

03 Envisioning the Future of Design in Scotland

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Introduction

Achieving positive futures for Scotland, enabled by design

Through preceding papers, we have established the value that design contributes to Scotland today, and the future potential that remains untapped. The barriers and drivers to this value being realised have been identified – now, we need to bridge the gap between design in Scotland today, and design in Scotland as it could be in future.

Imagining future contexts, as springboards for action today

Through this project, two parallel strands of sector engagement were initiated to take a ‘future-back’ approach, to then define the action that could be taken today. These were a digital, public-facing interactive survey, and a series of workshops with a recruited Working Group.

The interactive survey gave respondents the opportunity to take on the fictitious role of Scotland’s first ‘Minister for Design’ and build their own manifesto for design, thereby articulating possible futures for design in Scotland. The Design for Scotland Working Group was convened to work collectively to reflect on the current and future role of design in Scotland, and build scenarios which explore how design can thrive within and contribute to a future Scotland financially, socially, democratically and environmentally.

Both strands of engagement work were initiated and designed to tap into the collective imagination of the design sector, using the Design Value Framework to explore the future contexts being designed for – each with their own need, opportunities and constraints – and the potential ways in which design can contribute to Scotland in the future.

The following pages document the results of a collective creative endeavour involving more than 150 people from all corners of design in Scotland today, culminating in Four Scenarios for 2030 that articulate the potential contribution of the design sector to future social, democratic, planetary and financial challenges, and what possible priority outcomes could be.

Interactive Survey: Insights

Scotland's first 'Minister for Design'

In parallel to Working Group activities an interactive survey was launched and publicised to gain broader insight. By giving participants the opportunity to step into the fictional role of being Scotland's first 'Minister of Design', the survey allowed individuals to communicate their ideas on the future of the design sector in Scotland, while learning what others think along the way.

You've been hired as Scotland's first 'Minister for Design'

We're asking you to imagine that you've been hired as Scotland's first Minister for Design, and that you are progressing through your first term. You'll be faced with decisions to make, and will be asked to describe your priorities as Minister for Design.

The questions you'll be asked are based on research about the challenges facing the design sector in Scotland and the UK, and the opportunities to grow its impact. Submissions will be used by the Design for Scotland project to gather information about how people feel design should be supported in Scotland

Through the survey, respondents were led through a series of nine questions to build their own 'manifesto' for design in Scotland. These activities ranged from being asked to select a 'design advisor' from each of the four Design Value domains, and indicating how awareness of design and the supply and demand of design services and skills could be stimulated; through to assessing the potential appetite for a national design policy or strategy, and the ways in which sector change could be coordinated organisationally. Furthermore, participants were given the chance to outline their first priorities, define success over the next three years, and anticipate the biggest challenges they might face as they embarked on their term as 'Minister for Design'.

Importantly, unlike conventional online surveys, the Design for Scotland interactive survey allowed respondents to see the responses of all other participants to each question after submitted, facilitating 'real time' insight into the potential trajectories of the design sector in Scotland.

Respondent profile

In total 156 survey responses were received from across design sub-sectors; and including practising designers, design educators/researchers, design champions or advocates and users/buyers of design services. Participants were drawn from across career stages, genders and ethnicities; and from 21 of Scotland's 32 local authority areas.

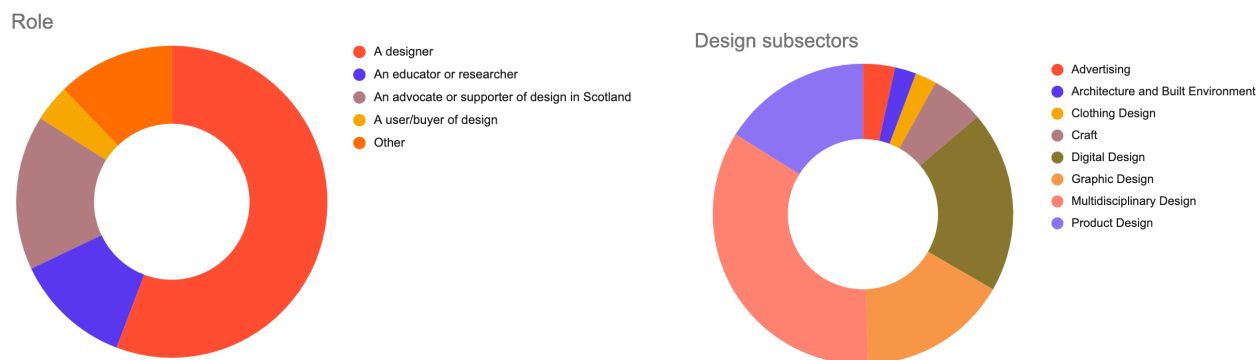


Figure 1: Profile of interactive survey respondents by role and design subsector

Deliver positive futures for Scotland, enabled by design

From both Working Group and Interactive Survey activities, it is clear there is appetite for the design sector to more actively and visibly shape its contribution to the future challenges and opportunities faced across all four design value domains: social, democratic, planetary and financial.

Future Ministry for Design
 Build your manifesto

[Contact](#)
[About](#)
[Privacy](#)

Question 1/17
Pick an advisor
 It's your first day in office and you've been asked to pick an advisor who will support your efforts. Who do you pick?

<p>Social Sashi</p> <p>"Design is about improving wellbeing, I want to see the design sector's energy focused on helping to improve public services and address big social challenges."</p>	<p>Fiscal Finley</p> <p>"Design has great potential to help economic prosperity and resilience in Scotland. It can help companies address new market opportunities, create highly skilled jobs, and boost our culture of entrepreneurship."</p>	<p>Climate Caelen</p> <p>"Design can support Scotland by finding innovative solutions to the climate crisis that not only reduce emissions or protect the natural world, but that also create behaviour change."</p>	<p>Democracy Demi</p> <p>"I think design can best support Scotland by imagining and implementing inclusive design processes that help citizens contribute to decision making; in communities, regions and as a whole nation."</p>
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Figure 2: Screenshot of example question from online interactive survey

Across all career stages and most design sub-sectors, survey respondents showed the most appetite for focusing the sector's energy on the social value of design in future (36 per cent); helping to improve wellbeing, improve public services and address big social challenges. The democratic value of design (23 per cent) in imagining and implementing inclusive design processes that help citizens contribute to decision making was prioritised next. Followed by the planetary and financial values of design, in supporting Scotland find innovative solutions to the climate crisis and helping the economic prosperity and resilience of the nation (both 21 percent). Beneath these headlines we also note a generational shift between junior designers who prioritise the social, democratic and planetary contribution of the sector;

and those in senior leadership roles who are more likely to advocate for the financial contribution of design to economic development and innovation.

Facilitate cross-sector collaboration

Across all respondent groups there was a clear preference for 'Facilitating greater cross-sector collaboration' as a means to getting decision makers in government and industry enthused about the potential of the design sector, with 41 per cent of respondents favouring this as a means of bring a range of organisations together to share good practice and improve wider understanding of design.

This option was selected more often, at the expense of focusing on 'Developing the sector's voice' (through a national 'Design Leadership Group' or other similar forum) or 'Showcasing good design' (through a national Design Showcase programme), which were the next preferred choices (at 23 per cent and 21 per cent respectively). There was limited appetite for focussing on evidencing the value of design more broadly (14 per cent) – reinforced strongly by design educator and researchers reluctance to prioritise this as an option – although this was in contrast to priorities articulated through open questions which placed improving the understanding of the value of design across all sectors as of high importance (see below).

Through open questioning, respondents articulated a desire to see the design sector working in partnership with organisations across all sectors to understand current challenges that they face, identifying opportunities around how design may be used, and showcase design benefits.

Improve understanding of design's value across all sectors

Respondents highlighted the need to evidence the benefits achieved from embedding design across all sectors. Some suggest developing a campaign to define and communicate the value of design to Scotland to as broad an audience as possible, for example showcasing how design can address pressing challenges, such as the climate crisis. Others want to see organisations, especially SMEs, being encouraged to take advantage of design approaches and methods by highlighting the results/outcomes of design-led initiatives.

Stimulate design demand through government-led strategic design investment

When asked to consider how to stimulate demand for design services across the economy to help achieve a fairer, wealthier and greener Scotland; respondents were unequivocally in favour of investing in mechanisms that would ensure government funding was directed towards addressing national challenges – economic transformation, net-zero transition – in a way that stimulated demand for design services provided by the sector.

Across career stages and design sub-sector this focus was consistently advocated in two ways: firstly with 45 per cent of participants favouring a national 'Design Challenge' procurement programme for design, to make it easier for public sector bodies to commission Scotland-based design experts to help solve their biggest challenges; and secondly with 37 per cent in favour of launching a 'National Innovation Programme' to partner design experts with early stage firms in strategically important industries of the future to speed up market launch.

There was relatively little interest in prioritising promotional or certification efforts – such as a ‘Design Nation’ publicity campaign, or ‘Scottish Design Pledge’ recognition programme – at the expense of more active government-led sector investment.

Create a National Design Skills Pipeline

When asked to consider how to stimulate the supply of design skills and expertise to ensure that the nation is equipped to address future challenges there was an even greater degree of consensus. There was a clear preference expressed (47 per cent) for the funding and creation of a National Design Skills pipeline to identify where future investment in design education should be focused – from early years, to higher education and beyond. This option was expressed as the clear first preferences across all design sub-sectors and career stages; and by both designers and design educators/researchers. Advocates or supporters of design in Scotland were marked by their preference for the launching of a network of Design Business Hubs across Scotland to incentivise new design business formation aligned to regional economic clusters.

Develop a national approach to design

The question of whether or not there should be a National Design Policy for Scotland has its origins in A Design Project for Scotland (ADPpS) and its antecedents; and exploring the appetite for a design policy for Scotland has been an aim of this Design for Scotland project from the outset.

Almost 80 per cent of respondents to the interactive survey think designers will respond well or very well to the introduction of a National Design Policy or Strategy, with broad enthusiasm across design sub-sectors and career stages; and from designers, educators/researchers and advocates alike. The more senior the respondent, the more likely they were to think the design community would see value in a national design policy or strategy.

Respondents expressed a desire for a national approach to design to be developed as a co-designed ‘manifesto’ or a national set of design outcomes. Many feel that in order to develop a national approach, the sector should ensure that energy is directed towards meeting the Scottish Government’s social, economic and ecological ambitions. While some suggest that design’s ability to solve ‘wicked’ problems shouldn’t be overstated, many feel that these are the challenges that the design sector is best placed to address.

Consider and evaluate a range of ways to make change happen

When asked to consider different ways to deliver or achieve a co-ordinated sector response to Scotland’s future challenges; respondents were open to a range of options outlined. While a slight preference was indicated for the establishment of a new Government funded sector support body with its own governance and funding arrangements (34 per cent); there was also strong appetite for ‘Supporting sector-led activity across Scotland’ (26 per cent) for instance, in actively supporting design sector-organisations to deliver strategic funding and support across the country. This was followed closely by preference for embedding design-focused strategies across public sector bodies in their annual plans and commitments.

Beware a one-size-fits-all approach: the case of product design

Across several survey questions product designers ran contrary to overall survey findings; suggesting this sub-sector has very different preferences and needs compared to other sub-sectors. Product designers showed the most appetite for focusing the sector's energy on the financial value of design; and a future focus on realising the potential of great design to help economic prosperity by helping companies address new market opportunities, create high-skilled jobs and boost Scotland's entrepreneurial culture.

To realise this potential of the design sector, product designers were the most keen (43 per cent) of all sub-sectors on developing the sector's voice as a means to getting decision makers in government and industry enthused about the potential of the design sector. Unlike other sub-sectors, few respondents from product design (14 per cent) agreed that facilitating cross-sector collaboration would build most enthusiasm for design.

As a design sub-sector heavily linked to technology and manufacturing industries, Product designers were most supportive (50 per cent) of the idea of a national innovation programme as a means of stimulating demand for the sector; and had a clear preference for government funded sector support as the best way to make change happen (with little interest in sector-led activity).

What success would look like in three years

Following on from interactive survey questions, respondents were invited to outline their immediate priorities on taking up the post of 'Minister of Design', and articulate what success would look like for the sector in three years' time if these priorities were followed up on and worked on. From all 156 responses three clear themes were evident:

Design education is much more established in schools	The impact of design can make on societal challenges is clear	Design's value is widely understood
Many suggest they would like to see a revised school-level design curriculum, which includes further teaching of design based skills and approaches and addresses the complex challenges that design often grapples with. This has the potential to encourage people to choose a design career, which in turn would see more people with design skills entering the workforce, driving the development in the sector.	Respondents identify measurable improvement in key sectors as the best marker of design-led success. If, hypothetically, key sectors such as health, education, climate change, well-being and social justice saw key indicators improve, that would demonstrate designs impact on those sectors.	Respondents emphasised the importance of demonstrating the value of design approaches to a wide range of stakeholders, not only to those who may invest or buy but also the general public. In their opinions, this increased awareness and appreciation of design has the potential to empower citizens to transform their own communities and environment.

Table 1: Summary of survey respondent immediate priorities in response to open question

As well as these main findings, further definitions of success included: retention of design graduates in Scotland, design being recognised as part of Scotland's the national identity, the existence of specialist design networks to coordinate events and research, improved sector diversity, and an increase in citizen engagement in participatory community and planet centred design processes.

What the biggest challenges over the next three years will be

To present a realistic picture of the change process required to successfully realise their priorities, survey participants were asked to articulate the biggest challenges they might face in the next three years of implementation. Again, from all survey responses three themes emerged:

Lack of financial support	Failing to create a culture where design can thrive	Societal challenges impact sector diversity
Many felt that the capacity of the sector is constrained due to lack of financial support. Some highlight this as particularly pressing in a context of a recession, where they anticipate difficulty convincing organisations of designs' value when they are in survival mode. However, many acknowledge that while this would be helpful, it is somewhat putting the cart before the horse, as design has to demonstrate its value in order to justify any further investment.	Many raised a concern that a lack of understanding and willingness to experiment with design thinking processes constrains the design sector's development. Closed mindsets, lack of time and capacity, and legacy procurement processes are suggested as key barriers to embedding design in different contexts. Some suggest that there is a need for design to improve its public perception in order to have the credentials to warrant upfront investment in time and effort required to be design-led.	Some have indicated that external societal challenges will halt the design sector's development, especially if the sector fails to demonstrate how design can help to address these issues. While some are concerned that a recession will stifle investment in innovation and therefore impact on design's ability to address societal challenges, such as climate breakdown and wealth inequality, others think that the recession is also likely to increase barriers to the design sector, contributing to a less diverse workforce. A lack of diversity and inclusivity in the design sector is a particular concern as it would lead to poor representation of the diversity of needs across Scotland.

Table 2: Summary of survey respondent views on biggest challenges in response to open question

As well as these main findings, further potential obstacles identified included: lack of leadership and vision to organise the sector, lack of buy-in from the public and private sector and competing priorities when addressing challenges in social, financial, democratic and planetary design value domains.

Interactive Survey: A Draft Manifesto by Future 'Minister of Design'

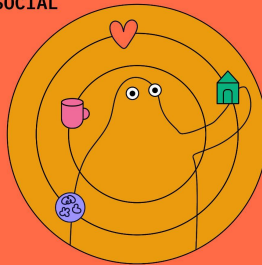
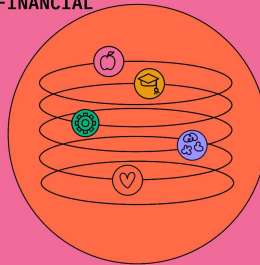
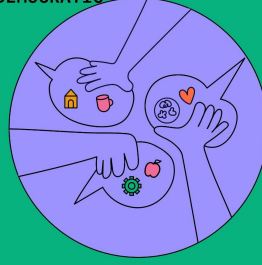
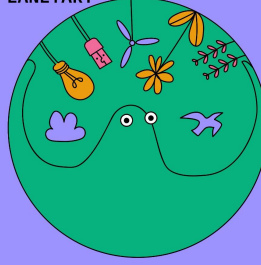
1. We will address societal challenges through design					
<div>SOCIAL</div> <div></div>	<div>FINANCIAL</div> <div></div>	<div>DEMOCRATIC</div> <div></div>	<div>PLANETARY</div> <div></div>		
<div>36%</div> <div>See design being about improving wellbeing. We want to see the design sector's energy focused on helping to improve public services and address big social challenges.</div>	<div>21%</div> <div>See design having great potential to help economic prosperity and resilience in Scotland. It can help companies address new market opportunities, create jobs, and boost entrepreneurship</div>	<div>23%</div> <div>Think design can best support Scotland by imagining and implementing inclusive design processes that help citizens contribute to decision making; in communities, regions and as a whole nation.</div>	<div>21%</div> <div>Think design can support Scotland by finding innovative solutions to the climate crisis that not only reduce emissions or protect the natural world, but that also create behaviour change.</div>		
2. We will facilitate cross-sector collaboration to raise design awareness					
Bringing a range of organisations together to share good practice to get decision makers in government and industry enthused about the potential of design					
3. We will stimulate design demand through government-led strategic investment					
Stimulating appetite for design services across the economy to help achieve a fairer, wealthier and greener Scotland; by investing in mechanisms that ensure government funding is directed towards addressing national challenges.					
<div>A national innovation programme</div> <div>We will launch a National Innovation Programme to partner design experts with early stage firms in strategically important industries of the future to speed up market launch</div>		<div>A procurement programme</div> <div>We will launch a 'Design Challenge' procurement programme for design, to make it easier for public sector bodies to commission Scotland-based design experts to help solve their biggest challenges</div>			
4. We will create a national design skills pipeline					
Stimulating the supply of design skills and expertise to ensure that the nation is equipped to address future challenges, we will identify where future investment in design education should be focused – from early years, to higher education and beyond.					
5. We will develop a national strategic approach to the design sector					
Co-designing and working towards a national set of design outcomes to ensure energy and investment is directed towards social, economic and environmental ambitions; enabled by government funded national support and formalised sector-led involvement.					

Figure 3: Summary of survey responses to design sector priorities, selected through the fictional role of Future Minister of Design

Working Group: Scenario development

The following sections provide an overview of the scenario development process, over the course of three workshops, with the Working Group participants.

Working group participants were selected from open applications, based on a tailored recruitment framework that ensured balanced sector, career level and demographic representation. The 114 applications received were reviewed anonymously and 33 participants selected. A broad range of design sector representation was secured, along with representation from Scotland's design education sector, buyers of design services and 'champions' of design.

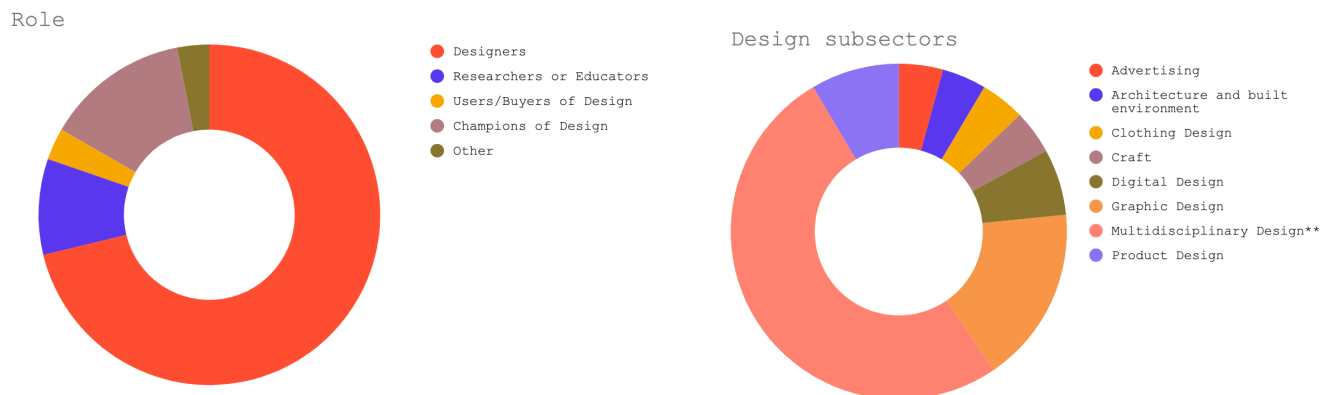


Figure 4: Working Group composition, by role and design subsector

The selected participants were invited to a series of three workshops between October and December 2022: two of which were held in-person (in Perth and Glasgow) and one online. The objectives of each workshop were to:

- **Workshop 1 (Perth):** Build a foundation of knowledge and identify areas of exploration
- **Workshop 2 (online):** Generate scenarios for a preferable future of design in Scotland
- **Workshop 3 (Glasgow):** Iterate scenarios, identify priorities and consider project next steps

Workshop 1

1st November 2022, Famous Grouse Ideas Centre, Perth Creative Exchange

Participants were given a presentation summarising the headlines from the desk research findings, and the framing of the project (as outlined in Briefing Paper 01). They self-assigned into four groups, allocated to each quadrant of the Design Value Framework. In their groups, they introduced themselves and placed a self portrait onto the framework, based on where they felt the main contribution of their work lies.

Individually, they were asked to note barriers and drivers to the growth of the design sector that they observe in their role. They then discussed these as a group and clustered them into themes, before sharing a summary with the rest of the Working Group. Next, they were asked to individually capture their hopes and fears for the future of Scotland, and map these onto the Design Value Framework.



Figure 5: Workshop 1 participants

Using all of the inputs generated throughout the workshop thus far (ie. barriers, drivers, hopes and fears), participants were asked to generate questions for further exploration during the Working Group engagements. These were mapped onto the Design Value Framework. The data generated in Workshop 1 was captured and synthesised by the project team, and used to create stimuli for Workshop 2.



Figure 6: Workshop 1 outputs

Workshop 2

22nd November 2022, online via Zoom/Miro

Prior to Workshop 2, participant 'hopes and fears' were summarised, and 'questions to explore' synthesised, to provide prompts for scenario building, aligned to each quadrant of the Design Value Framework. Participants were given the opportunity to digest and discuss these in their groups, (which were allocated prior to the workshop to create a balance of expertise, demographics and career level).

Each group was provided with a set of barriers and drivers, synthesised from Workshop 1 and cross referenced with those generated through Towards a Design Action Plan for Scotland, to ensure no important threads for exploration were dropped. Participants were given the opportunity to add any further barriers and drivers they felt were missing.

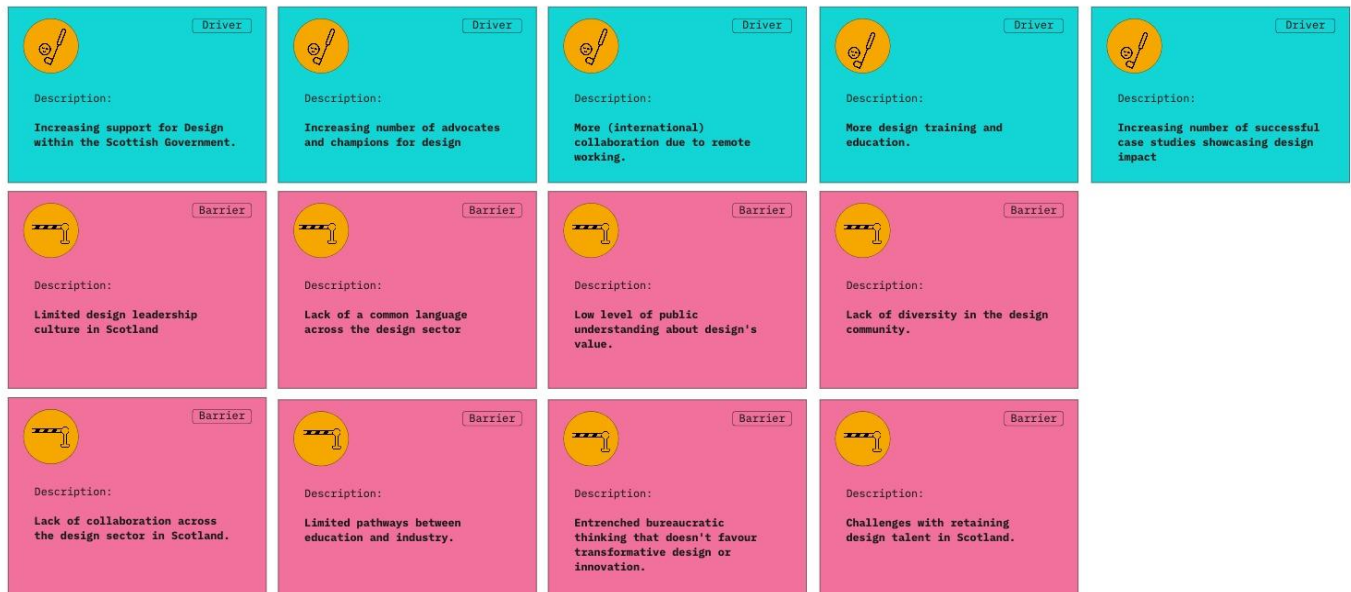


Figure 7: Example 'Drivers and barriers' cards synthesised from Workshop 1 and 'A Design Project for Scotland' outputs

The groups were also provided with additional inputs that were developed from desk research data:

1. **A set of five stakeholder categories:** funding and support providers, users and buyers of design, champions of design, designers, and education and skills providers. Groups were also given blank cards to add additional stakeholders that they felt were pertinent to their value domain.



Figure 8: Example stakeholder prompt cards

2. **A summary of Scottish Government policy priorities**, aligned to each quadrant of the framework. These were generated by looking across key Scottish Government strategy and policy documents to identify priorities, clustering these according to the Design Value Framework domains and drawing out themes. Documents reviewed included the Scottish Government's Programme for Government 2022–23 (Scottish Government, 2022) and National Performance Framework (Scottish Government, 2023); the Wellbeing Economy Monitor (Scottish Government, 2022) and Scotland's 2018–2032 Climate Change Plan (Scottish Government, 2020); together with the National Strategy for Economic Transformation (Scottish Government, 2022) and Culture Strategy for Scotland (Scottish Government, 2020).



Figure 9: Summary of policy priorities in Scotland against each design value quadrant

Considering all of the input materials, participants were asked to individually generate “what if” questions. Groups then reviewed and clustered these to identify themes, before dot voting on the questions they felt were most impactful, aspirational and realistic by 2030.

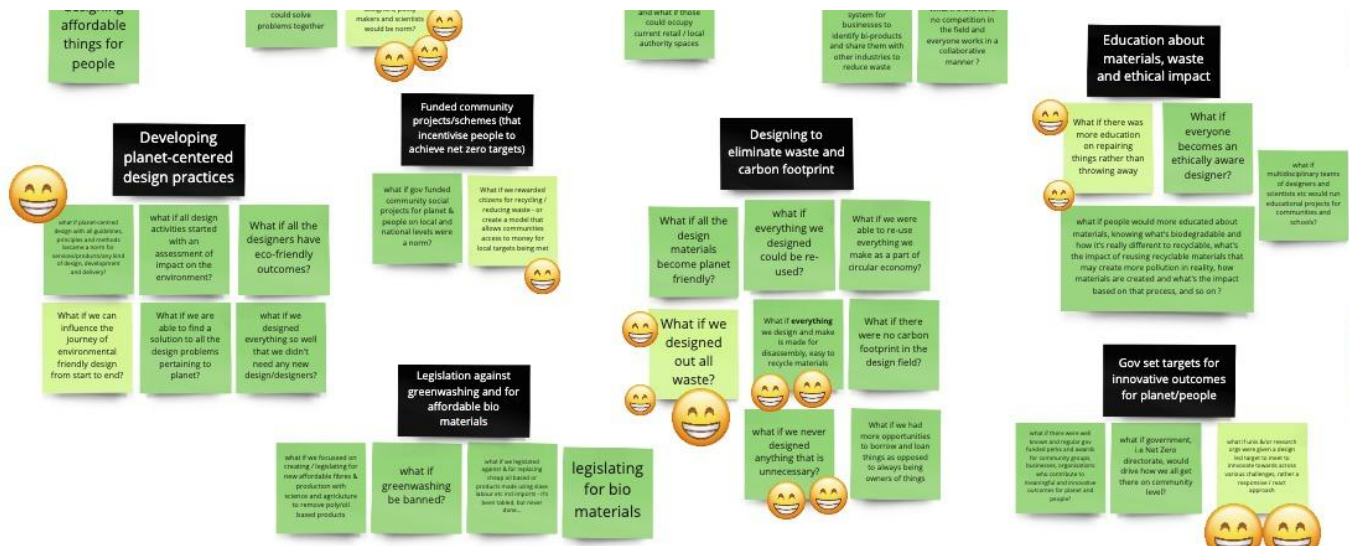


Figure 10: Example ‘What if?’ questions generated in response to design value domain prompts

Their chosen questions (approximately five) were used to develop a high-level one to two sentence summary of their scenario. They added detail to their scenario by generating examples of: project briefs they might hear about, ways that organisations are trying to use design and the wider impact that design is creating across society, in this future.

Lastly, they were asked to represent the scenario in the form of a collage, present it to the rest of the participants and share their insights from the process and outcomes.



Figure 11: Example draft scenario developed by workshop group against design value domain

Workshop 3

7th December 2022, TIC, University of Strathclyde, Glasgow

The scenario outputs from Workshop 2 (and their corresponding stimuli) were printed and displayed for the participants to review. In the same groups from Workshop 2, they discussed the scenario, refining and building upon it to emphasise positive elements and mitigate risks. The groups were also asked to represent the scenario in the form of a diorama, using props and materials to bring their vision to life.



Figure 12: Workshop 3 participants

The Working Group was given a presentation from Sabina Strachan of how2glu, outlining the pathway from the 'future scenarios' to 'a strategy to deliver desired outcomes'.

The use of scenarios to generate and identify priority outcome was explained, with these defined as **"a measurable change or difference you hope to make for your beneficiaries"**. These priority outcomes would be translated into strategic appraisal criteria, used to weigh up different operating options. The resulting entity or solution would have aims, goals, objectives and actions focused towards delivering the priority outcomes.

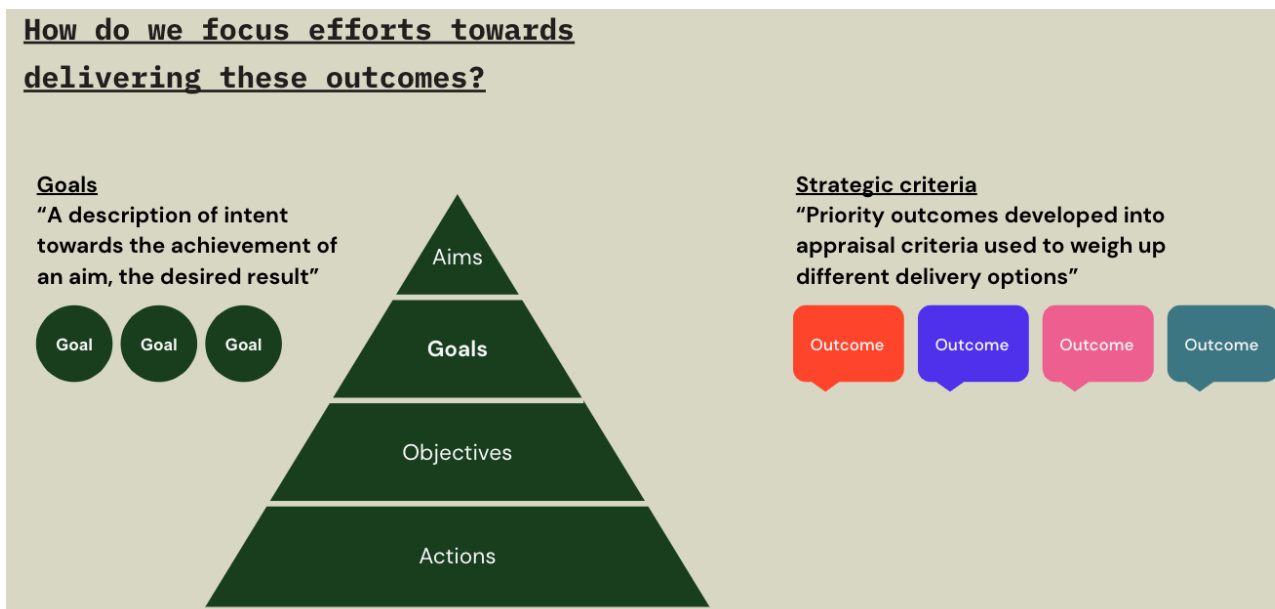
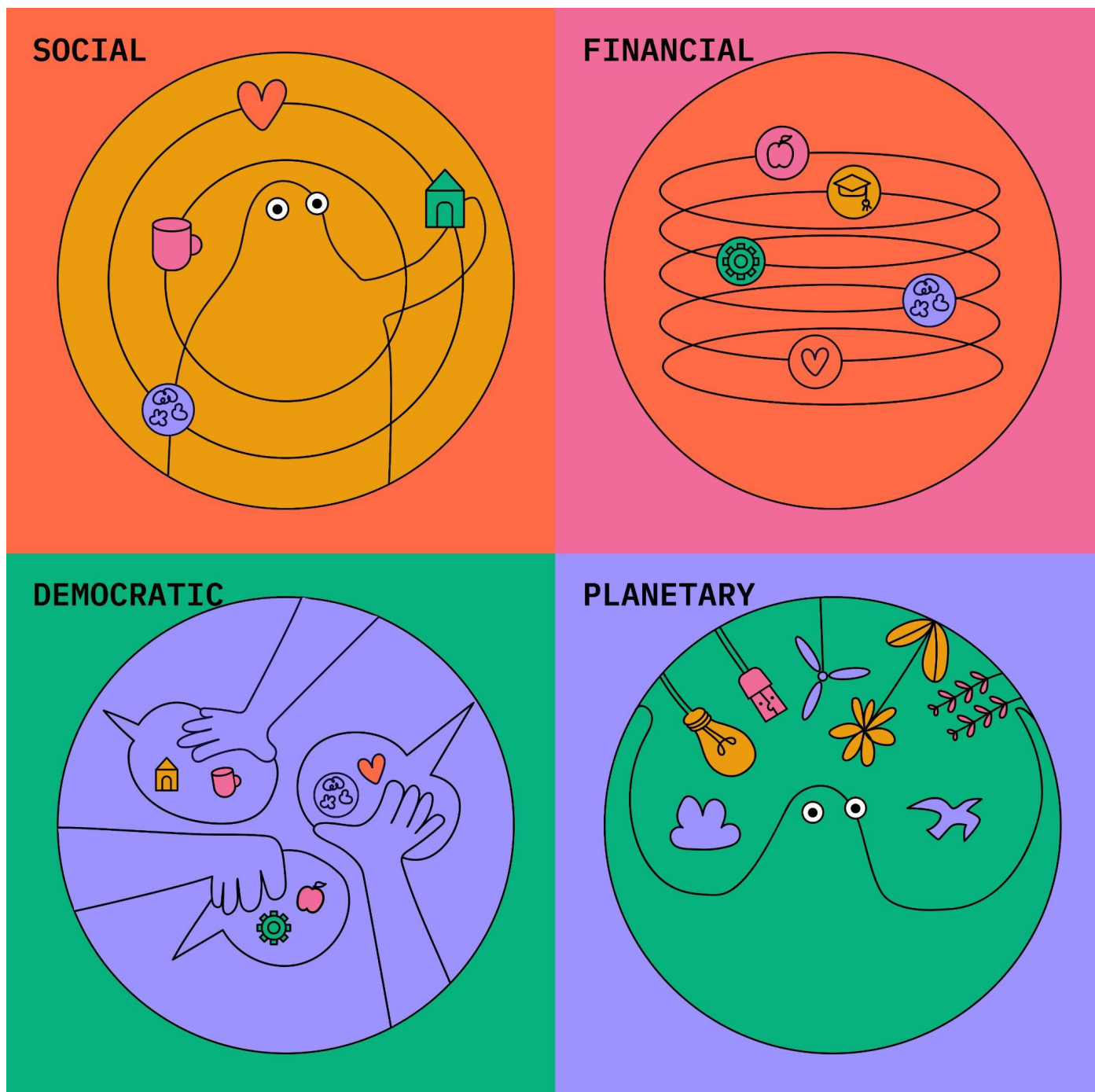


Figure 13: Summary of policy priorities in Scotland against each design value quadrant

The groups were tasked with highlighting the outcomes embedded in their scenarios, and identifying the three most important through dot voting. Next, they were given the opportunity to generate suggestions for goals for the Design for Scotland entity to prioritise over the next 12–18 months, towards the priority outcomes in their scenario. The project team shared some examples from the interactive survey respondents.

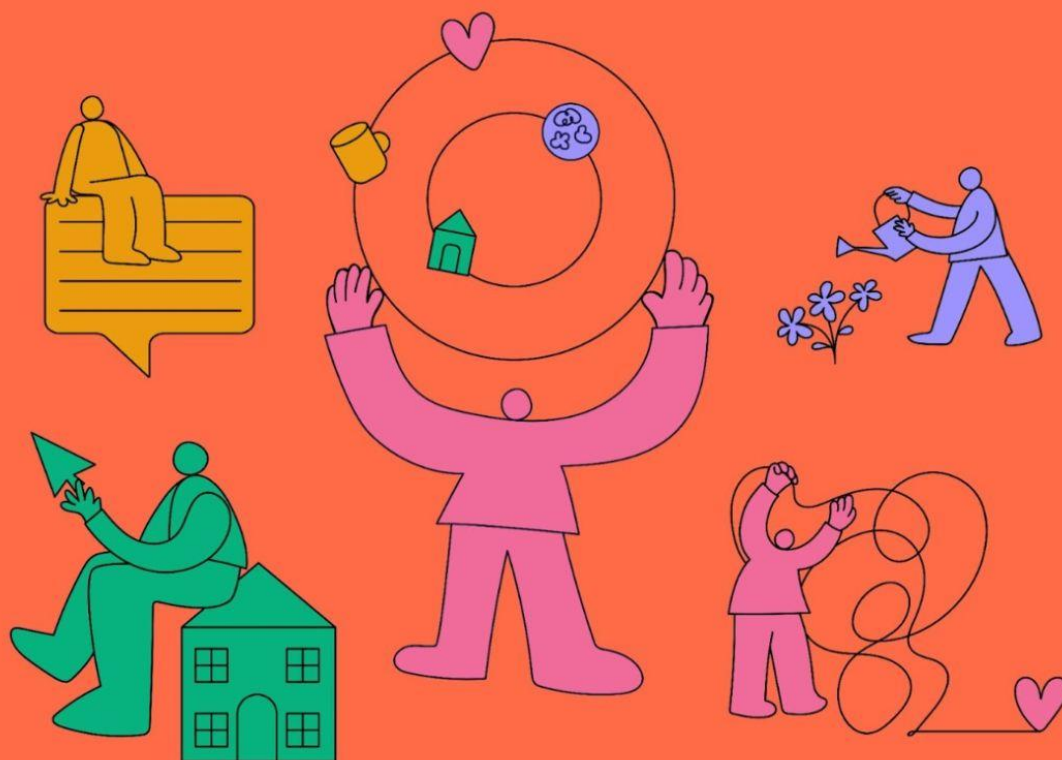
Finally, the groups presented their scenarios, priority outcomes and goal ideas to the rest of the Working Group.

Working Group: Four scenarios for 2030



The following 'scenarios for the future' summarise the discussions and outputs from the Design for Scotland Working Group participants.

Social scenario



In this socially focused future, Scotland has effectively positioned design 'everyday and everywhere' — something that is for the many. Scotland has also developed a distinctly people-centric design approach, with most organisations favouring design approaches that include lived experience participation in all parts of the process.

Design's ability to tackle social problems has been well articulated, and the practice is now seen as a key tool to find creative solutions to national social challenges. It's so ingrained in Scotland's development approach, and in early years, primary, and secondary education that everyone understands design, and everyone can access and practice some level of design.

The people of Scotland now see good design as a fundamental right (for example, the right to good, warm, and spacious housing), and they know how to spot poor design for best practice in design-led social innovation and entrepreneurship.

Priority outcomes

Good design is a right (design is everywhere)

Resources and opportunity are evenly distributed through good design

Nations look at Scotland for best practice in design-led social innovation

Possible goals

Engrain design in society

Give design a physical presence (e.g. more local design centres)

Increase the number of designers across all sectors

Embed design in curriculum from nurseries

Build a brand around Scottish Design

Hopes for the future...

We want our future Scotland to retain a strong sense of cultural pride, and to be an attractive place for all to live. It should have a healthy population, who have a high quality of life, and who are supported well by a strong health and social care sector.

Our future Scotland should be generous and full of opportunities. It should be at the forefront of meaningful social change, and should support people from all backgrounds, embracing those who need the most help.

Questions to explore...



Questions to Explore

How might design make itself more accessible, genuinely inclusive, and easier for a diversity of people to use?



Questions to Explore

How might design better articulate its ability to address systemic social issues?



Questions to Explore

How might design connect and collaborate better across public sector, third sector, industry and academia?



Questions to Explore

How might design increase its role in addressing key, systemic social issues, and improve quality of life for everyone?

What if...

...Scotland had a national approach to design, which embedded socially-focussed principles and standards?

...there were more accessible pathways into the design profession?

...participation was a core component of all design projects in Scotland?

...design was much more equitable?

...there was a hub for design in Scotland?

Examples from this future scenario...

Project briefs

Facilitate a participatory brief writing activity for X project.

Better understand the true financial and social cost of X system which has **not** been designed.

Use design to reduce homelessness by 40%

Ways organisations are using design

A Scottish Design hub is showcasing design's value to address social issues, develop common language and understanding

The Job centre is using Design based techniques to better fit jobs to people

Organisations are using design thinking to evaluate services and how they are implemented.

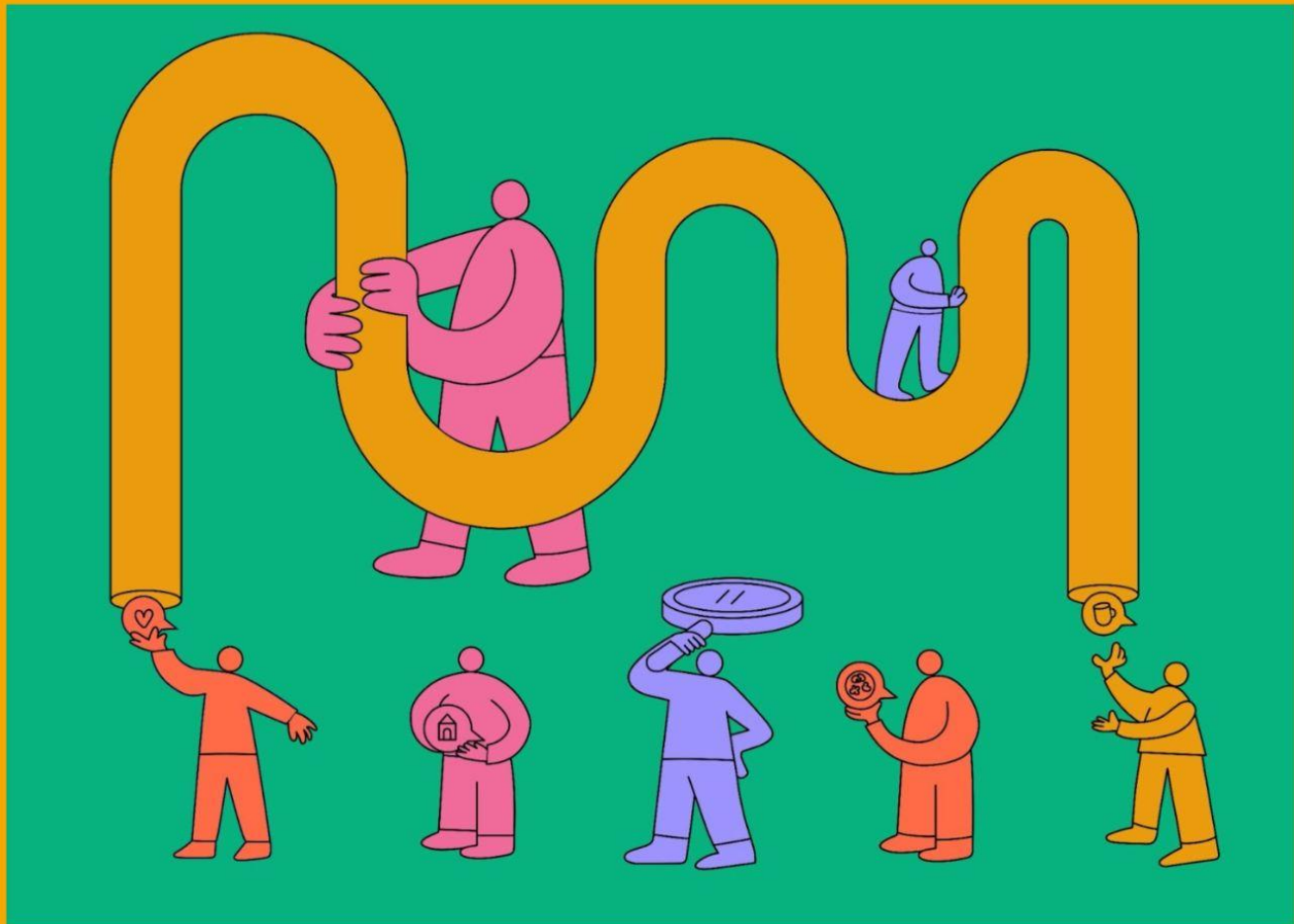
How design is creating impact across society

Design is helping Scotland to better understand its impact across the world.

Design is considered a valuable tool for finding creative/positive solutions to social challenges

Root cause resolution rather than symptom suppression becomes the norm.

Democratic scenario



In this democratic focused future, government is reimagined as a participatory design project. Democratic systems are designed to be proactive, not reactive; achieved by encouraging active participation, respecting lived experience and devolving the power of design into local community networks.

Re-designing democratic processes to further participation has become a key target, and is considered to be vital for the future. Participatory design is taught at all levels of education, often alongside other subjects to create opportunities for innovation, that centre on the people of Scotland's thoughts, needs and aspirations.

On a global level, Scotland is a shining example of participatory practices. It has created a knowledge sharing network with like-minded nations.

Priority outcomes

Participatory design practices are embedded at all levels of citizenship	Participatory design is recognised as a key component of Scottish democratic systems	Scotland establishes a network of best practice with other like-minded nations
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Possible goals

Encourage co-design practices in all democratic selections	Embed participatory design into all levels of education	Establish Scotland as a role model in citizen participation in democracy
Align design with Scottish citizenship	Create a grassroots upwards pipeline for policy and law making	Improve the electoral reform process using design (co-design) methods
Enable citizens in Scotland to design the systems they participate in	Use design methods to better the gap between local community, politics and its citizens	Improve the profile of Scotland's design capability through 'exchanges' with other countries

Hopes for the future...

We want our future Scotland to have its own distinct and progressive approach to policy which reflects the preferences and values of the nation. We want to see a sustainable approach to development, in which there is fair representation and everyone's needs are heard.

We want to see a Scotland that has a strong sense of unity, that moves away from polarisation and that respects differences, and understands alternative perspectives. A nation that is well connected with other nations, ensuring meaningful cultural exchange and trade.

Questions to explore...



Questions to Explore

How might we further embed design into central and local Government at all levels, across service, policy and strategy development?



Questions to Explore

How might design enable citizens to play a greater role in shaping Scotland?



Questions to Explore

How might design help shape Scotland's political voice, and help it communicate its beliefs and values?



Questions to Explore

How might we democratise the tools and language of design, to make it more accessible and rooted in communities?

What if...

...we had chief design officers & supporting design teams embedded in all cities in Scotland?

...new policies focused on problem solving for communities?

...design education was prioritised within the standard curriculum

...design is more common in sandwich degrees (business and design, legal design...)

...design was used to empower citizens by making policies/elections accessible and digestible?

Examples from this future scenario...

Project briefs

How can the electorate stay at the heart of an election? (innovation in election procedures)

How do we ensure citizen voices are heard, listened to and acted upon?

How do we balance freedom of speech with online safety?

Ways organisations are using design

Policy review focus groups run by government in local communities

NHS Scotland co-designs a new 111 service

Science & Technology companies work with design policy makers to implement new approach to transport

How design is creating impact across society

Elections are more community serving thanks to an innovative approach to electing government

Citizens feel more empowered and listened to

Other democracies copy Scotland's approach

Planetary scenario



In this planet focused future, Scotland is a place where people, nature and planet flourish; as a nation, we have committed to work within the limits of our planetary resources.

Design and designers are trusted, having developed common ethical frameworks, supported by legislation and targets, to ensure that the design process is people and planet-centred from start to end. We have developed methods and tools for measuring and communicating the impact that our ways of living and working have on the planet.

Communities are improved, as design projects actively involve the people they affect. Education on the impact of materials, waste and production is embedded.

Organisations are held accountable, individuals are incentivised, and everyone takes responsibility for our collective wellbeing.

Priority outcomes

People, nature and planet flourish	Design/designers are trusted	Communities are improved, individuals understand how they can act responsibly
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Possible goals

Commit to be a 'flourishing' nation within the limits of planetary resources	Hold business and organisations accountable for their environmental impact	Create a forum for legislation and regulations to be informed by design thinking and innovation
Legislate for people and planet-friendly materials and packaging	Introduce a 'Scottish Design Charter' for all designers sign up to; provide a common ethical framework for the sector	Develop a post-design management system and design legislation
Develop a framework and metrics to measure design inputs and impact; communicate transparently to users	Involve communities and individuals in design projects they are affected by	Educate about design materials, production, waste and impact as a mandatory part of the curriculum

Hopes for the future...

We want our future Scotland to act quickly to address the climate crisis, placing the needs of the planet at the heart of the nation's vision and while also prioritising a just transition.

We want to be a world leader in sustainability, showcasing best practise through regenerative policy, a strong culture of design and innovation built on circular principles, and a culture of supporting nature-based enterprise.

We want a future where Scotland can preserve and support its beautiful environment.

Questions to explore...

Questions to Explore

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How might a design policy help the design sector to change how and what they make, and reduce waste?

Questions to Explore

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How might design better articulate its role in helping Scotland reach net zero?

Questions to Explore

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How might we build a uniquely Scottish approach to design, in which the planet is a major stakeholder?

Questions to Explore

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How might design accelerate Scotland and Scottish businesses towards net zero?

What if...

...there was community-based problem solving/co-creation with all stakeholders

...there was accessible education about materials, waste and ethical impact

...designers developed planet-centered design practices

...we designed to eliminate waste and carbon footprint

...we developed ways to measure the planetary impact of our ways of living/working

...there was legislation against greenwashing, and for affordable bio materials

...government set targets for innovative outcomes for planet/people

Examples from this future scenario...

Project briefs

Funded community schemes that incentivise people to achieve net zero targets

Facilitation of research-industry collaboration to reduce waste

Ways organisations are using design

Big businesses are using locally sourced design/local waste

Orgs are commissioning/buying /paying tax within local authority areas

All packaging is biodegradable - Packaging, bottling

How design is creating impact across society

Impacted communities are consulted before/during product/service design

We have improved utilisation of buildings (for benefit of people/planet)

We have reinvented the education system for net zero

Financial scenario



In this financial focused future, design is recognised as an essential contributor to the economy, culture and society of Scotland.

Designers are at the heart of a 21st Century industrial revolution, embedded and integrated across startups, high growth SMEs and established companies. Confidence in the Scottish design industry is high, and evidenced through business growth, increasing exports and high profile international collaborations.

A career in design in Scotland is seen as an aspirational choice for school leavers and students, with healthy local demand for design skills. There is a 'golden generation' of design talent developing in (and coming to) Scotland.

Design is integrated into the curriculum from primary school to high school and beyond, to increase awareness and competence in design thinking.

Priority outcomes

Designers are at the heart of a 21st century innovation revolution	Scotland's reputation as a design-led economy is attracting inward investment	High growth SMEs are buying design services effectively and easily	Design is recognised as essential contribution to economy of Scotland
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Possible goals

Businesses (and other orgs) are aware of how to access and engage with design. What design is is clear.	It is clear how to engage with new funds.	Start up / entrepreneurial pipeline of leaders is supported	Scotland has a distinct design offer
There are numerous success stories showcase Scotland's distinct design offer	Design is accessible, valued and aligned with key industries	Evidence of economic value of design is communicated clearly	
Design is embedded at all levels of education	Design is articulated as 'facets' of one united diamond, without pigeon holing	Areas of future technological development for commercial applications are identified	

Hopes for the future...

We want our future Scotland to have an economic approach that prioritises sustainability, balancing financial needs with social, cultural and ecological needs.

Our future Scotland is economically prosperous, with an international economy that helps build local resilience, and provides financial stability across all regions in Scotland.

We want to see a Scotland that is a beacon of uniquely Scottish entrepreneurship, with a targeted, joined up approach to business support that helps us build a world leading innovation and design culture.

Questions to explore...

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How might design help to create a more resilient, and thriving economy in Scotland that benefits all?

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How might all types of design collaborate more with industry?

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How might design support entrepreneurship and innovation, particularly in Scotland's long tail of SME's and micro businesses?

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How might the Scottish Design sector better retain talent and attract new, senior talent?

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How might we create a stronger skills pipeline between secondary education, tertiary education and employment?

What if...

...we encouraged investment and entrepreneurship

...there were new forms of design industry collaboration

...there was a visible government presence for design

...we showcased success and impact on a sustained basis, at home and abroad

...design was integrated in education, from school to HE/FE and beyond

...we focused on future talent retention and development

Examples from this future scenario...

Project briefs

Net Zero, new industries, economic transition focused projects

Projects focused on building on Scotland's strengths: green energy, heritage, food and drink etc

Projects focused on economic development across Scotland's diverse geography (not just Central Belt)

Ways organisations are using design

SME/Growth businesses incentivised to use design through 'graduate partnerships', tax/R&D credits etc

Number of student places for Design at Universities/Colleges are funded to keep up with demands of sector

High growth SMEs are buying design services effectively and easily

How design is creating impact across society

Scotland Design Week is established on the national and international calendar

Primary and Secondary schools have a special section in the Scottish Design Week

Government funding for business growth is more effectively used through partnership of designers and companies

Scotland's reputation as a 'design-led' economy attracts inward investment, tourism etc

Continued participation

As they left the final workshop, participants were asked for ideas on how Design for Scotland could continue to support participation. Responses can be summarised as follows:

1. The working group could have continued governance over the Design for Scotland project, instilling community ownership and active participation into the ongoing process.
2. The town hall events could be a continued mechanism for involving the design community in the Design for Scotland project
3. A relationship should be maintained with the working group through continued communication of next steps and project progress. This relationship could become the foundation for a larger design community to build from.
4. Develop participation mechanisms that help people shape outcomes (e.g. recommendations of this project and ongoing work)
5. Help share the learnings from the working group sessions e.g. presenting process and findings to their teams communities and networks.

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