

Our Prosperous Future



What qualities do we wish to see in a good economy and in the best of businesses and public sector organisations?

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Introduction

At Anthropy, where we focus on the aspirations for our national quality of life and the qualities of the built and natural environments which support that, there is appreciation that only a vibrant and successful economy, capable of creating prosperity and generating value across the country, can sustain the futures we seek. The conversations at Anthropy25 revealed both the extraordinary strengths and the pressing challenges that define Britain's economic landscape today.

Britain has long been a nation of creativity and enterprise and is leading our green economy with double-digit growth. Our universities, research institutions, and diverse talent base are admired internationally. Yet what makes these assets remarkable is not just their scale, but the potential they hold to fuel a more inclusive and sustainable prosperity. The Anthropist community was clear that economic success cannot be detached from social wellbeing, environmental stewardship, or community resilience. It must be

woven into the very fabric of how businesses are built and how value is measured and this reflects the integrated nature of our four key Anthropy questions.

There is recognition, however, that systemic barriers still hold us back. Too many entrepreneurs, especially women, ethnic minorities and those outside London and the South East, face unnecessary hurdles to funding and opportunity. Too few businesses are encouraged to export or to scale on the global stage, whilst too often, investment flows overseas rather than being channelled into domestic innovation. These are inefficiencies that cost us not just in growth, but in the confidence of our people and their prosperity.

Yet the tone of Anthropy25 was not one of resignation, it was one of optimism. Eighty percent of Anthropists believe ethical and sustainable business practices are essential to Britain's positive global impact and nearly all share the conviction that the UK can still shape responsible growth. From AI to regenerative design, from community and employee-owned enterprise, to skills investment, there were many conversations where there was agreement that the tools, talent, and models already exist. What was felt needed now is the systematic implementation of policies and practices that reward value creation across its full spectrum; financial, social, environmental, and community.

It was felt therefore that Britain's future prosperity, lies not in chasing quick returns but in building the kind of economy that commands



The Vision: incentivising and supporting value creation

Anthropy25 highlighted that the UK has been historically and can be again, a global leader in business by removing barriers to entrepreneurship, redirecting investment toward domestic innovation, and creating ecosystems for businesses that generate prosperity in all its definitions.

respect at home and abroad, one that is innovative, inclusive and guided by long-term purpose. It was felt that if we choose to back our existing assets, remove barriers and invest in our people, the UK can continue to make a positive and sustainable contribution to the world.

This Accord is structured to begin by examining **the current reality**, before confronting the **uncomfortable truths** that often go unspoken. From there, we identify **the key principles for the path ahead** and make the **economic case**, before concluding with a **summary** that distils the shared ambitions and insights captured throughout.

The current reality

An evidence-led view of where we stand today, grounded in the conversations held at Anthropy25 and supporting research:

The UK is world leading in innovation, home to a third of all Europe’s unicorns¹ (2025), whilst it’s net zero economy grew by 10% last year, contributing £83.1 billion in Gross Value Added² (2025).

 IPSOS INSIGHT

60% of Anthropists describe Britain as ‘creative’ (compared to 22% of the general public) and 38% as ‘pioneering’ (compared to 17% of the general public).

This highlights a difference in perception between business leaders and the public and suggests scope to strengthen shared confidence in Britain’s capacity for innovation.

The UK economy holds vast untapped potential. The UK’s economic and entrepreneurial strengths are held back by systemic barriers such as the lack of support offered to underrepresented entrepreneurs and lack of investment towards domestic business innovation and technology. Britain is home to four of the world’s top ten universities³ (2025) and ranks as the sixth richest country globally⁴ (2024). Yet for that international recognition, around 90% of VAT or PAYE-registered businesses in non-financial sectors do not export⁵ (2021), highlighting significant unrealised opportunities for growth and global reach.

 IPSOS INSIGHT

Both Anthropists and the public rank the economy as one of the top three most important issues facing Britain today. Furthermore, inflation and rising prices is a top three issue for the public, and poverty and inequality is a top three issue for Anthropists.



Uncomfortable truths

Reflections on the barriers and risks which may be relevant to consider when striving for authentic and lasting change:



Climate change and poverty go hand in hand

Climate change and poverty are interconnected. Wealthier households can afford green technologies, while 36.4% of households spend over 10% of income on energy bills⁶. Demand for support via the British Gas Energy Trust has nearly quadrupled since 2020⁷ (2025).

IPSOS INSIGHT

84% of Anthropists believe that the economic impact of climate change is likely to exceed the costs of mitigating it, only **29%** of the general public agree.

Businesses see the long-term economic case for climate action, while financially strained households struggle to prioritise it.



Rethinking economic measurement

An economy that rewards value creation and aligns profit with wider wellbeing and prosperity measures must also account for the full life cycle of products and services. Traditional models have rarely included waste, disposal, or regeneration in their measures of value. Regenerative approaches, such as circular design and nature-based economies, offer a way to ensure that economic processes renew rather than deplete, creating lasting environmental, social, and financial benefits.



The cost of coordination

Collaboration and coalition-building are essential for systemic change, yet too often under-resourced. Effective partnerships require time, funding, and coordination capacity, without these, the networks that drive impact risk becoming overstretched and underperforming.



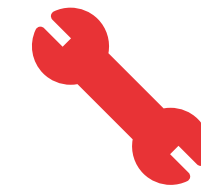
Business funding discrimination

Systemic funding discrimination restricts business growth and economic potential. Intersectional disparities, from underrepresentation of working-class talent in creative industries to lower earnings for disadvantaged groups, compound this gap, reducing innovation and productivity.

IPSOS INSIGHT

80% of Anthropists disagree that people have equal opportunities to get ahead, compared to **42%** of the general public.

Anthropists' awareness of inequalities is a key step toward addressing them while the general public may overestimate access.



Skills and support gaps

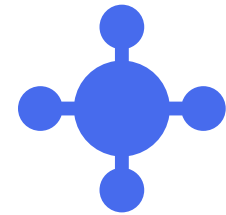
A thriving economy depends on a workforce whose skills match the challenges ahead. Navigating technological change, delivering the net zero transition, and meeting sector-specific demands requires long-term, coordinated investment in reskilling and capability-building. From durable skills and growth mindsets to competency-based hiring and AI literacy, developing talent must be seen as a shared, sustained national priority.

IPSOS INSIGHT

48% of Anthropists and **26%** of the public cited education and our schools as one of the most important issues facing Britain today.

Key principles for the path ahead

Certain principles emerged as relevant to bear in mind when shaping decisions to ensure that any progress achieved is equitable and sustainable:



Multi-capital thinking

Value could be measured holistically by integrating natural capital, social capital, and wellbeing alongside financial performance. It was noted at Anthropy25 that resilient and successful business models often involve strong community connections through local ownership, employee participation, or community benefit creation.



Long-term orientation

Reimagining economic purpose for long-term wellbeing for all was highlighted as a key central goal of the economy. Current short funding cycles and planning horizons are misaligned with the decades-long effort needed for skills building, the green transition, and ensuring sustainable prosperity. Expanding our definition of success to include the wellbeing of people, planet, and future generations offers a path where purpose and performance can create lasting value together.

IPSOS INSIGHT

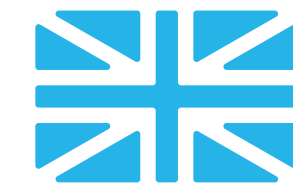
81% of Anthropists, and **34%** of the general public, believe the UK government focuses too much on short-term planning versus long-term.

This demonstrates that leaders in the Anthropy community may be particularly attuned to the need for planning horizons that support sustainable prosperity.



Inclusive innovation

Unlocking the full potential of the UK economy means removing systemic barriers that hold back proven talent. Female-led firms that outperform yet struggle for investment, underfunded ethnic minority entrepreneurs and overlooked regions, show economic potential remains untapped. Levelling access to capital, opportunity, and collaboration could unleash innovation and growth nationwide.



‘Economic Patriotism’

Many UK businesses are owned or invested in from overseas, while a large share do not actually trade internationally. This creates an opportunity to encourage more British backing for our domestic enterprises as well as a focus on growing exports, an approach described at Anthropy25 as a form of economic patriotism.

The economic case

Highlighting the business and economic benefits that can emerge when we take a broader view of people, value, and impact:



Purpose as a performance advantage

It was widely advocated that authentically purpose-driven organisations often outperform on economic, social, and environmental measures, in many cases by a significant margin. Those that foster engaged employees, strong community connections, and are environmentally conscientious see greater productivity and wellbeing. High-trust, psychologically safe workplaces can boost productivity by up to 50%⁸ (2023), showing that values-led cultures are also high-performing ones.

 IPSOS INSIGHT

80% of Anthropists see ethical and sustainable business and manufacturing as an important factor in creating the positive impact that Britain has.



Untapped economic potential

Female-led businesses outperform male-led businesses by 35% yet female entrepreneurs seeking funding receive less than 2% of venture capital⁹ (2024). It has been noted that with the right support and investment, ethnic minority entrepreneurs could quadruple their annual GVA from £25 billion to £100 billion¹⁰ (2023). Furthermore, community-owned businesses demonstrate remarkable resilience, providing further evidence that investing in diverse, and in this case locally rooted, enterprises delivers exceptional returns.



AI productivity gains

AI offers the possibility of transformative productivity and sustainability gains. IBM has reported that they are on track to save \$4.5 billion by the end of 2025 across functions from customer service to supply chain¹¹ (2025). It has also been suggested that AI applications can improve process efficiency. Discussions considered the challenges that come with AI transforming knowledge work from expensive human labour into something “productised, commoditised, and almost free.” While companies initially redeploy workers to higher-value tasks, there were fundamental questions about human purpose. Additionally, there were concerns about the elimination of social mobility pathways that traditionally lifted people through education and hard work.

The rapid growth of AI was seen to present the UK with significant opportunities for innovation and productivity but also raises profound risks that demand careful governance to safeguard jobs, trust, and long-term national resilience.



Green Economy Growth:

The UK’s growth in our net zero economy is evidence that the green transition is not only an environmental imperative but also a powerful driver of prosperity, innovation, and inclusive growth.

A call to action

What steps can leaders, organisations and communities take to improve prosperity in the UK?

Backing our assets

Highlight and amplify Britain's strengths to encourage investing in the UK, and project economic, cultural, and political leadership at home and on the international stage.

Shifting our economic focus

Move from extractive to regenerative economic models where value creation replaces value extraction.

Investing in skills

Investing in skills can ensure that the green and technological transitions create accessible and inclusive opportunities across all communities. Key discussion points were also about fostering deeper skills like collaboration, critical thinking, curiosity, courage and connection to nature that enable learners to thrive in an uncertain future. There was a strong sentiment that these need to be core to the curriculum, not just enrichment.

Summary

The UK possesses extraordinary entrepreneurial and innovation assets; however these exist alongside systemic barriers that prevent their full utilization for sustainable prosperity. The evidence consistently points toward business models that create value across multiple dimensions - financial, social, environmental, and community - while delivering superior long-term performance.

When seeing the importance Anthropists place on the economy, poverty and inequality and climate change, we can see how the data indicates that the Anthropy community recognises economic success as intertwined with social and environmental success.

By removing barriers to entrepreneurship, redirecting investment toward domestic innovation, and creating supportive ecosystems for businesses that generate prosperity in all its definitions, the UK can lead global transitions toward sustainable business models. The tools, talent, and examples exist - what's needed is the systematic implementation of policies and practices that reward value creation across its full spectrum.

This optimism suggests that Britain's potential for global leadership may increasingly be associated with ethical and responsible business practices and may help counter the narrative of decline.

Anthropy25 conversations reflected that while the UK holds extraordinary entrepreneurial and innovation assets, systemic barriers continue to restrict their full potential. The insights point to a future where Britain will be defined not only by economic competitiveness but also by its ability to embed social, environmental, and community value at the core of business models. By removing barriers, fostering supportive ecosystems, and aligning policy and investment with responsible enterprise, the UK has the opportunity to turn widespread optimism into sustainable prosperity and to position itself as a global player in ethical and forward-looking business practices.

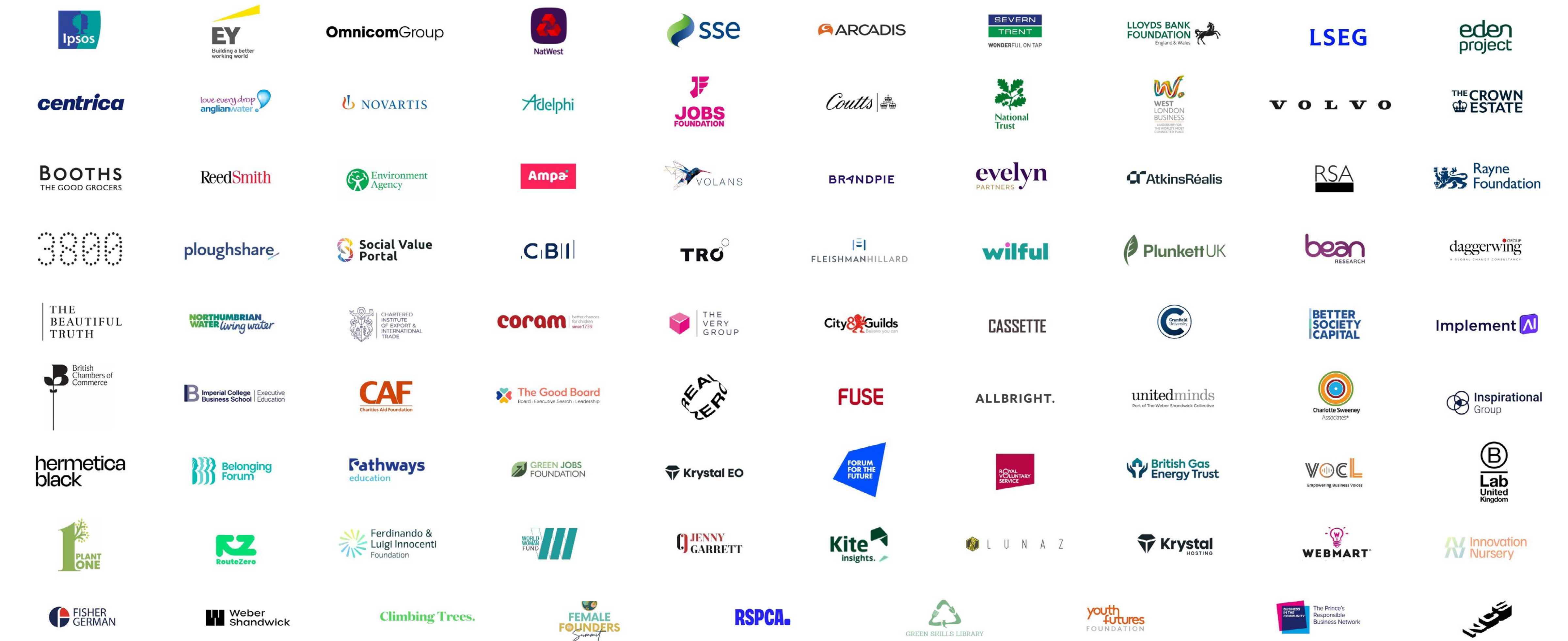


IPSOS INSIGHT

94% of Anthropists, and 60% of the general public, believe Britain can be a positive influence in the world.

With thanks to our members

We extend thanks to the following members who contributed to Anthropy25, and those who have joined us since: Your support is vital to the continuing Anthropy mission of inspiring a better Britain.



Further information

At the Anthropy national gathering, we also asked three further questions, each with their own summary:

What is the quality of life we want in the UK for the next thirty years?

What qualities of place and planet do we need to achieve that quality of life?

What qualities do we want to express to the world, to help solve shared issues such as poverty, climate change, and human rights?

Keen to explore any of this in more detail? Remember, if you were an Anthropy25 ticket holder, you can still open the Anthropy App, navigate to any session and listen back to the session recording, just like a podcast.

We have also taken this incredible volume of insights a step further – from these Accords, 10 overlapping ‘intersections’ are born. These intersections represent a new perspective on overlapping challenges, and tangible routes forward.

We welcome your contribution to inspiring a better Britain, and to Anthropy26. There are several ways to be involved in our next national gathering:

- [Corporate Membership](#). Our corporate members guide the national agenda, involve their networks and inspire impact.
- [Individual Membership](#). Our individual members attend the national gathering and support a variety of activities.
- Participate. Join us at the [national gathering](#).
- Become an Anthropist. Even if you are unable to make the next gathering, at no cost anyone can [sign up to the Anthropy Charter](#) and become an Anthropist by applying these principles, and following the Anthropy Pathway to identify and create impact within their own area of influence.

Methodology

Anthropist survey: Ipsos interviews took place online from 26 March to 9 May 2025. A total of 504 adults aged 16+ completed the survey.

Citizen survey: Ipsos interviewed a Nationally Representative quota sample of 731 – 1,176 (depending on the question) adults aged 16+ in the UK. Interviews took place online using the Ipsos i:omnibus solution from 14 – 17 March 2025. Minimum quotas on the UK Omnibus are age, gender, region and working status. Data has been weighted to the known offline population proportions.

These Accords have been shaped by the contribution of our c.2,000 participants at Anthropy25, as well as the public who responded to the Ipsos surveys.

Our heartfelt thanks goes out to everyone who has contributed, and although we cannot possibly hope to include every opinion, every solution and every idea, we can confirm that every conversation was transcribed and reviewed and has contributed in some way to these summaries. AI tools were used to assist in transcribing, analysing and drafting portions of these Accords. All information, analysis, and conclusions remain subject to human editorial oversight and approval.

These Accords reflect not consensus, but the commitment of so many to engage in open, sometimes uncomfortable but always constructive dialogue. The courage to collaborate is the spirit of Anthropy.

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Inspiring a better Britain



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