

21st August 2008



Andrew Welsh MSP
Convenor
Finance Committee
The Scottish Parliament
Edinburgh
EH99 1SP

Architecture+DesignScotland
Ailtearachd is Dealbhadh na h-Alba

Bakehouse Close
146 Canongate
Edinburgh EH8 8DD UK

www.ads.org.uk
info@ads.org.uk

T +44 (0)131 556 6699
F +44 (0)131 556 6633

Architecture and Design Scotland is incorporated under the Companies Act 1985 as a private limited Company, Company No SC267870.

Dear Mr Welsh

Request for further comment in relation to proposals for the Scottish Futures Trust

Thank you for the e-mail of 12th June 2008 inviting us to provide further comment on the government's proposals for the Scottish Futures Trust (SFT). We welcome this opportunity, and have confined our comments predominantly to your second point of inquiry – that of the role of the SFT as a 'centre of expertise'.

You will recall from our letter dated 6th December 2007 that we set out three basic principles for public procurement (see below). The 'centre of expertise' must act upon these principles if it is to meet the stated aspiration of being a "*provider of policy support, quality assurance, guidance and standardisation*". The requirement to deliver on this wider quality assurance role (either in-house or in partnership with other agencies) must be clearly defined by the organisation's sponsors in Government and be part of the criteria for measuring the success of the SFT.

A+DS Principles for Quality Assured Public Procurement

1.0 Policy and delivery should be linked.

Policy makers, and those with an overarching responsibility for the delivery of design quality by the Scottish Government, should be accountable for the delivery, by public bodies, of such quality. Their responsibility should go beyond the production of guidance and to include responsibility for the impact that guidance has on investment. They should monitor the outcomes of procurement and report on their success in improving the built environment through all the mechanisms that influence procurement across the sectors.

2.0 Public leadership of procurement processes.

Public procurement should value and deliver well designed environments that support our communities and public services and thus realise the full potential of capital investment. From our work and involvement in projects we note the following areas for improvement:

- Client bodies need to recognise and understand that a development is not "**fit for purpose**" unless it supports the sustainable development of the community in which it sits and the health and wellbeing of users. These broader qualitative issues should be a key objective of the commissioning body, and one in which the public has a voice.

- The opportunity, through good design, to **increase efficiency** and **reduce the cost** of running a public service needs to be understood and capitalised upon. This will require strategic design skills to be targeted at appropriate points in the procurement process to ensure that the investment realises the broadest and best impact.
- The client body should **control** the execution of the project to ensure that quality is delivered. Transferring responsibility for quality to those less motivated in the wider public interest makes the delivery of these broader objectives more difficult to achieve. Further, reducing the access of the client (and stakeholders) to the designer can be an obstacle to the constructive dialogue that assists designers in responding to the client's needs and aspirations.
- If the public sector client is to take a leadership role in procurement then project teams must be suitably **resourced and trained**. Client teams need to have the skills to plan and control the stages of the process by which it is delivered. This requires leadership at the highest level to ensure that quality is an objective given to the team, but also that senior people within the client team have a **professional design education** (either in-house or consultant design advisors) so that they have the confidence and skills to make judgements on such issues.

3.0 Procurement processes should recognise and value design quality.

An understanding of the value and contribution that a well designed environment can make to service delivery and the wellbeing of the wider community is key in effectively targeting investment. We recommend that long-term qualitative objectives are given prominence in the following processes:

- **Project Initiation:** the earliest documents describing the required outcomes of the project - the criteria against which the success of the project, and therefore the client team, will be assessed – should include design quality as a required outcome.
- **Financial modelling of business cases:** criteria should be developed to allow the value of a well designed environment to be quantified and recognised in financial assessments, particularly in relation to offsetting any revenue costs that may be seen as a bar to capital investment.
- **Project review systems:** these should include an assessment of the potential of the project to deliver an outcome of high design quality so that long-term best-value can be more readily realised and more properly planned for, thus reducing the risk of cost and programme over-runs.
- **Competitive selection procedures:** these currently include assessment of both quality and cost aspects of a bid, however the design quality of the end product is often only a small proportion of the total score due to the number of other delivery factors that are included in the quality assessment. We recommend that design quality be a separate and prominent part in the assessment of bids (i.e. quality:cost ratios should be replaced by design:delivery:cost ratios).

Architecture and Design Scotland is actively seeking involvement in the establishment of the SFT to discuss how these objectives may be enshrined in the remit and practices of the SFT as part of the intended “*Quality Assurance approach to procurement*”. Further, we seek to discuss with the SFT how they will employ the skills and experience needed to deliver the Government's policies on architecture and designing places, and any areas of overlap with our remit as the Government's Champion in this field.

We would welcome the opportunity to assist the Finance Committee further on these matters by making representation in person to the Committee. We look forward to discussing these issues with you.

Yours sincerely

Sebastian Tombs
Chief Executive
 Architecture and Design Scotland