

Upskilling Designers for the Green Transition

Design Council - Final Presentation

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Agenda

- 01** Framing the challenge
- 02** Understanding the context
- 03** Policy recommendations
- 04** Challenges and opportunities

01.

Framing the challenge

The context



UK's is moving towards Net Zero without risking growth

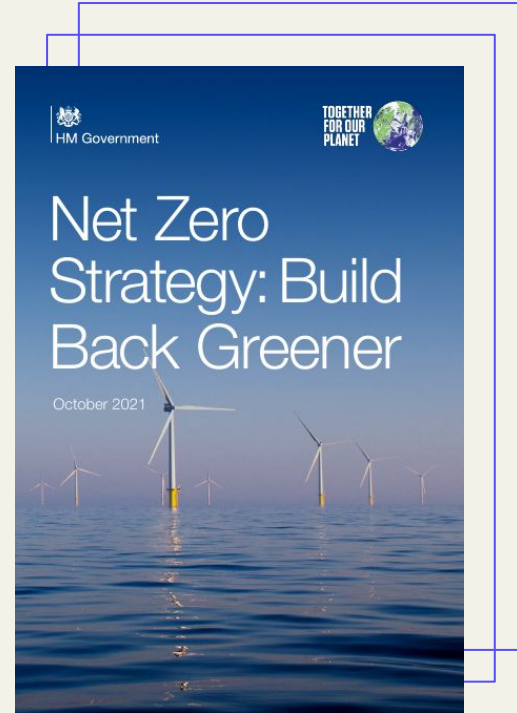
- Between 1991 & 2021 the UK's economy achieved GDP growth without increasing carbon emissions
- Only five UK industries did not experience reduced emissions
- 70,000 design intensive firms directly related to these industries.

(Institute for Manufacturing, University of Cambridge, 2024)

The context

However, UK's strategy for Net Zero doesn't incorporate design

- MIT ranked the UK globally at 7th for its ongoing Green Transition.
- High Green jobs penetration within the economy since 2019. Notably: energy sectors, sustainable Consultants etc.
- Yet, green design skills are noticeably absent within this narrative – The Green Transition.



The context



UK's designers are taking part of the transition but feel they lack the skills needed

- 71% of designers think demand for green design skills will grow.
- 66% in the reporting period designed for environmental impact.
- But only 43% of Designers think they can meet this demand.

(Design Council, The Green Design Skills Gap, 2024 pg.5)

The Design Council's challenge

**How might we upskill
1.9MM designers for the
green transition?**

Green design skills

Skills on the rise



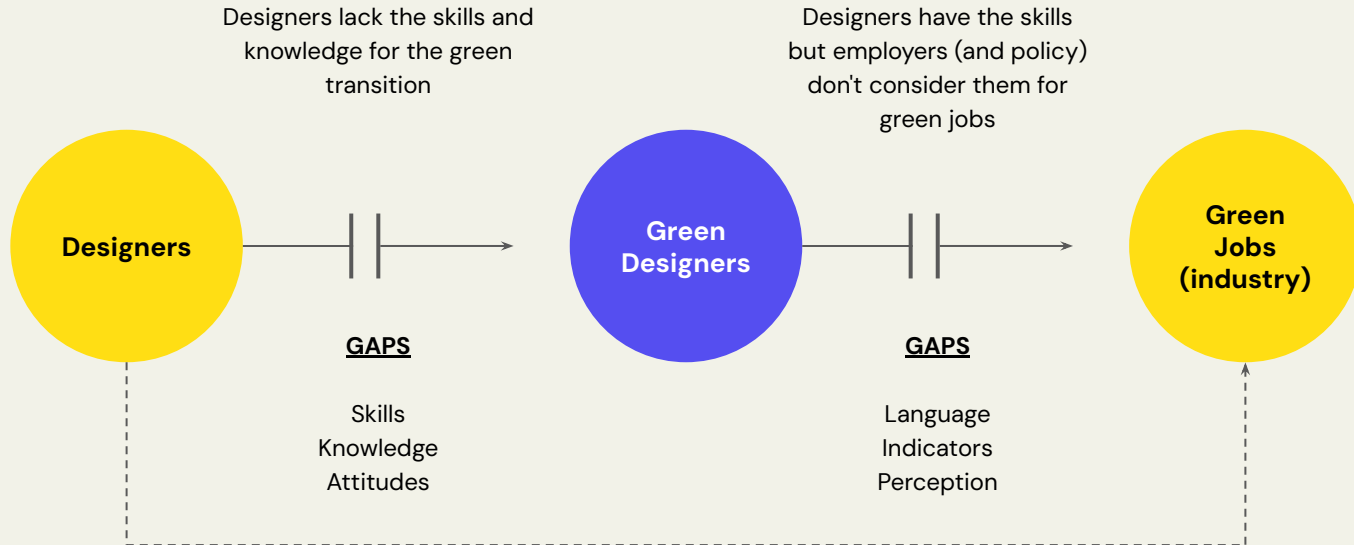
World Economic Forum, *Future of Jobs*, 2023

Skills designers feel expert or proficient in



Design Council, *The Green Design Skills Gap*, 2023

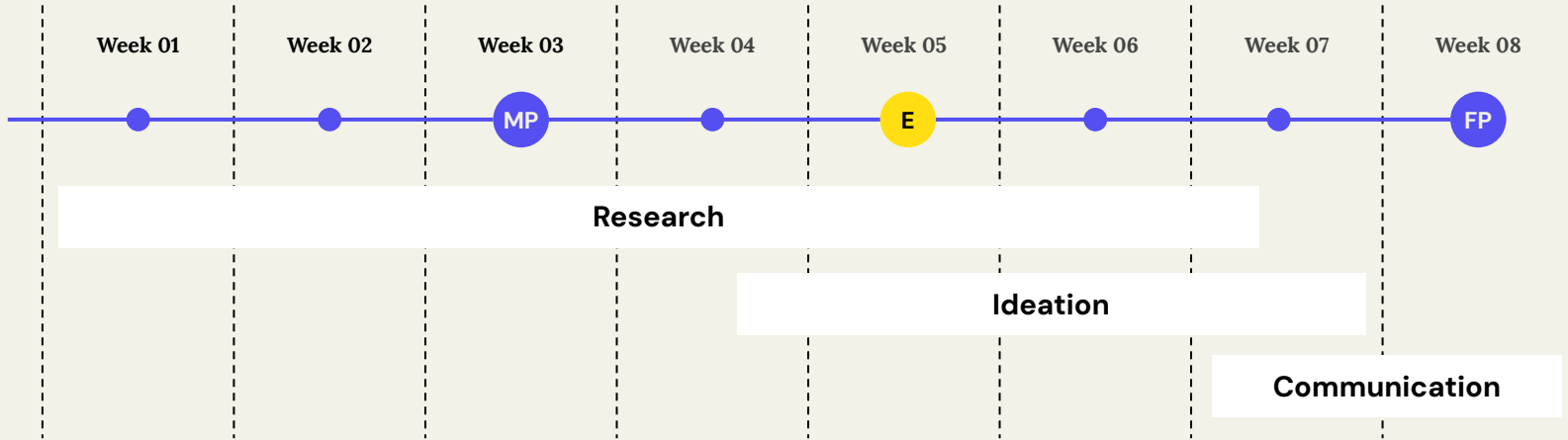
The challenge



Reframing the challenge

**How might we upskill
designers to support and
drive the green transition?**

Our approach



4 workshops

reviewed with designers and practitioners

15 interviews

with external and internal stakeholders

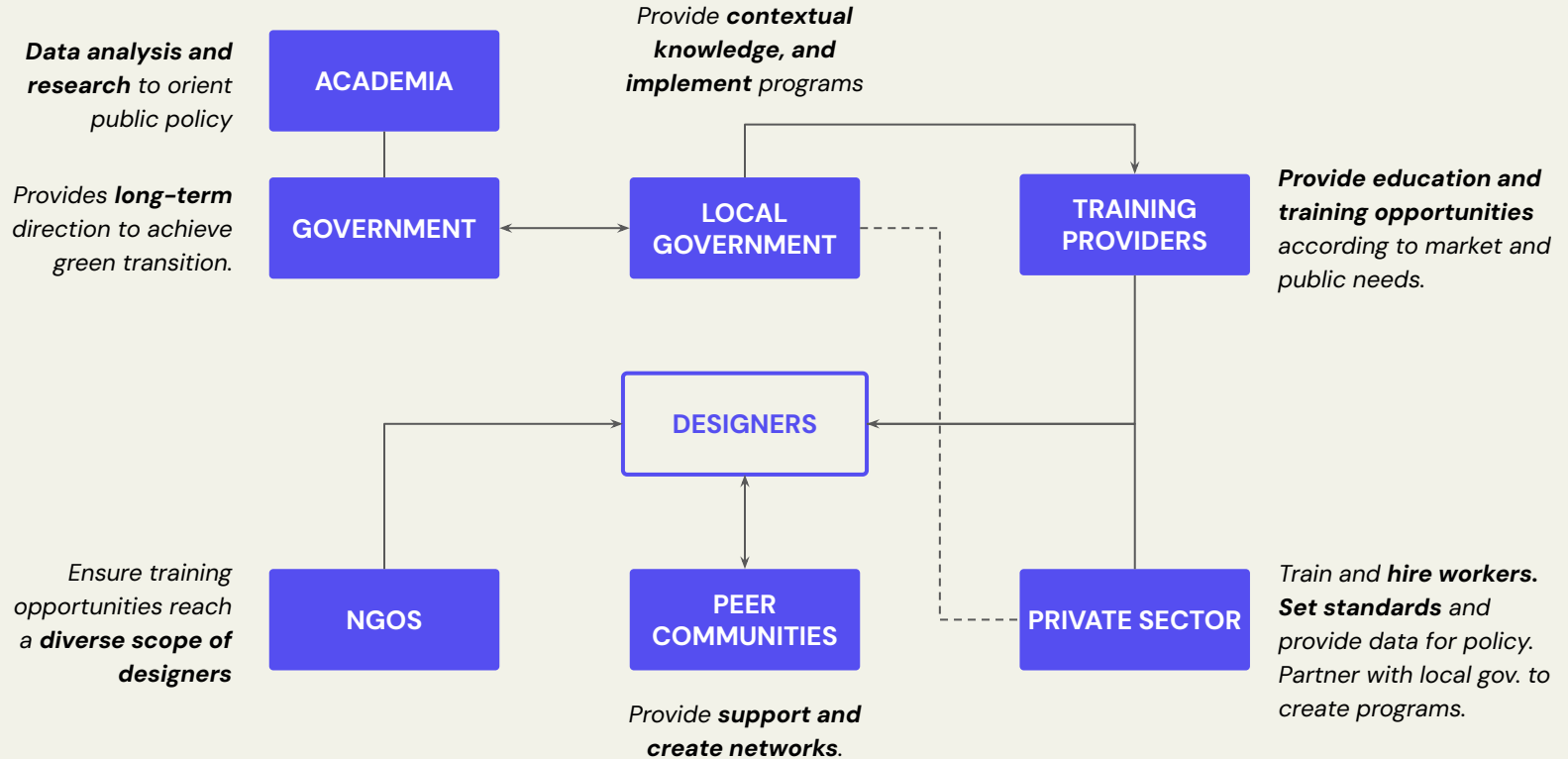
3 policies

aimed at different parts of the skill ecosystem

02.

Understanding the context

Skills ecosystem



Research insights

- 01** Government needs to provide consistent direction

- 02** The market-led approach alone is insufficient for upskilling for the GT

- 03** There is a need for a common understanding of green skills

- 04** The Design Council is uniquely positioned to propel a design-led transition

Research insights

“It’s almost like the government setting out the direction of travel [...] helps the market and public planning. [...] Creating a certainty for the market to invest and other partners to realise their ambitions as well”

Interview 10

01

Government needs to provide consistent direction

Leverage skills policy to set a clear direction for the green transition, allowing for investment and adaptation in local contexts and discipline.

Research insights

02

The market-led approach alone is insufficient for upskilling for the Green Transition

A coordinated approach to skills policy would contribute to workforce resilience & just green transition by incorporating future trends (i.e. digital transition), skills projections and cross-sectoral skills mobility

“There is no specific policy mandate or stipulation for design’s value in the green transition, incentivizing industry to explore these practices.”

Interview 06

Research insights

“I guess it's the mindfulness of the process and thinking through your relationship, impact and the consequences.”

Interview 09

“We have to achieve various building performances and regulations and these require various technical standards of performance,”

Interview 06

03

There is a need for a common understanding of green skills

The absence of a common framework definition is causing a policy disarticulation and industry siloes. A robust definition of *green design skills* could bridge industries

Our approach to green design skills

We understand **green design skills** as an active awareness of the impact of design processes on social and ecological systems.

Green design skills



Why this approach?

This approach integrates both technical and transversal design skills. And generates a:

- Common language and translatable between sectors
- Focus on impact
- Adaptability in scope and time
- Practice oriented tool coherent to how designers learn

Green design skills



Research insights

04

The Design Council is uniquely positioned to propel a design-led transition

DC is uniquely positioned to lead the incorporation of design into national industrial strategy, propelling a design-led green transition.

“To promote by all practicable means the improvement of design in the products of British industry”

Design Council, Our History

04.
*Policy
recommendations*

Policy scaffolding

1

Embed design in
national policy

National Policy

**Local gov. &
Industry**
Pull

Designers
Push

2

Help designers
develop the skills

3

Create internal capabilities
for external impact

Recommendation 01

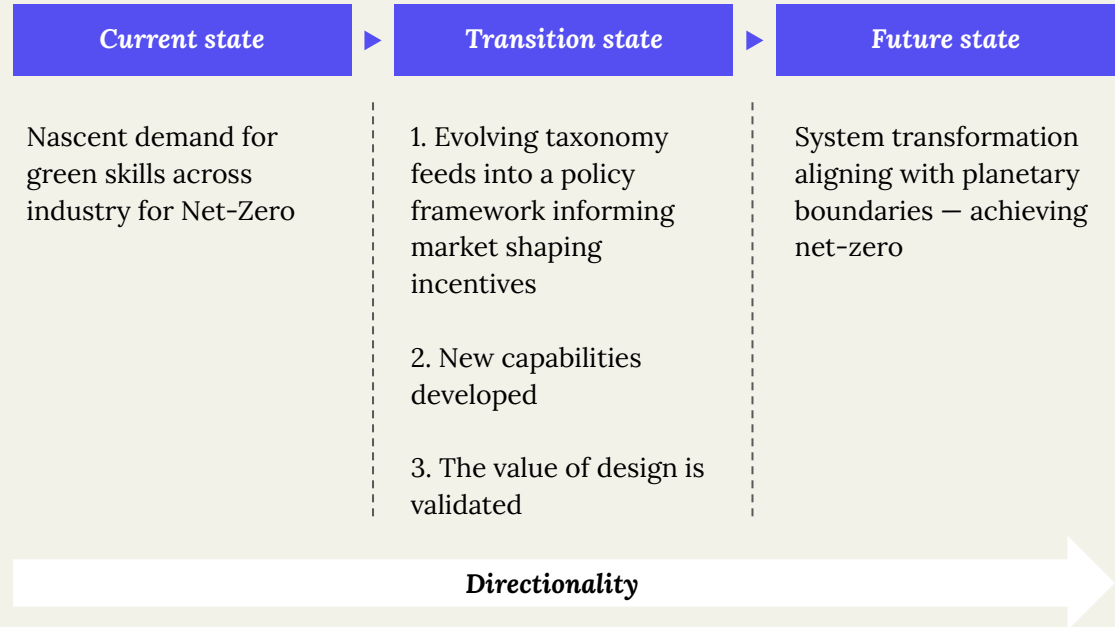
***Embed design in
national policy***

1 | Embed design in national policy

Situating the value of design in policy

The UK's economy must shift from peripheral green-design skills to fully embodied green design skills, aiming for a regenerative future across industries by 2050.

#FutureScoping



1 | Setting The Mission in National Policy

The Great Redesign:

A Green Design-led Industrial Strategy for the 2050 Net-Zero targets.

1A

Industrial incentives for green design-led innovation, business models & green growth

Nudging Demand | Symbiotic Partnerships | Market Shaping

E.g. Foster a SME Research and Innovation: Green Design-led innovation in industry.

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1B

Embedding Green Design Skills within the National Skills Framework.

Taxonomy Evolves | Upskilling | Embedded Practice

E.g. Review and Support National Skills Action Plan. For example: Incentivize green design focus apprenticeship.

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1C

Recognize and support the Design Council's role in the Green Transition.

Building Dynamic Capabilities

E.g. Embed the Design Council in the national Net-Zero Strategy as a delivery partner.

Recommendation 02

***Help designers
develop the skills***

2 | Help designers develop the skills

2A

Create a Green Design Certification

Due to its history and standing within the design ecosystem, the Design Council has the opportunity to take an active role in accrediting green design skills and upskilling designers.

Certification

Designers and practitioners

Implemented through **Skills Bootcamp scheme** and focused in specific areas prioritised by government. Opportunity to incorporate firms and individuals.

Green Digital Design

Green Fashion Design

...

Design Leaders

Implemented through **private funding** and focused on leaders within the design and non-design industry. Focused on strategic and management skills.

Leading Green Design

2 | Help designers develop the skills

2B

Support IFATE's efforts to transform occupations and make the greener

IFATE is currently working on greening occupations using their Green Toolkit. While some design occupations have been already modified, such as furniture designer, many design occupations are still being reviewed.

2 | Help designers develop the skills

2B

Support IFATE's efforts to transform occupations and make the greener

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2C

Work with the QAA to embed green design skills in HE curricula

As the Quality Assurance Agency develops a new standard for design education, the Design Council has the opportunity to collaborate with CHEAD in ensuring that green skills are embedded in higher education curricula.

Recommendation 03

***Create internal
capacities for
external impact***

3 | Create internal capabilities for external impact



**Create a new structure
within the Design Council
in charge of delivering the
Great Redesign Mission**

Create the Great Redesign Unit as a mission-oriented one in order to align the work of DC to the mission, starting with green design skills.

3 | Create internal capabilities for external impact

Strategy of the Great Redesign Unit (GRU)

Set the Mission

The GRU helps DC **articulate a mission** around Green Design Transformation, where the up-skilling of one million designers is one project.

Green Design in Industry

Green Design in Policy

Design Council as an enabler

Embed the mission in the DC

DC reaches multiple stakeholders through different means and touch points. The Unit will help DC every touch point leverages the Green Transformation discourse.

Alignment

Funding diversification

Transfer the ownership to DC

By mixing two approaches (missions and the way of working of digital transformation units such as 18F), the unit intends to transfer the mission ownership to DC once embedded.

Through agile

Through iteration

3 | Create internal capabilities for external impact

GOAL 1

Provides support and guidance to deliver the Mission

The Unit produces conversations inwards-outwards DC, sets thoughts and questions to trigger projects and makes every DC programme of significance to the mission.
(ie. A code for circular design?)

3 | Create internal capabilities for external impact

GOAL 1

Provides support and guidance to deliver the Mission

The Unit produces conversations inwards-outwards DC, sets thoughts and questions to trigger projects and makes every DC programme of significance to the mission.
(ie. A code for circular design?)

GOAL 2

Support designers up-skill themselves

The Unit creates/updates different tools to achieve this, provides information on the complex language of the transition (emission measurement, policy, etc.) to designers and helps them get funding from different sources (green funds).

3 | Create internal capabilities for external impact

GOAL 3

**Produce demand for
Green Design skills
through DC.**

Trickle-down the language of the transition in all programmes, support comms and tone of voice.

3 | Create internal capabilities for external impact

GOAL 3

Produce demand for Green Design skills through DC.

Trickle-down the language of the transition in all programmes, support comms and tone of voice.

GOAL 4

Funnel existing demand.

The Unit support DC in lobbying and supporting other stakeholders in the transition (ie. set the first BA Green Design in the world by a UK University).

Policy scaffolding

1

Embed design in national policy

A. Targeted Public-Private Investments and Tax Incentives

B. Embedding Green Design Skills within the **National Skills Policy**

C. Recognize and support the Design Council's role in the Green Transition.

National Policy

Local gov. & Industry
Pull

Designers
Push

3

Create internal capabilities for external impact

Create a new structure within the Design Council in charge of delivering the Great ReDesign Mission

2

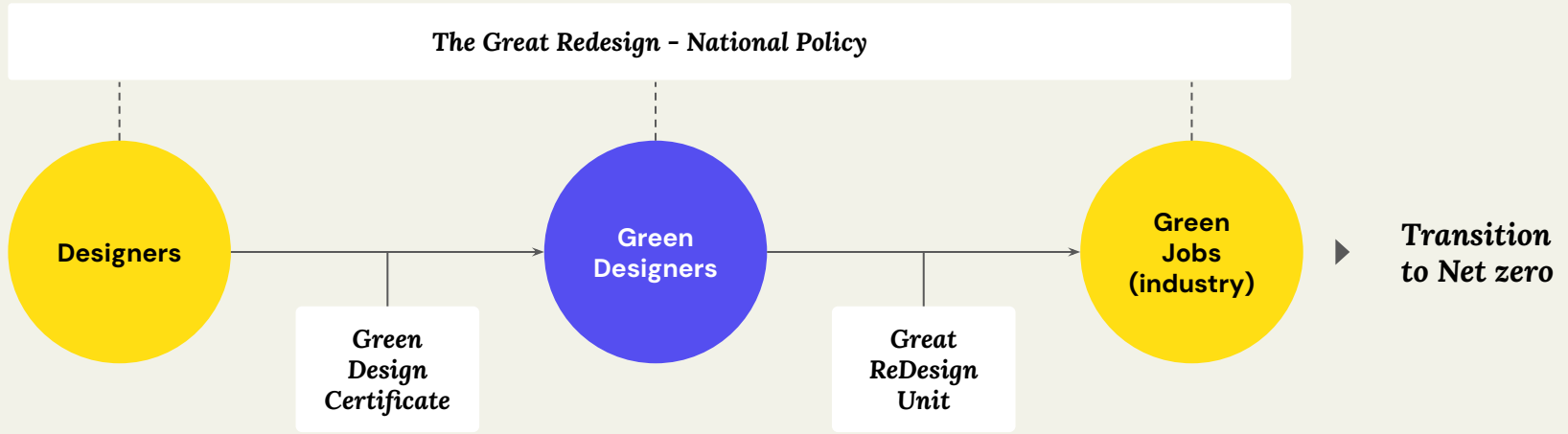
Help designers develop the skills

A. Create a Green Design Certification

B. Support IFATE's efforts to transform occupations and make the greener

C. Work with the QAA to embed green design skills in HE curricula

Closing the gaps



04. *Challenges and opportunities*

Challenges



01

Need for local contextualisation



02

Further explore non design perspectives



03

Measuring design's impact for Net Zero

And opportunities



04

**Moving beyond framework
paralysis**

05

**Increasing in public and private
funds for the transition**

06

Changes in the political context

Thank you

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