What is this?
—and, why are we doing it?

We know that we need to move on from our current 770 pixel wide page templates. The web’s evolved and we’re still crouching in the left corner of the browser.

This document shows the newly proposed design grid and page layout guidelines to be used across the site.

A full new technical architecture solution for the site is currently still in development, but there’s much that can be done in the meantime to improve the site’s overall user experience. We’ve got a great opportunity now to create new consistency, modernise its appearance, remove outdated Barley elements, and try out and iterate new template ideas which can then be fed as requirements into the full system. Some elements - like the new masthead - will continue to evolve as we develop this architecture, and so are marked as ‘interim’.

Making this change now across our new builds and redesigns will also make it easier to transfer these sites into the full new system when its complete.

Sites currently in Barley using these new guidelines will be built on an interim CSS-based technical template (an upgraded version of ‘Barlesque’ - the template behind BBC iPlayer).
Who approves this?

These guidelines have been defined in collaboration with user experience teams across the BBC.

Approval for this proposal (and any subsequent alterations and/or additions) sits with the User Experience Cluster and the Head of User Experience & Design.

Any feedback or suggestions should be raised with your representative in this Cluster and also Julie Dodd and Matt Coyne.
The template
—a visual framework

The new wider, centred page template and its associated guidelines create a visual framework for starting to make bbc.co.uk more consistent.

The following pages outline the new structure, including a design grid that affords flexible layout options and updated global elements.

There are also new guidelines for sizes and placement of images, the embedded media player and advertising.

Why grids?
There are many exponents of grid-based designs on the web—Khoi Vinh, Art Director at NYTimes.com (subtraction.com) and Mark Boulton, freelance designer (markboulton.co.uk) to name a couple of leading industry figures whose blog posts on the subject are well worth reading for future reference.

Oh Yeeaahh!

Nudge your elements

Five simple steps to designing grid systems
http://www.markboulton.co.uk/journal/comments/five_simple_steps_to_designing_grid_systems_part_1/

Khoi Vinh explains the benefits of using grids in design

"The way I see it, there are two levels of benefits to grid usage: the first is the superficial imparting of order, in which a grid helps the entirety of a layout fall together with enhanced cohesion. You use a grid when you want things to look tidy.

For me, though, I prefer the second, more subtle level, in which the grid is a crucial tool in a larger order. The grid helps extend the logic of an overarching solution to the most tactical levels, subtly communicating to the audience that they are experiencing a considered environment, where information, its presentation and its behavior are logical, consistent and reliable."

Khoi Vinh
Page layout
—the stuff that surrounds us

All new BBC pages are based around a design grid with a standardised surrounding border.

The design grid constrains your content area. No content should be placed outside of the design grid.

The first border to the design grid is 14 pixels either side and should be the page background colour. This gives a total of 974 pixels in which the page sits. There is a further 10 pixel white margin either side of this to frame the page, and then an outer border covering the rest of the page.

You **MUST** design your page to be fixed width (NOT stretchy) and centred within the browser.

PLEASE NOTE:
The 10 pixel margin will always be set to white.
The outer borders will always be set to #EAEAEA.
The design grid consists of 12 columns, each 66 pixels in width with a 14 pixel gutter spacing between them. This gives a total content area of 946 pixels.

An underlying 24 sub columns of 26 px can also be employed to aid in your design in more complex layouts.

The number of columns chosen enable the use of a variety of super column structures to allow for different page types (see next page).

The grid sets the bounds for content only. The structure of the areas outside the content are illustrated on the following pages.
Flexible layouts
—something for everyone

The grid is flexible enough to accommodate a variety of super column layouts and enables ad placement in the right hand column for international visitors.

Common layouts include 2 and 3 super columns with left hand navigation.

When using a super column for left hand local navigation you MUST always use 2 columns. This creates a consistent 146px for all left hand local navigation.

A combination of super columns could be used to create more complex structures. See bottom right for just one possible example of this.
This is the first release of a new global masthead for the whole of the BBC site. It is an interim solution which will continue to evolve and be iterated in line with work on the site-wide tech refresh.

The specifics of the masthead, including international, languages and children's variations are documented in a separate 'Global Masthead' document.

As an overview the masthead includes the BBC masterbrand, Text only & Help links, Search and an ‘Explore the BBC’ button which has a menu containing 17 static (including Home) and 3 temporal links.

The menu colour (button and links) can be changed by using the provided palette of colours ONLY. Please make sure you explicitly specify the menu colour to your development team.

**WARNING**
The current version of Adobe's Flash player creates a technical issue where Flash content will overlay HTML content including drop down menus and lightboxes. The menu has been designed to appear as high up the screen as possible to help avoid this.

You **MUST NOT** place any Flash content above 118px. This will ensure the menu is not overlayed by it [Flash].

The menu expands vertically on text resize. Site designs **MUST** proportionally expand (vertically) to ensure that Flash content does not display above 140px.

**Notes:**
1. The design assets that accompany this document contain Adobe Illustrator and Photoshop files of the current Global Visual Language to form the basis of your design. All assets including the page structure, the grid, global masthead and footer are provided. You **MUST** not recreate the files.

2. Current guidelines state that pages must be readable when the font size is increased by two steps in our supported browsers. (http://www.bbc.co.uk/guidelines/newmedia/technical/xhtml_integrity.shtml#css)

3. The measurements of 118px and 140px are based on default text size and +2 text resizing in Firefox (IE resizes in smaller increments) respectively and will ensure there the menu is not cut off within all our supported browsers.
Local masthead

If you have a local masthead you should extend it outside the edge of the content grid to the inside edge of the white page border. There is a 1px keyline (#cccccc) between the global masthead and the local masthead. This is part of the global masthead and does not need to be incorporated into a site’s design.

Content **MUST NOT** be placed outside of the grid.

**Notes:**
1. The illustration below is only an example. The local masthead does not have to be a strip of colour (see appendix 2 for current BBC site examples).
2. If your local masthead is a strip of colour it **MUST NOT** be deeper than 70px.
Footer
—a meaningful end

The Barlesque template includes a simple standard footer for use at the bottom of all pages.

There are 7 global BBC links (with an additional ‘Advertising’ link on international facing sites) on 2 columns, plus an optional column of site specific links (maximum of 4).

There are 3 colourways for the footer: The standard is grey (#4D4D4D) and should be used as much as possible. The exceptions are a black version and a white version which can be used as an alternative to the grey where it [the grey] does not suit the design of the page.

Notes:
1. ‘Send to a friend’ is still a supported tool but should be placed in your content area.
And what about content?

We now have a structure for the page, but to create further useful consistency across sites there are other elements we need guidelines for:

Certain attributes of content elements need to adhere to the guidelines which follow. These include indentation, images, the embedded media player, and advertising. Each of which will be outlined on the following pages.

Using these guidelines together with the structures outlined on previous pages will create a visual framework that affords consistency yet flexibility across bbc.co.uk.
The fold
—where is it?

The argument that ‘users scroll’ has been used to refute the need to worry about the ‘fold’ in a browser window. Equally user testing has shown that users can experience problems when faced with finding specific information that is not visible in the browser window.

Using current browsers/operating systems we can define a maximum and recommended depth for content that would be visible to the vast majority of users (see illustration, right).

Internet Explorer 7 on Windows XP has the smallest depth of visible content of 617px. The recommendation is to keep all significant content or navigation within 600px to create a comfortable viewing area for the user.

Whether to adhere to the fold depends on the type of page and the design of the page. E.g., a user can expect a news article to be scrolled, but would not expect to have navigational elements positioned below the fold.

Ultimately it is up to designers and design managers to make the best decision for each page and product, based on the audience and page type and function.

However, there is a requirement with regard to advertising. When using the 300x250px medium rectangle advert size, at least 50% of the advert MUST be displayed above the fold.
Text/object indentation

When indentation of images and text are required (within boxes) use a 10px indent from the edge of the box. In addition 10px between images and text should also be employed.

When content is not in boxes, text and images can be aligned to the grid or indented to 10px.

**Notes:**
1. This is a recommendation and not a fixed rule.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lorem ipsum</th>
<th>Lorem ipsum</th>
<th>Lorem ipsum</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

- **Indentation when content is in a box**
- **Indentation when content is not in a box**
Images

—sizes and ratios

Images **MUST** work with the grid and help to create order within the page layout.

You should use an image ratio of 16:9 or 4:3. Aligning with the grid then gives us the five common sizes illustrated on the right (heights based on a 16:9 ratio). Images should also be able to pad against the column edges if it suits the design.

The following dimensions apply to a 16:9 image.

### IMAGE SIZES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indented</th>
<th>Flush</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. 446 x 251px</td>
<td>1. 466 x 262px</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. 286 x 161px</td>
<td>2. 306 x 172px</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. 206 x 116px</td>
<td>3. 226 x 127px</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. 126 x 71px</td>
<td>4. 146 x 82px</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. 86 x 48px</td>
<td>5. 106 x 60px</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. 46 x 26px</td>
<td>6. 66 x 37px</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Where 16:9 and 4:3 are not appropriate square and portrait (8:10) images can be used. Simply fit to the grid using the relevant widths above with the height changing proportionately.

**Notes:**
1. Does not apply to background images
2. Does not apply to image galleries
Interim embedded media player sizes
— one player, three sizes

The Embedded Media Player [EMP] currently uses a codec which is not fully scalable and as such specific sizes need to be built.

The video sizes that are available to you are 512x288, 448x252 and 256x144.

448x252 is the recommended size for use within story pages (left hand nav + 2 super columns).

Future iterations of the EMP will have greater flexibility in sizes and thus will fit better into pages.

Notes:
1. The EMP video controls add an extra 35 pixels to the height.
2. The 400x225 size is now deprecated and replaced by 448x252.
3. An additional size of 384x216 is also available but restricted to sites with the Barley page layout.
4. See bbc.co.uk/emp for more information.
Advertising
—size and placement

Advertising on bbc.co.uk will only be visible to visitors from outside of the UK. Current implementation is only on a small number of site areas but may be extended.

When the page is viewed by a UK facing audience the ad will not display. In it’s place the content will either move up into the space (collapsible columns), or alternate content of the same column width will be displayed.

There are four ad sizes and respective placements.
1. Leaderboard (728x90) above the global navigation within the masthead and is controlled by Barlesque.
2. MPU (300x250) in the right hand column, inset by 3px (centred), 14px padding top and bottom.
3. Button (120x240) in the left hand navigation, inset by 13px (centred), 14px padding top and bottom.
4. Full banner (468x60) in the footer, aligned left, above the BBC logo. Controlled by Barlesque.

All ads will automatically display the supporting text 'ADVERTISEMENT' (10pt Verdana, caps) above or below the advert (as illustrated, right).

Notes:
1. The rules and standards around use of these ads are TBD and this document will be updated accordingly.
2. At least 50% of the MPU **MUST** be above the fold.
3. The button is not mandatory on all sites (TBD).
4. See appendix 1 for examples of collapsible columns.
Putting it together

The design to the right is purely an exercise to illustrate how we can pull all the elements in this document together on one page.
This document aspires to save you time and give you more creative freedom.

These rules and guidelines if adhered to will give a visual framework that affords consistency across bbc.co.uk and yet still allow design teams to inject personality into their site’s design.

A quick recap.

- **Design to the grid**
  946 wide, 12 columns, 66px wide with 14 pixel gutter

- **Design for a centred fixed width page**

- **Stick to the page layout**
  14px content border / 10px white border / outer border

- **Use the standard footer & global masthead**

- **Indent text & objects in boxes by 10px**

- **Check object sizes**
  Images, embedded media player & advertising

- **Ensure Flash content is **NOT** higher than 140 px on the page**

Over to you
Appendix 1
—collapsible columns

Ads will be shown on some sites to international users of the site. When those pages are viewed by a UK facing audience the ad will not display.

In its place the content will either move up into the space (collapsible columns), or alternate content of the same column width will appear in its place.
Appendix 2

—sample local mastheads

NEWS

RADIO 1XTRA

SPORT

RADIO 3

I'D DO ANYTHING

GARDENERS' WORLD

DOCTOR WHO

THREAD