PRESS RELEASE
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DESIGN COUNCIL LAUNCHES LANDMARK DESIGN ECONOMY REPORT

The Design Council releases *Design Economy: People, Places and Economic Value,* demonstrating value of design to the UK

The report reveals the design economy is growing at twice the UK average, contributing £97.4bn in GVA to the UK economy

Data shows the design economy is a significant industry in post Brexit Britain, employing 1.97 million people in 2020

Digital design jobs rose by 138% in recent years, growing faster than both the design sector and the wide economy

Report details that 77% of all designers work in non-design sectors such as finance, retail and construction

Scotland named as the region with the faster rate of design economy growth, growing five times faster than the Scottish economy*

The Design Council calls for curriculum reform and warns that without diverse career pathways the sector is under future threat

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Today (Thursday 21 July 2022) the Design Council releases its ***Design Economy: People, Places and Economic Value* report**. The research's mission is to show the economic, social, and environmental value of design in the UK and to advocate for the conditions needed for good design to thrive across the country.

The Design Economy report focuses on six key pillars including **economic growth, regional prosperity, digital innovation, exports, skills for the future and diversity within the sector.**

The report reveals that **during 2020 one in twenty workers in the UK (1.97 million people), worked for a job within the Design Economy.** Sectors include architecture, product design, fashion, digital design, craft and graphics plus those working design roles in other sectors, such as the NHS and financial services.

Design has been shown to increase productivity and return on investment across the economy, acting as a key driver for regional growth and prosperity. New **data reveals Scotland as the region with the largest level of design economy growth**, with an increase of 33%, growing five times faster than the Scottish Economy.
Digital design continues to supercharge the future of the design industry, with roles such as user-experience, website development, app design, video-game creation and other forms of digital production and publishing growing by 138%* in recent years - demonstrating the world class reputation that the UK's design industry holds. In 2019, the design sector also **accounted for over £70bn in exports**, including work commissioned for overseas projects from the UK.

Alongside digital innovation, faced with the climate and biodiversity emergencies, the scale of what the UK's need to design – and re-design – to achieve net-zero targets by 2050 is immense. To

achieve such goals investment in education and workforce will be paramount. However, statistics across the UK, show that entries to **Design and Technology GCSE have fallen by 68%** - putting extreme threat on a crucial career pipeline for designers.

Key data from *Design Economy: People, Places and Economic Value* report reveals:

- **The Design Economy contributed £97.4bn in GVA to the UK economy, equalling 4.9% of total UK GVA**

- **Design Economy accounted for over £70bn in exports in 2019, equalling one in every ten pounds from all UK exports and 18% of all UK service exports**

- **London continues to be a powerhouse for design, home to a third of all design businesses generating 29.5% of all design economy GVA**

- ***Scotland has seen the fastest growth: its design economy grew five times faster than the Scottish economy at 33% between 2017 and 2019**

- **Digital Design is the faster growing design sector, increasing by 138% between 2010 and 2019, three times the rate of the UK's digital sector**

- **Rapid growth in digital design employment in the South West (110%), Scotland (88%), Yorkshire and the Humber (55%) and Northern Ireland (31%)**

- **The design economy is still disproportionately male: 77% of designers identified as male in 2020**

- **The design workforce needs to reflect the diversity of the world it designs for with 85.6% of managers in the UK Design Economy workforce being from a white background**

Minnie Moll, Chief Executive, the Design Council said:

"We want as many people as possible, from the design community to design commissioners, the business sector to government, to really engage with the big messages from the research and recognise that design is a powerful tool to be used right now."

Andy Haldane, Chief Executive RSA and Chair, Levelling-Up Commission, said:

"Design should be at the heart of driving jobs, skills and regional prosperity across the UK. Designers bring immense value to the places they are a part of, be it in working with communities to shape our public spaces and services, creating affordable and good-quality homes, or in ensuring that our built environment and transport infrastructure are regenerative and benefit our planet. The RSA's new mission – Design for Life – reflects the crucial contribution design makes in society, the economy and to the environment.

We can see from this landmark research with the Design Council the growth, value and importance of the design sector across the UK and we must continue to advocate for the conditions needed to help design continue to thrive across the country."

The full report and executive summary can be downloaded HERE via the Design Economy Website.

Since 2015, Design Economy has been the most comprehensive assessment of the state of design in the UK, with its world leading approach adopted around the world. The Design Council's latest report explores the economic contribution of design across the UK, and the demographics of the design sector. Over the next three years, the data built up through this research will be combined to create a picture of the holistic value of design to the UK.

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- **Notes to Editor:**

The research behind this report was undertaken by BOP Consulting and the Enterprise Research Centre. It builds on the methodology developed by University of Arts London Social Design Institute, BOP Consulting and the Design Council.

For further information, images and interview requests please contact:

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Infographics and video assets available HERE

About Design Economy: Design Economy is the Design Council's flagship research programme that identifies the social, environmental, and economic value of design across the United Kingdom. It demonstrates its economic prosperity, potential to address regional inequalities, and significant capability to support the UK's drive to achieve net-zero. Research was undertaken by BOP Consulting and the Enterprise Research Centre at Aston University. The findings of the latest edition will be published in July 2022.

www.designeconomy.co.uk

#DesignEconomy

About Design Council: The Design Council is the national strategic advisor on design, and champions design and its ability to make life better for all. It is an independent and not for profit organisation incorporated by Royal Charter. The Design Council uniquely works across all design sectors and delivers programmes with business, government, public bodies and the third sector. The work encompasses thought leadership, tools and resources, showcasing excellence, and research to evidence the value of design and influence policy.

www.designcouncil.org.uk

About the RSA: The royal society for arts, manufactures and commerce (RSA) is a global network of more than 30,000 entrepreneurs, educators and innovators working together for the advancement of society, the economy and the environment. We believe in a better future, where we move from extracting for short-term gains to replenishing for the long-term and future generations. Our aspirations are not limited to doing less harm but are supercharged by the desire to do more good.

www.thersa.org/design-for-life