporary art closer to communities.
- b) Host galleries that currently host the national collection of Welsh art.
- c) An anchor gallery will provide a prominent public face for the national contemporary art gallery; and
- d) The development of a digital platform named Celf ar a Cyd, providing access to the digitised national collection available to everyone.

A phased approach is being taken to setting in place this model, working across the partner organisations and Welsh Government.

Although an initial report was produced considering the concept during 2008, the first feasibility study was completed in July 2018.

During the Covid 19 pandemic, much of this work was curtailed while the focus shifted to supporting the sectors through the period. Work focusing on the model then continued from 2020. A summary timeline is attached at Annex 1.

a) Gallery Network

This element of the model is led by a partnership between Arts Council of Wales, Amgueddfa Cymru - Museum Wales and The National Library of Wales with support from the Welsh Government. The three partners have been working with different venues which are being considered as part of a dispersed network of galleries across Wales.

An outline business case has been submitted for the gallery network. Over the coming months, activity will commence in up to nine galleries across Wales to ensure that the galleries meet the specific standards required to participate in the network.

Based on the exploratory work undertaken on behalf of the project partners by the Rural Office of Architecture, it is clear that different levels of investment are required in the galleries selected to participate in the network status based on the criteria required to meet GIS Standards. The approach to commencing delivery is phased allowing galleries to participate at different stages as they reach readiness, until the investment in them completes in March 2025.

Each of the galleries will be setting in place the work programmes required over coming months with much of this work subject to competitive procurement.

Nine venues across Wales have been shortlisted to be members of the network of galleries, these will be places where people can view the national collection closer to their homes. Each of the venues are now undergoing a more detailed assessment. These are:

- Aberystwyth Arts Centre, Aberystwyth
- Glynn Vivian Art Gallery, Swansea
- MOSTYN, Llandudno
- Newport Museum & Art Gallery, Newport
- Oriel Davies, Newtown
- Oriel Myrddin, Carmarthen
- Plas Glyn-y-Weddw, Pwllheli
- Ruthin Craft Centre, Ruthin
- STORIEL, Bangor

There is a potential to increase access geographically in the future, either through expanding this network or through the sharing digitised works for display in wider venues across Wales.

b) Host Galleries

Host galleries are those which either currently host, or plan to host the national collection, and are part of the current infrastructure in Wales. They include National Museum Cardiff, and potentially the National Slate Museum in Llanberis and the National Library of Wales in Aberystwyth.

Although these currently exist, they will continue to form an important part of the network and are the main source of the current national collection including contemporary art. Investment will continue in these institutions through the grant awards made to these sponsored bodies to support their delivery.

c) Anchor Gallery

The search for a suitable site for an anchor gallery commenced in July 2022 with Welsh Government issuing an invitation to submit expressions of interest being

issued to public sector estates managers in Wales. A total of 14 expressions of interest were received with five public sector organisations invited to develop a more detailed plan for the site being considered.

In February 2023, third sector organisations in Wales were also invited to submit expressions of interest and in total two were received. One of these has been invited to develop a more detailed plan.

Decisions relating to the assessment of the plans received will take place in early 2024 and if a site is selected for further development, it will commence development under the model for better business cases developed by Welsh Government and Treasury.

Until a preferred site is identified, it is not possible to identify the level of investment required to support the development, affordability, or operational models for any future anchor gallery.

The exact sites have not been disclosed in all cases due to some sensitivities with either the sites or issues with the future tenure of the properties being considered.

d) Digitisation of the national collection

Digitisation of the national collection commenced in 2020 and has now resulted in the June 2023 launch of digital resource platform Celf ar Y Cyd. Celf ar y Cyd is a core feature of the NCAGW with its development being led by Amgueddfa Cymru in partnership with Arts Council of Wales, and National Library of Wales. It is a digital platform open access to the nation's collection of contemporary art.

The website and its resources offer the opportunity to browse, learn and be inspired by the National Art Collection at Amgueddfa Cymru. At the point of its launch, over 30,000 works at Amgueddfa Cymru had been digitized and made available.

As the platform continues to develop, the National Library of Wales will also be incorporating its digitised collection. The resource offers the nine galleries across Wales the opportunity to request works to borrow, giving more people across Wales the chance to see the collection in their locality. The network of nine galleries will have the opportunity to contribute content to the website, that responds to, and reflects, the National Contemporary Art Collection at both Amgueddfa Cymru and the National Library of Wales

This is a first-of-its-kind project, developed and created following responses to a Wales-wide public consultation. With some works having never been seen on public display before, the project is breaking new ground in making Wales's national and contemporary art collection truly accessible to a global audience.

2 The merits of the dispersed model, building on existing assets proposed by the Welsh Government (8-10 regional sites, and an anchor hub).

a) Dispersed Network

The dispersed/distributed model is a way of ensuring the national collections of contemporary art in Wales can be enjoyed by and belongs to everybody in Wales. This exciting way of delivering a national gallery will create a new sense of ownership and collaboration with the art sector across the whole of the country.

This will allow a genuinely democratic way of working with local galleries making decisions about works that will be relevant to their local demography. It will provide a whole host of creative opportunities for gallery directors and curators to compliment the works they borrow from the national contemporary collections with locally held artworks, and to create locally relevant engagement and learning opportunities.

The model has been developed to inspire increased access and participation by people across the country with contemporary art, whilst also increasing Wales's profile as an international destination for cultural tourism.

The nine sites include both larger and smaller galleries and reflects a wider geographic spread across Wales allowing for increased accessibility of the national collection and contemporary art. It is anticipated that this model will support an increase in the audiences attending contemporary art across Wales by achieving a 30% increase within the first 10 years of the project.

While there are pockets of excellence, there is a sense that Wales lacks a focal point for contemporary visual artists and Welsh and international audiences. The model will seek to create a sustainable and resilient network at all levels of the arts ecology. It will create a distinctive focus and identity for Welsh art that would become instantly recognisable both nationally and internationally, along with the landscapes, people and culture that inspire it.

The use of current venues and investment in them represents an investment in the current gallery infrastructure in Wales, supporting those galleries to increase their standards. It also increases the accessibility of art locally, reducing the cost of and need to travel long distances to see the collection which is now more important than ever due to the on-going cost of living crises. This approach will also support a lower carbon footprint through reduced travel distances.

b) Anchor Gallery/Site

An anchor gallery will provide a formal front end and prominent public facing presence for the NCAGW model in Wales.

The addition of an anchor site for the NCAGW is not aimed at replacing existing gallery facilities but will provide a central hub to complement provision in the existing venues that collectively will form a distributed NCAGW model across Wales.

Making new use of surplus public sector property is a strong starting point for the environmental sustainability of any new facility. In line with Ystadau Cymru best

practice, the request for candidate sites scoped out what properties may be available within the public or third sectors or their partners.

The request centred on existing buildings which will require adaption or reconfiguration but also allowed for any undeveloped site which could meet the key locational requirements.

The anchor site will be a 'magnet' for visitors and a significant contributor to growth of the local visitor economy, the cultural and creative industries and related sectors. The development of an anchor gallery will provide an opportunity for town centre regeneration and certainly the "town centre first" initiative will be a strong consideration. Democratic access to the collection is of paramount importance with the intention to make the visitor experience as rich and fulfilling as possible.

The new venue selected will enshrine principles contained within the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 and focus on improving the social, economic, environmental, and cultural well-being of the area and Wales as a whole, as part of the wider model.

More specific detail will become available once a venue has been selected for development.

3 The factors that should be considered when assessing the suitability of candidate sites for the various galleries.

Building on the initial feasibility study (Event Communications 2018), further work was undertaken on behalf of the Arts Council of Wales by the Rural Office of Architecture considering potential sites within a **dispersed mode**. This included research, analysis and evaluation in relation to various sites across Wales and was initially presented in April 2020, with the final version delivered in May 2021.

The Project Board (consisting of Arts Council, Amgueddfa Cymru and Llyfrgell Genedlaethol Cymru), considered the recommendations in a joint meeting of the Project Board and Arts Council's Capital Committee on 21 Sept 2022.

Following this meeting, options for up to 10 galleries were presented to the Cooperation Agreement Oversight Board on 18 October 2022, with agreement that up to nine of these be considered further. It was also agreed there would be at least two host galleries in the national partners.

The galleries identified in the preferred option are widely distributed across Wales and (apart from one) are accessible via public transport. Whilst all participating venues will have to fulfil all other criteria, their location is crucial to the success of the model and compliments the locations of the host organisations (Amgueddfa Cymru and Llyfrgell Genedlaethol Cymru).

The criteria for the selection of the venues included the physical and operational requirements of the distributed/dispersed gallery network which provided the framework to identify the galleries. These included:

- delivering an equitable geographical spread and affording a higher degree of access to people across Wales;
- providing adequate physical security, storage and environmental standards and meeting the requirements of the Government Indemnity Scheme (GIS);
- ability to offer educational and engagement programmes and co-create with communities;
- ability to deliver within the project timeframe and be sustainable for at least five years;
- staffing with the leadership and curatorial skills, experience and resource to contribute to co-curation and co-production; and
- affordability (within Welsh Government indicative project budget).

Requirements for access and facilities for disabled visitors and artists are subject to ongoing assessment.

For the **anchor gallery**, a list of essential and desirable criteria was drawn up and agreed with organisations asked to submit expressions of interest against these criteria. From the submissions received, five public sector organisations and one third sector organisation have been invited to develop their proposals further based on how they met the brief and the following criteria:



Anchor Site Draft
Criteria#2.docx

The criteria for the selection of the potential anchor gallery sites at the next stage will include an assessment of:

- How the site meets/or could meet each of the criteria set out in the full list of criteria developed for an anchor site as attached,
- The initial plan/options for the layout of the site meeting the requirements above
- The explanation of how the site would work with other local museums and galleries including other that may be a part of wider NCAG developments
- How public or sector support for the application will be achieved;
- Estimated costs for delivering the plan;
- Funding model to be used and from where contributions would be sought; and
- The timescale for delivery.

These are the key criteria to be used in assessing the plans submitted to inform decisions on a location early in the next calendar year.

4 The merits of digital access to contemporary art.

Celf ar y Cyd makes Wales's national and contemporary art collections more accessible than ever before. Key merits include:

a) Improved accessibility:

- i. Over 30,000 images of artworks currently available, including many that have never been on public display before including fragile works such as those on paper that need to be stored in dark solander boxes to prevent fading and deterioration.
- ii. The collection can now be accessed through your mobile phone or computer without having to leave your own home.

b) Democratic visual access is improved:

- i. The collections belong to the nation, everyone in Wales and beyond i.e. international audiences (who have internet access) can browse, learn, and be inspired and without the need to travel long distance. The website looks to change the way the people of Wales, and beyond, engage with our contemporary art.
- ii. To understand what people in Wales want from a website devoted to contemporary art, and before development of the Celf ar y Cyd website could begin, a Wales-wide consultation was undertaken. Over 900 people were consulted.

c) Benefits to partner galleries:

- i. The website acts as a 'shop window' that showcases the artworks in the national collection. Partner galleries (as well as other organisations in Wales and beyond) can research the digitised collection for exhibition planning and loans. Celf ar y Cyd offer galleries an online and interactive digital space to further develop their exhibition/display programming.
- ii. The website is designed to bring up interesting contrasts and comparisons through the intuitive search function. This will help gallery partners when researching works for display or exhibitions.
- iii. Through the high-resolution camera equipment and IIF technology, galleries can research and examine artworks in minute detail.

d) Formal and informal opportunities for learning enhanced:

- i. The digital learning programme covers all aspects of what Welsh contemporary art is, what it does, and how artists speak to us through it. Users can find out what goes on behind the scenes and meet the teams that look after the collection. Users will be inspired to have creative responses. There will be wider community engagement with the collection through innovative editorial content.
- ii. The consultation revealed that educators did not want strict lesson plans, but preferred resources that can be used to suit their programmes.

5 Longer Term Sustainability

The longer-term sustainability of the model is an important factor in determining viability of the proposals being delivered once the initial investment in the creation of the asset has been completed.

For the dispersed network, we are awaiting a more detailed plan from the partners relating to this aspect of future delivery. We have agreed that this will be submitted as part of the full business case that will be developed and submitted before the end of the calendar year.

Similarly, more detail will become available for the anchor gallery, once a site has been selected and more detailed business case produced.

However, in both cases the expectation is that sustainability will not be purely reliant on funding from Welsh Government and there will be a reduced reliance on central funding. This will be achieved through commercial elements such as sponsorship, donations, philanthropy, fundraising, merchandising, funding raised through income on intellectual property and charging for elements such as touring exhibitions. This will assist in achieving a better balance between funding sources and any future revenue requirement from Welsh Government. The exact balance of these elements is yet to be determined and may vary over time.

This approach to funding reflects the current financial context and that in response to this situation, efficiencies need to be considered within the overall budget.

National Contemporary Art Gallery – Considerations for an Anchor Site

Draft Criteria	Essential	Desirable
Museum and exhibition criteria:		
7,500-15,000m ² , with at least 2/3 rd gallery space and with at least one single gallery 1000m ² plus potential to extend further in the future	7,500m ²	12,000m ² (more if possible) Extend further at future point
Minimum height requirement of 6m in gallery space. The ideal height for at least some gallery space would be 10m for sculpture	6m	10m
Joint venture or partnership with Amgueddfa Cymru and National Library Wales as custodians of the national collection. Organisation highly unlikely to have own collection in the short term.	x	
Strong partnership with galleries in the distributed model and supports/ does not compete with the gallery ecosystem	x	
Capable of accommodating significant annual footfall	750k (average £2k/day)	1m (average £3k/day)
Organisation that has adequate curatorial, conservation, collections management and exhibition expertise, registrar capabilities and other museum professionals or could access this e.g. via Amgueddfa Cymru	x	
Capacity and capability to run at least four temporary exhibitions/annum (2 major, 2 minor) plus long term loans or acquisitions. (Suggest major exhibitions c£2-3m and minor £1-1.5m but needs to be quantified.)	2 major, 2 minor	3 major, 3 minor
Organisation and leader with sufficient international reputation to attract and partner with international and national organisations as well as support local Wales gallery ecosystem	x	
Organisation able to meet Museum Accreditation Guidelines and criteria for a 'nationally-styled museum' in terms of facilities and scope and scale of the exhibition. The anchor site will offer visitor facilities appropriate to a 'national' organisation.	x	
Organisation will work to the National Museum Directors' Council Principles for Lending and Borrowing including the expectation that they will meet the standards for environment and security set out in the Government Indemnity Scheme Guidelines for Non-national institutions or as agreed with the lending organisation.	x	
Potential to coordinate/facilitate touring exhibitions		x
Significant marketing and customer relationship management expertise and insight	x	

National Contemporary Art Gallery – Considerations for an Anchor Site

Access, infrastructure and location:		
Transport Infrastructure (road and rail) –enables sufficient access for large numbers of people Transport is a trade-off and a balance between urban with different transport options and consideration of other locations including more rural/isolated locations	X	
Tourism Infrastructure (i.e. sufficient hotels, places to stay overnight, restaurant offer)	X	
Ample Parking for Visitor Numbers (c500 spaces)		X
Proximity to major urban centres/ other visitor attractions (within x hrs or y miles). Could consider rural location if suitable transport links. Ideally rail and road.	X	
Existing major urban area, tourist attraction or potential to attract sufficient visitors, including international visitors (e.g. for international visitors this could mean within 1 hour of an airport or seaport.)	X	
Location should include regeneration potential	X	
Building features:		
Landmark building, either new build or part of Wales' existing heritage, significant piece of architecture in its own right, balancing it as a 'magnet' and potential cost envelope - could be new or repurposed building		X
Extensive storage space for collections, including suitable security and environmental conditions	X	
Adequate and separate areas for exhibition build and change over	X	
Adequate provision for couriering – eg. covered transport/unloading area	X	
Adequate and significant sized lift access for moving collections within building.	X	Separate from visitor lifts
Conservation facilities and expertise or ability to access easily	X	
Ease of access for disabled visitors (or able to convert if historic building)	X	
Studio spaces for 'Artists in residence' (rotational not permanent)		X
Sufficient/ significant height and loadage capacity for major installations and equipment to display	X	
Sufficient/significant clearances and turning clearances re. doors, corridors, lifts, etc.	X	
Flexible spaces to cater for different types and sizes of exhibition	X	
Space for café, retail and other income generation including out of hours	X	
21 st century space and can take major digital installations and new media forms (eg Blavatnik)	X	

National Contemporary Art Gallery – Considerations for an Anchor Site

Sustainable building practices and use of energy (including energy efficiency and renewable energy)		
Space for learning and engagement centre	x	
Flexible community space		x
Relevance to local population – activity engages with and used by local population		x
Encourages access and participation for all communities		x
Promotes and encourages young talent and skills development with links to curriculum and new policies/not passive how increase creativity and inspire young people	x	
Policy considerations:		
Ability to secure significant revenue/annum (even in London galleries have substantial ongoing revenue support, in addition to upfront capital) + additional revenue for existing sponsored bodies to partner and additional activity. Required for 3-5 years prior to opening due to upfront costs of hosting major exhibitions.	£5m rev/annum+, £500k capital.	£10m rev+, £1m capital
Supports and promotes wider national and local culture offer in Wales and does not detract from existing culture offer	x	
Alignment with other policy developments and be linked to/supportive of other WG strategies and PfG commitments	x	
Can only host proportion of national collection at any one time and not all choice pieces due to need to display themselves and share with other organisations, including fee paying loans. National contemporary art collection in the national collection has a max 50k of contemporary art pieces, many of which are works on paper and can only be displayed for a limited period of time.	x	
Beneficial to host all visual arts forms and not limit to contemporary art, so can maximise audiences and national collection. Extend focus to historic art – both Welsh and international (Impressionists), how society reflects on pieces, cross time considerations		x
Potential to explore art in the outdoors such as sculpture especially if a venue came with land and had the potential to use sculpture part as a different way to bring art and nature together		x
Any organisation with a pre-existing display of historic art/ social or local history collections must demonstrate how the display of new contemporary art	x	

National Contemporary Art Gallery – Considerations for an Anchor Site

collections will enhance visitor experiences and not result in loss of access to local history for that organisations community.		
Need to consult on proposed options in line with FGA	x	
Critical to have free access to the permanent collection (hybrid model could be considered where access to permanent collection is free but special exhibits/events could be chargeable to make it affordable – this is consistent with policy re the National Museum).	x	
Would it be beneficial to have an acquisitions budget so the organisation develops its own collection rather than being dependent upon loans? Any collections policy would need to align with those already being implemented by other organisations.		x
Need to learn lessons from unsuccessful Centre for Visual Art (run by Cardiff Old Library trust)	x	
Digital infrastructure and broadband able to provide full extent of contemporary art. Desirable to include including immersive and experiential exhibition space for a range of digital exhibitions (e.g. Tate Modern extension)	x	Immersive and experiential exhibition space
Need to ensure digital access options as key way to democratise and promote access to the national collection	x	
Need to factor in planning permission and development times	c5 years	c10 years

National Contemporary Art Gallery, Wales

Cardiff Bay Anchor Site Proposal

THE PROPOSITION

Our bid sets out why Atlantic Wharf in Cardiff Bay is the prime and most suitable location in Wales for the new anchor site for the National Contemporary Art Gallery, Wales. Our proposal aims to deliver something that will be internationally relevant, driven by principles of inclusivity and sustainability, and provides the opportunity for as many people – from Wales and beyond – to be part of the Wales story.

The Cardiff Bay anchor site for the distributed model would provide a flagship platform for contemporary artists from across Wales and international artists to show in Wales. The contemporary visual art scene across Wales is well networked and connected, artists and curators work closely and support each other to promote and enable the creation and presentation of contemporary art. However, it is clear that more revenue investment is needed to develop coproduction across the network and to support Wales' thriving contemporary art scene.

A fundamental principle for this project is that this facility would support existing galleries which are part of the distributed model, and other associated contemporary art spaces, artists and organisation in Wales. Work will also be undertaken to ensure this project development works for the sector that it is intended to represent, and we would ensure that the sector is fully engaged in development work. Collaboration and consultation with experts in the contemporary art field, predominantly artists and curators is crucial to the success of this project. **We aim to work closely with artists and curators to shape the anchor site to meet their needs at this centre of excellence, enhancing production and exhibition opportunities, enabling creative practitioners to present to the largest possible audiences in Wales.**

Production and presentation are important aspects of contemporary art practice, and access to both is essential in creating an understanding of how and why art is made. **The anchor site will therefore also be a centre for conversations about all areas of contemporary art practice: from performance and moving image, through to digital and audio work, to socially engaged and participatory practice.**

This centre for contemporary art could be the place where ideas involving art in the public realm could be debated and refined; where artists could try new things and talk to the visiting public about their process and, of course, it could host touring exhibitions, give curators and artists the opportunity to work on a larger and more ambitious scale, provide a focus for conversations in the media, be the engine for initiatives such as Wales At Venice, a home for Artes Mundi, an educational resource for teachers and students at all levels and be a driver for moving forward ideas around gallery education.

The Atlantic Wharf site has been chosen specifically due to its ability to accommodate a large number of visitors, as well as its ability to attract a large number of visitors.

Furthermore, the site has been chosen on the basis of its ability to compliment other key cultural institutions – both current and proposed. As one example the Wales Millennium Centre regularly welcomes over 1.8 million visitors annually. The proposed Indoor Music Arena is also based on a business model that will accommodate a million paying visitors per year.

The current Cardiff Bay station is currently the 6th most used in Wales, with circa 1.5 million entries and exists in 2019/20. The secured funding for Crossrail Phase 1 that links Cardiff Bay and this site directly to Cardiff Central, as well as an additional station at Pierhead Street is proposed to significantly increase rail capacity. Alongside the Core Valley Line electrification which includes the existing line to Cardiff Bay the expectation is that patronage will significant exceed 2 million passengers per year. **This will make the site one of the most accessible in Wales by public transport (as well as active travel means) ensuring that it is made open for people across Wales.**

Critical to this is the development of a building that can **welcome people of all ages and abilities by all means of travel.** This includes step-free access by public transport from Cardiff Bay station and the proposed new Pierhead Street station to the new gallery.

STRATEGIC IMPORTANCE OF CONTEMPORARY ART

Contemporary arts festivals such as Cardiff Contemporary have delivered Wales wide contemporary art opportunities in the Capital, nurturing a complex ecosystem of artists, curators and innovators, to deliver an international diverse cultural offer. We have piloted and tested what is possible as a catalyst for cohering our national and international arts offer. **Cardiff is committed to raising cultural aspirations across the city and Wales, to be a leading force in diverse contemporary art productions and presentation.** Working with lead partners we would work to develop the most suitable vehicle and governance model, to ensure operational success, exploring capacity, resource needs and expertise to deliver this prestigious anchor site for the National Contemporary Art Gallery, Wales.

The Atlantic Wharf anchor site for the National Contemporary Art Gallery Wales, is intended to have a prominent role to co-ordinate and facilitate contemporary temporary art exhibitions. **This will create a home in the capital city to showcase the very best Wales based contemporary art, working closely with all selected contemporary art spaces and organisations from across Wales which are part of the dispersed model, developing international showcases to exhibit and present to the largest possible audiences in Wales.** This landmark facility, would programme an exciting contemporary art programme, hosting at minimum 3 major and 3 supporting world class contemporary art exhibitions each year.

The vision is to develop an **internationally renowned platform** to receive international shows, residences and activity to further cement Wales' profile on the international cultural

stage, building on the success of Artes Mundi, Wales at Venice and established international partnerships.

The Atlantic Wharf anchor site for the National Contemporary Art Gallery, Wales, **will have a prominent role to co-ordinate and facilitate contemporary temporary art exhibitions creating a home in the capital city to showcase the very best Wales based contemporary art**, working closely with all selected contemporary art spaces and organisations from across Wales which a part of the dispersed model, developing international showcases to exhibit to the largest possible audiences in Wales. (The galleries that are part of the dispersed model are still to be determined and confirmed at time of submission).

Touring exhibitions are expected to be key part of the programme for the anchor site for the National Contemporary Art Gallery, Wales. We have described the physical facility which can easily accommodate a variety of touring exhibitions. We would also work with established national and international galleries to co-ordinate and deliver significant touring exhibitions for the people of Wales in the Welsh Capital. We would also ensure that new exhibitions exhibited at the anchor site in Cardiff, would tour to contemporary art spaces across Wales, as part of the dispersed model where appropriate.

ACCESS, INFRASTRUCTURE AND LOCATION

The site is the one of most accessible in Wales in terms of access to both road and rail infrastructure. It is currently served by Cardiff Bay station that serves 1.5 million entries and exits per year, as well as the A4232 that directly connects the site to the M4 and the wider Wales Road network. Cardiff Airport is also within 10 miles of the site as the crow flies, as well as a heliport within a mile of the site. In addition, the site will benefit from the electrification of the Core Valley Lines that will see direct services to Cardiff Bay from the South Wales Valleys, a tripling of the capacity of the trains, an additional platform at Cardiff Bay and a doubling of the track into and out of the Bay. This work will be further enhanced by the funding secured to link Cardiff Bay to Cardiff Central as part of Crossrail Phase 1.

As a result of the public transport provision the site will be accessible to communities across Wales, ensuring that all can access. It is the intention that the site will primarily focus on supporting attendees to access by public and active travel to ensure that the site is welcoming to all, and not just those who travel by car. This is considered an essential part of the proposal given that a car only site would restrict access to poorer communities in Wales, those unable to use private vehicles, younger people and incoming visitors who don't travel by car. Overall, the site would be the most accessible option in Wales, providing step-free access from all forms of transport, and having the greatest reach in terms of population of any proposed location. This also means that the location is also accessible to isolated areas across Wales in ways that other locations aren't.

REGENERATION POTENTIAL

The site is part of a wider masterplan that supports the creation of a nationally important cultural destination. The ambition is to create a cluster of cultural venues, institutions and organisations within a single site that provides a destination in its own right, regardless of events taking place. This approach to creating a destination linked with culture and creativity makes it an ideal site for the proposed contemporary art gallery. It will also provide for complimentary uses, in addition to the potential for the wider site to be used for display purposes. This includes a public events square that will be created in the heart of the Atlantic Wharf site that would have potential for external display of exhibitions and public performance art.

In addition, the site has a longstanding commitment to development as a visitor destination. Cardiff Council has control over the whole Atlantic Wharf site and is continuing to develop the masterplan and attract investment to the site. There is outline planning permission for the site masterplan which is currently being marketed and promoted as a cultural and visitor economy destination.

Furthermore, the site is also part of a wider ambition of regeneration for Butetown and Cardiff Bay. This approach was documented in the successful £100m Levelling Up Fund bid that outlined an ambition for a transport-led regeneration of Cardiff Bay. The aim is to deliver a sustainable regeneration programme embedded in the principles of the Well-being and Future Generations act by creating Wales' first destination where sustainable transport is the assumed means of accessing the site. As transport represents by far the greatest contribution to carbon emissions of any venue or event this is seen as a 'must do' in terms of a sustainable regeneration strategy.

The site is also located amongst some of Wales's most diverse communities and represents an opportunity to support regeneration for some of Wales' communities that have previously been overlooked for investment. The Council will put in place additional mechanisms to support links with community development to open opportunities for local residents across a range of jobs, but also providing training and support linked specifically with cultural and creative industries.

In July 2021, Cabinet approved a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with WMC to initiate an Atlantic Wharf Cultural Production Partnership with the aim to work towards developing joint areas of working. This includes developing a shared vision and work programme to align Cardiff's economic strategy and creative sector development plans to maximise opportunities for talent development, expressive arts creative education and to support production and performance to boost the city's international cultural profile and to drive inclusive growth within the creative industries in Cardiff. The key objectives include:

- To raise the international profile of the creative sector in Cardiff.
- To increase the value of creative and cultural production in Cardiff.
- To increase attendance and participation at creative/cultural productions events in Cardiff.
- To support a diverse talent pipeline to sustain the creative sector in Cardiff.

As part of this agreement the WMC has set out its aspiration to deliver a new Production Studio facility in close proximity to their existing building and the proposed new anchor site for the National Contemporary Art Gallery, Wales. The Council has worked with WMC to develop a viable proposal as part of the Atlantic Wharf regeneration scheme. The Production Studios project, known as 'Capella', aims to facilitate the production of local and national 'content' to support the WMC offer and help to develop the cultural offer within Cardiff and Wales, this includes innovation and digital spaces, that will provide relevant associated opportunities for the National Contemporary Art Gallery, Wales.

A dedicated Energy Strategy will also be put in place for the site to ensure that the overall development is carbon neutral. This will include elements such as the district heating network and renewable energy schemes.

The location of the building is a fundamental decision in terms of its sustainability – choosing a location that has an immediate community & cultural footfall, in order to justify its existence & sustain its usefulness. A location that is appropriately populous and/or served by sustainable transport infrastructure that provides linkage throughout City, Wales & beyond. We believe that Cardiff Bay offers such a location, and presents the opportunity to regenerate an historic 'brown-field' site

SPACE FOR LEARNING AND ENGAGEMENT CENTRE

Education' & 'Community' were essential considerations when formulating proposal, particularly in regard to ensuring the long-term use & sustainability of the gallery building. To this end, the project team consulted with many local experts in the field, prior to any design work taking place – a process that would inevitably continue, ahead of any further design & construction.

Beyond the gallery itself, the building will aim to address community with art installations placed within the immediate public realm of Atlantic Wharf, the wider Cardiff Bay area & the city centre. Besides providing a physical environment in which to engage with community, the gallery would also offer an interactive digital platform from which 'virtual' visitors would be able to engage remotely with the gallery's exhibits & Education programme. This would be a key aspect of its community & educational offer - able to link users to galleries throughout Wales & beyond.

RELEVANCE TO LOCAL POPULATION

As noted above, In July 2021, Cabinet approved a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to initiate an Atlantic Wharf Cultural Production Partnership with the aim to work towards developing joint areas of working. This includes a shared vision and work programme to align Cardiff's economic strategy and creative sector development plans to maximise opportunities for talent development, expressive arts creative education and to support

production and performance to boost the city's international cultural profile and to drive inclusive growth within the creative industries in Cardiff.

This approach includes establishing formal arrangements with local communities to ensure that the development links with the local population. This will also include linking with Wales schools, the wider education sector and also linking with existing provision such as the Butetown Youth Pavilion that has a focus on creative endeavours.

In addition, funding has also been secured through the Shared Prosperity Fund to support a communication and engagement officer who will work with the local community to help shape the development of Atlantic Wharf.

We plan for the National Contemporary Gallery, Wales anchor site gallery and wider gallery network to operate as a beacon for inspiring our nation and our people for young people and all people. With partners we would develop the most progressive learning and engagement opportunities in the spaces described in this bid. We would provide exhibition opportunities for the children of Wales, developing young Welsh Artist of the Year opportunities, and we would work closely with the Arts Council of Wales and Wales Schools to develop significant engagement programmes.

FUTURE GENERATIONS

The proposal developed has already been predicated on delivering a scheme that is:

The most environmentally sustainable: Providing a location where access by public transport means that the car isn't the assumed means of transport, and as part of an overall development where energy is a key part of the development strategy. As transport is the key carbon emitter of any venue or event this is paramount.

The most accessible: Located amongst Wales' most diverse communities, but also in the site with the greatest population reach in Wales. Transport links will have step-free access, and the site will be easily accessible for those with physical disabilities.

A global reach: Whilst the site will provide a place for people across Wales to enjoy contemporary art, it also intends to bring the world to Wales and showcase what the nation and its capital city has to offer.

Our team have developed this exciting RIBA Stage 2 design concept, that we feel is the home that our artists need in Wales, creating a flagship destination to promote Wales as a creative, sustainable and forward-thinking nation. We look forward to sharing design concept images when appropriate. Our anchor site design for the National Contemporary Art Gallery, Wales looks like it belongs on our nation's skyline. We passionately believe we can deliver this transformational cultural project, networked to artists and citizens across Wales and the world.

This project has been developed by Cardiff Council's Culture, Major Projects, and Regeneration team.

Response by The Cyfarthfa Foundation to the inquiry by Senedd Cymru's Culture, Communications, Welsh Language and International Relations Committee on the subject of the National Contemporary Art Gallery for Wales.

August 2023



Table of Contents

1. Summary.....	2
2. Cyfarthfa - the status quo	5
3. The proposed model – Network + Anchor.....	7
Delivery of the brief	8
Timescales.....	8
4. Cyfarthfa – the anchor site.....	9
Location.....	9
The Castle.....	9
Space	10
The park	10
Facilities.....	11
5. The digital dimension	12
6. Regeneration and economic impact	13
7. Policy alignment	14
8. Conclusion.....	15
Appendix A: Six examples of museums in UK and Europe (NB, do not publish; images subject to copyright).....	16
Appendix B: The Cyfarthfa Foundation	22
Appendix C: Cyfarthfa Foundation staff.....	26

1. Summary

- 1.1 The Cyfarthfa Foundation – a registered charity - was created with a view to transforming a much-loved local museum and gallery into a national institution fully worthy of its history, heritage and art, and at a scale and quality that befits their significance. From the outset we have envisaged the imaginative integration of heritage and contemporary art in a way that responds both to a long tradition of innovation and the immense challenges of the 21st century.
- 1.2 The establishment of a National Contemporary Arts Gallery (NCAGW) has been a long-held aspiration in Wales, born of the continuing development of the country’s visual arts sector as well as evidence of public appetite. The vibrancy of galleries across Wales, the success of Welsh artists at the Venice Biennale and the public response to the international Artes Mundi biennial exhibition have in their different ways provided evidence of further potential.

- 1.3 The Foundation is proud to present its vision for a necessary central element of this proposition – an anchor site to be located at Cyfarthfa Castle and Park at Merthyr Tydfil. We do so in partnership with Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council. We have also been assisted in this by expert input from specialists in the field - Cultural Associates Oxford – who have completed two extensive reports that have been submitted to the Welsh Government.
- 1.4 Our vision for an anchor site for this exciting new network is for a place:
- to present the best of contemporary art from Wales and elsewhere, whether within a gallery context or an open park
 - to take a broad and inclusive view of contemporary art
 - to give contemporary art historical context where appropriate
 - to embrace both established and emerging artists
 - to encourage the making of art - via artists residences, co-production and participatory opportunities
 - to engage large and diverse audiences, across all ages, through community-based activity, learning and events.
- 1.5 Importantly, we wish to achieve these ends in a creative partnership with galleries across Wales as well as with the National Museum and the National Library. It should be a partnership that recognises not only the value of creative collaboration but also the autonomy of these galleries and institutions and the need often to serve audiences in different parts of Wales in distinct ways.
- 1.6 We contend that Cyfarthfa Castle and Park is the best and natural location for the NCAGW anchor site that the Programme for Government has in mind, for the following reasons:
- It would be a major cultural investment in Merthyr Tydfil and the Heads of the Valleys area – an area that merits much greater investment in its cultural infrastructure.
 - It is notable that none of the other envisaged participating galleries is located in the Heads of the Valleys area, despite the central and iconic place of those valleys in the creation of the art of Wales and our national identity.
 - It would rescue a crucially important but threatened part of our history, giving Cyfarthfa Castle and Park a new lease of life, a national purpose and an international outlook.
 - It would build on an existing art collection that is both relevant and of high quality.
 - It would enable Cyfarthfa to position itself as a centre of innovative thinking, creative production and inventive educational development.

- It would generate employment, social value and community renewal in a place of demonstrable need.
 - It would provide a bold working exemplar of the principles of the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act.
 - The Cyfarthfa Foundation already exists – a ready-made special purpose vehicle created specifically to undertake a challenge of this nature and scale.
- 1.7 The prospect of an anchor site for a National Gallery of Contemporary Art for Wales, sitting alongside a compelling museum of our industrial history, holds the potential for myriad creative synergies that will provide context and relevance for both the historical and contemporary aspects of its mission. These conjunctions should be a source of excitement for curators and public alike.
- 1.8 The necessary design and development timescales for the physical renewal of Cyfarthfa will allow ample time for the planning of organisational arrangements both at the centre and across the gallery network, as well as between both. We look forward to working with partners and with the recently appointed project planning team to make this a reality of which the whole of Wales can feel proud.



2. Cyfarthfa - the status quo

- 2.1 Cyfarthfa Castle was the home of the Crawshay family, famed Merthyr ironmasters. The family left the castle at the end of the 19th century and bequeathed it to the local authority. It then became both a museum and a school - the home of Cyfarthfa High School. The school left the building ten years ago, since when 85% of this Grade-1-listed building has lain empty with its condition deteriorating markedly.
- 2.2 It now houses a gallery that contains a significant collection of more than 300 works by, amongst others, William Armfield, Frank Brangwyn, Duncan Grant, Shani Rhys James, Alfred Janes, Heinz Koppel, Thomas Lawrence, Cedric Morris, George Murray, Winifred Nicholson, Ruskin Spear and Jack Butler Yeats, and as well as a collection of 19th century works, many of which record Merthyr's industrial past.

- 2.3 Cyfarthfa Castle and its 160-acre park are owned by Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council and are currently managed by the Merthyr Tydfil Leisure Trust. The Council, the Leisure Trust and the Cyfarthfa Foundation have agreed in principle to the eventual transfer of ownership and operation to the Foundation, subject to negotiation. Those negotiations are currently ongoing.
- 2.4 The Cyfarthfa Foundation is a company limited by guarantee and a registered charity. Its Board consists of 14 people with an exceptional range of experience relevant to projects of this magnitude, as well as deep community engagement. It currently has a staff of four led by the Chief Executive, Anna Baker – an architect who last year completed an award-winning lottery-funded heritage project in Bath.
- 2.5 The Foundation has been funded by an initial grant of £1.25m from the Welsh Government. It has received £429k funding via the UK Government’s Shared Prosperity Fund, and has also received promises of funding by some major charitable foundations.
- 2.6 Prior to the formation of the Foundation, and with input from the Design Commission for Wales, the Council provided £250,000 to commission a masterplan from an internationally-renowned team led by Ian Ritchie Architects. This was delivered prior to the formation of the Foundation itself. This set out a 20-year plan for the development of the park with a wide range of options that included “the imaginative integration of heritage and contemporary art.”
- 2.7 It said: “If such a centre were to be concerned only with Merthyr’s past it would be doing only half a job. For instance, taking the cue from Merthyr’s history of industrial innovation, provision could also be made for a gallery dedicated to changing exhibitions of 21st century innovation in art and industry that would help change perceptions of Merthyr and the Heads of the Valleys area and encourage economic development particularly in modern creative industries.”



3. The proposed model – Network + Anchor

- 3.1 The proposed distributed model for the NCAGW recognises the geography of Wales, the current wide distribution of galleries and their long track record of serving their communities and artists. It is a model that encourages diversity and celebrates locality. It should be valued and enhanced. However, if the ambition of this project is to bring a wholly new focus to contemporary art in Wales, such as will establish it more firmly in the public mind, as well as establishing Welsh practice internationally, a new institution with an unmistakable physical presence is necessary. That, we believe is the nature of the required anchor. Cyfarthfa can be that anchor.
- 3.2 An anchor site of scale - with a collaborative purpose written into its mission, and a collegiate approach embedded in its practice - should be an asset to the whole network. The innovative combination of multiple nodes of creativity with effective central capacity would be yet another way of placing Welsh institutional creativity on a global stage. The creation of a new central capacity is the *sine qua non*.
- 3.3 The space we envisage being available at Cyfarthfa will be substantial, enabling its development as a major museum and gallery. Its 160-acre park also has the potential to develop as a sculpture park. But far from competing with the existing gallery ecosystem, a NCAGW anchor at Cyfarthfa would wish to support the network in many ways, aiming at mutual benefit for all participating organisations and their audiences.

3.4 This might be through:

- Collaborative planning of multi-venue exhibitions
- Collaborative fund-raising, allowing access to larger funds
- Practical support with transport and installation
- Provision of storage space
- Support for marketing and communications
- Providing a learning and research centre as a physical and virtual hub for the network
- Showcasing the work of the individual galleries or groups of galleries nationally.

3.5 These options need to be discussed across the network, as well as with the newly appointed central planning team, to arrive at the most effective collaborative structures while also preserving the capacity of individual galleries to pursue their distinct agendas and address their own audiences. The objective must be the creation of a supportive infrastructure that will allow the visual arts sector in Wales to develop its profile and audience.

Delivery of the brief

3.6 The brief for the NCAGW anticipated that this would be a joint venture or partnership between the galleries, Amgueddfa Cymru and National Library Wales as custodians of the national collection. The nature of this relationship will need to be carefully defined so that public access to the collections is maximised, while the national-collection holders are certain that their custodial responsibilities for safeguarding the collections are upheld. It will also be important that the galleries in the distributed network have a clear voice in determining which works are displayed at which venue.

3.7 There are several options for configuring these arrangements, but we would advocate the creation of a joint NCAGW commissioning group composed of representatives of the anchor site, the participating galleries, Amgueddfa Cymru and the National Library of Wales. The secretariat would be provided by the anchor site. We believe that this would keep overheads to a minimum while creating an effective collegiate structure. The accountability of the anchor site could be via Arts Council Wales or direct to the Welsh Government.

Timescales

3.8 Arguably, the embryo for the proposed system has been with us for many years. More recently, under the auspices of Amgueddfa Cymru, it has taken another step forward with the development of online resources that have made the national collection available to all. There is no need to put any brake on these incremental developments while new arrangements are agreed.

3.9 Although the physical development of the Cyfarthfa galleries will not be complete and open to the public for 5-7 years, it is likely that the Foundation will wish to appoint curatorial staff ahead of this in order to plan the content. There would, therefore, be

nothing to prevent the development of agreed NCAGW commissioning structures even before the new galleries at Cyfarthfa are ready. An interim period could be used constructively to experiment and to build audiences in anticipation of Cyfarthfa's opening.

4. Cyfarthfa – the anchor site

Location

- 4.1 Cyfarthfa's location is superb. It sits at the junction of two major roads – the A470 and the A465 Heads of the Valleys road – providing fast access from all points of the compass, including the Cardiff, Newport and the west of England to the south, the Swansea city region to the West and the English Midlands to the east. In the next year the South Wales Metro will increase the speed and frequency of trains from Cardiff and other valley communities, and the dualling of the Heads of the Valleys road will near completion.
- 4.2 It can also take full advantage of its proximity to the Bannau Brycheiniog National Park, which is said to attract 4 million visitors per annum.

The Castle

- 4.3 Cyfarthfa is perfectly placed to deliver its art ambition. It encompasses a much-loved historic castle and a large surrounding park perfectly suited for the display of sculpture. Its existing galleries, in the castle's finely decorated family rooms, house a fine collection of work by significant artists. It is an under-used treasure trove. The building also has numerous well-proportioned former school classrooms, now sadly unused, but ready to be developed as further beautiful galleries, learning spaces, studios and workshops.
- 4.4 Originally a private dwelling for the Crawshay family, the Castle now belongs to the people of Merthyr who have huge pride and affection for it. That said, it has not received the attention and investment that it deserves and is in a severe state of disrepair.
- 4.5 There is also a potential to create larger, more dramatic display spaces within and beyond the castle's existing footprint through sensitive reconfiguration and additions. The scheme illustrated in this report includes additional buildings, designed so that Cyfarthfa can meet the Welsh government's space requirements for a proposed anchor site for the National Gallery of Contemporary Art. This is intended only as an indication of the potential of Cyfarthfa.
- 4.6 In our approach to contemporary art our work will draw inspiration from that of the Dowlais educational settlement of 1928, whose work was further developed towards

the end of the Second World War by artists such as Esther Grainger and Cedric Morris. The idea of a socially minded creative community is steeped in Merthyr Tydfil's past.

Appendix A includes photographs of a number of excellent European galleries that combine old and new buildings to great effect.

Space

4.7 The Welsh Government's brief for an anchor site suggests that 12,000 sqm. or more of space is desirable, with 7,500 sqm. regarded as essential. Within these figures it is suggested that two-thirds of this total space would be gallery space – i.e. between 5,000 and 8,000 sqm. Our consultants estimate that the existing castle's c.6,200 sqm would provide c.3,000 sqm of exhibition space, with the remainder being provided by new galleries – tailored and flexible contemporary spaces that would benefit the content and complement the existing castle.

4.8 For comparison purposes we note the footprint - footprint, not floor area – of two comparators alongside Cyfarthfa:

National Museum, Cardiff	7,700 m ²
Cyfarthfa Castle	4,100 m ²
Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art	1,820 m ²

4.9 Our consultant team, that included distinguished and experienced curators and museum consultants, developed a scalable strategy that can be flexed in response to the needs of the NCAGW partners. The strategy proposes a series of large 'halls' that can be connected or separated according to the needs of the museum and its temporary exhibition programme.

The park

4.10 Cyfarthfa Park is already a large 160-acre park, but our plan is to extend it across the valley to the 263-year-old Cyfarthfa furnaces the west side of the Taff and Taf Fechan rivers. This would create a park of 240 acres, becoming one of the great parks of Wales, cheek by jowl with the Bannau Brycheiniog National Park.

4.11 Our ambition for the landscape is that the change should be transformative, creating an accessible, inspiring, creative, educational, biodiverse and sustainable destination, embodying a profound sense of community and social narrative.

4.12 This existing asset, with its potential for dramatic enlargement, will greatly enhance the NCAGW concept, providing a fabulous backdrop for sculpture and other environmental interventions. The Foundation hopes to commission artists who can also engage people in the process of creating sculpture, as well as assisting emerging artists to develop their skills.

4.13 Cyfarthfa Park offers a 'green stage' for outdoor art displays in a variety of diverse landscape characters and habitats with stunning views and hidden natural gems to

inspire and delight all visitors, including people who might not usually engage with art, such as dog walkers and runners or families out for some fresh air. Such changing displays of sculpture will attract regular public and social media attention and encourage repeat visits. There is also a great potential here for works that involve mass community participation in their creation.

- 4.14 Further, there is the opportunity to use the parkland for outdoor events that will encourage attendance all year around, for example winter light installations, open-air theatre, outdoor cinema, concerts and small festivals. This mixed-model of art and popular culture will mean that art works will come to life in new and exciting contexts and allow for greater revenue generation.

Facilities

- 4.15. The range of facilities available at the anchor site should be such as to allow and encourage the maximum attendance and fullest engagement, while also fostering research and artistic practice. The facilities would include:

- Contemporary gallery spaces
- Historic public rooms
- Childrens' galleries
- Sculpture park plus outdoor and interactive art
- Digital displays and interpretation
- Learning and research centre
- Space for artists residencies and visiting fellowships
- Studios and workshops
- Shop, café and kitchens
- Events space



5. The digital dimension

- 5.1. No cultural or educational institution in the 21st can afford to neglect a digital dimension to its activities. It will constitute not only a dimension of its accessibility but also of its creativity. This must be a priority task not only for the NCGAW at Cyfarthfa, but also for the museum. They can enrich each other.

- 5.2 Cyfarthfa already has a significant contemporary art collection which is digitised and available for people to search and view on the Art UK platform. The NCAGW anchor site will therefore be able to build on Cyfarthfa's existing inclusive working practices to ensure that access to its collection is democratised, enabling audiences to engage more deeply with the national collection of contemporary art through digital means from anywhere in the world.
- 5.3 In addition, it will draw on the best practice example of Casgliad y Werin Cymru – the People's Collection Wales, creating a digital experience that could extend to training to local community groups and organisations on digitising content, and which could record people's stories linking to the art collections.
- 5.4 Within the museum we would also intend to make the fullest use of state of art digital techniques in Cyfarthfa's story-telling.

6. Regeneration and economic impact

- 6.1 Cyfarthfa offers a substantial regeneration opportunity. By developing an organisation rooted in the community and yet achieving a position in a much higher league of tourist attractions, it will spearhead social and economic regeneration in and around Merthyr Tydfil and support an engaging programme that raises aspiration, enhances health and wellbeing, supports skills development and creates employment.
- 6.2 The need is considerable. A study completed just before the Covid lockdown placed Merthyr Tydfil – for all its potential – at the wrong end of UK economic leagues tables:
- 375th out of 379 localities in the UK's competitiveness index
 - 3rd lowest in Wales
 - 2nd lowest in the Cardiff Capital Region
 - GVA per head of £15,420 – 17th amongst the 22 Welsh local authorities.
- 6.3 Other research has shown that 8 out of the 36 Lower Layer Super Output Areas (LSOAs) in the borough are among the 30% most deprived in Wales. Despite unflattering measures of poverty and morbidity 85% of those who responded to our survey took pride in living and working in Merthyr Tydfil, demonstrating that there is huge desire for people to feel part of a local community and share a sense of place.
- 6.4 It is reasonable to assume that locating a major attraction such as the NCAGW at Cyfarthfa will, with appropriate marketing and imminent road and rail improvements, increase visitor numbers and encourage further development of new hotel accommodation, thus giving yet further encouragement to tourism in the area. Precise forecasts will depend on the scale and timing of investment, although we would expect a completed NCAGW anchor site to generate not less than 300,000 visitors per annum in the early stages, rising to 500,000 within 10 years.

- 6.5 We were asked to consider whether the failure of the Centre for Visual Arts (CVA) in Cardiff more than 20 years ago holds any lessons for the proposed NCAGW. In our view the proposed NCAGW is a very different proposition. The CVA was a stand-alone venture, whereas an anchor site for the NCAGW at Cyfarthfa, would start with the advantages of
- i) the existing substantial footfall at Cyfarthfa Park,
 - ii) Cyfarthfa's well-developed education/schools programme,
 - iii) the co-location of a museum and contemporary art gallery that will ensure wider market penetration
 - iv) the support of a chain of well-established galleries across Wales and
 - v) the strength of Amgueddfa Cymru and National Library collections.
- 6.6 The Economic Impact Study prepared during the Cyfarthfa masterplan exercise recommended that the mapping of socio-economic change – its monitoring and evaluation - should become a centrepiece of the of the Cyfarthfa Plan. This is an approach that we wish to explore with the Future Generations Commissioner for Wales.

7. Policy alignment

- 7.1 Regeneration in the 21st century cannot confine itself to simple quantitative goals. We have stressed from the outset our wish to align our work with the principles of the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act. In fact, we wish to embed every one of its dimensions within our purposes: health, equality, cohesive communities, culture, the Welsh language and global responsibility.
- 7.2 It is worth commenting on the last of these. In all of the above dimensions our primary focus will be on addressing the concerns of communities in Wales, but in addressing the global dimension we will make a concerted effort to connect with similar institutions both within the UK and beyond our shores.
- 7.3 As with contemporary art – witness the Artes Mundi scheme - we cannot be properly globally responsible unless we are open to influences from across the globe in our work. We will, therefore, aim actively to grow our international connections, partnering with galleries across the world, and inviting international creatives and thinkers to spend time here. We aspire to be a home of cutting-edge production and thought-provoking ideas.



8. Conclusion

- 8.1 We believe that the creation of a National Contemporary Art Gallery for Wales is overdue. It would fill a gap in the Welsh cultural landscape and offer opportunities for both local and international engagement, to the benefit of artists and the public alike.
- 8.2 The designation of Cyfarthfa as the anchor site for the NCAGW would ensure the creation of a dedicated team, in a worthy physical space and setting, working in partnership with galleries across Wales, and focussed on a common interest. It is this scale of presence – powerfully apparent to the audience, credible to artists, curators and academia alike, and visible to the world – that will give our contemporary art, a fresh momentum, a higher profile and a secure place in the Welsh cultural firmament.

Appendix A: Six examples of museums in UK and Europe (NB, do not publish; images subject to copyright)

Some but not all of the developments listed below may be on a different scale to the Cyfarthfa project, but they embody principles that can hold good for it.

a. The Whitworth, Manchester

This museum is dedicated to the concept of the “Useful Museum promoting art as a tool for impacting on the world around us”. The redbrick frontage is complemented by brand new galleries at the rear.



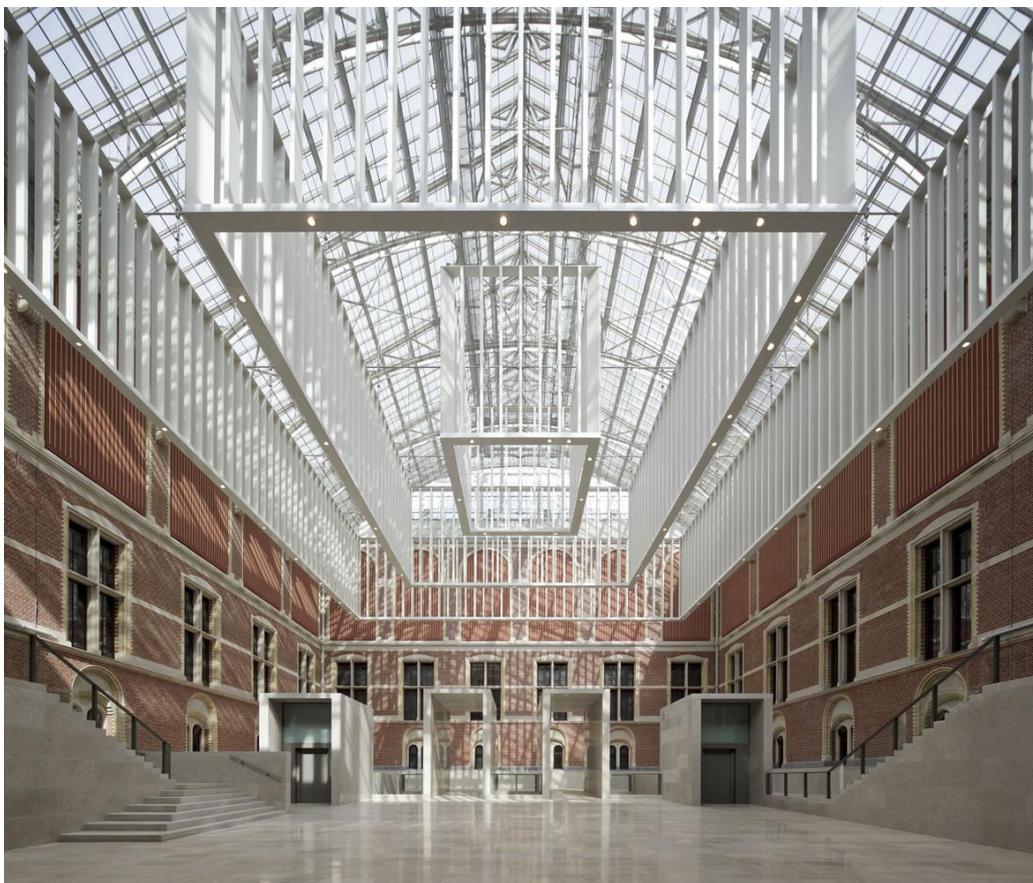
b. The Kunstmuseum, Moritzburg Castle, Halle, Germany

This museum was created by the adaptation of an archbishop's residence, dating back to the Middle Ages, into an art museum.



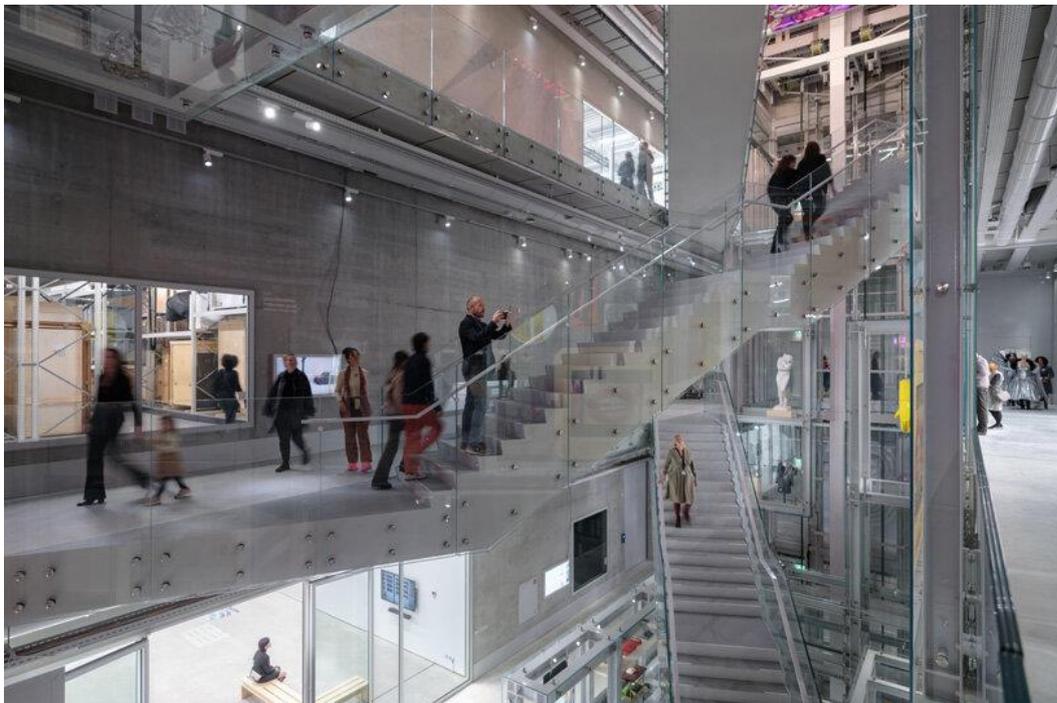
c. Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam

The Rijksmuseum was built in 1885. Its restoration and renovation were completed in 2012 based on a design by Spanish architects Antonio Cruz and Antonio Ortiz.



d. The Depot, Rotterdam

Set in a park, this is the world's first publicly accessible art storage facility. The public can wander through six floors of art works, guided by an app. They can also watch art professionals at work.



e. MAS, Museum an der Strom, Antwerp

The MAS at Antwerp is a pioneering museum, notable for its publicly accessible storage systems and commitment to informing the public using new media and immersive presentations.



f. Van Abbemuseum, Eindhoven, Netherlands

Progressive museum seen as one of the leading centres of rethinking public engagement, with special programmes using a variety of multi-sensory tools for use by blind and partially sighted visitors and the deaf and hard of hearing, as well as people suffering from Alzheimers and aphasia. It also runs groups programmes that try to link topical issues of the day with art objects. Below is a Dutch signing choir performing with the museum choir.



Appendix B: The Cyfarthfa Foundation

The Cyfarthfa Foundation is a registered charity and a company limited by guarantee. Its trustees are:

Dr Carol Bell

Carol Bell, originally from Felindre, Swansea, is an experienced industrialist, financier and charity trustee.

She is a board member of the Development Bank of Wales, council member of Research England, Vice President of National Museum Wales, Vice Chair of the Wales Millennium Centre and the first female board member of the Football Association of Wales. Carol currently serves on three public company boards: Bonheur (Norwegian renewable energy), Tharisa (platinum miner in South Africa) and the BlackRock Energy and Resources Income Trust.

In 2019, she was one of the founders of Chapter Zero, part of the World Economic Forum's Climate Governance Initiative, which helps non-executive directors to integrate climate risk into strategy and investment plans. Her academic interests, based at UCL, include the development of metal smelting and trade in metals in prehistory. She chairs the British School at Athens and is Treasurer of the Institute for Archaeo-metallurgical Studies. She lives in London and Cardiff.

Geraint Talfan Davies (Chair)

Geraint Talfan Davies is a writer and broadcaster who has had a long involvement with public policy and the arts in Wales. He is the instigator of the current project to develop Cyfarthfa Castle and Park at Merthyr Tydfil. His career has spanned newspapers and broadcasting in both ITV and the BBC. A former Controller of BBC Wales and a past Chairman of Welsh National Opera, the Arts Council of Wales, and Cardiff Bay Arts Trust, he is also the co-founder of the Institute of Welsh Affairs. He is a non-executive director of Severn Screen Ltd. and an Honorary Fellow of the Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA).

Rowland Davies (Vice-Chair)

Rowland Davies is a solicitor and the former head of the real estate practice of Geldards LLP where he specialised in major long-term projects for the public, private and third sectors. At Geldards he led the team that assembled the land for the Millennium Stadium, and has acted on various Cardiff Bay developments. He also represented the local authority in the Coed Darcy Urban Village development at Swansea as well as the acquisition and development of MoD St Athan. He now works as a consultant for Geldards overseeing the Plasdŵr Garden City development and is also Head of Strategic Land for the Marcol Estate.

Rowland is a former Trustee of Ty Hafan children's hospice and the Artes Mundi International Art Prize, and currently Vice-Chair of the Contemporary Art Society for Wales, a Trustee of the Cardiff Blues Regional Benevolent Trust, and a Trustee of the Plasdŵr Community Fund.

Geoff Hunt

Geoff Hunt is the Chief Operating Officer for Arup in the UK - a multidisciplinary engineering, planning and management consultancy - and in this role has full operational responsibility for 6,000 staff in six countries. As a corporate director in the private and charitable sectors he has a keen interest in business planning and governance both at organisational and project level. He is a chartered civil and structural engineer and has spent his career in civil and structural engineering as a contractor, designer and business leader. He retains an interest in historic buildings and civil engineering. Geoff is a graduate of Swansea University and lives in Porthcawl. He is a previous board member and Chairman of Groundwork Wales.

Sir Simon Jenkins

Sir Simon Jenkins is a journalist, author and broadcaster and has served as the Chairman of the National Trust and, previously, as Deputy Chairman of English Heritage. He was political editor of The Economist for five years, and went on to be editor of The Times and the Evening Standard. He now writes twice weekly for the Guardian and regularly for the Evening Standard.

He has been a board member of British Rail, London Transport, Faber and Faber and the Pevsner book trust, and a Trustee of the Millennium Commission, the Museum of London, Somerset House, the South Bank Centre, Save Britain's Heritage, the Thirties Society, and the RIBA drawings collection.

He has written books on churches, houses, London and Welsh architecture, as well as on politics and a Short History of England. His next book is on station architecture. He was knighted in 2004 and is a fellow of the Society of Antiquaries and the Royal Society of Literature. He lives in London and Wales.

Ewan Jones

Ewan is a Welsh architect, born in Newport and raised in Porthcawl, where many of his family still live. He is a Partner at Grimshaw, an international architectural practice with studios in Europe, Australia and USA, and designers of the Eden Project.

Working on complex projects, in public and private sectors, Ewan is an experienced designer and director. His architecture carefully integrates engineering and construction, all contributing to each other's success. Leading teams with a flair for creative attention to detail, the results are distinctive, award-winning structures across a range of scales and sectors.

Ewan has worked with the Design Commission for Wales since 2005, including a ten-year term as a board member. He continues to chair design reviews for the Commission and assists with advice to clients and government.

Hanif Kara

Prof. Hanif Kara is co-Founder and Design Director of AKT II, a design-led structural and civil engineering firm in London. With his creative lead the practice is associated with many

innovative construction projects at different scales, winning over 350 design awards, including the RIBA Stirling Prize on three occasions, as well as the RIBA Lubetkin Prize for the UK Pavilion at Shanghai Expo in 2010.

Hanif has gained international standing in the built environment, through practice, pioneering research and education in interdisciplinary design. A tireless passion for a 'design-led' approach has allowed him to work on numerous exemplar and pioneering projects at the forefront of many challenges facing the built environment in the past two decades, including the climate crisis.

He is also Professor in Practice of Architectural Technology at Harvard Graduate School of Design and advisor to the Aga Khan Development Network. He is also a member of the UK Government National Infrastructure Commission Design Group.

Helen Protheroe

Helen Protheroe is Executive Director Global Partnerships and Philanthropy at The Allen Institute in Seattle and a member of the Allen's C Suite. Her focus is on building the Allen Institute's global community and extending its impact in understanding life and transforming human health. Prior to this appointment she had been Director of Development and Alumni Relations at The Royal College of Art and a member of the college's leadership team. Born in Merthyr Tydfil, Helen has also undertaken executive roles for Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama, LAMDA, the Wales Millennium Centre, The Homeless World Cup (Wales), Royal Opera House and the Design Museum. She is a board member of The Royal College of Arts USA (RCA USA) and of the Aspen Institute UK.

Cllr. Lisa Mytton

Lisa Mytton a former Leader of Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council and former Cabinet Member for Learning. She has been the elected member for the Vaynor ward since 2008. In 2012-13 she became the youngest ever Mayor of Merthyr Tydfil. She has worked for more than 20 years in post-16 education, dealing mainly with apprenticeships, and more recently as an Estyn Peer Inspector. She is a governor of Cyfarthfa Park Primary School and has also represented Merthyr Tydfil on the Welsh Joint Education Committee and the Welsh Local Government Association.

Dr. Marion Loeffler

Marion Loeffler is an historian and broadcaster and Reader in Welsh History at Cardiff University specialising in the industrial and cultural history of modern Wales in its European, empire and global contexts. She is also a member of the Women's Archive Wales Committee and Assistant Editor of the Dictionary of Welsh Biography.

Originally from Berlin and an alumna of Humboldt University, she speaks Welsh fluently, has presented television documentaries on historical themes for S4C and Germany's ORB, and regularly contributes to Radio Cymru and Radio Wales.

Robert Rummey

Robert Rummey is an architect and landscape architect with expertise in re-purposing historic assets for regeneration, tourism, educational and environmental benefit. His practice is currently applying this approach to three castles in the UK and one in Italy, as well as at Bletchley Park, balancing historic exactitude with the need for visitor revenue. The practice has also designed a 120-hectare park at Betteshanger Colliery in Kent and other land-based regeneration, development and recreational initiatives.

Cllr. Geraint Thomas

Geraint Thomas is Leader of Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council and former Member for Regeneration, Transformation and Commercialisation. He has been an Independent Councillor for the Cyfarthfa ward since 2017. He was educated at Cyfarthfa High School and Merthyr College and worked in the family's coal mining business before establishing a recycling business providing safe surfaces for children's play areas.

Sara Turnbull

Sara Turnbull is a chartered environmentalist, social entrepreneur and an award winning leader in sustainability and social value. She has more than 22 years of experience of leading and shaping social enterprises, charities and other organisations committed to creating a more sustainable world. She has worked internationally in community engagement and regeneration, often mentoring social and green start-up businesses.

Sara lives in Swansea and is a non-executive director of the Swansea-based Coastal Housing Group - that has 6,000 homes in south Wales - Chair of the Creative Workspace Resilience Fund for the Greater London Authority, a member of the Sustainable Development Board of Transport for London and a non-executive director of the Covent Garden Market Authority. She also led on the development of social sustainability policies for Foster + Partners. She is the Founder and Director of Workwild and Better Off Edits, and was the Founding Chief Executive of the Creative Land Trust, as well as a former Vice Chair of the European Sustainable Development Council of the Urban Land Institute.

Sarah Hopkins

Sarah Hopkins is Headteacher at Bishop Hedley Catholic High School, Merthyr Tydfil – a school that serves the wider Heads of the Valleys area. Sarah graduated in Religious Studies at Cardiff University and worked in the NHS before moving into teaching. She has taught in Cardiff and Merthyr and was appointed Assistant Head at Bishop Hedley School in 2012, Deputy Head in 2017 and Head in 2018. Sarah has led the school's improvement journey and has represented the education sector on many boards including Qualifications Wales and Welsh Government and local authority panels.

Appendix C: Cyfarthfa Foundation staff

Anna Baker, Chief Executive, The Cyfarthfa Foundation

Anna Baker is an architect and project manager. Before joining the Cyfarthfa Foundation she had completed a £9m scheme to restore the UK's oldest open-air public swimming pool – the Cleveland Pools in Bath which was built in 1815. Anna, who is from Glasgow, studied architecture at Dundee University and London's South Bank University. She has also managed major store development projects for Harrods in London, the building and installation of an interactive pavilion for Samsung in Monaco, and the building of a large movable sculpture – the Mobile Orchard – intended to raise awareness of environmental issues and to act as the centrepiece of the City of London Festival.

The location and expected cost of the proposed facility in Newport is commercially sensitive and we are unable to disclose. However, the site is within the City Centre with excellent access to public transport and active travel routes. The size requirements specified by Welsh Government can be accommodated by the Newport proposal. The following key information also featured within the bid submission and may be of assistance:

- Newport is unrivalled in its location and accessibility.
- Newport has a captive audience - 1.6m people live within a one-hour drive of Newport .
- Newport saw the largest population increase in Wales and is the fastest growing City in Wales.
- There are five universities within 30 miles of Newport, including the prestigious Cardiff School of Art & Design (part of Cardiff Met).
- There is a strong and significant creative network in Newport, including internationally renowned groups, organisations and creators. Newport also has the active Alumni of the Newport Arts College.
- The Newport bid proposes a strategic operational partnership in order to complement, rather than compete with, the existing contemporary art offer.
- The Newport site provides flexible learning and creative space alongside gallery/exhibition spaces and visitor facilities.
- All levels of education, from primary and secondary schools through to colleges, universities and adult community learning will be engaged with the Newport proposal.

Providing a national contemporary art gallery within an existing site (as opposed to new build) is a positive initiative and the overall concept reflects the fact that Wales deserves a national platform to showcase existing and emerging contemporary art. Through choosing a location which does not have any existing national gallery provision, a new facility has the ability to reach a wider audience and directly engage and inspire more diverse communities. However in developing the bid there were a number of issues:

- Lack of information/direction on key issues such as the expected operating model for the new facility. It was unclear if this facility is to be part of Amgueddfa Cymru as one of their national facilities, or what the expected relationship would be with organisations such as Amgueddfa Cymru, Arts Council of Wales and the National Library Wales.

Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport, and International Relations Committee
National Contemporary Art Gallery – Anchor site proposal

24.08.2023

1. Overview and Background

- 1.1. The National Contemporary Art Gallery represents an exciting and significant project for Wales. Establishing an anchor hub and investing in the expansion of the regional sites will contribute significantly to Wales' economy and cultural milieu. This proposal presents the opportunity to establish a national gallery focused on modern and contemporary art, akin to the Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art and Irish Museum of Modern Art. This achievement would bring Wales in line with the other nations of the United Kingdom, offering a platform for national expression and cultural exploration, as observed in other countries.
- 1.2. Swansea Council, in partnership with Urban Splash, submitted a proposal for the Civic Centre to be considered for the National Contemporary Art Gallery anchor hub in March 2023. The bid set out a vision for the gallery, an architectural design, governance structure, its role within the cultural landscape, and an approach to delivery of the capital programme and its ongoing operation. The bid team comprised of:
 - Swansea Council Cultural Services
 - Swansea Council Physical Regeneration and Development Team
 - Urban Splash - Strategic regeneration partner
<https://www.urbansplash.co.uk/>
 - Counterculture - Cultural business and strategic planning consultants
<https://www.counterculturellp.com/>
 - Coffey - Architects
<https://www.coffeyarchitects.com/>
 - Gardiner & Theobald - Cost consultants
<https://www.gardiner.com/>
- 1.3. Swansea Council appointed Urban Splash as its long-term strategic development partner across seven major strategic development sites in 2021, including the 23-acre seafront Civic Centre site, included in the bid. Urban Splash are a pioneering private sector developer with a 30-year track record of transformational urban projects and the creative reuse of existing structures.

- 1.4. In alignment with Swansea Council's corporate well-being objectives, as defined in its Corporate Plan 2023/2024 <https://www.swansea.gov.uk/corporateimprovementplan>, its Asset Management Plan and associated Accommodation Strategy sees the relocation of functions currently housed at the Civic Centre to more accessible and fit-for-purpose locations within the city centre by 2025/6. The vacation of the building will allow for the redevelopment of the site.
- 1.5. Swansea's Glynn Vivian is one of 9 regional galleries that form a national network of galleries across Wales that will provide increased access to the national collection and bring contemporary art closer to communities. The network of galleries will work closely with Amgueddfa Cymru and National Library Wales to curate exhibitions and displays using the national collection alongside and as part of the Glynn Vivian's own programmes and projects.
- 1.6. The commitment is being made possible through a collaboration between the Arts Council of Wales, Amgueddfa Cymru and the National Library of Wales. The three partners have been working with different venues which are being considered as part of the dispersed network of galleries across Wales.
- 1.7. Nine venues across Wales have been shortlisted to be members of the network of galleries, these will be places where people can view the national collection closer to their homes. Each of the venues are now undergoing a more detailed assessment.
- 1.8. Wales, and Swansea has the opportunity to gain international recognition as a destination for modern and contemporary art. By siting the anchor hub at the Civic Centre and establishing Glynn Vivian as a regional site within the same location, a critical mass is achieved, drawing in both local and national visitors and providing the necessary infrastructure and skills base. The collaborative impact of the anchor hub and Glynn Vivian can function as a powerful catalyst, nurturing the growth and prominence of Wales' cultural sector.

2. National Contemporary Art Gallery Anchor Hub – Site and Architecture

- 2.1. Swansea Council and Urban Splash's submission for the National Contemporary Art Gallery anchor hub sees the gallery occupy the repurposed Civic Centre and a new-build 'art-box,' delivering an accessible and sustainable destination of a scale and quality fitting of a national gallery.
- 2.2. The modernist architecture of the Civic Centre and its physical attributes provides a fitting environment for the celebration of Welsh and Modern art in all mediums, scale, and formats. The Civic Centre is a striking example of Modernism and 20th century brutalism, designed by J Webb and CW Quick, West Glamorgan County Architects, and identified by the Twentieth Century Society as a building of architectural significance. The building's location on the seafront, facing out into Swansea Bay, and adjacent to Oystermouth Road, a key arterial highway, makes it one of Swansea's most visible and well-known buildings.
- 2.3. Urban Splash and Swansea Council's stage 1 proposal satisfies all essential and desirable criteria defined by the 'Anchor Site Draft Criteria' provided by Welsh Government, Culture Division.

- 2.4. The gallery will occupy the eastern and central wings of the Civic Centre, utilising the existing imposing 12m-high atrium as the entrance space, the council chamber repurposed as an auditorium, and rooftop canteen reimagined as a restaurant. The two wings on Oystermouth Road provide linear gallery spaces, with accommodation for community and education rooms at ground level linked to the entrance areas. Art handling, storage, and back of house functions sit in the lower ground and basement sections.
- 2.5. A new build 'Art Box' will be inserted between the two existing wings of the building on the Oystermouth Road side. The efficient Art Box provides adaptable large floorplate display spaces that can be configured and subdivided to suit a range of exhibitions, events, and layouts, and easily redeployed or partially closed off during exhibition changeover.
- 2.6. Combining the adaptive reuse of the existing structure with the incorporation of new build components will ensure the greatest adaptability in meeting and exceeding the specified spatial requirements. Single gallery spaces will allow for large-scale installations and the hosting of significant exhibitions. The design provides efficient circulation and service strategies. This solution can meet the changing operational and curatorial needs while providing visitors with an engaging experience.
- 2.7. The design includes spaces with varying ceiling heights, with the minimum height of 6m achieved throughout the gallery. There are several display spaces with a generous 10m ceiling height, specifically tailored for displaying large sculptures and monumental works of art. Lower height areas cater to other forms of art presentation, such as digital or community-focused art, ensuring a comprehensive and inclusive approach to the gallery's programming. A sculpture garden, exploiting the landscape features, delivers spaces for innovative and immersive exhibitions.
- 2.8. The design proposals deliver facilities to accommodate major digital installations and new media forms, such as those found in the Blavatnik, by providing areas of significant size with clear structural spans. Designed with blackout capabilities, allowing for the customisation of lighting conditions to suit the specific requirements of digital installations and other exhibitions with unique spatial and lighting needs. This adaptability ensures that the gallery remains at the forefront of cutting-edge artistic expression, catering to a diverse range of creative mediums.
- 2.9. Artists will be welcomed into the gallery in studio spaces for 'Artists in Residence'. Designed to accommodate a rotational, non-permanent residency programme, these versatile studio spaces provide an inspiring environment for artists to develop and showcase their work. By offering these studio spaces, the gallery will enrich the visitor experience through direct engagement with artists and their creative processes.
- 2.10. The gallery design includes spaces for café, retail, and other income-generating activities that can operate independently of gallery hours, enhancing revenue generation potential and making it a destination for both cultural and social activities. A ground floor sea facing café and retail space, plus roof top restaurant, outside of the secure line, present commercially viable operations that function as attractors in their own right.
- 2.11. Versatile and adaptable learning and engagement spaces will be able to accommodate a range of activities, including workshops, lectures, and interactive programmes tailored to various age groups and interests. The proximity to the gallery

spaces enables seamless integration of the exhibitions into the educational programming, creating an accessible immersive learning experience.

2.12. Centrally located, high quality community spaces will cater to a diverse range of activities and events. This approach aims to create a vibrant cultural hub that is not only a destination for art enthusiasts but also a gathering place for people to connect and collaborate.

2.13. The aim is for the project to achieve Net Zero status, positioning it as an exemplar in terms of sustainability and environmental responsibility. The reuse and refurbishment of the existing building is a sustainable solution in terms of embodied and operational carbon. State-of-the-art retrofit technologies will be employed, as appropriate, to ensure optimal performance of the building. The new build elements will meet the highest standards in terms of embodied, operational, and life cycle carbon emissions.

2.14. The gallery design adopts the principle of accessibility for all, providing seamless access throughout the building. The design incorporates a clear and legible layout and specialist spaces, such as sensory rooms and 'changing spaces', ensuring all visitors can comfortably and safely navigate and experience the venue.

2.15. The National Contemporary Art Gallery will form a significant part of wider plans to transform the Civic Centre and surrounding area into a vibrant new City Waterfront district, reconnecting Swansea with its city beach and south facing bay. The existing building will be the centrepiece of a large-scale mixed-use complex. The gallery will both contribute to and benefit from this lively mix of uses, helping to drive additional footfall to the site, and draw extra visitors into the gallery who may have come to the waterfront for other reasons.

2.16. The Civic Centre's city centre location aligns with Welsh Government's "Town Centre First" initiative and benefits from excellent transport connections.

2.17. The gallery design proposal can accommodate significant annual footfall, meeting the essential target of 750,000 visitors per annum and aiming for the desired level of one million visitors per annum, with the potential for further expansion as required. The site's scale exceeds the current city venues' capacity, which ranges from 75,000 to 200,000 visitors per annum, demonstrating the gallery's potential for attracting larger audiences.

3. National Contemporary Art Gallery Anchor Hub– Governance, Funding, Operational, and Programming Models

3.1. The proposal submitted, as requested by the Stage 1 bid invitation, outlines a suggested funding and governance models, informed by specialist advice, and analysing the following (associated report is included as an appendix to the bid):

- A full review of comparable galleries' programme, scale, governance and funding
- Artists' needs
- Visitor and community needs
- Requirements of the further and higher education sector
- Visitor number modelling and associated market penetration
- Projected income sources across a range of visit scenarios
- Relevant national, regional, and organisational strategies and policies

- 3.2. The recommendation is for the National Contemporary Art Gallery to be funded and staffed through a newly established national organisation, arms-length from government with independent governance, decision-making, fundraising, and income generation powers but substantially funded, both for capital and revenue purposes, through government subsidy. This model is in line with models seen at comparable national and major galleries.
- 3.3. Swansea Council together with Urban Splash would work closely with the organisation to deliver the project.
- 3.4. The submission includes a draft staffing structure with the necessary expertise to deliver the exhibition programme, collections displays and liaison with the national collection and the satellite galleries.
- 3.5. The proposal presents a high-level cost appraisal relating to initial and on-going costs of delivering the anchor site, covering:
- Capital project costs.
 - Ongoing annual revenue/operating costs.
 - Pre-opening organisational development and activity costs: there is a requirement to develop organisational capacity over a period of years before opening to manage the development, plan the opening programme, and ensure operational readiness.
- 3.6. Under a joint venture or partnership with Amgueddfa Cymru and National Library Wales, the new gallery will curate and present a programme that enables it to become a pivotal venue for exhibitions and displays from the permanent national collections of Amgueddfa Cymru, National Library Wales and the regional galleries. The bid outlines a full and costed suggested exhibition framework and timetable developed through analysis of proposed gallery objectives, and exhibition programmes of comparable organisations.
- 3.7. Digital programmes and digital access would be fundamental tenets at the core of any programme or operating models which form part of the National Contemporary Art Gallery. Whilst the Civic Centre offers more than adequate space and with investment the correct conditions to care for collections in the traditional sense re security, conservation, environmental controls it also provides an excellent space for the public to engage digitally with the collection via Celf Ar Cyd and other collection management systems.
- 3.8. The gallery will work to the National Museum Directors' Council Principles for Lending and Borrowing including the expectation that they will meet the standards for environment and security set out in the Government Indemnity Scheme Guidelines for Non-national institutions or as agreed with the lending organisation. The Council's Cultural Services and its partners are responsible for managing and curating the Glynn Vivian Art Gallery; Dylan Thomas Exhibition; Swansea Museum; West Glamorgan Archives and the National Waterfront Museum, all of which have MA Accreditation and are networked to their respective peers internationally. Glynn Vivian, alongside Mostyn and Artes Mundi are the only three galleries that are part of the PlusTate Network in Wales, which supports excellence in its contemporary exhibition and learning programmes. The process for coordinating and facilitating touring exhibitions and exchange is well known and applied regularly, ensuring loans from national and international collections and vice versa. With appropriate modification around environmental controls, security measures for display and storage, this would be a world class gallery space. The lower ground floor of the Civic Centre, currently used by Central

Library as a distribution facility for 17 libraries, provide for excellent access and loading bay facilities for receiving and distributing artworks. A list of potential national and international exhibition partnerships is included in the bid.

4. Merits of the Proposed Model - 8-10 regional sites and an anchor hub

4.1. Swansea Council recognises the merits of the proposed model of regional sites and an anchor hub. Appropriate capital and revenue funding models, and resource development, will be required to ensure long-term sustainability and vibrancy of the regional sites, the anchor hub, and the existing national and local cultural institutions and networks. The Anchor hub situated at the Civic Centre, and the Glynn Vivian as a regional site, has the potential to significantly contribute to Wales' modern and contemporary art sector. Their combined efforts, in a single destination, could serve as a powerful catalyst, boosting the growth and prominence of this artistic field.

The merits include:

4.2. Revealing the national collections to new audiences by enabling access for the widest and most diverse audiences through the larger scale central hub and local sites. An anchor hub will be able to display collections that are currently in storage due to display and capacity limitations.

4.3. Providing Wales with a gallery possessing the scale of requisite infrastructure to further enable participation in the international art world through commissions, collaborations, and touring exhibitions.

4.4. Creating a focal point for modern and contemporary Welsh art and artists to celebrate Welsh culture and identity today. Working in tandem with the 8-10 regional sites and the national partner institutions, the anchor hub would be a platform to explore and debate what contemporary Wales: what are its roots, what it feels to be Welsh today, what does future Wales look like.

4.5. Establishing a hub for the Welsh visual arts sector, providing a landmark, world class, curatorial, administrative, logistic centre for the proposed regional model. Therefore, future proofing the production of and engagement with art and heritage collections in the age of digital culture and climate change.

4.6. Contribute towards significant skill and talent development:

4.6.1. Give opportunities for gallery staff to develop their practice and experience in new areas of research and skills, including in curation, collections, and exhibition management, within an internationally significant gallery context.

4.6.2. The anchor hub would be a major resource to the further and higher arts education system. The project has the potential to engage with a range of educational institutions, regionally and nationally, enabling students and staff to benefit from talent and professional development opportunities, including the ability to learn in 'real time' in the gallery space.

4.7. Function as cornerstone of the urban regeneration and a key strategic element in the delivery of a stronger visitor and cultural economy.

4.7.1. The anchor hub would be an asset and attractor of national and international scale. Located at the Civic Centre within in a vibrant urban seafront destination, the hub would act as a crucial catalyst for further growth in Wales second city and the

wider regional economy by attracting a new wave of investment, visitors, and sustainable development.

- 4.7.2. Swansea's regeneration programme secures its role as the regional capital of South-West Wales, facilitating growth of the wider regional and national economies. Last year saw the delivery of its first major scheme, Copr Bay, with a landmark 3,500 seat arena, coastal park, and new homes. Next year will see number of new developments opening, including the City Deal-enabled tech-focused workspace at 71/72 The Kingsway, the Council's Community Hub, plus a revitalised Palace Theatre. The historical Hafod Morfa Copperworks benefits from newly opened the Penderyn Distillery and Visitor Centre and the recently announced £29 million Levelling up bid for the Lower Swansea Valley. Swansea Council is working with Urban Splash to bring forward other sites including Swansea Central and riverside St. Thomas. New infrastructure will reconnect Swansea's urban core to its beach; 'Ffordd I'r Mor' with link Swansea Central, Copr Bay and the City Waterfront via traffic free active travel route. These strategic largescale schemes look to deliver growth in jobs, values, and private investment, building the city's ability to sustain viable development.
- 4.7.3. The National Contemporary Gallery Anchor Hub and Glynn Vivian regional site would be key attractors and facilitators within a wider cultural network. Enhancing Swansea's existing gallery network by attracting visitors to the city who will also be interested in the wider visual arts offer in Swansea. The city's record of hosting major events and attractions, such as the Wales Airshow, BBC Proms in the Park, and concerts featuring world-renowned artists, demonstrates its capacity to market, manage, and sustain its cultural portfolio.

End.

National Contemporary Art Gallery Engagement findings

August 2023

As part of the **Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport, and International Relations Committee** inquiry into the Welsh Government's plans for a **National Contemporary Art Gallery**, the Citizen Engagement Team proposed a qualitative approach to engagement, comprising of six focus groups. This paper communicates the findings.

Background

1. As part of its inquiry on the National Contemporary Art Gallery, the Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport, and International Relations Committee were interested to hear the views of artists, gallery staff, friends and supporters of art galleries on the merits of the model proposed by the Welsh Government.

Engagement

2. Between 24 July and 8 August 2023, six online focus groups were conducted by the Citizen Engagement Team. The purpose of the focus groups was to provide the Committee with the views of stakeholders on the Welsh Government plans for a National Contemporary Art Gallery and the digital access to contemporary art.



Participants

- 3.** 29 participants took part in the focus groups. Participants included academics, national and international Wales based artists, gallery staff and members of art charities and organisations.
- 4.** Some of the participants were associated with the venues shortlisted as members of the network of galleries for the National Contemporary Art Gallery. Other participants were associated with venues bidding for the anchor site for the gallery.
- 5.** Participants were sourced via a screening survey sent to over 25 individual artists, over 20 galleries (both public and private), and over 15 art charities or organisations associated with art across Wales.
- 6.** All venues shortlisted as members of the network of galleries for the National Contemporary Art Gallery were invited to take part in the focus groups.
- 7.** The Citizen Engagement Team liaised with relevant stakeholders (for example, Disability Arts Cymru and Race Council Cymru) to ensure fair, diverse and inclusive representation in the focus groups.
- 8.** Participants came from all five regions of the Senedd.
- 9.** Thank you to everyone who contributed to the programme of engagement.

Methodology

- 10.** All focus groups were held online to enable as many as possible of the identified participants to take part.
- 11.** The following discussion points were addressed during the focus groups:
 - What are the merits of the model proposed by the Welsh Government for a National Contemporary Art Gallery?
 - What are the challenges of the model proposed?
 - What difference will it make to people and their communities that they will be able to access contemporary art locally?
 - What will be the advantages, if any, of the digital access to contemporary art?

- What will be the disadvantages, if any, of the digital access to contemporary art?

Key themes

Merits of the Welsh Government plans for a National Contemporary Art Gallery

- 12.** All participants agreed that a National Contemporary Art Gallery would have great potential in order to promote artists, create jobs for artists and practitioners and help promote Wales.
- 13.** The majority of participants were supportive of the Welsh Government plans for a dispersed model.
- 14.** Participants agreed that one of the main merits of the dispersed model will be giving access to the national collection, across Wales. Potentially, it will identify it nationally and internationally.
- 15.** Many participants, both artists and gallery staff, spoke of the potential of the National Contemporary Art Gallery for Welsh artists and Wales based artists on an international level.
- 16.** Participants shared their vision of new commissions that will respond to the national collection ensuring that the collection itself does not remain static.
- 17.** Participants were pleased that the Welsh Government plans for the National Contemporary Art Gallery seem to have gained momentum during recent months.
- 18.** All participants agreed that the launch of the new website, [Celf ar y Cyd](#), in June 2023, was a significant milestone in the progression of the Welsh Government plans for a National Contemporary Art Gallery.

"I'm not sure that everybody involved understands the scale of this ... what this could be, and in essence needs to be, if it's going to be good enough. If we're going to do it, we have to do it properly."

"[We need] to lift this from 'here is our collection and we're making it more accessible' which is of course brilliant, to 'Let's really raise the bar for what Welsh art means, internationally'."

Dispersed model

- 19.** The majority of participants agreed that the dispersed model is a strong model. It is well suited for Wales, where both the anchor site and the network galleries could be utilised to share national collections.
- 20.** Participants felt this was an opportunity to do something different and innovative with contemporary art in Wales as well as raise awareness of the national collection on a local level.
- 21.** Assuming that all venues listed for the network galleries within the dispersed model will come to fruition, participants agreed that the venues listed demonstrated a good demographic spread across Wales, including rural areas.
- 22.** Many participants suggested that the network galleries are the key 'strand' to the dispersed model in allowing people to access the national collection and contemporary art in Wales.
- 23.** Participants suggested this was a unique opportunity for galleries who are part of the Welsh Government plans, to develop as galleries and work in partnership to promote contemporary art in Wales.
- 24.** Some participants mentioned how worthwhile it has been to date. Working with other network galleries has been beneficial through sharing ideas, experiences and expertise.
- 25.** Some participants suggested that having work curated and exhibited differently, and more diversely in various venues, would benefit all.
- 26.** Other participants mentioned how the network galleries, in particular, could develop expertise in different *genres* within the national collection.
- 27.** Participants agreed that all 'strands' of the National Contemporary Art Gallery's hub and spoke model should support local artist activity.
- 28.** Some participants suggested that being able to access art locally could encourage people to invest and buy artwork.
- 29.** Some participants mentioned the value of the dispersed model in the context of the age of Artificial Intelligence. The opportunity to be able to access art locally would contribute to the need for responding as humans to complex ideas through contemporary art.

30. Participants mentioned the shift to the increase in working remotely and working flexible hours, especially since the pandemic. Being able to access the national collection in their local community could make a difference to people as they possibly spend their time differently and reassess their work-life balance.

"Taking art to various parts of the country, especially taking it away from where we are now in south-east Wales is admirable and should be supported."

"The fact that [Wales] is geographically diverse but also geographically small makes it eminently suitable for this kind of model ... each of the venues is very distinctive in their own way."

"It's given us [the network galleries] the opportunity to develop professionally."

"... being able to curate it differently in different spaces ... that seems to me to be wholly positive."

"I don't think we're screaming enough about Welsh art, this would be a great way to do it. I feel very strongly about it."

"The anchor site has to be a trophy building, that's important, it needs to be a destination ... but I also think what's important is the dissemination of art ... that's what going to help the fostering of contemporary art in Wales. There's a lot of talent in Wales that's not being exploited."

Anchor site

31. Participants suggested the anchor site should be rooted in Welsh history, with international significance. For example, the history of past industries in both north and south Wales. This would bind Welsh heritage and culture with contemporary art and allow people to respond to it.

32. Participants mentioned that this principle should be reflected in the network galleries too - using relevant artworks from the national collection to introduce and enrich understanding of local history.

33. Many participants suggested that the anchor site should be 'iconic' and should act as a parent site. Other participants described it as a potential 'trophy building'.

34. Few participants mentioned the Yorkshire Sculpture Park - which has developed from being a small college to an extraordinary park and hub - as a good model to follow for the anchor site.

"There is a history of people coming to Wales and working in Wales and being supported and being inspired by Wales and producing international quality of work ... The anchor site has a responsibility to support new work being produced here in Wales."

"Being able to make sure there is access across the whole country seems like a brilliant thing to do, but there is also strength in having an anchor site as well, because you kind of need a central place that can support that network ... like a parent site."

Anticipated impact of being able to access art locally

35. All participants agreed that the dispersed model has huge potential to benefit people and local communities.

36. As teachers and tutors, many participants shared their first-hand experience of seeing the impact of art and art activities on the wellbeing of individuals and local communities.

37. Many participants spoke of the wider benefits to other services too, for example social care and health services.

38. All participants agreed that the dispersed model offered far-reaching opportunities within the education sector. For example, one participant spoke of lack of resources in schools, having to always take materials and basic resources with her to school workshops. The participant hoped the dispersed model would offer new, exciting opportunities for partnerships between the network galleries and local schools, which would create and nurture an interest in young people in the national collection.

39. Some participants spoke of the potential of the dispersed model for them as emerging artists.

“As an art teacher and trying to get art into all parts of the community all the time for everybody, it’s going to make such a huge difference, and being able to champion that and feel proud of an institution we have developed which further connects us all and allows us to have stronger relationships with other parts of Wales ... that’s so necessary at the moment.”

“As a tutor ... the response from people attending [recovery classes] is unbelievable and the medical opinion now is going towards the benefit of art.”

“Wales has innumerable and talented artists working in its communities. It would be great for them to have some recognition.”

“You’re talking about £300 to get a bus [for a school visit] and that money is not available today ... So, the idea of having [art] in our communities is a great idea ... that we can open the arts world out into the community, without having to travel.”

Tourism

40. Participants mentioned that a National Contemporary Art Gallery has the potential to drive tourism and investment in local areas, across Wales.

“In terms of tourism I think its massive. We get people who come to holiday in west Wales and who now come just to see exhibitions ... and [in terms of] ownership locally and people actually kind of being proud of Welsh art ... they actually compete on the international stage, because the standard is already there.”

Welsh language

41. Many participants spoke of the opportunities the National Contemporary Art Gallery would lend to promote the awareness of the Welsh language, nationally and internationally.

Challenges of the Welsh Government plans for a National Contemporary Art Gallery

Lack of information

42. Many participants spoke of their concern about the lack of information available about the Welsh Government plans for a National Contemporary Art Gallery.

43. As artists, many participants felt that they had not been involved in the process of developing the Welsh Government plans for the contemporary art gallery.

44. Some participants raised concerns about the lack of logistical information about the Welsh Government plans, for example timescales and staffing.

“Artists feel out of the loop. To be honest, the galleries have felt out of the loop for quite a long time as well.”

“More knowledge would be helpful. We’re having to guess, almost hoping what this might be.”

“We don’t have a sense of how this will operate and who will run it.”

“I’m struggling because there is a lot of unknown factors ... I can see a lot of potential in it, and I hope it’s a good opportunity to bring in people that are really underrepresented in art, for example disabled people, but all the other groups who need to be seen too.”

Terminology

45. One participant suggested that this is not a new model, it is an already well-established model found elsewhere. However, it is not usually described as a ‘gallery’. This has led to confusion and a lack of understanding of the project.

46. Some participants raised concerns about the lack of consistency in the use of terminology. For example, the anchor site is described as a flagship building and an anchor site, which are two very different ideas.

47. One participant suggested having a flagship building with its own budget and staff would give impetus to the national collection, in a way the dispersed model would not.

48. The same participant mentioned the downside to having the flagship building would probably be the relationship with the network galleries.

“The wording is quite confusing ... the word gallery implies a physical space.”

“One thing I think is really interesting is that this Welsh model is described as the National Contemporary Art Gallery ... It's simply a model of disseminating collections more effectively throughout a country.”

“There are many good things about it; it acknowledges the geography of our country, the cultural diversity of the country. But in practice, it seems to be extremely complicated and actually a rather fraught process.”

Dispersed model

49. Many participants spoke of the challenge for all venues involved to keep their own identity as individual sites, as well as being a part of the National Contemporary Art Gallery.

50. Other participants spoke of the challenge for the National Contemporary Art Gallery to have its own clear and consistent identity, so that people understand what is meant by the gallery itself.

51. Some participants mentioned the challenge of making the National Contemporary Art Gallery relevant to people in their local communities.

52. Participants suggested that it will be challenging to make sure that the project is viewed as a whole and venues should not be seen as separate ‘strands.’

53. Many participants spoke of the need for a holistic approach with shared protocols for all the venues involved, i.e. the nine network galleries, the potential three hubs and the anchor site.

- 54.** Participants mentioned the challenge of working collaboratively, ensuring that all partners are treated fairly, equally and feel included in the project.
- 55.** Similarly, some participants spoke about their experience of the process to date and felt that it was more top down than what they had hoped.
- 56.** Some participants spoke of the disconnect between the hubs and the nine network galleries.
- 57.** Having attended some information sharing sessions with the Welsh Government, some participants felt that there was very little difference between existing processes and the new model being proposed, for example, when applying for a loan from the national collection.
- 58.** As artists, many participants spoke of the challenge of embracing all forms of contemporary art within the national gallery.

"It has to be made to work so that everybody is working together and there's no competition between sites."

"It is only going to be as strong as the collaboration between the anchor site and the existing sites."

"It's all about relevance ... actually making it relevant to my environment and it actually being of interest to the people around me is very, very important."

"Acknowledging the expertise, the curatorial perspective of each of the [network galleries] and that they have their own context and locality ... is not as much a part of the conversation as it should be at the moment."

"The national centres ... are they calling the tune or to what extent is it a model which actually listens to, understands, learns from and respects the expertise of the venue galleries?"

"It's to do with mindset, Cardiff has to resist the idea that the museum is doing us a favour."

"It will just be so dispersed that it doesn't have a central identity. That would be my worry."

"It needs to be from the ground up, if it starts to feel from the top down, it's going to feel as if it's imposed on people and will become patronising."

Anchor site

- 59.** Many participants mentioned the need for clarity concerning the anchor site and raised concerns about the recent development and lack information about this 'strand.'
- 60.** Some participants questioned the need for an anchor site suggesting it would be more beneficial to further utilise existing galleries.
- 61.** Other participants suggested that the anchor site should be the starting point, then being able to further direct to the network galleries across Wales.
- 62.** Few participants discussed the idea of having a 'family of galleries' on three sites, similar to Tate, which is a family of four sites, including St Ives, Cornwall. These could be located in north, mid and south Wales.
- 63.** Few participants were in favour of having one physical building for the National Contemporary Art Gallery.

"I would rather see investment to build up what is currently quite a precarious visual arts ... rather than divert money into a big, new glossy building which may not have a clear rationale."

"It would be lovely to have a super duper gallery, a central point. But you have to be practical. We are living in dire times at the moment."

"Personally, it feels like a bit of a cop out to be honest ... we really do need a contemporary art gallery in one building, and we need the Welsh Government to do it!"

Private sector

- 64.** Few participants mentioned how the private and public sector could work in conjunction to develop and sustain a National Contemporary Art Gallery.

“There is an assumption all the time in the public sector, that once you set these things up they have to be government funded ... but it doesn't have to be like that. [The Welsh Government] really do need to have the private sector onboard ... This is a gallery that can become self-sufficient.”

Promotion

65. Participants felt that effective promotion would be key to the success of the dispersed model; many spoke of the challenges of such promotion.

66. Many participants spoke of the need for cafes, shops etc. to encourage people to visit the galleries as well as family activities to allow the local community to take ownership of the National Contemporary Art Gallery.

Transport and sustainability

67. Some participants suggested it will be challenging to ensure good or even sufficient transport links between the various galleries, across Wales.

68. Many participants mentioned the issues of transporting the national collection to venues across Wales and raised concerns about carbon footprint.

Economy

69. In light of the current economic climate, some participants spoke of their concern about public response to the spending regarding the National Contemporary Art Gallery.

70. Some participants raised concerns about the ongoing funding, particularly regarding staffing the venues across Wales.

71. Participants suggested the potential of sponsorships for the National Contemporary Art Gallery.

Digital access to contemporary art

Advantages

72. All participants agreed that digital access to contemporary art is an integral 'strand' of the Welsh Government plans for a National Contemporary Art Gallery.

- 73.** Participants agreed that the new website, **Celf ar y Cyd**, launched in June 2023, has huge potential for the acknowledgment of contemporary art in Wales on an international level.
- 74.** Many participants praised the quality of the digitisation on the **Celf ar y Cyd** website.
- 75.** As lecturers, teachers and tutors, many participants spoke of how the website would enrich and enhance many aspects of the education sector.
- 76.** Some participants mentioned the inclusivity of digital access, particularly for people whom are not physically able to visit galleries.
- 77.** One participant noted how digital access should not be an alternative to visiting galleries, but rather another option, especially for people not within reach of galleries.
- 78.** Many participants suggested that digital access would be the springboard needed to encourage people to visit galleries.
- 79.** Participants spoke about how the **Celf ar y Cyd** website would raise awareness and introduce the Welsh language to a new audience.

"It is a democratic way of sharing the work and would increase its visibility."

"... it doesn't matter where in the world you are, you can see Welsh art. In that respect, you compete with all the other major galleries, because you become that other entity."

"Digital access is really important from a teaching and research perspective, having one centralised, standardised database with images and cataloguing information is really valuable. But it can't be just a website, it needs to be a part of the wider programme of the gallery."

"The interactive and immersive side of digital access to contemporary art is really exciting."

"The digital gallery is absolutely brilliant. It's a great idea."

“The digital artwork could be used almost like a trojan horse to introduce the language to people who don’t know about it ... it does give it another perspective.”

Disadvantages

- 80.** Participants spoke of the challenges of digital poverty, restricting access to contemporary art.
- 81.** Many participants shared their concerns about digital access discouraging people to visit galleries in person.
- 82.** All participants suggested that the experience of accessing art physically is very different to accessing art digitally. All participants spoke of the need to be physically in the same room as the artwork in order to fully appreciate the work.
- 83.** Many participants spoke about the social aspect of visiting a gallery, which is lost when accessing art digitally.
- 84.** Participants spoke of the need to involve the artists themselves in the process of the digitisation of contemporary art.
- 85.** Participants mentioned the challenge of keeping the digitisation of contemporary art up to date.
- 86.** One participant mentioned that researchers need something less curated than a public facing digital resource and a fine balance was needed.
- 87.** As artists, some participants spoke of their concern about people taking ideas from their artwork.
- 88.** One participant mentioned the possible issue of over digitisation.

“We’re all so au fait with sitting in front of a screen and accessing anything in the world, but to actually go into a physical space and the work in reality is a totally different experience.”

“As an artist, the painted surface is very important to me in my work and is a whole other dimension to my artwork.”

Document is Restricted

Agenda Item 10.2

By virtue of paragraph(s) vii of Standing Order 17.42

Document is Restricted