

Design
Council

Chief Executive

Recruitment Pack
November 2025

Welcome from the Chair

With the current Chief Executive standing down next Spring after 5 impactful years, we are looking for someone dynamic to lead the next chapter. This is an incredibly exciting time to join the Design Council.

Our recent 80th anniversary celebrations showcased the incredible influence of the Design Council over eight decades of design, and how since 2021 the Design Council has had a focused mission: Design for Planet.

Design has a critical role to play in addressing the biggest challenge of our lifetime – the climate and nature crisis. Our mission seeks to galvanise the 1.97 million designers working in the UK to put planetary needs at the heart of their work and help accelerate the green transition and green growth in the UK.

We have set ourselves the ambition to upskill 1 million designers in green design skills by 2030, and we recently launched our Skills for Planet Blueprint which outlines the key principles and learning outcomes required to embed green design skills across the design sector.

In September 2025, the Design Council hosted the high-profile World Design Congress with the theme of Design for Planet, aimed as a global call for action to the design community across government, business and academia. It was a catalysing moment and a great example of the strength of our brand, convening power and ability to champion the UK's leadership in design and innovation.

Our current programme of work and strategy focuses on making the case to government and business for supportive policy and conditions that recognize and amplify the impact design can make through our flagship Design Economy research, our ambitious Skills for Planet programme.

The foundations we've laid are gaining traction, and the next chapter is about building on the momentum we have achieved to date to make meaningful, impactful and long-lasting change and using the power of design to create a regenerative world for all.

To do this, we are looking for a new Chief Executive who can lead the Design Council

into its ninth decade as a thriving, resilient and high profile national organisation, and who can spearhead the drive for public, private and philanthropic funding to support us deliver on our Design for Planet mission and charitable objects.

As the inspiring economist Kate Raworth says, *"If you're not designing for planet, what planet are you on?"* Now that's a rallying cry. And we hope it will inspire the right person to join us in leading how we rise to the challenge.



William Eccleshare
Chair

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 government, public bodies, business, 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. That mission has developed to include the ambitious goal to upskill 1 million in green design skills by 2030. This is supported by many partners including the endorsement of government.

Our five-year strategy sets out how we, as part of a global design community, can truly drive the change we want to see in the world and help accelerate the green transition in the UK.

The Design Council is funded as an independent charity through grants, partnerships, and commissioned, paid-for services, including an annual government grant from AHRC/UKRI under a three-year framework agreement since September 2022.

We were created in 1944 by Winston Churchill's wartime government to tackle the biggest challenge of the time, the post-war economic recovery. Our focus now on the climate and nature crisis is a more urgent challenge. You can see some of our activities and achievements over the years [on this timeline](#).

Read more about:

[Our Five Year Design for Planet Strategy](#)



[Our Partnership Opportunity offering](#)



[Our work in our 2024/25 Annual Report](#)



[Previous Annual Reports](#)



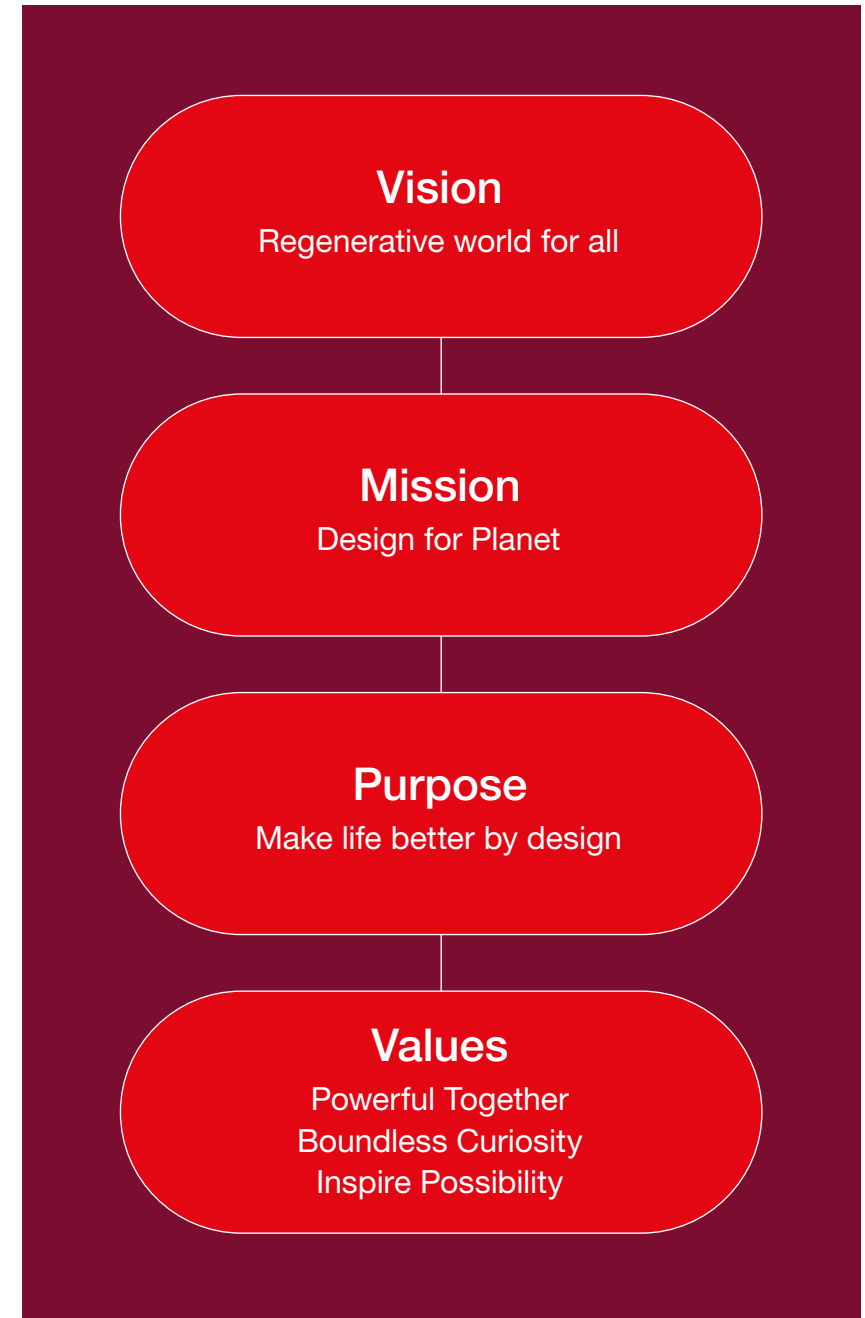
[The World Design Congress that we hosted in London in 2025](#)



Our Purpose, Vision and Values

Our values are principles that guide us and help us achieve our purpose, mission and vision.

How we behave reflects our values and our culture. Therefore it's important that we all have a shared understanding of what it means to live those values, how we show up to work each day and how we behave with each other.



An aerial photograph of a dense forest. A paved road winds through the trees, forming a large, irregular circular loop that encloses a central area of greenery. The surrounding forest is thick with various shades of green, and some darker, more shadowed areas are visible in the upper right. The overall scene is a top-down view of a natural landscape with a man-made road.

**“If you’re not designing
for planet, what
planet are you on?”**

Kate Raworth
Author, Doughnut Economics

About Design

Design shapes the world. Everything around us has been designed by someone.

Design uses creativity to solve problems across many sectors including architecture, product, industrial, digital, service, graphic and systems.

Design has had a role in getting us to this place, in which we take more from Earth than it has to give, and now design has a critical and potentially transformative role to play in the creation of a positive, joy filled future.

Design will be the fuel of the innovation which enables us to live well within our planetary boundaries: from retrofitting buildings to developing infrastructure for electric transport, improving products' energy efficiency, and driving the circular economy.

1.97m

people working in design economy, which generates...

£97.4bn

almost the value of the hospitality and real-estate sectors combined. And it's...

4.9%

of total UK Gross Value Added (GVA).

78k

design firms, the majority of them small SMEs.

77%

of designers work in non-design sectors.

Source: [Design Economy 2022](#)



**“Design is at the heart
of innovation, economic
growth and the skills
we need for the future.”**

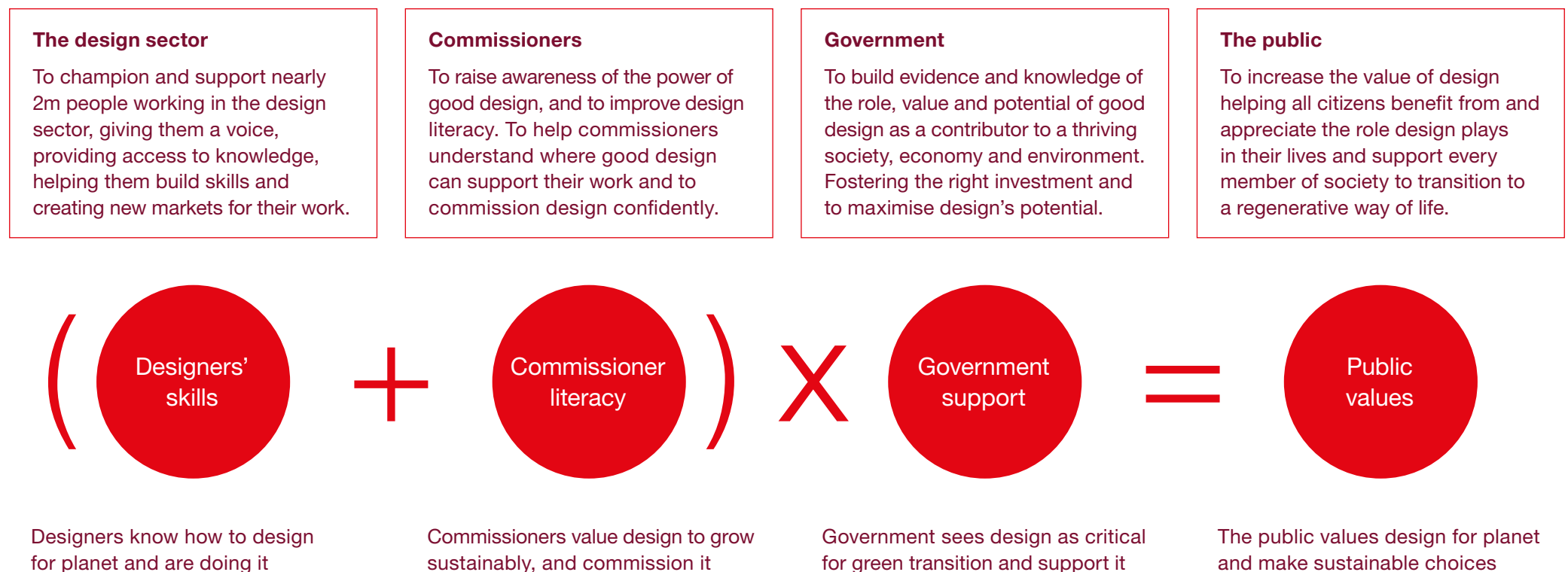
Sir Chris Bryant
Minister of State for the Creative Industries

Our Theory of Change

Design has potential to be a transformative asset for the UK, but we're facing a skills gap. Our Design Economy research shows 71% of designers believe the demand for design for planet will grow, but only 43% feel they have the capability to meet the demand.

To have as much impact as we can, we are focusing heavily on driving the skills and capability needed to ensure that design can play its critical role in the transition to a regenerative society for all.

We have reduced our theory of change to this simple equation:



Our Reach and Impact

Through our programmes, partnerships and thought leadership, the Design Council reaches and influences a broad and diverse audience from government and industry to educators, practitioners and industry.

A look at 2024/25 in numbers is below:



The World Design Congress 2025

The Design Council hosted the prestigious World Design Congress in September 2025 for the first time in over 50 years.

This was truly a showcase for British design and how designers are propelling us through the green transition: from regenerating nature to empowering green communities, eliminating emissions to measuring green impact.

It brought together design innovators, business leaders and academic thinkers from around the globe to connect, share learning and inspire action around the theme of Design for Planet.

Hosted at the iconic Barbican Centre for two days Minister for the Creative Industries Ian Murray used his closing speech to endorse the Design Council's mission to upskill 1 million designers in green design skills by 2030.

“London has always been a thriving hub for world-leading design and hosting the World Design Congress 2025 will be an excellent opportunity to showcase the talents of our creative community, as leaders from across the world unite to put design at the heart of our efforts to address climate change.”

The Mayor of London, Sadiq Khan



The World Design Congress in numbers

1,000

Attendees
in the room

177

Speakers

33

Sessions

330

C-suite
attendees

211

Design Council
invitees

48m

Total combined
press reach

81

Countries
represented

108

Student passes
sold

106

Universities



About the Team

We are a small team of around 30 people based in London. We are able to achieve our broad remit with the support of our 200+ Design Council Experts and Ambassadors. This is a group of brilliant design leaders who work with us to advocate for design, share knowledge about best practice, and help us deliver advice and programmes.

Our full list of Experts and Ambassadors can be [found here](#).

We are led by our Executive Team:



Minnie Moll
Chief
Executive



Rob Holmes
Chief Operating
Officer



Cat Drew
Chief Design
Officer



**Our Design Council
Experts**

About the Board of Trustees

Our Trustees bring deep expertise, leadership and insight to guide the Design Council's strategic direction and ensure we deliver on our mission with integrity and impact.

It is our intention to have a diverse Board of Trustees in terms of experience, gender, ethnicity and age. This includes a breadth of design expertise. The wider the peripheral vision in our Board, the better.

The Board is overseen by a Chair and one Deputy Chair. There are currently a total of 10 Trustees on the Board.

You can see full details of our Trustees on our website [here](#).



Ben Ramalingam
Chief Strategic
Development Officer,
UNICEF UK



Chris Naylor
Director,
Inner Circle



Elena Marco
Pro Vice-Chancellor and
Head of the College
of Arts, Technology,
and Environment,
University of the West
of England Bristol



Jonquil Hackenberg
Chief Executive Officer,
Ellen MacArthur
Foundation



Keith Morgan CBE
Former CEO, British
Business Bank



Patrick Bellew RDI
Founder,
Atelier Ten



Paul Monaghan
founding Director,
Allford Hall
Monaghan Morris



Sadaf Hosseini
Global Head of
Partnerships and
Philanthropic
Engagement, UpLink



Tom Crawford
Global Head
of Sustainability,
Vodafone



William Eccleshare
Former Global CEO,
Clear Channel Outdoor



**“The Design Council has
led the world through
its standard setting, its
international connectivity
and its convenorship.”**

Professor Christopher Smith
Executive Chair, Arts and Humanities Research Council

The role of the Chief Executive

The main purpose of the role is to lead Design Council, to ensure the strategy is robust and the operations will deliver all the agreed objectives in year. Additionally, the postholder will champion the role of design especially with government, and working with the Chief Design Officer across key commercial and public sectors.

Governance

The Chief Executive is the lead officer for all engagement with trustees, and is directly responsible for working with trustees to develop:

- The vision, strategic plan and values.
- Effective governance structures.
- Effective oversight of operations on a quarterly basis.

Senior Leadership

The Chief Executive leads the executive team, and is directly responsible for building a high performing team by:

- Proposing the annual objectives for the organisation and the targets for each Director
- Ensuring all staff understand and abide by our policies, procedures and values
- Reviewing progress with objectives on a quarterly basis.

Strategy Development

The Chief Executive is directly responsible for strategy, and leads in particular for:

- Contributing an awareness of areas of potential work and influence with Government
- Ensuring the strategy builds on historic successes and meets the major challenges facing society
- Supporting the development of cross organisation systems to support delivery.

Government and External Relations

The Chief Executive is the lead officer for our work for Government, and for a number of national influencers, and leads external relations in order to build brand and reputation especially in terms of:

- The ongoing funding agreement with the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC).
- Discussions with all/any other government departments or major public bodies including UK Research and Innovation, Arts and Humanities Research Council, Innovate UK, Department for Culture, Media and Sport, Department for Business and Trade, Department for Energy Security and Net Zero.
- Delivering speeches or similar with national or international coverage.

Accounting Officer

The Chief Executive is the Accounting Officer at the Design Council, and so has to:

- Ensure compliance with all relevant regulations and the accuracy of all records.
- Work with Directors to build a sustainable business model ensuring that all major business development opportunities are seized.

Impact

The Chief Design Officer holds the design practice and leads in terms of producing the annual Impact Report, but the Chief Executive will have a close oversight of this work.

Risk

The Chief Executive leads the process to capture risks, design mitigations, report these to Trustees and ensure all mitigating actions are effectively delivered.

Person Specification

The current Chief Executive will be stepping down next year after 5 impactful years in the role.

We are looking for a Chief Executive who is inspired by our Design for Planet mission and can help attract the funding we seek to deliver maximum impact.

Understanding of sustainability issues and design's role in creating a regenerative future is important, and someone who has experience in catalysing sectoral and economic growth would be beneficial.

The Design Council is a small organisation so this is very much a sleeve rolled up role. There are a lot of evening events and speaking requests.

We recognise that no single individual is likely to embody every attribute listed here, and that exceptional leaders will demonstrate these strengths in diverse ways. However, these characteristics reflect the leadership qualities and experiences we believe will drive our future success.

We welcome applications from people of all backgrounds and ages and encourage underrepresented groups to apply.

Essential Leadership Competencies

Strategic, Commercial and Organisational Leadership

- **Strategic Vision & Execution:** Ability to simplify complexity, bring coherence to organisational priorities, and translate vision into action.
- **Financial Oversight:** Strong grasp of financial management, especially in hybrid and not-for-profit funding environments.
- **Innovation Mindset:** Future-oriented thinking, with awareness of digital technology and AI as drivers of change in design and education.
- **Inclusive & Purpose-Driven Culture Building:** Embeds values-led leadership and fosters a high-performing, mission-aligned team.
- **Experienced People Leader:** Skilled in team building and cultivating strong internal and external relationships.

Sector & Stakeholder Credibility

- **Design Sector Gravitas:** Recognised and respected within the design and built environment communities. Brings authority, influence, and sectoral presence.
- **Government & Public Sector Engagement:** Well-networked and experienced in navigating public policy, government advisory roles, and funding landscapes.
- **Partnerships for Impact:** Skilled at building strategic alliances across sectors to deliver societal value, understands the role of Design Council as a bridge between research, industry needs, education, and design expertise.
- **International Perspective:** Understands global design challenges and opportunities, with potential to elevate Design Council's international profile and influence.

Desirable Experience

- Track record in public and private sector commissions & consultancy
- Commercially focused not-for-profit sector experience
- Education sector experience.

Salary and Benefits

The salary is £130k per year.

The Design Council offers a number of benefits which are offered to all colleagues and include the following:

- 28 annual leave days pro rata (plus buy up to 5 additional days), 3 days for Christmas closure and 1 day off for your birthday
- 5% Employer Pension Contribution (up to 7.5% if matched)
- Learning and Development
- Hybrid working policy (working in our office at least 2 days per week)
- Flexible working policy (if you require to work non-standard hours)
- Season ticket loan
- Cycle to work scheme
- Enhanced Sick Leave
- Enhanced Maternity & Paternity Leave
- Aviva Employee Assistance Programme
- Life Assurance Policy
- Eye care test cover up to £50
- Marriage and civil partnership leave (5 days).

How to Apply

If you are interested in this role, please visit [this link](#). The closing date for all applications to be received is **28 November 2025**.

If you need any additional support, please do contact recruitment@designcouncil.org.uk.

To apply for the role of Chief Executive please submit:

1. A video explaining how you meet the skills, experience and behaviours we are seeking. The video must be at least **1** minute long but not longer than **3** minutes. Please submit this to recruitment@designcouncil.org.uk.
2. Your CV detailing your work to date, with clear examples of success from your previous positions and how your experience meets the brief. The CV must be at least **1** page but not longer than **3** pages.

The Design Council is fully committed to being a diverse and inclusive organisation. We welcome applications from everyone who meets the criteria. If you need any additional support, please do send in an early alert to our email address above.

The selection process is as follows:

1. Initial sift

Every Video and CV sent to us will be shortlisted against set criteria to ensure they comply with our process.

2. Longlisting

Led by our Head of HR, a small team of colleagues will create a longlist of candidates for the Selection Panel. The Panel will comprise a number of our Trustees and be led by our Chairman.

3. First Interviews

Candidates selected for the long list will be invited for interviews w/c 15 December 2025.

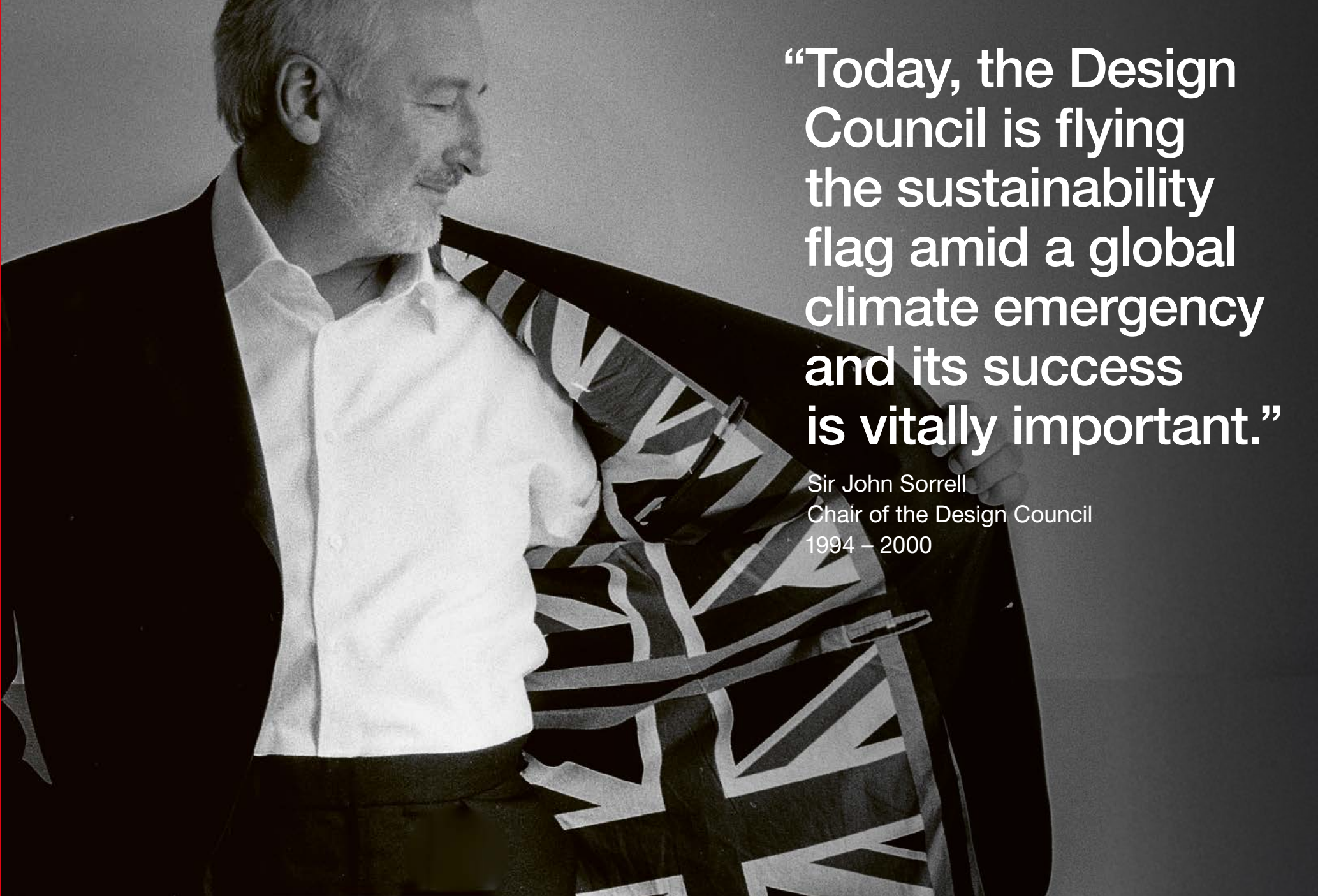
4. Second Interviews

Shortlisted candidates will be invited to interviews w/c 5 January 2026.

For shortlisted candidates it will be possible to meet with our current Chief Executive to gain more understanding of the day to day role and ask questions.

If you require any additional support during the interview stage please do alert us in advance.

Thank you so much for your interest in becoming our next Chief Executive, and we look forward to receiving your application.

A black and white photograph of Sir John Sorrell, an older man with a beard, wearing a white shirt and a dark jacket. He is holding a large Union Jack flag over his shoulder. The background is a solid dark grey.

“Today, the Design Council is flying the sustainability flag amid a global climate emergency and its success is vitally important.”

Sir John Sorrell
Chair of the Design Council
1994 – 2000

