PRESS RELEASE
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For immediate release

Sustainability, accessibility focus for the Design Council brand refresh

Guidelines audit first aims to pave the way for a more inclusive, climate conscious design industry

(London, UK. 28 February 2023) The Design Council's refreshed visual identity launched today (28 February) with sustainability and accessibility at its heart. As the UK's national strategic advisors for design, the Design Council aims to open a conversation around graphic design principles that are more inclusive and responsive to the climate emergency and to better serve design's two key stakeholders: people and planet.

Refreshed identity

The Design Council worked with B Corp certified brand studio OPX to create a simplified design system and updated graphic language, promoting the use of white space and applying a structured use of red to create signature moments. The colour palette has been streamlined to

replace black with a deep claret that brings depth and warmth. Carefully selected hero imagery is used to champion all disciplines of the design industry as well as UK communities and business.

Designed by Tayburn McIlroy Coates in 1996, the distinctive red Design Council logo remains unchanged. With its core red colour and Quay Sans typeface, it cements the clarity and consistency of the brand's identity.

Sustainability & accessibility audit

Mia Allers, Design Lead on gov.uk at the Government Digital Service audited the new guidelines and provided recommendations about its physical and digital application.

Allers conducted the accessibility and sustainability audit in late 2022. The accessibility audit was based on the AA rating for WCAG 2.1 published in 2018. For non-digital applications, feedback was based on a translation of WCAG guidelines (where appropriate), the Leserlich contrast calculator and industry best practices.

The sustainability audit took into account broad considerations of how the brand may be applied to communication materials. However, there isn't a formal set of rules to follow to keep the carbon impact of branding to a minimum, as with accessibility standards.

Allers' recommendations led to several adjustments to the new guidelines, including:

- The addition of an off-white colour to use in digital applications, as white is the most energy emitting colour.
- Using cropping, a two colour only filter and saving file in SVG format to reduce the size of images.
- Helvetica Neue was selected for the signature typeface because serif fonts have been found to be harder for neurodiverse people to read.
- Use of white space increases legibility and allows for printing directly onto white paper.
- Introducing HTML versions of all pdf documents to be screen-reader friendly.
- Guidance for not using red and colour combinations with type under a certain size to ensure legibility.
- Use of consistent headings in presentations and reports to help with user navigation.

The Design Council hopes to start a dialogue with the design community to continue to learn and inspire others to incorporate people and planet in their work.

The Design Council's CEO Minnie Moll said: "It can be tempting to be too clever or too showy when designing for the Design Council but OPX Studio has done exactly what we wanted. The brief was for a refresh rather than a rebrand and the small but important changes that were made have created a canvas for our communications that feels fresher, warmer and cleaner."

Moll continues, "Our new mission makes walking the walk an imperative and conducting a sustainability and accessibility audit of the brand guidelines makes the Design Council brand fit for purpose for a new era of Design for Planet. We see this as a work in progress and we hope to hear from other design practitioners doing the same, so we can share knowledge and continue to do better."

David Bennett, Creative Director of OPX Studio said: "This project is the result of a chance

encounter in 2021 when we saw Minnie speak passionately about the Design Council. It got us thinking about what design means for everyone and led to a simplified visual language that we hope will help support the brilliant work they do. We welcome the opportunity to learn more about accessibility."

Commenting on the audit, Mia Allers said: "When you understand the impacts of what you do, you are more likely to design in a considered and strategic way. Conducting a sustainability and accessibility audit is just the start. And for the Design Council, it's a new approach that I hope to see adopted by more brands. Sustainability and accessibility guidelines will help steer the strategy of each piece of communication created from now on. It all comes down to clarity, usability and impact, which are foundational to good design."

View the new brand guidelines here: https://www.designcouncil.org.uk/fileadmin/uploads/dc/Documents/Design_Council_Brand_Guidelines_2023_FINAL.pdf.

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Notes to Editor:

About the Design Council:
The Design Council is the UK's national strategic advisor for design, championing design and its ability to make life better for all. It is an independent and not for profit organisation incorporated by Royal Charter. The Design Council uniquely works across all design sectors and delivers programmes with business, government, public bodies and the third sector. The work encompasses thought leadership, tools and resources, showcasing excellence, and research to evidence the value of design and influence policy. Their Design for Planet mission was introduced in 2021 to galvanise and support the 1.97 million people who work in the UK's design economy to help achieve net zero and beyond.

#DesignForPlanet

www.designcouncil.org.uk

About OPX Studio:
OPX invents, reinvigorates and transforms brands.
opx.studio