

The National Champion for Design

Annual Report 2024/2025



Design Council colleagues and
Experts at the Expert Refresh
Launch July 2024.

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& Chair of the Board of
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About the Design Council



The Design Council is the UK's national champion for the effective use of design for the benefit of the economy, society and the environment. 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. Our 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.

The Trustees submit this Annual Report for the year ended 31 March 2025 along with the financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2025, which comply with the current statutory requirements and which have been prepared in accordance with the Statement of Recommended Practice: Accounting and Reporting by Charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102), and the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the United Kingdom and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) and the Charities Act 2011.

Foreword

As we mark our 80th year, the Design Council stands at a moment of historic opportunity and responsibility. Founded during a time of national renewal, we are once again called upon to help shape a better future, this time amidst the pressing challenge of the climate and nature crisis.

Over the past year, our work has continued to champion design as an essential skill for the green transition, and a driver of opportunities and growth. This has included launching an ambitious mission to upskill one million designers in green design skills by 2030.

Our Design for Planet momentum is building. We created a refreshed network of Design Council Experts, selected for their Design for Planet knowledge and practice. Our fourth Design for Planet Festival, held in Manchester, brought together practitioners, businesses, and community leaders around

the theme of Planet Positive Business. We announced an impressive cohort of Ambassadors and Design for Planet Trailblazers, remarkable individuals shaping the future of sustainable design, featured in the Financial Times and Observer as part of our countdown to the World Design Congress, which we are set to host later in 2025.

The Congress is set to be a catalytic moment not only for the UK but for the global design community. It has already begun to galvanise support and collaboration. This year we welcomed major partners including Kearney, Zaha Hadid Architects, and Decathlon, whose commitment to our shared mission is enabling us to deliver a Congress with ambition and global relevance.

We've been working to ensure design's influence reaches the highest levels. From

convening a Homes Taskforce to champion sustainable, human-centred housing, to celebrating design leadership at the Royal Garden Party at Buckingham Palace, we are strengthening the voice of design in public life.

The road to the World Design Congress and beyond will involve deep collaboration, new partnerships, and an unwavering commitment to designing for planet. We are ready. And we know there is a growing movement alongside us.



Minnie Moll
Chief Executive

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Minnie Moll'.



William Eccleshare
Chair of the Board of Trustees

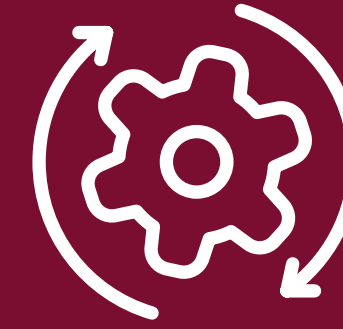
A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'William Eccleshare'.

Charitable objects

The Design Council is a charity
incorporated by Royal Charter.

We are guided by four key objectives.

1



The advancement of British
industry and public services
by the improvement of
design in their processes,
products and services.

2



The protection, enhancement,
improvement and
revitalisation of the natural
and built environment
(including architecture).

3



The advancement of the
education of the public
in subjects relating to
sustainable development
and sustainable living.

4



To promote the study of
and research into the value
of design and to actively
disseminate the results to the
public at large.

Our vision and mission

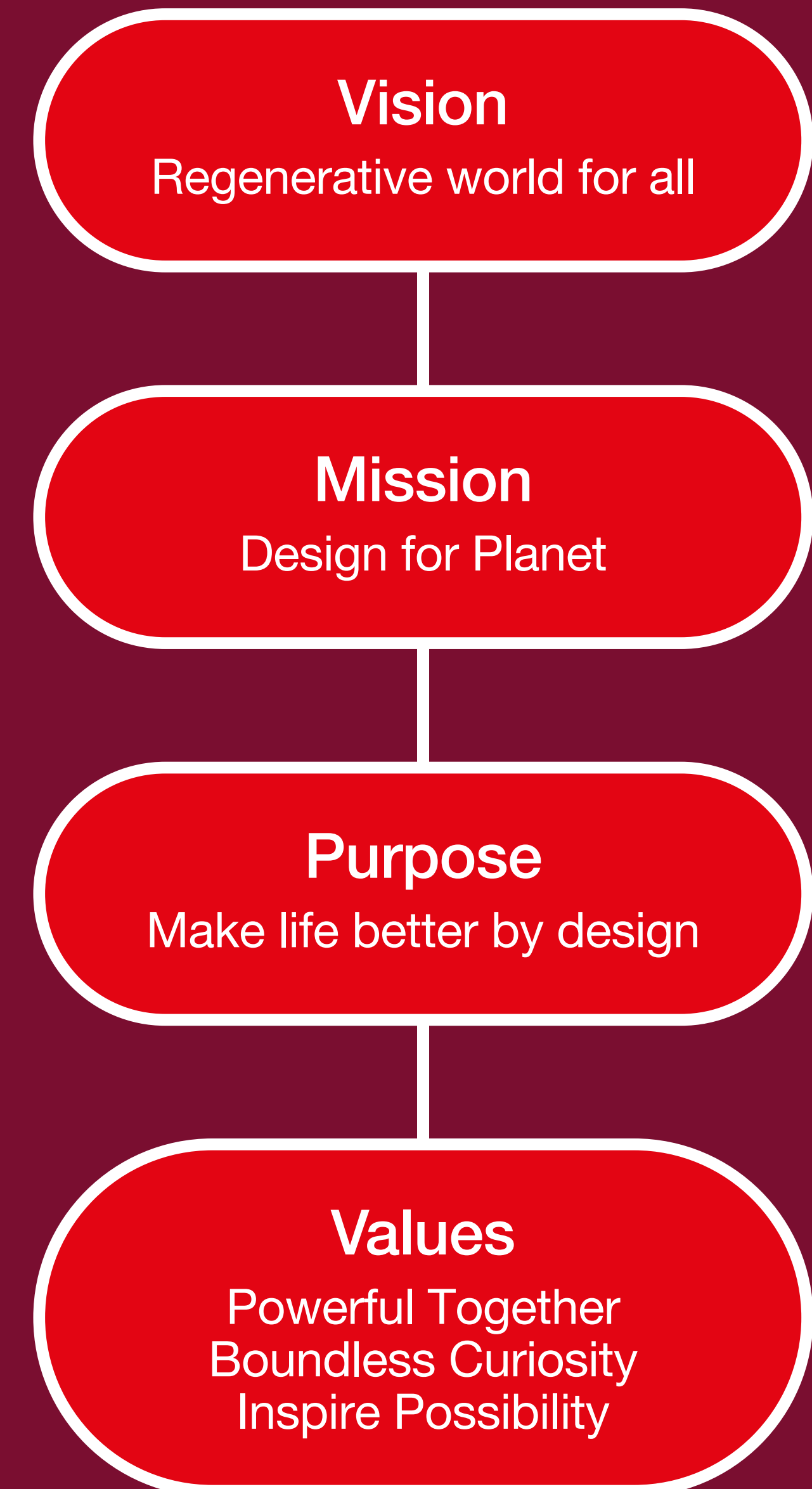
We are hopeful that, as part of a global design community, we can truly drive the change we want to see in the world.



Design had a role in getting us to the point when we are taking more from the planet than it has to give, and now design must play a critical and potentially transformative role in the creation of a positive future.

We have published our 5-year strategy as our roadmap for accelerating a societal transition from a consumer economy to a regenerative society.

Design for Planet is not just our mission, it's a call to action, a practice, a movement and a definition of good design.



What we do

At Design Council we commission pioneering evidence-based research, develop ground-breaking programmes and deliver influencing and policy work to demonstrate the power of design.

We bring together non-designers and designers from grassroots to government and share with them our design expertise to transform the way they work.



Fundraising statement

Section 162a of the Charities Act 2011 requires charities to make a statement regarding fundraising activities. Although we do not undertake fundraising from the general public, the legislation defines fundraising as “soliciting or otherwise procuring money or other property for charitable purposes”. In relation to the above we confirm that all solicitations are managed internally, without involvement of commercial participators, professional fundraisers, or third parties.

The day-to-day management of all income generation is delegated to the key management personnel as described within the Structure, governance and management section, who are accountable to the Trustees.

We have received no complaints in relation to solicitations. Our terms of employment require staff to behave reasonably at all times; as we do not approach individuals for funds we do not consider it necessary to design specific procedures to monitor such activities.

Public benefit

The Trustees confirm that in exercising their powers and duties they have had due regard to the Charity Commission’s guidance on public benefit. The Design Council exists for the benefit of people and our purpose is to make life better by design. The Trustees have referred to the Charity Commission’s guidance on public benefit when reviewing the charity’s aims and objectives and in planning its future activities.



Our impact and achievements



Mayor of Greater Manchester, Andy Burham with Minnie Moll on stage of the Design for Planet Festival 2024 at Manchester Metropolitan, Manchester School of Art.

In numbers

103

Government
ambassadors engaged

50

Speaker platforms

21

Curated events

174

Experts engaged

31

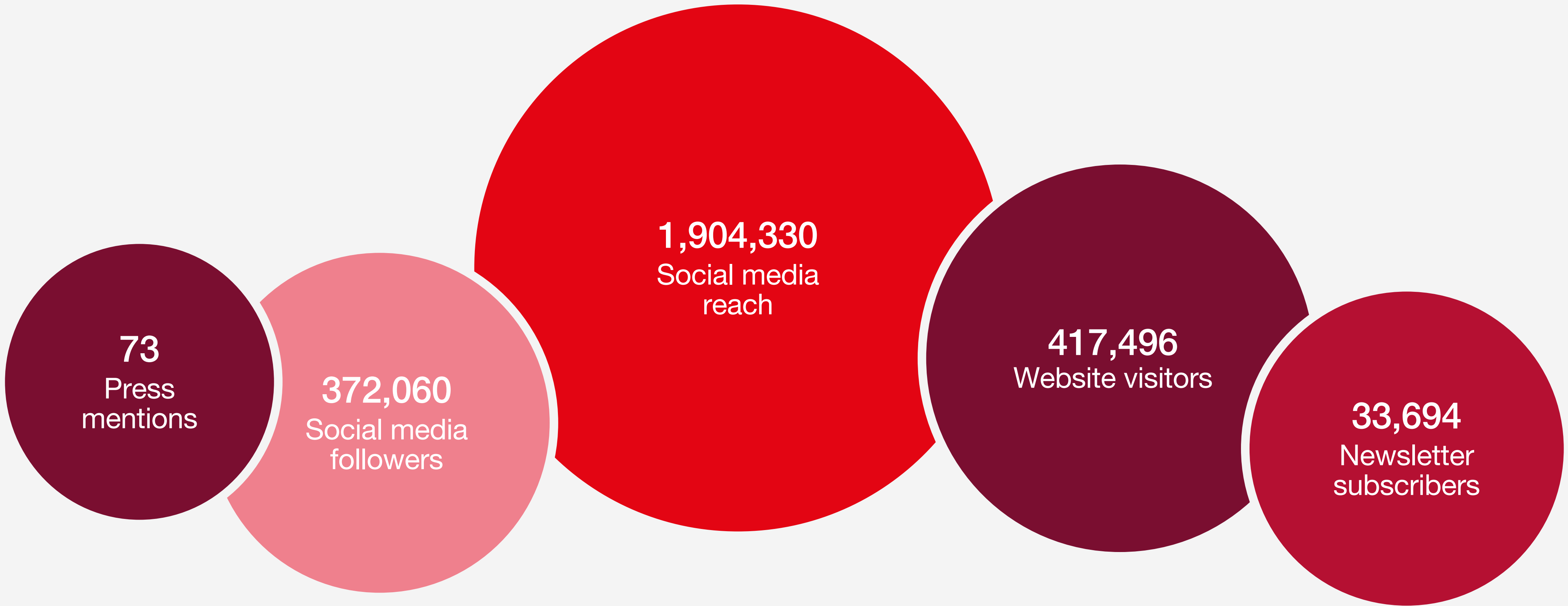
Workshops

40

Expert speakers at Design
for Planet Festival 2024

Raising awareness of design

Achieving our charitable object of educating and promoting the value of design.



In the press

dezeen

Magazine

Architecture

Interiors

Design

Technology

Series

Interviews

Opinion

Talks

Videos

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Awards

Jobs

Events Guide

Showroom

School Show

Courses

Competitions



Design Council launches plan to upskill one million designers by 2030

INDEPENDENT

NEWS SPORT VOICES CULTURE LIFESTYLE INDYBEST DEALS TRAVEL MORE

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Designing our way to a regenerative future

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Minnie Mull Chief Executive, the Design Council • Wednesday 03 July 2024 11:41 BST



FINANCIAL TIMES

HOME WORLD UK COMPANIES TECH MARKETS CLIMATE OPINION LEX WORK & CAREERS LIFE & ARTS HTS

Design + Add to myFT

The ‘Olympics of design’ returns to London with a call to action

In 1969, when the World Design Congress was last in the capital, it introduced us to snowmobiles and cash machines. This time, the environment is top of its agenda



THE TIMES

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RECRUITMENT

Lack of design students threatens crucial legacy

Britain has a proud history of producing outstanding designers, but this could be under threat as educational routes into the industry are not being taken up

Jane Hamilton

Friday April 26 2024, 12.01 am, The Times



The Guardian

News Opinion Sport Culture Lifestyle

The Guardian view Columnists Cartoons Opinion videos Letters

Opinion Housing

Yimbys hear this – simply building more homes won’t solve our housing crisis

Phineas Harper

Sun 29 Sep 2024 12:00 BST

Share 182



The Observer

Design comes full circle

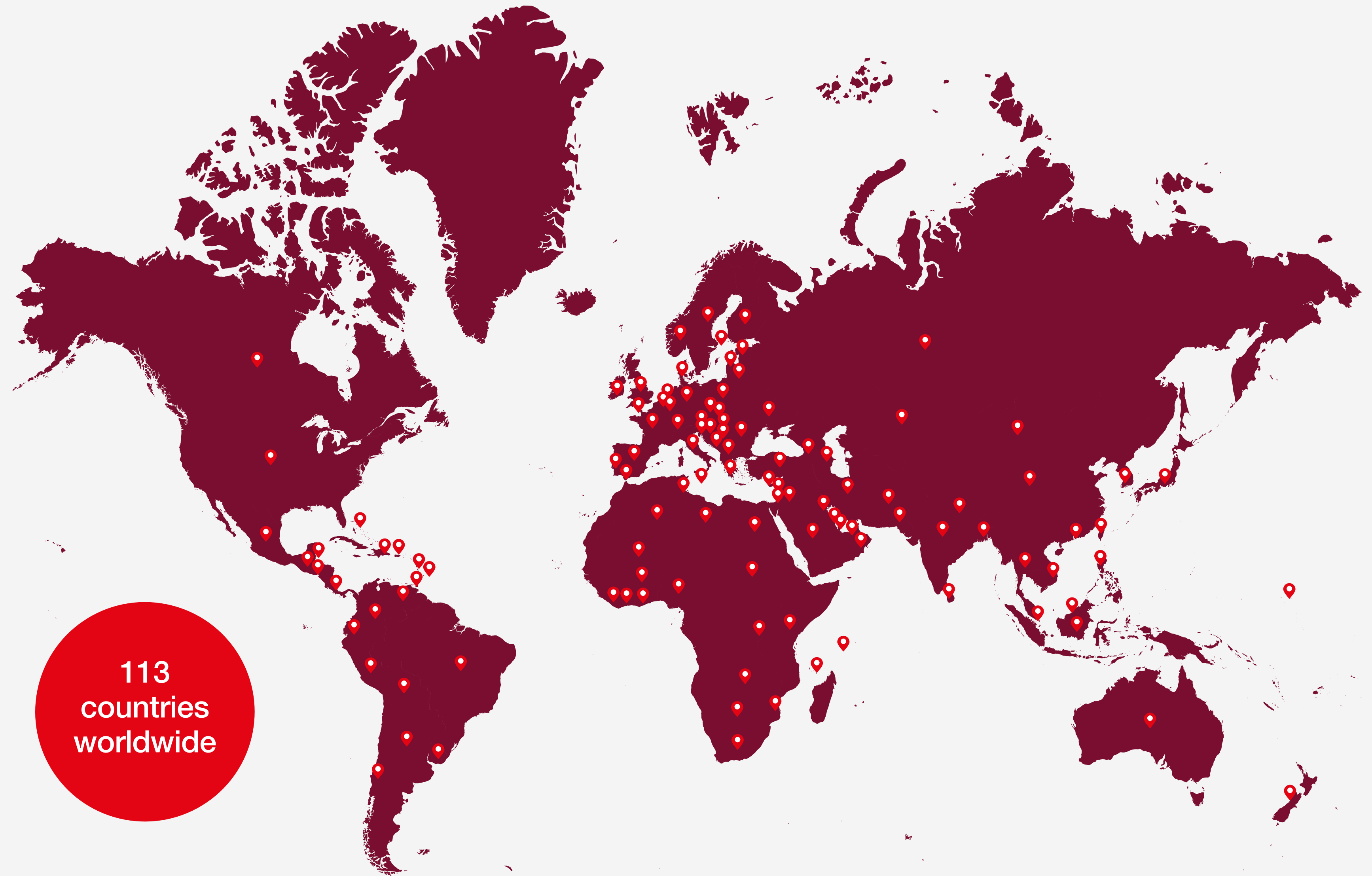
Redeamed rattan, sand sculptures, bacteria-dyed fabrics... Smart, circular and sustainable designers are putting the planet first



Taking our mission around the world

We have worked hard to engage stakeholders and audiences from across the four nations of the UK through events, design festivals, round tables, steering groups and our UK wide Experts network.

We have extended our global reach through a combination of Design for Planet Festival online attendees (from 113 countries worldwide) and speaking at international events.



Design for Planet Festival 2024

The 4th edition of the Design Council's flagship event, was held at Manchester School of Art, Manchester Met University to bring together designers, businesses, and policy makers to connect, inspire and help make this year's theme of Planet Positive Business a reality.

29 speakers, delivered insightful talks and workshops including opening remarks from Mayor of Greater Manchester Andy Burnham, BBC Sewing Bee's Patrick Grant, Sophie Thomas, B Corp, Faith in Nature and many more. Site visits to SUEZ repair centre and a Purcell retrofit site brought the topic to life for in-person attendees.



162

in person attendees

5000

online registrations from
113 countries

96%

of post-event survey
respondents said the
event increased their
Design for Planet
knowledges

96%

of event production
materials were recycled
or reused

Official Media Partner

**The
Guardian**



“
We should only
make stuff from
materials we
understand the
provenance and
performance of.”

Patrick Grant, founder, Community Clothing
at Design for Planet Festival 2024

Student banners made with
designer and BBC presenter
Patrick Grant at Design for
Planet Festival 2024.

Making the case for design to government



Lord Jo Johnson speaking at the Blueprint for Renewal launch.

In June, we published Blueprint for Renewal, a collective call to government from leading design education voices including the D&TA, Institution for Engineering and Technology, Creative Education Manifesto, Save Our Subjects, and EngineeringUK. The report outlined urgent recommendations to reverse the 68% decline in GCSE design subject uptake over the past decade and garnered cross-party support from senior parliamentarians including Lord Jo Johnson, Lord Jim Knight, Alex Sobel MP, Lord Hampton, and Lord Watson of Invergowrie.

The Blueprint helped shape the Government's independent curriculum review. The Design Council led a coordinated response from over 10 organisations across industry, education, and academia, and continues to play a key role in shaping the review's recommendations, expected in Autumn 2025.

Following the July 2024 general election, the new Government reaffirmed design's value, naming the Creative Industries as a key growth

sector in the Modern Industrial Strategy. In response, we convened nearly 100 sector leaders to inform our submission to the Industrial Strategy Review and delivered tailored departmental responses aligned with ministerial priorities.

In recognition of our leadership in championing design for green growth, the UK Government invited us to join the relaunched Net Zero Council in January 2025. Our role on this cross-sector body supports strategic direction for the Clean Energy Superpower Mission and reflects our ongoing advocacy for design's role in achieving net zero.

We also remained an influential voice through the Creative Industries Council, co-chaired by the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, supporting its Taskforce to shape a strong Creative Industries Sector Plan.

Upskilling 1 million designers in green design by 2030

In June 2024, the Design Council launched its Skills for Planet mission, an ambitious call to equip designers with the skills needed to tackle the climate crisis.



The mission aims to upskill 1 million designers in green design skills by 2030 at every level, from the classroom to the C-suite.

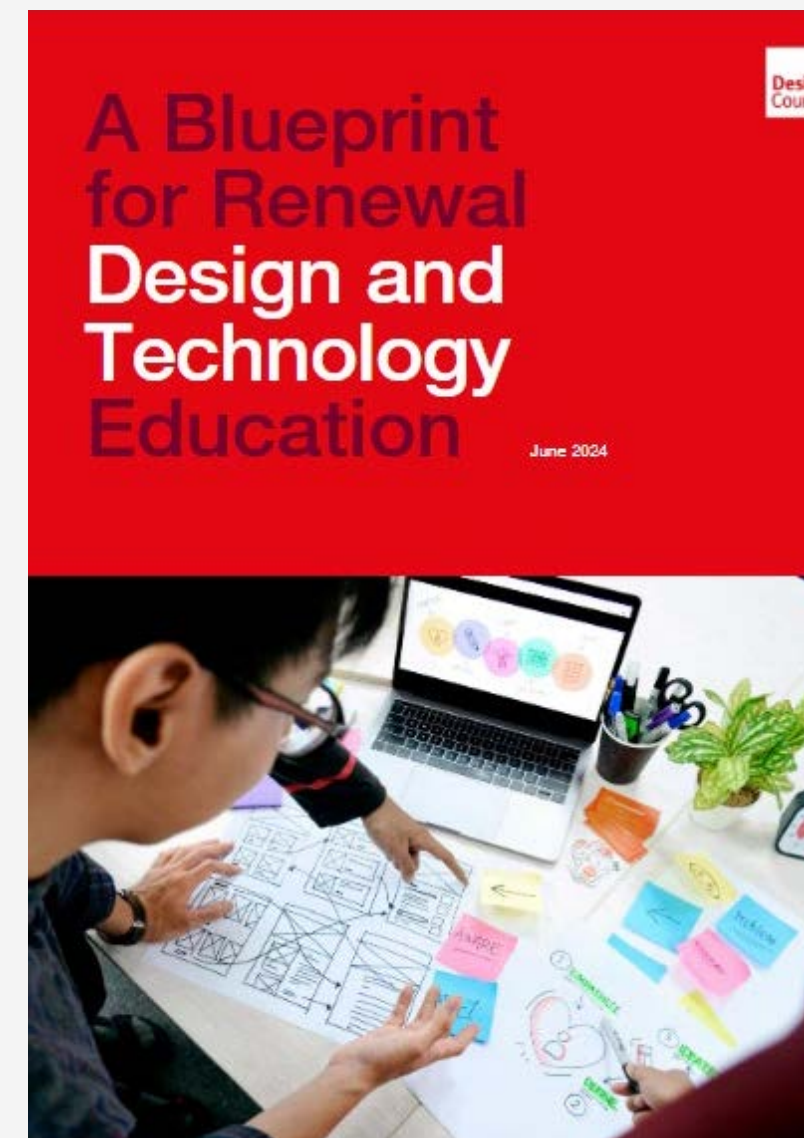
In the lead up to the World Design Congress we have convened partners such as the Design Museum, Creative Industries Council, DBA, AHRC, Innovate UK, and leading universities RCA, Westminster University and the University of Greenwich to co- design how to achieve the mission.

We are looking to publish the first in a series of resources, the Skills for Planet Blueprint, as a tool for identifying the green design skill areas and announcing the next phase of initiatives in 2025.

Blueprint for Renewal Samsung campaign

In December 2024, the Design Council partnered with Samsung UK's Solve for Tomorrow initiative and the Design & Technology Association (D&TA) to call for urgent reform of the Design & Technology (D&T) curriculum in schools.

This collaboration built on our earlier advocacy, including our report the [Blueprint for Renewal](#).



As part of Samsung's campaign, we co-authored an open letter to the Secretary of State for Education and Curriculum Review lead, Professor Becky Francis, making a strong case for a modernised D&T curriculum. The Design Council ensured green design skills were central to the case, framing them as critical not only to future employment, but also to the UK's wider goals around innovation, digital transformation and net zero. The Government's Curriculum Review, concluding in October 2025, is expected to reflect this agenda.

To amplify the message, we also co-hosted a Skills for Planet broadcast on London Live Radio and BBC Norfolk, which reaches an average audience of 3.7 million.

Improving design in nationally significant infrastructure projects



The Design Council pioneered the use of Design Review, establishing it as a trusted methodology for improving the quality of the built environment for public benefit. Over the years, we've applied Design Review across a wide range of places and building types. Today, our focus is on supporting Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects (NSIPs), where our input is helping shape the future of sustainable infrastructure in the UK.

As government prioritises infrastructure to drive growth and prosperity, our impartial and expert Design Review process continues to play a vital role, enhancing design quality, reducing environmental impact, and shaping a more resilient built and natural environment.



In the past year, we have reviewed:

- Onshore infrastructure for several of the UK's major offshore wind farms
- Proposals for the first new reservoirs in decades
- Design vision and sustainability priorities for major water recycling schemes
- Major road projects, ensuring carbon emissions are minimised in both construction and operation

Building design capability through our Academy proposition

The Design Council has long supported organisations to strengthen their in-house design capability. Building on the success of our Design in the Public Sector (DIPS) programme, we continued to expand our Design Academy offer this year.



In partnership with Network Rail, we launched the Buildings and Architecture Academy (B&AA) in 2022. After piloting the programme that year, we delivered a second cohort in 2023, and significantly scaled up in 2024 with three additional cohorts, delivered in person in London and Leeds.

The training combines classroom-based learning, interactive activities, field visits, and e-learning modules featuring case

studies and foundational theory. Action Learning Sets help participants translate theory into practice through peer-based problem solving.

We also convened Network Rail's Executive Team for a full-day strategic design training session, supporting leadership as the organisation transitions to Great British Railways.

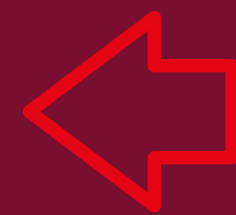
Building our partnerships with UK research councils

In September 2022, the Design Council entered into a new framework agreement with the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC). Since then, we've deepened our support across AHRC, Innovate UK, and other Research Councils to embed design and design thinking more effectively into research and innovation systems.

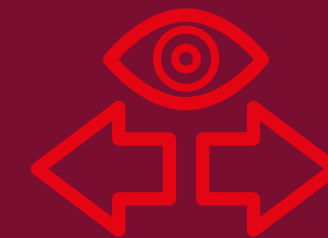
Design partnership for innovation

This year, we were commissioned by Innovate UK Business Connect to identify and scale impactful design support, building the case for more effective innovation at Innovate UK.

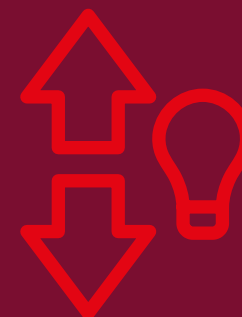
We conducted an audit to assess how design is understood, valued, and embedded across the Research Councils and Innovate UK's portfolio. Our work was grounded in four design principles:



Shift left
Act earlier



Look wide
Take a broad perspective



Think long
Plan for the long term



Act fast with care
Respond quickly but responsibly

We also analysed current design support mechanisms, identifying barriers and opportunities to improve how they connect and function. Through stakeholder interviews and a review of design support typologies, we're developing a new framework for deploying streamlined and effective design approaches in current and future programmes.

This work marks a step change in the adoption of design thinking across UKRI and is helping to embed design more strategically at scale.

UKRI environmental sustainability strategy



UKRI is a major funder and producer of world-leading science and social science, with significant influence over the environmental impact of the UK's research ecosystem.

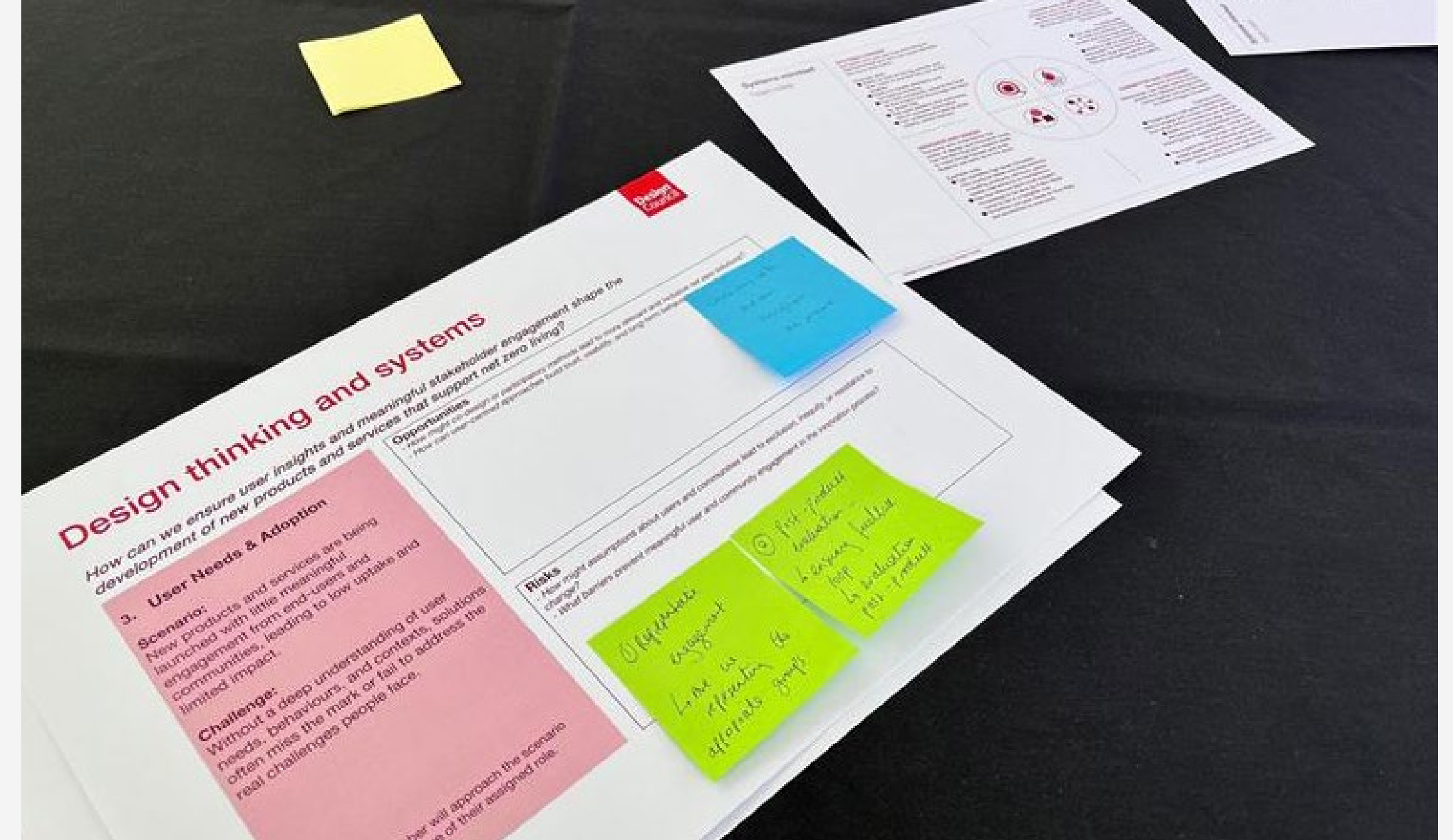
As part of its refresh of the Environmental Sustainability Strategy for 2025–2030, UKRI commissioned Design Council to lead a cross-council consultation to shape the direction of the new strategy.

Acting as impartial and experienced facilitators, the Design Council delivered a robust and inclusive engagement process designed to embed

environmental sustainability across all aspects of UKRI's operations and research activity.

We convened over 200 participants from across all Research Councils, uncovering key barriers and co-developing a shared set of ambitions to guide UKRI's sustainability efforts over the next five years.

Net zero living programme



The transition to net zero is one of the greatest challenges of our time, demanding innovation, collaboration, and a deep understanding of user needs. While businesses are developing new products, services, and supply chains to lead this transition, real impact depends on adoption, usability, and behaviour change. That's where design is essential.

From November 2023 to March 2025, the Design Council partnered with Innovate UK on the Net Zero Living programme, supporting 47 businesses through our User-Focused Design initiative. Our Experts

provided tailored 1-to-1 coaching to help businesses understand user needs and barriers to adoption, embedding design thinking to strengthen innovation in the net zero market.

Building on our legacy as the UK's champion for design, and aligned with our Design for Planet mission, we developed the programme blueprint, delivered expert design support, and evaluated its impact, demonstrating how design can accelerate the path to a low-carbon future.

Design Council Experts

Over the past year, we engaged 174 different Design Council Experts (71% of our network) across 372 opportunities. Their contributions have been central to our work, from delivering 10 Design Reviews and co-creating the Skills for Planet Blueprint, to shaping Innovate UK’s sustainability strategy, supporting the Design for Planet Festival, and upskilling Network Rail staff.

To strengthen and diversify our engagements, we introduced a new process and EDI matrix for Expert selection, running 17 open calls across the year. This resulted in a significant increase in participation

(from 93 Experts in 2023–24 to 174 in 2024–25) ensuring broader perspectives and expertise are embedded in all we do.

We also convened the network through two all-Expert events, bringing together 141 participants to align around our mission. We co- hosted two Design for Planet Collectives, engaging 75 wider-sector designers regionally, and reinstated our Community of Practice workshops (four held in 2025 alone) where 77 Experts collaborated to shape key programmes and strengthen community ties.



174 Experts engaged

Across 372 opportunities

Royal Garden Party

The Design Council was tasked by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport to nominate 100 key figures from the UK's design ecosystem to invite to Buckingham Palace for the first Creative Industry Royal Garden Party. The event gave us the opportunity to connect, convene and champion a range of organisations including the London Design Festival, Design Museum, V&A, DBA and D&TA as well as high profile designers such as Margaret Calvert, Morag Myerscough, Dick Powell and Yinka Ilori, and design media Dezeen, Design Week, It's Nice That, Wallpaper, the Guardian and Financial Times.



British designers Yinka Ilori, Morag Myerscough and Margaret Calvert celebrating at the Creative Industries Royal Garden Party.

Design Council Homes Taskforce

In response to the Labour government's pledge to deliver 1.5 million homes by 2030, the Design Council convened the Homes Taskforce, a group of eight leading voices in architecture and design, including Sadie Morgan OBE and Sunand Prasad OBE. The Taskforce set out to shape policy that ensures new housing is not only delivered at scale, but is well-designed, climate-resilient, inclusive, and built for long-term value.

Through a series of roundtables with over 50 experts, MPs, and local leaders, the Taskforce explored policy and design solutions for urban extensions, regeneration, and new towns. Three key themes emerged: the need to prioritise both new builds and refurbishment, the importance of design quality in housing delivery, and the case for neighbourhood-led approaches.

These insights informed Design for Neighbourhoods, a report outlining ten policy recommendations for high-quality, sustainable housing, along with five key questions for future research. Launched in partnership with ING Media at a high-profile event with design and policy leaders, the report has already begun shaping national conversations.

Taskforce ambassadors continue to support our engagement with government and the design sector, informing Design Council's wider work on green skills, design quality, and research-led innovation.



Homes Taskforce New
Towns Roundtable, joined
by Architect George Clark.

Design Council

Design for Neighbourhoods

A design agenda for the new government



Design for Neighbourhoods
publication February 2025.

The Design Council's Homes Taskforce members outside the Houses of Parliament for the New Towns Roundtable October 2024.



Design Economy

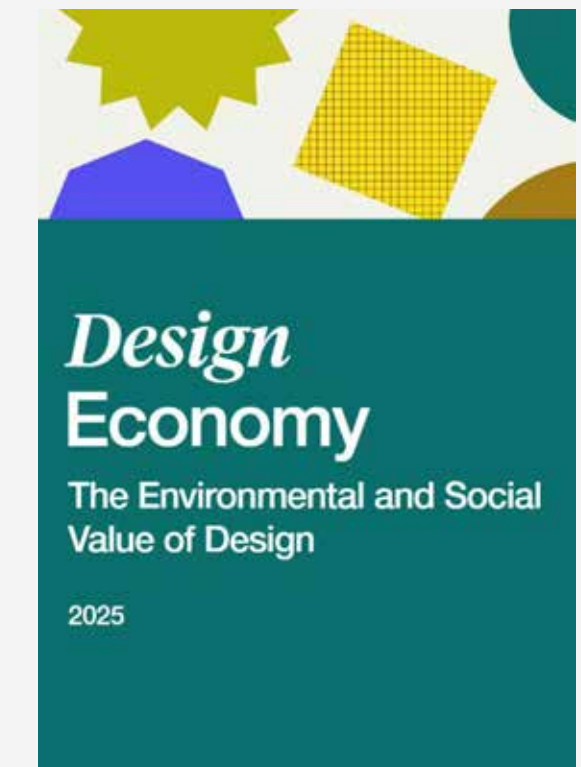
Design Economy is the Design Council's flagship research programme, exploring how design drives growth, innovation, and sustainability.

This year, we published two major reports, collectively read over 6,000 times, that expanded the conversation beyond economic impact to include social and environmental value.

The Environmental and Social Value of Design

revealed that 66% of designers are working on environmental challenges, and 60% on social ones, yet only 19% measure the impact of their work. While 71% anticipate rising demand for green design skills, just 43% feel prepared to meet it. These findings have directly shaped our Skills for Planet mission.

Our research is also influencing national policy. It underpins the government's Creative Industries Sector Plan, contributes to the Circular Economy Taskforce, and helped secure our seat on the Net Zero Council, where we advocate for design's role in putting people at the centre of climate action.



Public Design Beyond Central Government draws on our deep experience in the public sector. The report informed the UK Civil Service's 2025 Public Design Evidence Review, a landmark Cabinet Office study, and helped drive momentum for embedding design capability into the heart of government. We supported the review's launch and contributed to the expert panel.

The road to World Design Congress



In the year ahead of the Design Council hosting the World Design Council in September 2025, we laid the foundations for harnessing the event as a catalytic moment for the design sector with early bird tickets selling quickly.

We confirmed the Barbican Centre as our venue partner, situating the event in one of London's most iconic architectural locations and aligning with them on the Congress Design for Planet theme as they undergo their Renewal project to retrofit the building (with Design Council design review support).

We brought on major financial partners including global management consultancy group Kearney, Decathlon and Zaha Hadid Architects, and convened programme, education and marketing steering

groups to gather insight from partnering organisations and experts in delivering a world class event. This helped us in confirming big name speakers including Brian Eno, Thomas Heatherwick, Marianna Mazzucato and Indy Johar.

To build a brand and drive excitement, we formed a panel of World Design Congress Ambassadors as leading voices from across the sector (Tom Dixon, Es Devlin, Foday Dumbuya, Dr Lesley Lokko and Suhair Khan) who nominated 20 "Design for Planet Trailblazers as champions for the Congress messaging which was announced by The Observer.



World Design Congress Ambassadors Foday Dumbuya, Es Devlin, Suhair Khan, Tom Dixon, Prof. Lesley Lokko at the Barbican Centre, featured in the Financial Times who dubbed the upcoming event the “Olympics of Design”.

A Design Council fit for the future

Towards the end of our 80th year, we undertook a wide-ranging review of our role as well as the commercial model that underpins it to ensure the Design Council remains relevant and continues to thrive for the next 80 years.

The review concluded we need to diversify our revenue base as well as be sharper and more focused on describing our impact, in order to align our programme delivery with potential new funders. The 2025/26 business plan incorporates the first stages of these recommendations which will continue to evolve over the next few years.

In addition to this, the organisation has spent the last 12 months focusing on initiatives to reduce cost and improve operational excellence, through a mixture of restructuring of support functions to make them more efficient and effective as well as focusing on maximising value for money from external service providers.

This builds on the work already undertaken over the last 2 years to standardise our systems and processes, all with the objective of making the organisation more agile, operationally and financially resilient and fit for the future.



Financial statements & Auditor's report



Preface

This version contains only the financial statements, trustee report and auditor’s opinion for review and approval by the Finance & Assurance Committee on 21 October 2025.

This information will be added to and combined with the other information required for the Annual Report to be approved by the Board and filed with the Charity Commission.

About the Design Council

The Design Council is the UK’s national champion for the effective use of design for the benefit of the economy, society and the environment. 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. Our 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.

The Trustees submit this Annual Report for the year ended 31 March 2025 along with the financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2025, which comply with the current statutory requirements and which have been prepared in accordance with the Statement of Recommended Practice: Accounting and Reporting by Charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102), and the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the United Kingdom and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) and the Charities Act 2011.

Financial review

Review of the period

The results for the Design Council for the year ended 31 March 2025 are set out in the financial statements from [page 49](#) onwards.

The results for the financial year 2024/25 show a surplus of £128k compared to a planned surplus of £100k.

Total income for the year amounted to £3.7m (£3.64m in 2023/24) including a grant of £2m from the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) (£2m in 2023/24). The remaining income of £1.7m (£1.64m in 2023/24) was raised from a variety of sources including event sponsorship and paid project and programme work.

Total costs for the year were £3.49m (£3.95m in 2023/24).

Cash and short-term deposit balances amounted to £1.2m as at 31 March 2025 (£1.3m as at 31 March 2024).

Reserves Policy

Total funds held by the Design Council at the end of the year were £0.86m (£0.64m in 2023/24). Of this, none were restricted funds (£0.19m in 2023/24).

The Trustees have reviewed the level of reserves required to sustain on-going operations. Accordingly, the Design Council has adopted a reserves policy whereby the unrestricted funds not committed or invested in tangible fixed assets (the “free reserves”) should be between three and six months of overheads.

At 31 March 2025, free reserves were £0.79m (£0.35m in 2023/24). Given the current external context and delivery plans for 2024/25, the Trustees are comfortable that the free reserves at 31 March 2025 are sitting just above the upper limit of the reserves policy range of £0.35m to £0.75m.

Free Reserves

	2025 £000	2024 £000
Total Unrestricted Funds	847	456
Less Tangible Fixed Assets	(59)	(104)
Free Reserves	788	352

Going Concern

The Trustees have reviewed the financial position of Design Council and its subsidiary, its forecast cash flows, liquidity position and potential funding commitments for the foreseeable future.

Design Council operates as an independent charity with part of its revenue coming from an annual grant from the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) and the rest generated from various other sources, mostly commercial client projects.

The AHRC grant agreement was renewed in March 2025 for another 3 years, so this provides a degree of stability and certainty in terms of core funding. However, the Trustees recognised the need for Design Council to diversify its income base and therefore the organisation launched a revised commercial model in early 2025 with the objective of growing overall income and making it less reliant on having to secure multiple individual short term commercial projects.

This means 2025 into 2026 is a transition period and there remains a degree of uncertainty about the level of total income that can be secured. Consequently, the Trustees have used prudent assumptions in assessing the likely size and scale of income opportunities and will only commit funds to charitable activities when they are certain that obligations can be met.

However, despite this conservative outlook, the Trustees believe that the charity has adequate resources to continue in operational existence for the foreseeable future. As a result, they continue to adopt the going concern basis of accounting in preparing the Annual Report and Accounts.

Subsidiary undertaking and related parties

The Charity wholly owns a subsidiary Design Council Enterprises Limited, a company registered in England and Wales. The subsidiary is used for fundraising activities that are non-primary purposes trading. The subsidiary is currently dormant.

As such, the results of Design Council Enterprises Limited have not been presented separately and consolidated accounts have not been prepared.

Plans for the future

During 2025/26, as the UK’s National Champion for design, we will drive the third year of our 2023-28 mission, Design for Planet, ensuring the effective use of design delivers real benefits for the UK’s economy, society, and environment.

What we deliver to achieve our impact is:

Celebrate design impact
Advocacy | Research | Events | Exhibitions

Create good conditions for design
Advocacy | Policy | Education & skills

Convene the design sector
Convening | Programmes | Partnerships

Priorities for 2025/26 include
Delivering an outstanding World Design Congress in September 2025 which is set to be a catalytic moment not only for the UK but for the global design community.

Launching a Green Design Skills Blueprint and building a coalition of support to underpin our mission to upskills 1 million designers by 2030.

Widening our capability building work through upskilling commissioners of design in business and the public sector.

Championing the value of design and design skills in accelerating green growth through our latest Design Economy value of the design sector research.

Maximising the value and impact of our people through our People and Culture Strategy initiatives.

Ensuring we remain a thriving organisation that is resilient and financially and operationally sustainable, including building new commercial and strategic partnerships.

Whilst we have seen progress in terms of demand for Design for Planet-

orientated client projects as well as new opportunities to raise our profile such as hosting the World Design Congress, there are still a number of challenges that the organisation is facing such as:

- The ongoing need to secure longer term and more sizeable sources of funding to reduce year to year financial uncertainty and enable Design Council to plan further ahead in terms of core strategic programme development
- The small size of Design Council versus the scale and nature of its mission and expectations of the sector and government
- Pressures from cost increases when the core annual grant has not risen with inflation

Nonetheless, we remain confident and excited by our Design for Planet mission and what we can achieve in 2025/26.

Structure, governance and management

Governing document

The Design Council is a charity incorporated by Royal Charter that works for public benefit. The Royal Charter was originally granted on 9 May 1976 and amended on 1 April 2011 to reflect the Design Council’s change in status from being a public body to being a charity and the transfer in of certain activities and assets of the Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (CABE).

The Design Council and the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC), part of UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) have had a grant framework agreement since 2022 for the common objective of furthering the role of design within the UK. An observer from AHRC is invited to attend Design Council board meetings.

The Design Council registered as a charity on 13 October 1976 and the registered charity number is 272099. Our registered address is Design Council c/o Sayer Vincent, 110 Golden Lane, London, EC1Y 0TG.

Structure of the organisation and decision making

The Board of Trustees is responsible under the Design Council’s Royal Charter for:

- Setting the vision, mission and values.
- Developing strategy to achieve the Charity’s Objects, and monitoring performance.
- Ensuring that the charity seeks the views of current and future beneficiaries and that these are considered in developing strategy and delivering services.
- Ensuring that the charity complies with all legal and regulatory requirements.

- Safeguarding the assets of the charity to ensure these assets and resources are used only in furtherance of the charitable objects.
- Ensuring that the charity’s governance is of the highest possible standard.

The Board of Trustees takes into consideration the Charity Commission’s requirements including guidance on public benefit. Trustees must at all times act in the best interests of the charity and must avoid any conflict between their personal or outside interests and those of the charity. The responsibilities of the Board of Trustees and its committees are set out in terms of reference.

The Board of Trustees delegates day to day responsibility for managing the charity to the Chief Executive. The Chief Executive is accountable to the Board of Trustees for achieving the mission and goals, for ensuring the organisation is well run and meets its charitable objects and for ensuring that the Design Council remains relevant, contemporary and sustainable in the future. The Chief Executive reports to the Chair of the Board of Trustees and leads an Executive Team.

The Board of Trustees formally met six times during the year and additionally for other briefings and strategy discussions.

Sub committees

During the year the Board held the following two sub committees: the Finance & Assurance Committee and the People Committee. The Chair of each committee reports back to the Board of Trustees after it meets.

Finance & Assurance Committee: meets quarterly or more frequently as needed to support the Board of Trustees in ensuring effective:

- Financial stewardship, audit and risk management.
- Management of physical resources (including technology and property).
- Ensuring that the charity is complying with all aspects of the law and relevant regulations.

People Committee: meets quarterly or more frequently as needed to support the Board of Trustees in ensuring effective:

- People and culture-related strategies, risks and opportunities
- Strategies for equality, diversity and inclusion.
- Governance and recruitment, and development of the Board.

In December 2024, the Board agreed to temporarily absorb the People Committee’s remit into the main Board until the new Trustees had been appointed in the summer 2025, when its remit and membership would be reviewed, and the committee reinstated in the autumn.

The Team

The Design Council had 32 colleagues employed at the end of the year.

Additionally, we draw on the expertise of our [Design Council Experts](#), a network of design pioneers who work with us to advocate for design, share knowledge about best practice and help us deliver advice and programmes.

The cohort was selected by the Design Council with an external steering committee to represent a full spectrum of design disciplines, regional and demographic diversity, and skills that will help accelerate our Design for Planet mission. During the year we engaged 174 different Design Council Experts (71% of our network) across 372 opportunities.

Recruitment, induction and training of Trustees

New Trustees are recruited through an open process and are appointed by the Board of Trustees. Trustees may serve up to two consecutive three-year terms, and in exceptional circumstances a third term may be approved, up to a maximum of nine years.

On appointment, new Trustees are provided with an induction pack and have meetings with key management personnel to brief them on the activities of the Design Council and their responsibilities as a Trustee. Periodically, a survey is used to identify skills gaps and development priorities. Briefings and training are provided for Trustees as necessary.

During 2024/25 two Trustees completed their final terms. One Trustee renewed for another term and three Trustees each renewed for another one-year term.

The Board started recruitment for five new Trustees in December 2024 particularly looking for skills

and expertise in design, finance and sustainability. Following an open campaign five Trustees were appointed in March 2025 and took up their positions in April 2025. Inductions were provided between April to July including opportunities for the Trustees to meet with members of the wider team.

Pay and remuneration of key management personnel

The remuneration of key management personnel is reviewed and approved annually by the People Committee. Remuneration is benchmarked periodically against pay for similar roles in the sector.

Trustees are not remunerated for their role as Trustees, other than reimbursement of reasonable expenses which are described in the Note 5.

A small number of Trustees may also deliver design advice services in their capacity as the Design Council experts. Any remuneration for these services is at the same rate as paid to other built environment practitioners for equivalent services.

Risk management

We believe that sound risk management is integral to both good management and good governance practice. Risk management forms an integral part of the charity’s decision-making and is incorporated within strategic and operational planning.

As part of annual business planning the Board reviews risk appetite and more frequently as required. A risk register covering key strategic risks is reviewed regularly by the Finance & Assurance Committee on behalf of the Board and updated as deemed necessary in response to known and potential risks, especially during times of volatility. and more frequently where risks are known to be volatile. Risk registers are maintained for individual core programmes and new activities and projects are reviewed to ensure they are in line with the charity’s objectives and mission. Any risks or opportunities arising will be identified, analysed and reported at an appropriate level.

The Board will commission expert advisers to provide independent assessments and assurance on a case by case to address specific business needs.

The Board considers that the key risks facing the Design Council are as set out below:

Risk/challenge area	We will mitigate this by:
Financial	• Diversify our sources of income by exploring the potential of philanthropic fundraising • Make the case for increasing our level of Government funding for our National Champion role • Grow our fee base especially by partnering with AHRC/UKRI on key projects • Control costs to achieve a financial surplus • Produce regular and timely financial reporting and forecasting, including quarterly business reviews and clear ownership of budgets
Operational	• Continue to work on improving employee value proposition and experience to reduce turnover and associated operational disruption • Stabilise and embed new ERP system and implement common project management life cycle approach and tool • Focus on building operational excellence • Continue to strive for improvement through accredited systems (ISO 90001, Cyber Essentials)
Reputational	• Successfully demonstrate the impact of our work, especially the Design for Planet strategy • Deliver a successful and impactful Design for Planet festival, as well as secure key sponsors for World Design Congress in 2025 • Increase our voice and reach by promoting the outcomes of our research and skills programmes • Ensure we embed and live our values and code of behaviours • Make use of external reputational advisory firm when required
Legal / Commercial	• Appointed new legal advisors to support across commercial/contract and employment law • Roll out of new standard framework agreements • Use of standard project management tool to manage contracting and document management • Provide training for new starters on GDPR requirements

Reference and administrative details

Board of Trustees

More information on each of our Trustees can be found [here](#). Trustees who served during 2024/25 and meeting attendance is listed below.

The Board of Trustees is overseen by the Chair, William Eccleshare. Jonquil Hackenberg succeeded Anne Boddington as Deputy Chair from January 2025.

We thank Anne Boddington and Beatrice Fraenkel who completed their terms during the year. Paul Monaghan renewed for another three-year term. Wiliam Eccleshare, Chris Naylor and Jonquil Hackenberg renewed for another one-year term.

The Board appointed five new Trustees in March 2025 who took up their positions in April 2025: Ben Ramalingam, Elena Marco, Patrick Bellew, Sadaf Hosseini and Tom Crawford.

Trustee	Date appointed	Role and Committees	Notes
1 William Eccleshare	29.07.22	Chair, Board of Trustees Finance & Assurance Committee People Committee	Second term until 29.07.26
2 Anne Boddington	10.09.15	Deputy Chair, Board of Trustees People Committee	Completed term on 31.12.24
3 Ben Ramalingam	17.04.25		First term until 17.04.28
4 Jonquil Hackenberg	26.05.22	Deputy Chair from 01.01.25 People Committee	Second term until 26.05.25
5 Beatrice Fraenkel	13.12.18	People Committee	Completed term on 13.12.24
6 Biljana Savic	26.05.22		First term until 26.05.25
7 Chris Naylor	26.05.22	Finance & Assurance Committee	Second term until 26.05.26
8 Elena Marco	01.04.25		First term until 01.04.28
9 Keith Morgan CBE	04.10.18	Chair of Finance & Assurance Committee	Third term until 31.03.26
10 Patrick Bellew	01.04.25		First term until 01.04.28
11 Paul Monaghan	17.03.22		Second term until 17.03.28
12 Sadaf Hosseini	01.04.25		First term until 01.04.28
13 Tom Crawford	01.04.25		First term until 01.04.28
14 Tendai Chetse	26.05.22	Chair of People Committee	First term until 26.05.25

Attendance record	Board	Finance & Assurance Committee	People Committee
William Eccleshare (Chair)	6/6	7/7	1/1
Anne Boddington (D Chair)	4/4		1/1
Jonquil Hackenberg (D Chair)	5/6		1/1
Beatrice Fraenkel	2/4		1/1
Biljana Savic	6/6		
Chris Naylor	2/6	2/7	
Keith Morgan CBE	6/6	7/7	
Paul Monaghan	6/6		
Tendai Chetse	2/6		0/1

Key management personnel

Aside from the Trustees the key management personnel during the period were:

Minnie Moll

Chief Executive
(joined 1 March 2021)

Cat Drew

Chief Design Officer
(joined 1 July 2019, maternity leave
August 2024 – April 2025)

Edward Hobson

Director of Place
(joined 1 November 2021)

Robert Holmes

Director of Finance and Operations
(joined 23 November 2023)

Sarah Booth

Director of Impact
(joined 1 November 2023,
left 30 August 2024)

Rachel Moriarty

Executive Lead for Skills –
Maternity Cover
(joined 5 August 2024)

Administrative details

Registered name and address

Design Council
c/o Sayer Vincent
110 Golden Lane
London EC1Y 0TG

Charity Commission number

272099

Bankers

Lloyds Bank
Villiers House
48-49 The Strand
London WC2N 5LL

Advisory and legal

TLT LLP
20 Gresham Street
London EC2V 7JE

Auditors

Sayer Vincent
110 Golden Lane
London EC1Y 0TG

Statement of Trustees’ Responsibilities

The Trustees (who are also directors of the Design Council for the purposes of company law) are responsible for preparing the Trustees’ annual report and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

Company law requires the Trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charitable company and of the incoming resources and application of resources, including the income and expenditure, of the charitable company for that period. In preparing these financial statements, the trustees are required to:

- Select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently.
- Observe the methods and principles in the Charities SORP.

- Make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent.
- State whether applicable UK Accounting Standards and statements of recommended practice have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements.
- Prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charity will continue in operation.

The Trustees are responsible for keeping adequate accounting records that disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charitable company and enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Companies Act 2006. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charitable company and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

In so far as the Trustees are aware:

- There is no relevant audit information of which the charitable company’s auditor is unaware
- The Trustees have taken all steps that they ought to have taken to make themselves aware of any relevant audit information and to establish that the auditor is aware of that information.

The Trustees are responsible for the maintenance and integrity of the corporate and financial information included on the charitable company’s website. Legislation in the United Kingdom governing the preparation and dissemination of financial statements may differ from legislation in other jurisdictions.

Members of the charity guarantee to contribute an amount not exceeding £1 to the assets of the charity in the event of winding up. The total number of such guarantees at 31 March

2025 was 7 (2024: 9). The Trustees are members of the charity but this entitles them only to voting rights. The Trustees have no beneficial interest in the charity.

Approved and authorised by the Trustees on 21 October 2025 and signed on their behalf.

William Eccleshare
Chair of the Design Council
Board of Trustees
31 October 2025

Independent Auditor’s Report to the Trustees of the Design Council

Opinion

We have audited the financial statements of the Design Council (the ‘charity’) for the year ended 31 March 2025 which comprise of the statement of financial activities, balance sheet, statement of cash flows and notes to the financial statements, including significant accounting policies. The financial reporting framework that has been applied in their preparation is applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards, including FRS 102 The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

In our opinion, the financial statements:

- Give a true and fair view of the state of the charity’s affairs as at 31 March 2025 and of its incoming resources and application of resources, for the year then ended
- Have been properly prepared in accordance with United

Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice

- Have been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011

Basis for opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK) (ISAs (UK)) and applicable law. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the Auditor’s responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements section of our report. We are independent of the charity in accordance with the ethical requirements that are relevant to our audit of the financial statements in the UK, including the FRC’s Ethical Standard and we have fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

Conclusions relating to going concern

In auditing the financial statements, we have concluded that the Trustees’ use of the going concern basis of accounting in the preparation of the financial statements is appropriate.

Based on the work we have performed, we have not identified any material uncertainties relating to events or conditions that, individually or collectively, may cast significant doubt on the Design Council’s ability to continue as a going concern for a period of at least twelve months from when the financial statements are authorised for issue.

Our responsibilities and the responsibilities of the Trustees with respect to going concern are described in the relevant sections of this report.

Other Information

The other information comprises the information included in the Trustees’ Annual Report, other than the financial statements and our auditor’s report thereon. The Trustees are responsible for the other information contained within the Annual Report. Our opinion on the financial statements does not cover the other information and, except to the extent otherwise explicitly stated in our report, we do not express any form of assurance conclusion thereon. Our responsibility is to read the other information and, in doing so, consider whether the other information is materially inconsistent with the financial statements or our knowledge obtained in the course of the audit or otherwise appears to be materially misstated. If we identify such material inconsistencies or apparent material misstatements, we are required to determine whether this gives rise to a material misstatement in the financial statements themselves. If, based on the work we have performed, we conclude that there is a material misstatement of

this other information, we are required to report that fact.

We have nothing to report in this regard.

Matters on which we are required to report by exception

We have nothing to report in respect of the following matters in relation to which the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 requires us to report to you if, in our opinion:

- The information given in the Trustees’ Annual Report is inconsistent in any material respect with the financial statements;
- Sufficient accounting records have not been kept; or
- The financial statements are not in agreement with the accounting records and returns; or
- We have not received all the information and explanations we require for our audit

Responsibilities of Trustees

As explained more fully in the statement of Trustees’ responsibilities set out in the Trustees’ annual report, the Trustees are responsible for the preparation of the financial statements and for being satisfied that they give a true and fair view, and for such internal control as the Trustees determine is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial statements, the Trustees are responsible for assessing the charity’s ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless the Trustees either intend to liquidate the charity or to cease operations, or have no realistic alternative but to do so.

Auditor’s responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements

We have been appointed as auditor under section 144 of the Charities Act 2011 and report in accordance with regulations made under section 154 of that Act.

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor’s report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with ISAs (UK) will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these financial statements.

Irregularities, including fraud, are instances of non-compliance with laws and regulations. We design procedures

in line with our responsibilities, outlined above, to detect material misstatements in respect of irregularities, including fraud. The extent to which our procedures are capable of detecting irregularities, including fraud are set out below.

Capability of the audit in detecting irregularities

In identifying and assessing risks of material misstatement in respect of irregularities, including fraud and non-compliance with laws and regulations, our procedures included the following:

- We enquired of management, which included obtaining and reviewing supporting documentation, concerning the charity’s policies and procedures relating to:
 - Identifying, evaluating, and complying with laws and regulations and whether they were aware of any instances of non-compliance;
 - Detecting and responding to the risks of fraud and whether they have knowledge of any actual, suspected, or alleged fraud;

- The internal controls established to mitigate risks related to fraud or non-compliance with laws and regulations.
- We inspected the minutes of meetings of those charged with governance.
- We obtained an understanding of the legal and regulatory framework that the charity operates in, focusing on those laws and regulations that had a material effect on the financial statements or that had a fundamental effect on the operations of the charity from our professional and sector experience.
- We communicated applicable laws and regulations throughout the audit team and remained alert to any indications of non-compliance throughout the audit.
- We reviewed any reports made to regulators.
- We reviewed the financial statement disclosures and tested these to supporting documentation to assess compliance with applicable laws and regulations.

- We performed analytical procedures to identify any unusual or unexpected relationships that may indicate risks of material misstatement due to fraud.
- In addressing the risk of fraud through management override of controls, we tested the appropriateness of journal entries and other adjustments, assessed whether the judgements made in making accounting estimates are indicative of a potential bias and tested significant transactions that are unusual or those outside the normal course of business.

Because of the inherent limitations of an audit, there is a risk that we will not detect all irregularities, including those leading to a material misstatement in the financial statements or non-compliance with regulation. This risk increases the more that compliance with a law or regulation is removed from the events and transactions reflected in the financial statements, as we will be less likely to become aware of instances of non-compliance. The risk is also greater regarding irregularities occurring due to fraud rather than error, as fraud involves intentional concealment, forgery, collusion, omission or misrepresentation.

A further description of our responsibilities is available on the Financial Reporting Council’s website at: www.frc.org.uk/auditorsresponsibilities. This description forms part of our auditor’s report.

Use of our report

This report is made solely to the charity’s Trustees as a body, in accordance with section 144 of the

Charities Act 2011 and regulations made under section 154 of that Act. Our audit work has been undertaken so that we might state to the charity’s Trustees those matters we are required to state to them in an auditor’s report and for no other purpose. To the fullest extent permitted by law, we do not accept or assume responsibility to anyone other than the charity and the charity’s Trustees as a body, for our audit work, for this report, or for the opinions we have formed.

Jonathan Orchard
Sayer Vincent LLP, Statutory Auditor
11 November 2025

110 Golden Lane, London, EC1Y 0TG

Sayer Vincent LLP is eligible to act as auditor in terms of section 1212 of the Companies Act 2006.

Statement of Financial Activities

For the year ended 31 March 2025

	Note	Unrestricted £000	Restricted £000	Designated £000	2025 Total £000	Unrestricted £000	Restricted £000	2024 Total £000
Income from								
Charitable activities	2	2,131	1,575		3,706	1,037	2,599	3,636
Total income		2,131	1,575		3,706	1,037	2,599	3,636
Expenditure on								
Charitable activities	3 & 6	1,864	1,624		3,488	1,056	2,890	3,946
Total expenditure		1,864	1,624		3,488	1,056	2,890	3,946
Net income / (expenditure) for the year		267	(48)		218	(19)	(291)	(310)
Transfer between funds		124	(140)	16	-	(21)	21	-
Net movement in funds		391	(189)	16	218	(40)	(270)	(310)
Reconciliation of Funds								
Total funds brought forward		456	189		645	496	458	955
Total funds carried forward	12	847		16	863	456	188	645

Notes:
a. All operations of the Design Council are continuing.
b. There are no recognised gains and losses in the year other than those shown above.
c. The notes, numbered 1 - 14, form part of these accounts.
d. Designated funds include 16k of Congress profit retained at end of year

Balance Sheet

As at 31 March 2025

	Note	2025 £000	2024 £000
Fixed assets			
Tangible fixed assets	8	59	104
Total fixed assets		59	104
Current assets			
Debtors	9	364	195
Cash at bank and in hand		1,198	1,322
Total current assets		1,562	1,517
Current liabilities			
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	10	758	975
Net current assets		804	541
Net assets		863	645
Funds	12		
Restricted funds		-	189
Unrestricted funds		847	456
Designated Funds		16	-
Total funds		863	645

The notes at page 53 to page 66 form part of these accounts. Approved and authorised by the Trustees on 21 October 2025 and signed on their behalf.

William Eccleshare
Chair of the Design Council
Board of Trustees
31 October 2025

Statement of Cash Flows

For the year ended 31 March 2025

	Note	2025 £000	2024 £000
Cash flows from operating activities:			
Net cash provided/ (used in) operating activities	a	(124)	22
Cash flows from investing activities:			
Purchase of property, plant and equipment		-	-
Net cash provided by / (used in) investing activities		-	-
Change in cash and cash equivalents in the year		(124)	22
Cash and cash equivalents brought forward		1,321	1,299
Cash and cash equivalents carried forward		1,198	1,321

Note to the statement of cash flows:
a: Reconciliation of net income / (expenditure) to net cash flow from operating activities

	2025 £000	2024 £000
Net income / (expenditure) for the year	218	(310)
Interest received	-	-
Depreciation charges	44	50
Loss on the disposal of fixed assets	-	-
(Increase)/decrease in debtors	(169)	286
(Decrease)/increase in creditors	(217)	(3)
Net cash provided by/ (used in) operating activities	(124)	22

Notes to the Design Council Financial Statements

For the year ended 31 March 2025

1. Accounting policies

The principal accounting policies applied in the preparation of the financial statements are as follows.

a) Basis of preparation

The financial statements have been prepared under the historical cost convention with items recognised at cost or transaction value unless otherwise stated in the relevant note(s) to these accounts.

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the Statement of Recommended Practice: Accounting and Reporting by Charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) issued on 16 July 2014 and the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the United Kingdom and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) and the Charities Act 2011.

The Charity constitutes a public benefit entity as defined by FRS 102. The financial statements have been prepared on a going concern basis which assumes that the Charity will continue in operational existence for twelve months from the date of approval of the Financial Statements.

The Trustees have applied the going concern basis to the financial statements. As outlined within the trustees' report the Charity has been managing financial risk and the continuing uncertainty around the Charity's long term funding arrangements. The Trustees are confident in the Charities ability to manage these risks and do not consider that these represent any material uncertainty around the Charities ability to continue as a going concern.

In preparing financial statements it is necessary to make certain judgements, estimates and

assumptions that affect the amounts recognised in the financial statements.

The accounting policies below include estimates relating to provisions and the recoverability of debtors and stage of completion of contract delivery for programme fees.

b) Income recognition

All income is recognised once the Charity has entitlement to the income, it is probable that the income will be received, and the amount of income receivable can be measured reliably. In particular:

- Grants are accounted for once a formal offer of funding is received, subject to satisfying any performance-related conditions. In the event that a grant is subject to conditions that require a level of performance before the Charity is entitled to the funds, the income is deferred and not recognised until either those conditions are fully met, or the

fulfilment of those conditions is wholly within the control of the Charity and it is probable that those conditions will be fulfilled in the reporting period;

- Programme fees income are accounted for on an accruals basis. As services are delivered in accordance with any milestones set out in these contracts income is recognised. Any part of the service not delivered at the balance sheet date is deferred;
- Gifts in kind are assets donated to the Charity for its own use or for distribution to beneficiaries. They are included at valuation and recognised as income only when they are used or distributed.

c) Expenditure

Expenditure is accounted for on an accruals basis, and allocated to the appropriate heading in the Financial Statements. Charitable activities’ expenditures enable the Design Council to meet its charitable aims and objectives, consistent with good governance.

In note 3 costs are attributable to the categories of charitable expenditure on an actual basis with the exception of support costs which are allocated as a proportion of total directly attributable costs.

Support costs in note 6 costs are attributed to the categories detailed on an actual basis. The basis of apportionment to charitable expenditure is as a proportion of total directly attributable costs.

Grants are paid to approved beneficiaries. Grant expenditure is recognised in the period in which eligible activity creates an entitlement in line with the terms and conditions of the grant. Accrued grants are charged to the SOFA and included as part of the accruals within the balance sheet.

The Design Council reclaims from HMRC VAT incurred in goods and services in line with the standard method of partial exemption. Irrecoverable VAT is treated as a central cost and allocated with other support costs to the relevant activities on the SOFA.

d) Liquid resources

The Design Council’s liquid resources are a combination of cash, and short term deposits.

e) Funds accounting

Funds held by the Design Council are either:

Restricted Funds: These are the grant funds received from government, charities, and other public bodies where the use of the funds is restricted to a specific purpose.

Designated Funds: These are funds which have been allocated by the Design Council Board of Trustees for activities in the following financial year

Unrestricted Funds: These are funds which have been received from all other programmes.

f) Fixed assets and depreciation

Tangible Fixed Assets costing less than £1k are not capitalised and are written off in the year of purchase. Assets are capitalised at cost and are kept under review for any impairment.

All fixed assets are written off on a straight-line basis over the assets’ expected useful lives as follows:

Leasehold improvements
10 years, or over the period of the lease

Furniture and fittings
5 years

Computer equipment
2 - 5 years

g) Pensions
The Charity operates a defined contribution pension scheme on behalf of its employees. The amount charged to the SOFA in respect of pension costs and other post-retirement benefits is the contributions payable in the period. Differences between contributions payable in the year and contributions actually paid are shown as either accruals or prepayments in the balance sheet.

h) Leases
All leases are accounted for as operating leases and rentals are charged to the income and expenditure account on a straight-line

basis over the life of the lease

i) Provisions
Provisions are made when the Design Council has a legal or constructive financial obligation, that can be reliably estimated and for which there is an expectation that payment will be made. The obligation is recognised as a liability once the obligation has crystallised.

j) Design Council Enterprises Limited
The Charity owns the whole of the share capital of Design Council Enterprises Limited. Its trading subsidiary was dormant during the year and therefore consolidated accounts are not prepared.

2. Income from charitable activities

Income from charitable activities 2024-25

			2025
	Unrestricted £000	Restricted £000	Total £000
Grants from AHRC	500	1,500	2,000
Other grants from government and public bodies		75	75
Programme fees and other income	1,631	-	1,631
Total income from charitable activities	2,131	1,575	3,706

Note:
Change to recognition of AHRC grant compared with previous years following review of the grant terms agreement stipulating 25% is unrestricted and 75% is restricted

Income from charitable activities 2023-24

			2024
	Unrestricted £000	Restricted £000	Total £000
Grants from AHRC		2,000	2,000
Other grants from government and public bodies	(73)	599	526
Programme fees and other income	1,110	-	1,110
Total income from charitable activities	1,037	2,599	3,636

3. Expenditure

Expenditure 2024-25

	Grants payable	Staff costs	Other direct costs	Total direct costs	Support costs (note 6)	2025 Total
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
Charitable activities						
Impact (note a)	-6	515	278	887	-	887
Knowledge	-	335	271	605	-	605
Partnerships	-	216	2	218	-	218
Comms	-	318	36	354	-	354
Congress	-	33	243	277	-	277
Operations	-	-	79	79	1,068	1,147
Total 2025	-6	1,417	1,009	2,420	1,068	3,488

Grants payable

a. The negative £6k figure in Grants Payable column is a returned unused grant from the legacy Spark programme.

Expenditure 2023-24

	Grants payable	Staff costs	Other direct costs	Total direct costs	Support costs (note 6)	2024 Total
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
Charitable activities						
Impact	-128	503	545	921	-	921
Knowledge	-	235	165	400	-	400
Partnerships	-	112	43	155	-	155
Comms	-	674	25	699	-	699
Operations	-	362	31	394	0	394
Total 2024	-128	1,886	809	2,568	1,291	3,860

4. Staff costs and numbers

Staff costs were as follows:	2025 £000	2024 £000
Salaries and wages	1,727	1,859
Social security costs	198	215
Pension contributions	104	119
Staff benefits	4	5
Redundancy costs	47	62
Total payroll staff costs	2,079	2,260
Total temporary and contract staff costs	-	-
Total staff costs	2,079	2,260

Redundancy payments are £47k (2023/24: £62k). These payments are based on continuous length of service and include accruals. Amounts paid excluded pension contributions or benefits in kind.

The number of employees, whose emoluments were over £60k (including salary and taxable benefit in kind costs but not including pension) falls within the ranges shown below.

Band	2025	2024
£60,000 - £69,999	3	-
£70,000 - £79,999	1	1
£80,000 - £89,999	2	1
£90,000 - £99,999	1	-
£100,000 - £109,999	-	1
£130,000 - £139,999	-	-
£140,000 - £149,999	1	1

The total costs of key management personnel including gross salary, NI Contributions and Employer’s pension contributions are £584.5k (2023/24: £557k). These relate to 6 staff (2023/24: 6) as specified in the Trustees Report within the Structure, governance and management section.

The average number of employees based on headcount during the year was as follows:	2025 No.	2024 No.
Permanent (payroll)	34	36
Other staff (other)	0.7	0.5
	35	37

5. Net income/(expenditure) for the year

This is stated after charging:	2025 £000	2024 £000
Depreciation	44	50
Auditors’ remuneration:		
Audit	14	15
Other services	-	2
Operating lease rentals:		
Plant and machinery	-	-
Land and buildings	-	-

6. Support Costs

Support costs 2024/25

Support costs are allocated to charitable activities as follows:

	Notes	Staff costs £000	Other costs £000	2025 Total £000
Executive		209	36	245
Office		125	100	225
Governance costs	a	71	-	71
Human resources		103	52	155
IT		49	62	111
Finance	b	103	115	218
Depreciation		-	44	44
Total support costs		659	409	1,068

Notes:

- a. Governance costs relate to the Design Council’s cost of secretariat. This includes the administration of Trustee meetings.
- b. The Design Council only recovers a proportion of the VAT incurred on purchases under the “partial exemption methodology”. The irrecoverable element of the incurred VAT is taken centrally and charged to finance (included above in ‘Other costs’); in 2024-25 it is £85k (2023-24: £112k).

Support costs 2023/24

	Notes	Staff costs £000	Other costs £000	2024 Total £000
Executive		194	-	194
Office		72	125	197
Governance costs	a	60	-	60
Human resources		51	44	95
IT		88	218	306
Finance	b	214	175	389
Depreciation		-	50	50
Total support costs		678	613	1,291

Notes:

- a. Governance costs relate to the Design Council’s cost of secretariat. This includes the administration of Trustee meetings.
- b. The Design Council only recovers a proportion of the VAT incurred on purchases under the “partial exemption methodology”. The irrecoverable element of the incurred VAT is taken centrally and charged to finance £111.7k (2022/2023: £112k).

7. Taxation

The Design Council is a Charity within the meaning Para 1 Schedule 6 Finance Act 2010. Accordingly the charity is potentially exempt from taxation in respect of income or capital gains within categories covered by Chapter 3 of Part 11 of the Corporation Tax Act 2010 or Section 256 of the Taxation of Chargeable Gains Act 1992, to the extent that such income or gains are applied exclusively to charitable purposes. No tax charge arose in the period.

8. Tangible fixed assets 2024-25

	Leasehold Improvements £000	Furniture and fittings £000	Computer equipment £000	Total 2025 £000
Cost				
At the start of the year	-	-	202	202
Additions in year	-	-	-	-
Disposals in year	-	-	-	-
At the end of the year	-	-	202	202
Depreciation				
At the start of the year	-	-	(99)	(99)
Charge for the year	-	(0.1)	(44.2)	(44)
Disposals in year	-	-	-	-
At the end of the year	-	(0.1)	(142.7)	(143)
Net book value				
At the end of the year	-	-	59	59
At the start of the year	-	-	103	103

Tangible fixed assets 2023-24

	Leasehold Improvements £000	Furniture and fittings £000	Computer equipment £000	Total 2024 £000
Cost				
At the start of the year	-	7	202	209
Additions in year	-	-	-	-
Disposals in year	-	-	-	-
At the end of the year	-	7	202	209
Depreciation				
At the start of the year	-	(6)	(50)	(56)
Charge for the year	-	(1)	(49)	(50)
Disposals in year	-	-	-	-
At the end of the year	-	(7)	(99)	(105)
Net book value				
At the end of the year	-		103	104
At the start of the year	-	1	152	153

9. Debtors 2024-25

	2025 £000	2024 £000
Trade debtors	106	158
Other debtors	-	-
Prepayments and accrued income	258	37
	364	195

Note:
Prepayments and accrued income total of £258k is made up of £218k Prepayments and £40k Accrued Income; Accrued Income £40k is Spark Income relating to 2024-25 invoiced in May25; Prepayments are higher than last year (£37k in 2023-24) because they include £24.7k 80th Anniversary Book production expenses to be recognised as unit costs against book sales expected in 2025-26, plus £140k World Design Congress venue hire costs paid in 2024-25 but to be recognised in September 2025

10. Creditors 2024-25: amounts due within one year

	2025 £000	2024 £000
Trade creditors	22	144
Tax and social security	50	60
VAT payable	79	70
Other creditors	46	113
Other accruals	-	74
Deferred income	560	515
	758	975

Note: £500k of £560k deferred income represents 2025-26 Q1 grant which was received in advance in March 2025

11. Analysis of group net assets between funds

Analysis of group net assets between funds 2024/25			2025
	Unrestricted funds £000	Restricted funds £000	Total funds £000
Tangible fixed assets	59	-	59
Net Assets	804	-	804
Net assets at the end of the year	863	-	863
Analysis of group net assets between funds 2023/24			2024
	Unrestricted funds £000	Restricted funds £000	Total funds £000
Tangible fixed assets	104	-	104
Net Assets	353	189	541
Net assets at the end of the year	456	189	645

12. Movements in funds during 2024/25

		2024				2025
	Note	At the start of the year £000	Income £000	Expenditure £000	Transfer to Unrestricted £000	At the end of the year £000
Restricted funds:						
AHRC Grant	a	-	1,500	(1,500)	-	-
DLUHC Programme	b	33	75	(108)	-	-
Public Design Reviews	c	16	-	(16)	-	-
AHRC & CD Scoping Project	d	140	-	-	(140)	-
Other funds		-	-	-	-	-
Total restricted funds		189	1,575	(1,624)	(140)	-
Unrestricted Funds:						
Designated	e	-	-	-	16	16
Unrestricted General Funds		456	2,131	(1,864)	124	847
Total unrestricted funds		456	2,131	(1,864)	140	863
Total funds		645	3,706	(3,488)	-	863

- a. Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) provide an annual grant of £2m – of which £1.5m is restricted funds – under a 3 year framework agreement to help the Design Council deliver its role as national champion for the effective use of design and achieve its 3 core objectives of celebrating and promoting the impact of design, creating good conditions for design to thrive and convening the UK design sector.

b. Design Council recognised a total of £108k (of which £75k was received in 2024-25) grant funding from Department of Levelling Up, Housing & Communities (DLUHC) – now known as Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) – to support its Design Codes Pathfinder Programme working with 25 local authorities and neighbourhood planning groups in producing design codes for their local areas.
- c. Design Council received a grant in 2023-24 from UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) of which £16k was carried over into 2024-25. The grant supported the Public Design Review research programme which looked at the value of design in the context of the public sector. It comprised of a series of workshops with public sector stakeholders and culminated in a written report that was published in May 2025.

d. Design Council received a grant from AHRC to further and scope design opportunities and activities within the UK in 2023-24. £140k of this grant was carried over from 2023-24 into 2024-25 is now considered to be unrestricted and has been transferred accordingly.

e. Designated funds of £16k relates to financial activity undertaken in 2024-25 in preparation for and to be carried over to support the World Design Congress event in 2025-26

13. Contingent liabilities

There are no contingent liabilities to declare.

14. Related parties transactions

The Design Council Trustees are drawn from among its key stakeholders, and staff may at times have links to stakeholder organisations. Therefore, it is in the nature of the Design Council’s business to have transactions which are classified as related. All transactions entered into are as part of the ordinary course of business and on an arm’s length basis, consistent with the Design Council’s policy on potential conflicts of interest. During the year, the Design Council entered into the following transactions with related parties as follows:

Name	Position at Design Council	Note	Related Party	Income £	Expense £
Paul Monaghan	Trustee	a	Founder of AHMM Architecture Company	-	1,800
Anne Boddington	Deputy Chair & Trustee	b	Trustee at Design Council	-	516
Beatrice Fraenkel	Trustee	c	Trustee at Design Council	-	188
Jonquil Hackenberg	Trustee	d	Trustee at Design Council	-	245

Notes:

- a. Design Council rented space in AHMM’s Old Street offices for 3 months of 2024-25
- b. Expenses paid to Anne Boddington incurred in her role as Trustee
- c. Expenses paid to Beatrice Fraenkel incurred in her role as Trustee
- d. Expenses paid to Jonquil Hackenberg Fraenkel incurred in her role as Trustee

Design Council

info@designcouncil.org.uk
designcouncil.org.uk

September 2025