

# Building a Global Experience Language for the BBC

- 00 Introduction**
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**We are evolving a global experience language for the BBC's digital services.**

**The GEL guidelines are a reference point for all designers creating BBC websites (future iterations will also incorporate mobile and IPTV recommendations).**

**The design philosophy underpins everything we do as a user experience and design team. It informs the way our services look, the way they behave and the way we operate as a team.**

**The foundations should be used by all. They include a vertical grid, baseline grid and recommended templates.**

**The building blocks** help create consistent interaction and visual design across the site; from typography to iconography.

**Our design pattern** library will offer a comprehensive set of re-usable page components.

**We welcome feedback and suggestions.**

# 01 Philosophy

10 Principles  
Cultural Map

## 01 **Modern British**

**Our services are woven into the fabric of everyday life in the UK. They embrace a modern British design aesthetic that extends outside national boundaries. Our character is vibrant and sometimes quirky.**

## 02 **Compelling**

**Our voice ranges from serious and authoritative through to witty and entertaining. We sound authentic and relevant, warm and human. We engage our audiences with compelling storytelling.**

## 03 **Authentic**

**We value the familiarity and trust placed in us. We acknowledge the BBC's heritage of iconic design and broadcasting history with subtle references.**

## 04 **Pioneering**

We pioneer design innovations that surprise and delight. We introduce the unexpected but always take our audiences with us.

## 05 **Current**

We curate a timeline of Britain; reflecting the present as it happens and adding relevant contextual links with the past.

## 06 **Distinctive**

We stand out by looking to tomorrow instead of simply referencing the design trends of today. We strike a balance between cookie-cutter design and beautiful anarchy.

## 07 **Joined-up**

All our services and platforms are one connected whole which deliver experiences sensitive to their context of use. We enable coherent journeys both within and outside familiar paths. We connect our audiences where there are shared interests and experiences.

## 08 **Local/Global**

We need to speak to everyone but we recognise the individual. Our message is scalable and localisable.

## 09 **Universal**

Our messages are clear and are communicated through simple, useful and intuitive interfaces. Our services are inherently open and accessible.

## 10 **Best**

Last but not least, we put quality first...



**GEL is the glue that ties all BBC services together. The BBC masterbrand will speak directly to the audience on the homepage. A rich brand experience will still be distinctly 'BBC' on Doctor Who.**

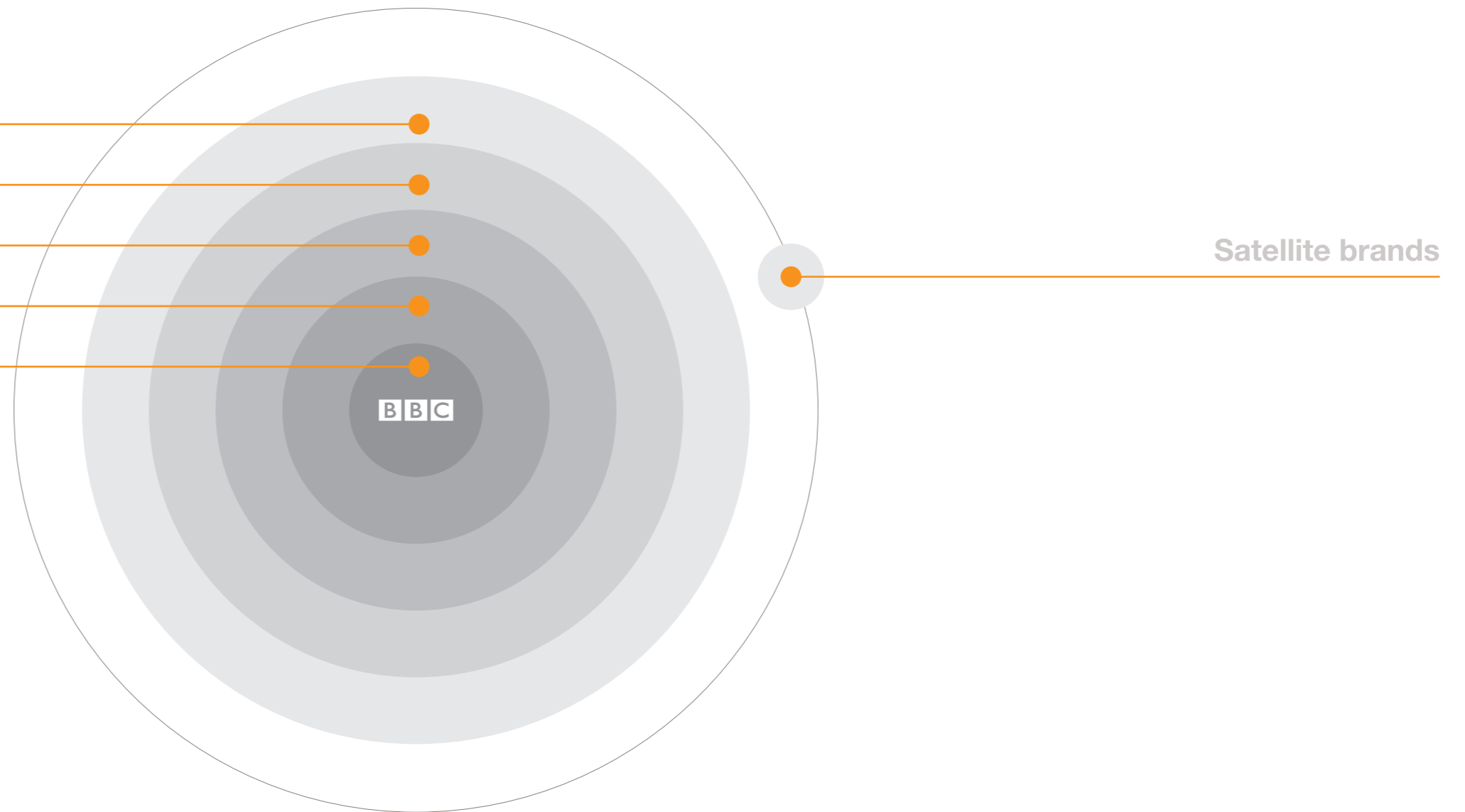
Programmes

Channels

Genres

Sport, News, Weather

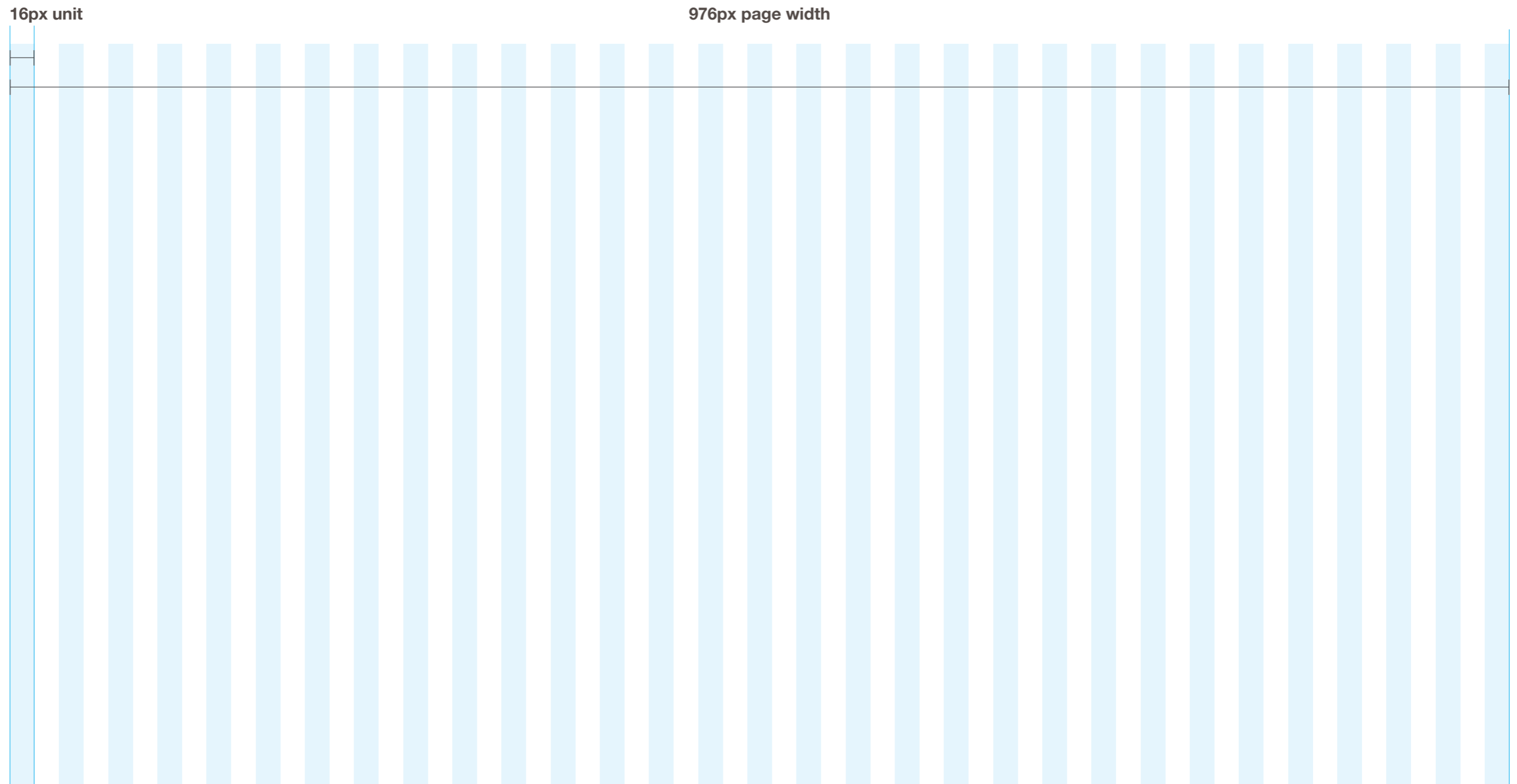
Homepage, Search, Help



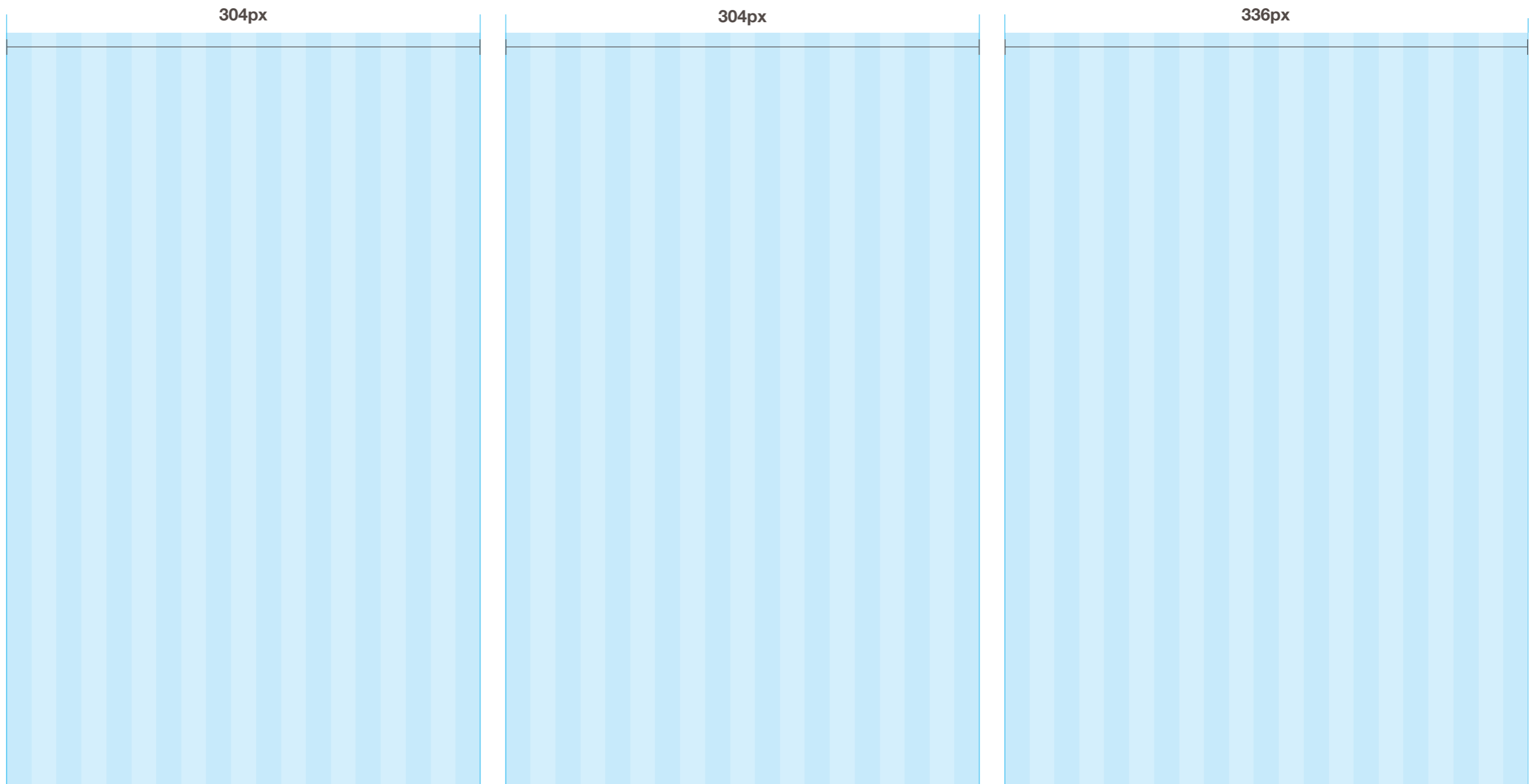
# 02 Foundations

- Universal Grid
- Columns
- Grid Variations
- The Baseline
- The Masthead
- Horizontal Navigation
- The Local Masthead
- Backgrounds
- The Footer

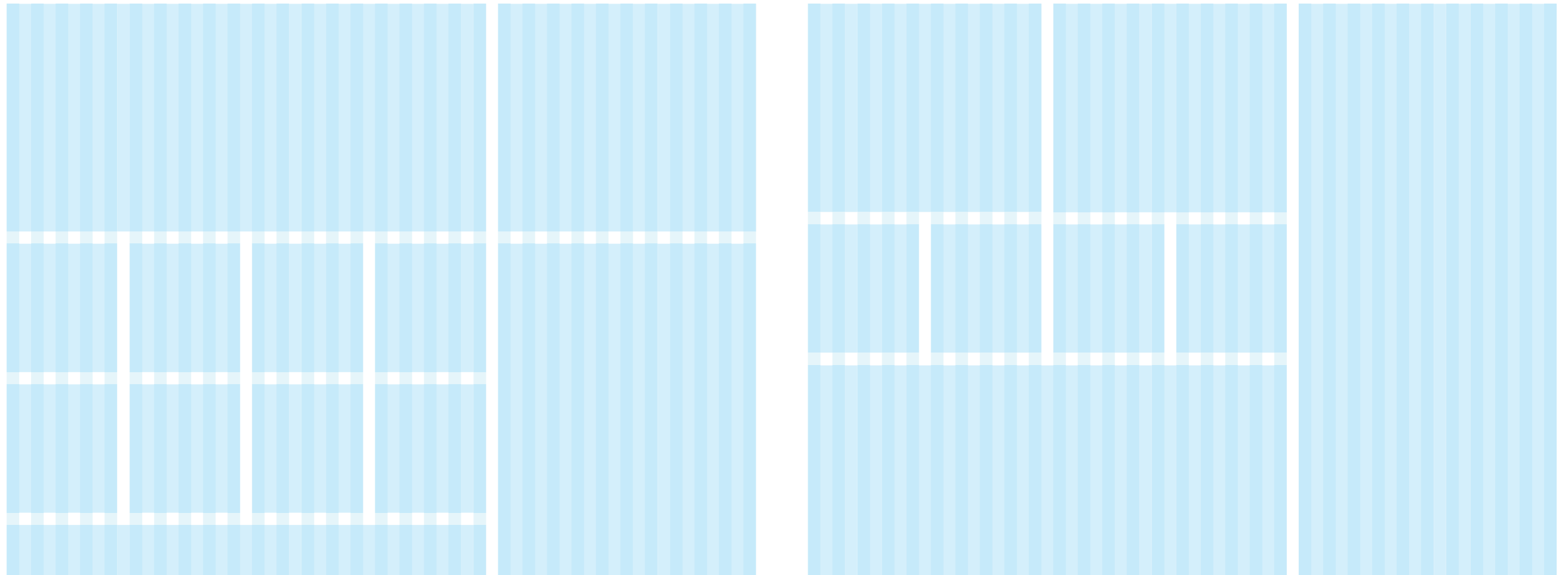
Your starting point is a universal grid, divided into **61 x 16px vertical units**. This has been created to align with existing EMP sizes, image ratios and advertising requirements.



The grid allows for a standard split across **three columns with 16px gutters**, creating a feature of the slightly wider column on the right that accommodates ‘fixed panel’ adverts.

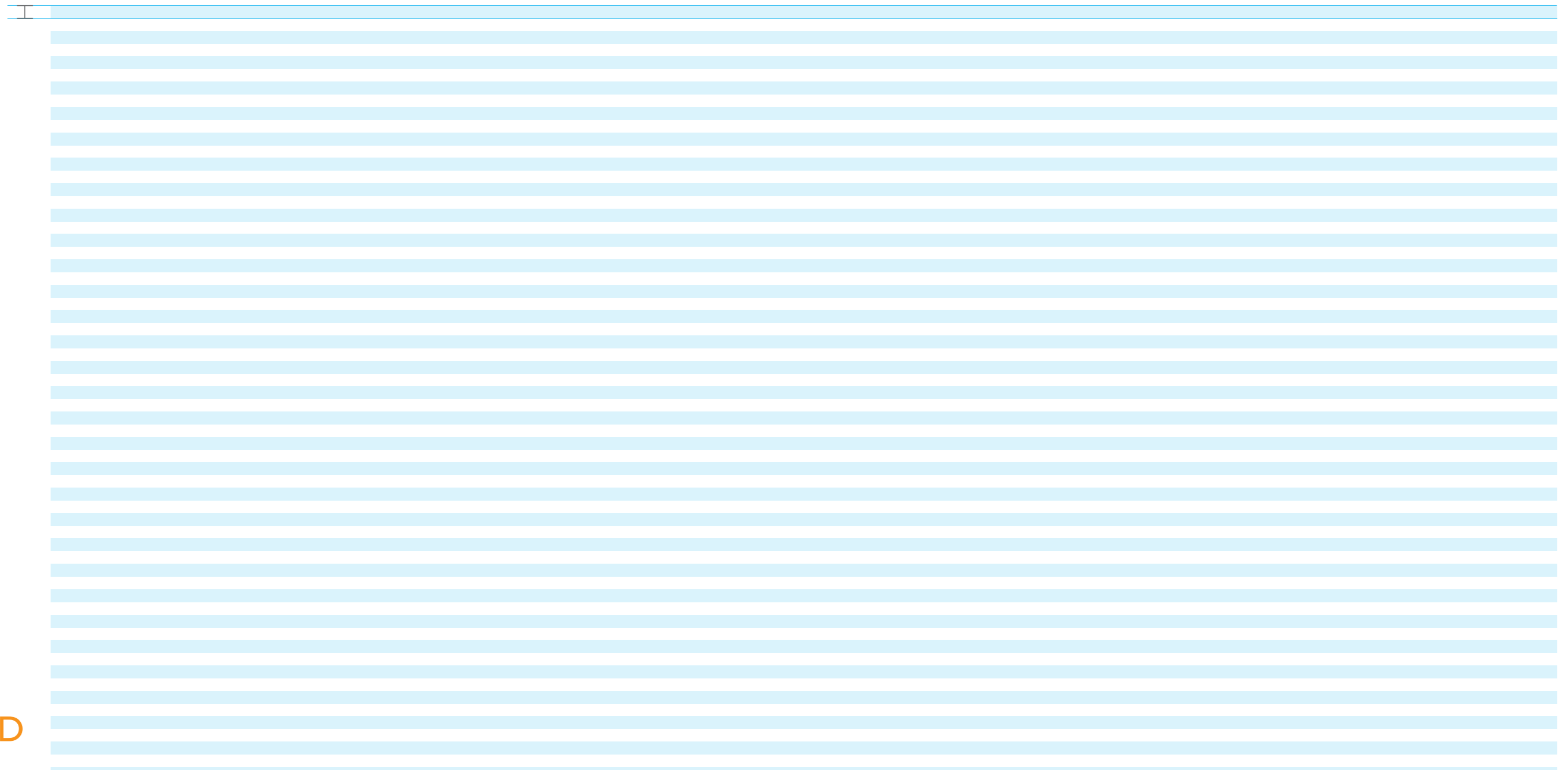


Columns can be further divided. The grid allows for a huge range of **experimental layouts and templates.**

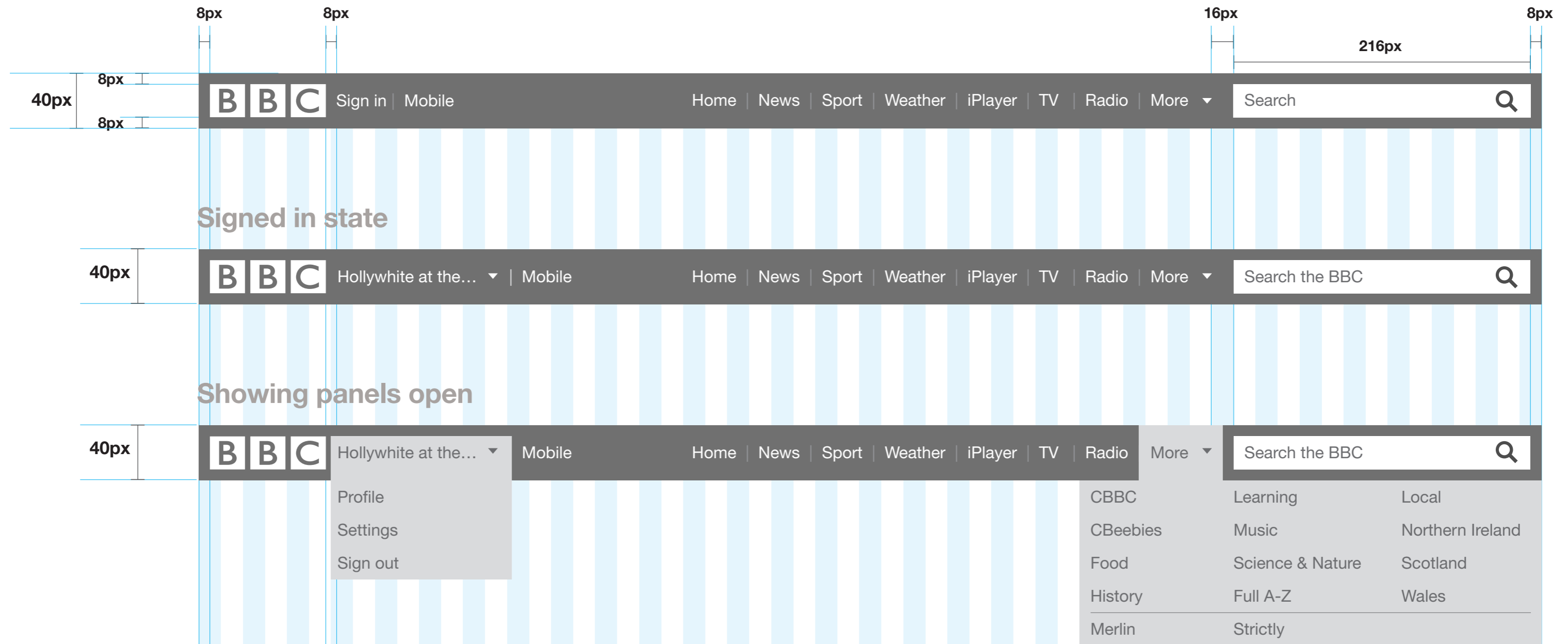


We're also employing an **8px baseline grid** to help with vertical alignment of page components. Slavish adherence to the baseline isn't necessary for all typography but it does help to create vertical rhythm on the page.

8px



The global masthead retains the current **global navigation links** with additional links in an overlay panel. BBC iD and mobile links are positioned to the right of the BBC blocks. The masthead is black but either 40% opaque or 70% solid grey.



We are proposing up to two lines of horizontal navigation with tabs and a crumbtrail solution for deeper hierarchies. More details are available in the design patterns library.

### Single tier menu

Lorem ipsum | Dolor sit amet | Consectetur adipiscing | Vestibulum faucibus | Enim at odio | Fusce fermentum | Neque sed gravida

### Double tier menu

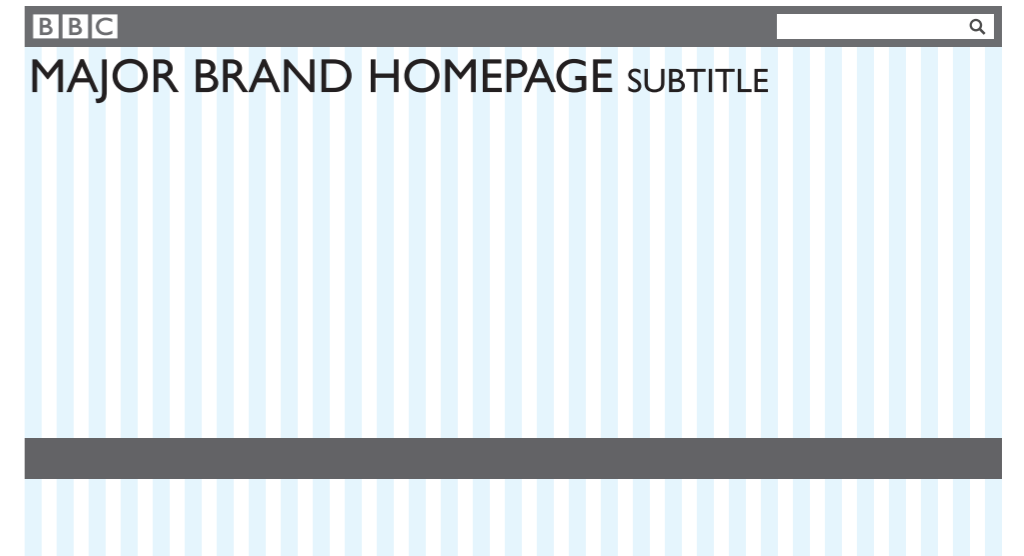
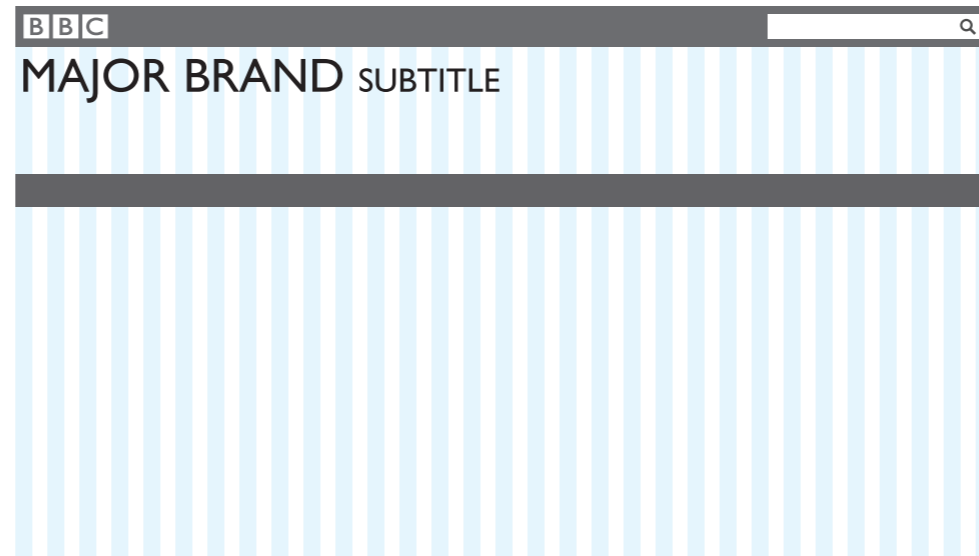
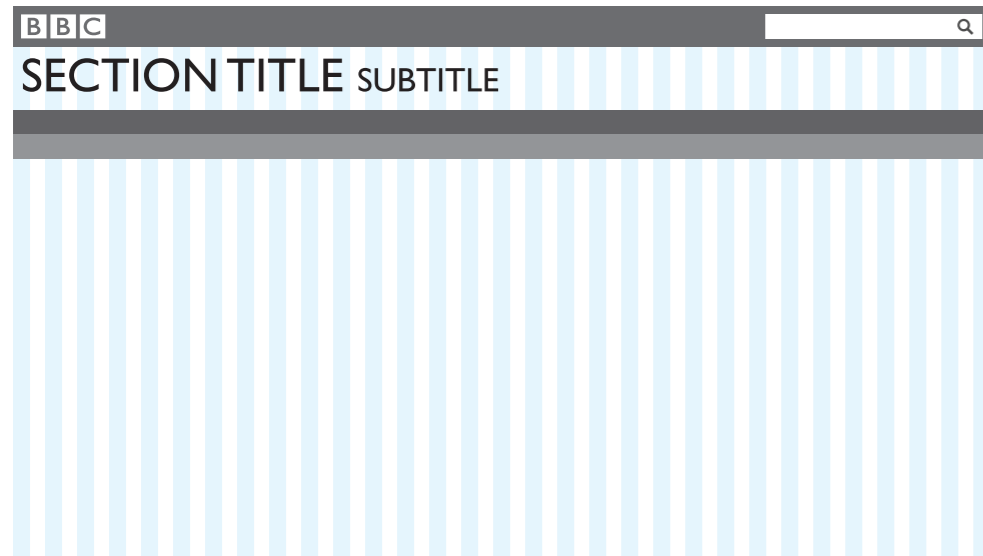
Lorem ipsum | Dolor sit amet | Consectetur adipiscing | Vestibulum faucibus | Enim at odio | Fusce fermentum | Neque sed gravida  
Proin euismod | Condimentum tellus | Vulputate quam | Bibendum | Nullam auctor | Euismod lobortis | Duis auctor | Neque malesuada

### Deep hierachies

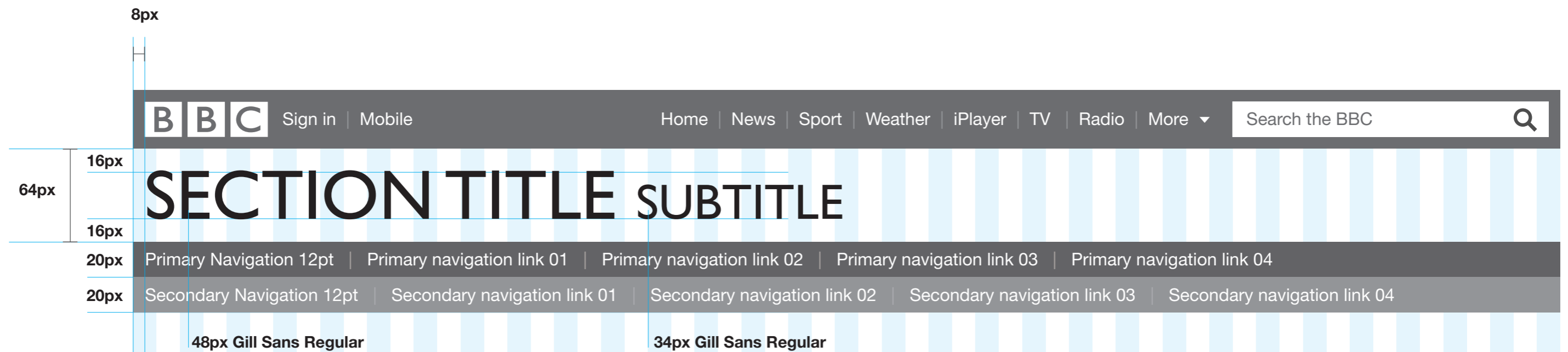
Lorem ipsum | Dolor sit amet | Consectetur adipiscing | Vestibulum faucibus | Enim at odio | Fusce fermentum | Neque sed gravida  
Euismod lobortis | Proin euismod | Condimentum tellus | Vulputate quam | Bibendum | Nullam auctor | Duis auctor | Neque malesuada



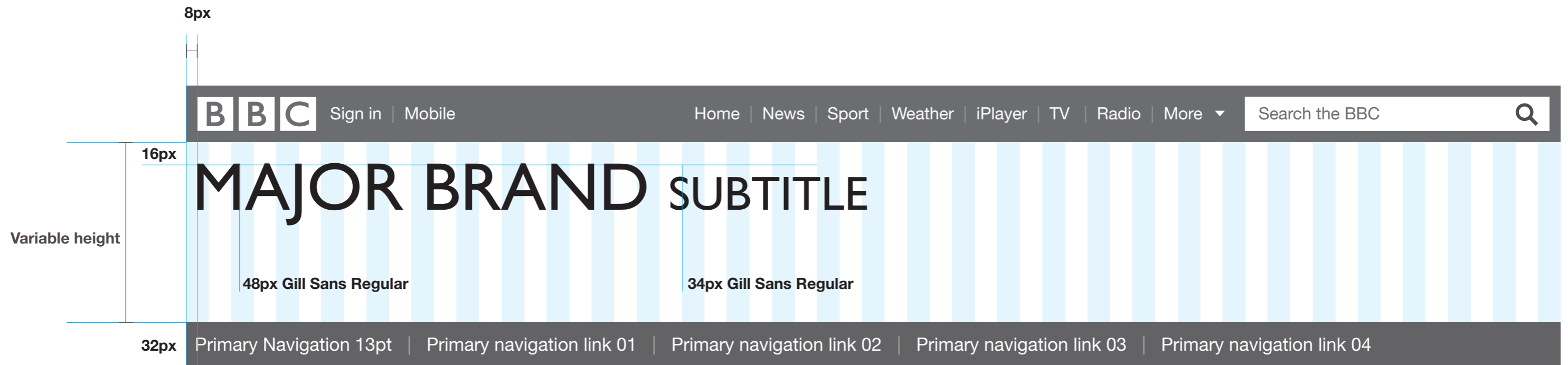
The new masthead approach provides the flexibility to accommodate various brand elements.



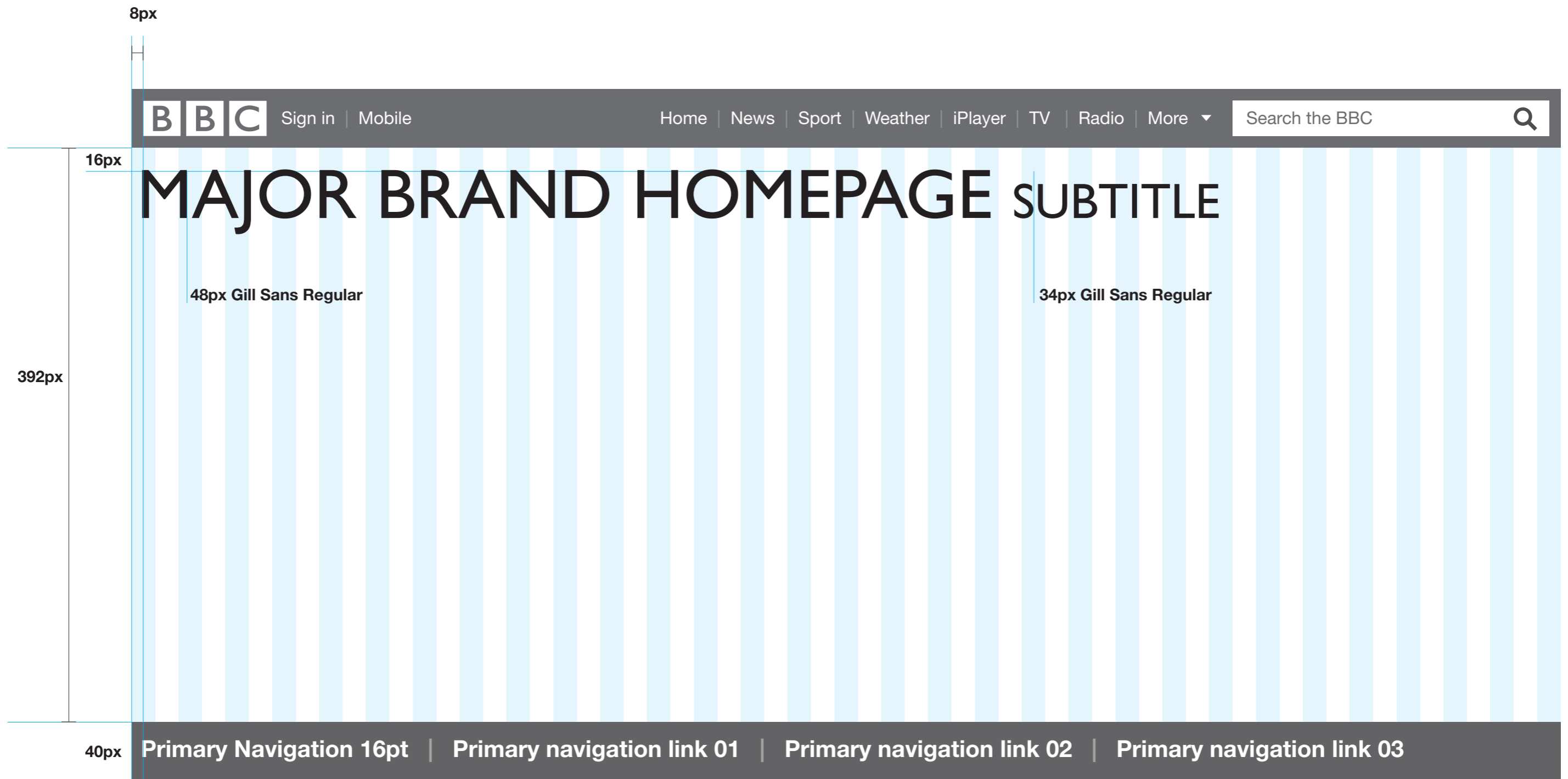
The local masthead will vary in height depending on the type of service. The minimum depth will be **64px for content heavy sites such as News.**



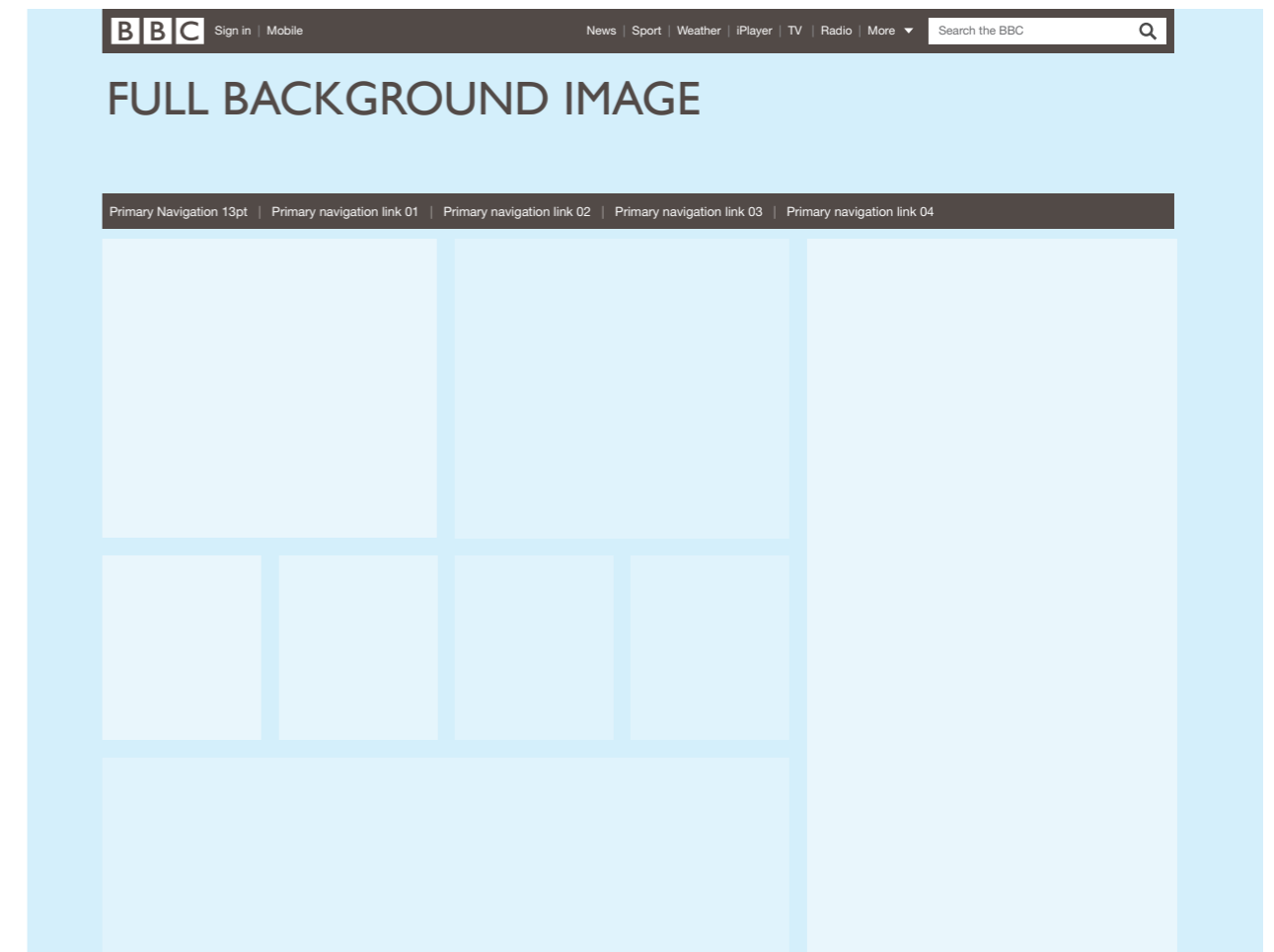
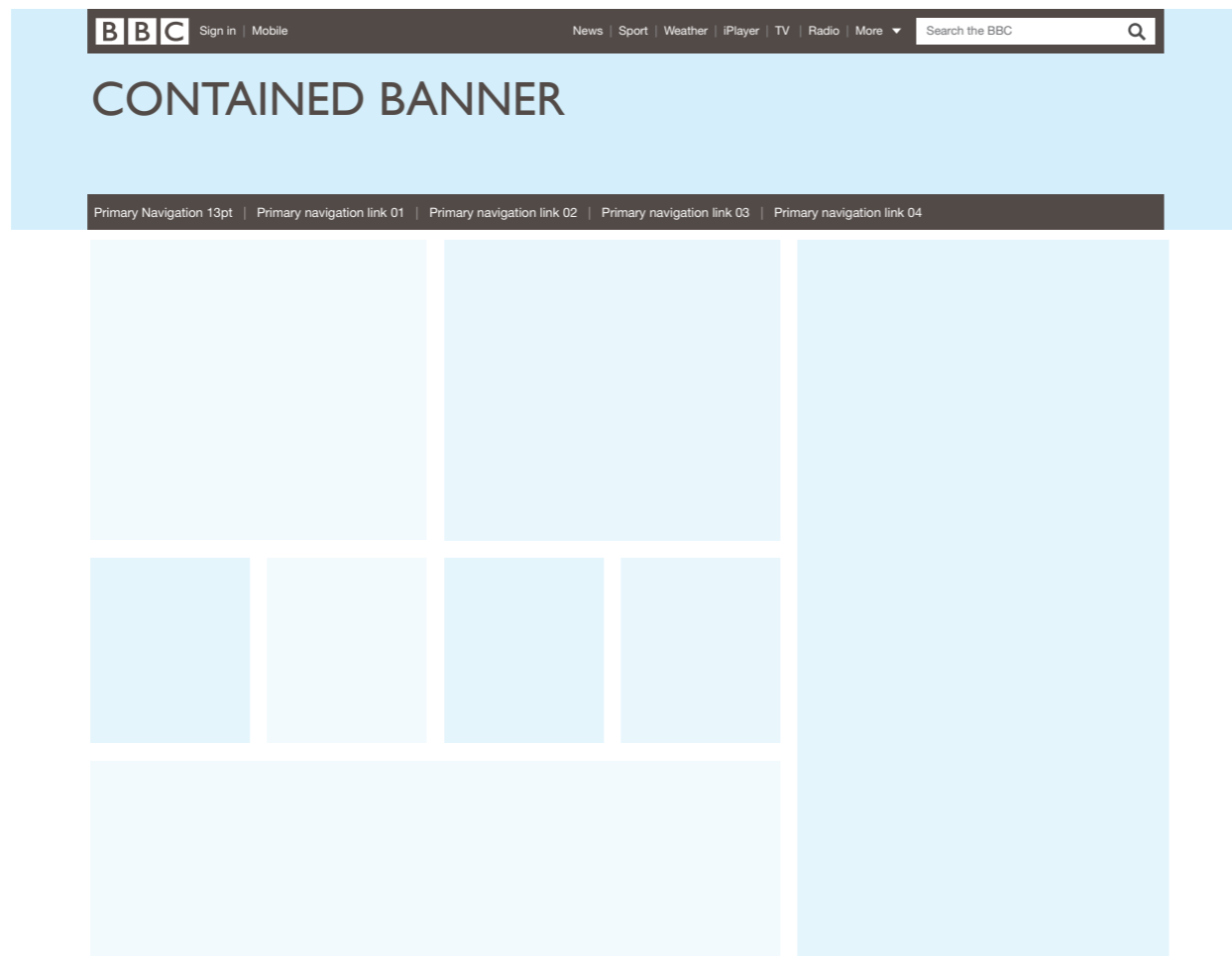
Other brands such as Radio 1 or BBC One may be deeper.



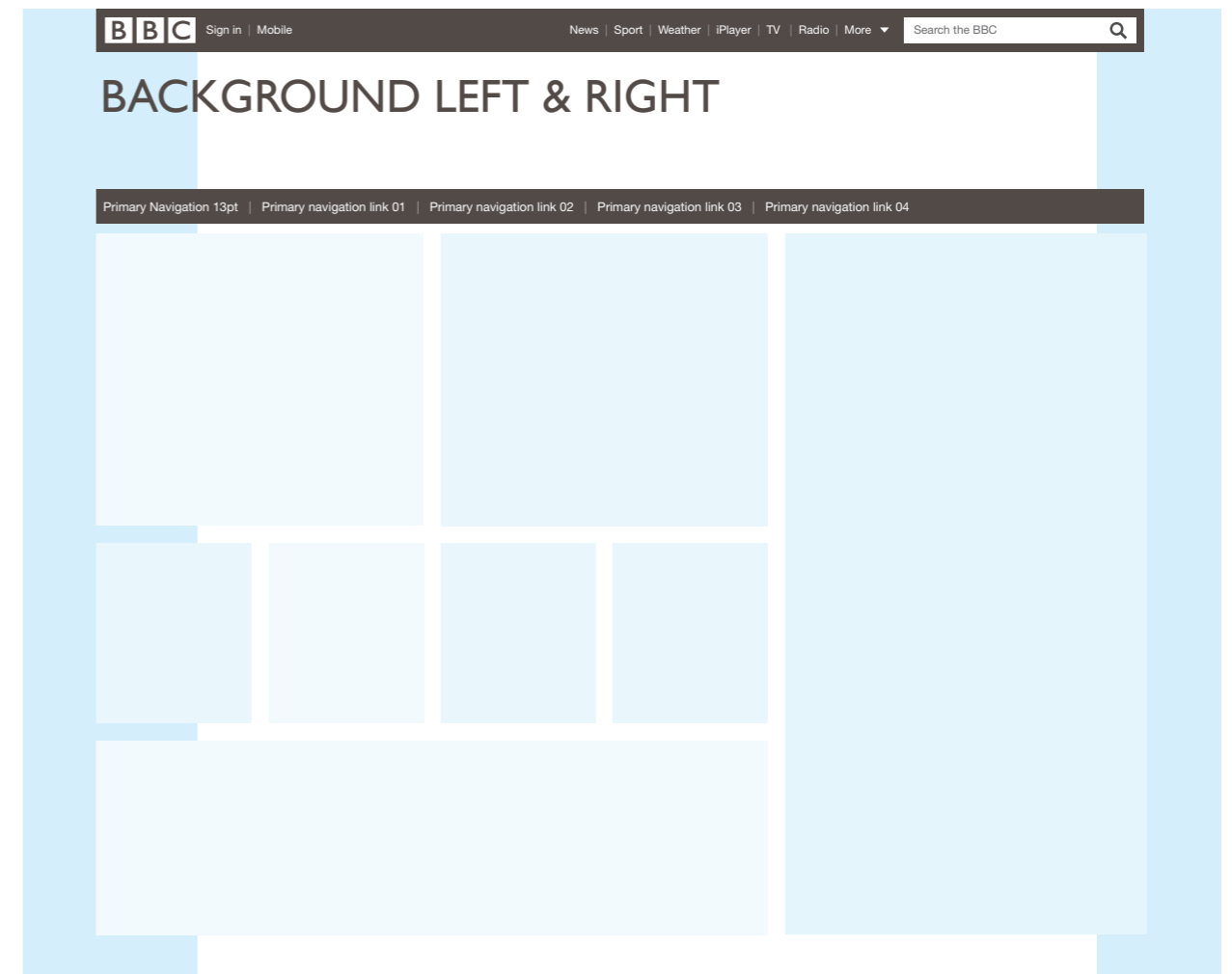
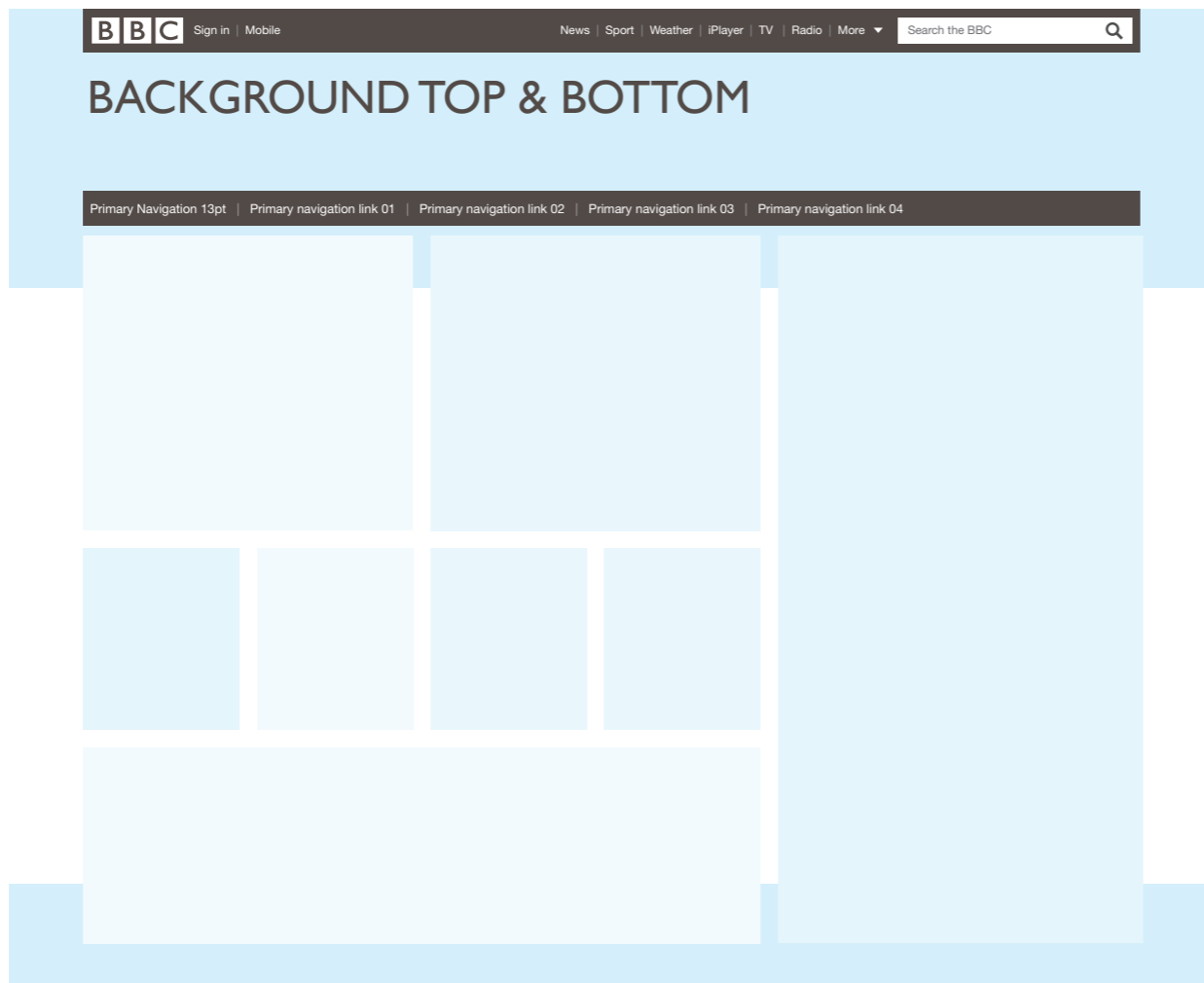
Rich programme experiences such as Doctor Who could be deeper still – **up to 392px**. The default font for the local masthead is **Gill Sans regular (48px)**. Local branding should be left-aligned.



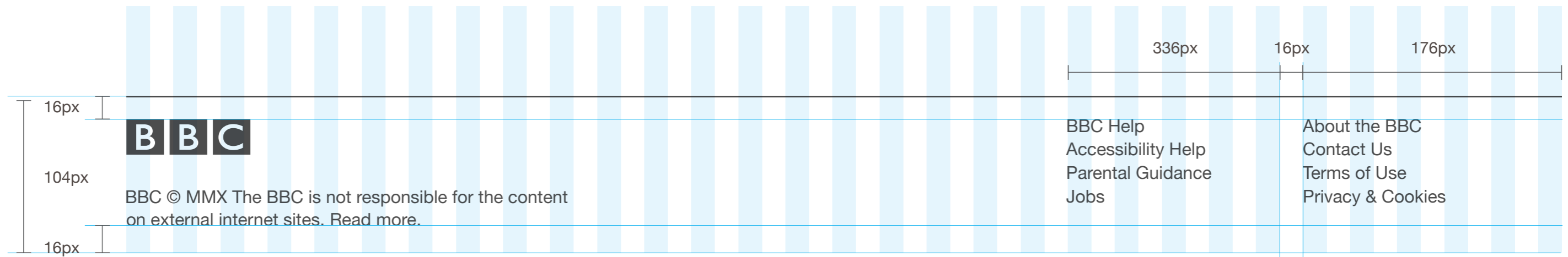
There is no longer a requirement for consistent placement of page backgrounds or page ‘shoulders’ across the site. **Backgrounds can be white, full colour, gradient or image backgrounds** and may feature within the content area, within individual panels or **as free-floating elements.**



As well as the default full screen or repeated background image, images can be fixed to the **top, bottom, left and/or right** of the page content or browser viewport.



The GEL footer is a variant of the existing GVL 2.0 footer. Colour options are **white, grey, black and semi-transparent over an image.**



# 03 Building Blocks

Typography  
Iconography  
Linking Conventions  
Image Size Ratios



**GEL uses bold typography to create stronger hierarchies and drama across the site. We're moving from Verdana to Arial as the BBC's default web font for both headers and body copy.**

**Arial Regular**

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ  
abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz  
1234567890!@£\$%^&\*()\_+

**Arial Bold**

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ  
abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz  
1234567890!@£\$%^&\*()\_+

**Gill Sans Regular**

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ  
abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz  
1234567890!@£\$%^&\*()\_+

Large bold type should be used to establish a clear information hierarchy. These are the recommended type sizes.

Arial Bold 48px

48px Leading / -40 Tracking Dev Pixel Spec: -2px Letter spacing

Arial Bold 36px

36px Leading / -30 Tracking Dev Pixel Spec: -1px Letter spacing

Arial Bold 32px

32px Leading / -30 Tracking Dev Pixel Spec: -1px Letter spacing

Arial Bold 28px

28px Leading / -36 Tracking Dev Pixel Spec: -1px Letter spacing

Arial Bold 24px

24px Leading / -43 Tracking Dev Pixel Spec: -1px Letter spacing

Arial Bold 20px

20px Leading / -47 Tracking Dev Pixel Spec: -1px Letter spacing

Arial Bold 16px

18px Leading / 0 Tracking Dev Pixel Spec: 0px Letter spacing

Arial Bold 14px

18px Leading / 0 Tracking Dev Pixel Spec: 0px Letter spacing

Arial Bold 13px

16px Leading / 0 Tracking Dev Pixel Spec: 0px Letter spacing

Arial Bold 12px

ARIAL BOLD CAPITALISED 11px

## Putting it together with body copy...

**Super Header 36px**

**Header 32px**

**Subheader 20px**

**TIME STAMPS 11PT CAPITALS**

**Copy 13px Arial Bold on 16px leading** Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit. Fusce sed leo. Maecenas ultrices lorem sit amet diam. Aliquam sollicitudin tristique nulla. Duis libero diam, condimentum et, condimentum in, congue eu, tellus. Phasellus eu elit at nisi ultricies lobortis. Suspendisse porta commodo leo.

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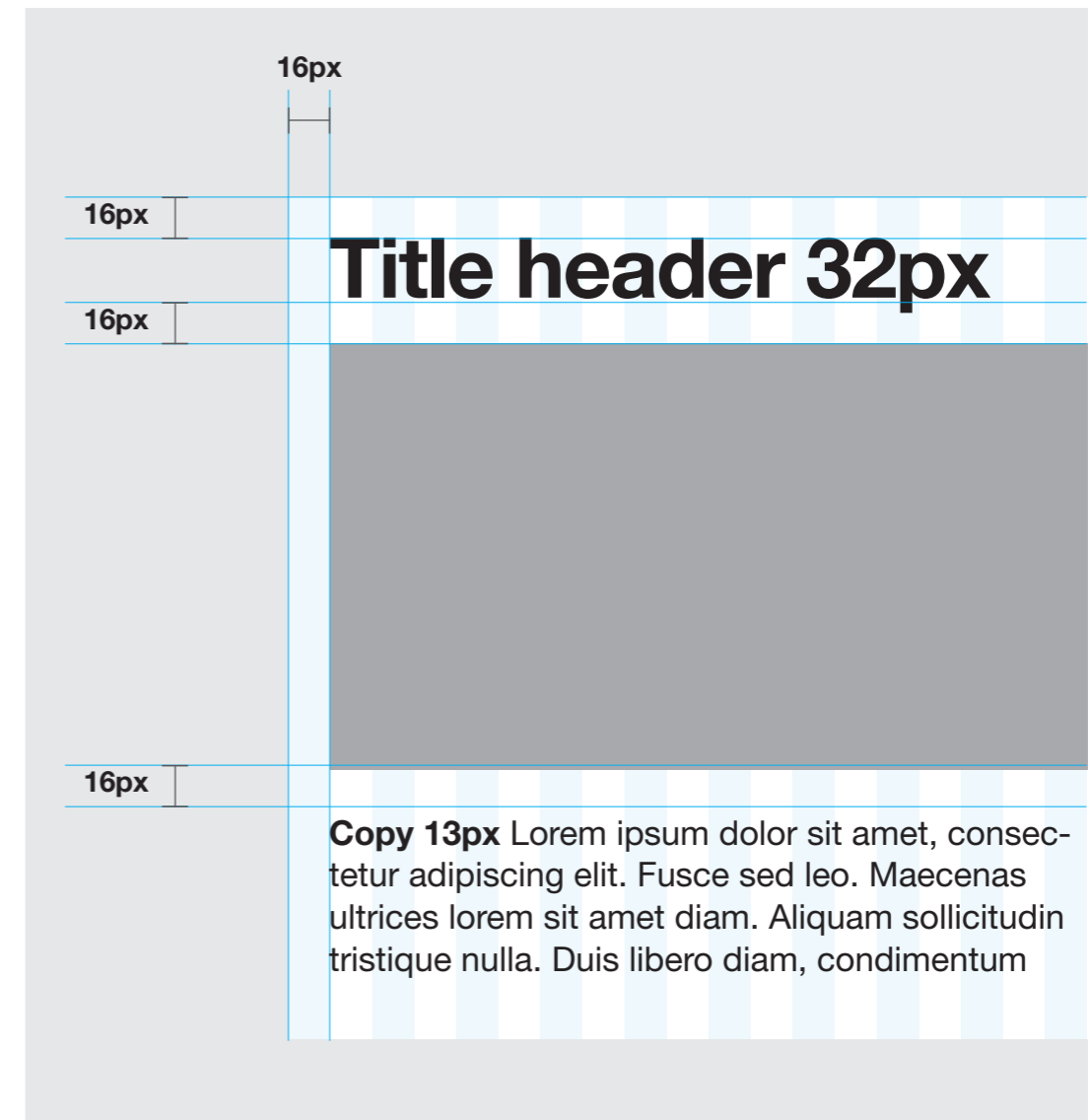
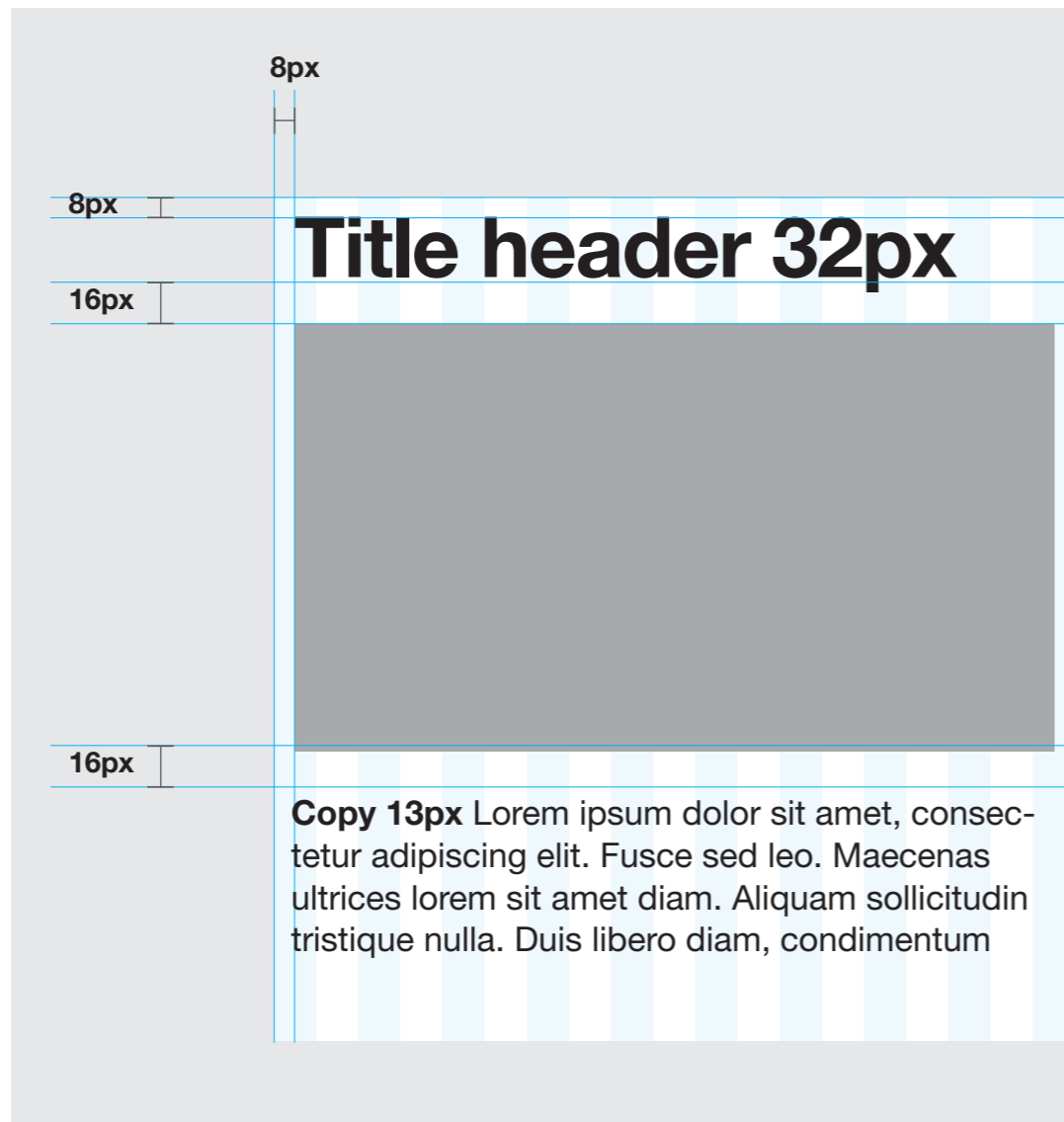
**Copy 13px Arial Regular on 16px leading** Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, 8px

consectetur adipiscing elit. Fusce sed leo. Maecenas ultrices lorem sit amet diam. Aliquam sollicitudin tristique nulla. Duis libero diam, condimentum et, condimentum in, congue eu, tellus. Phasellus eu elit at nisi ultricies lobortis. Suspendisse porta commodo leo. Sed tincidunt tincidunt massa. Cras scelerisque diam non arcu. Donec egestas. Integer a mi. Aenean tempus, mi eu luctus imperdiet, erat ligula semper turpis, consectetur faucibus libero ante non sem. Aliquam quis diam. Pellentesque mollis nisi eget purus. Aenean iaculis metus vel sem. Integer at erat.

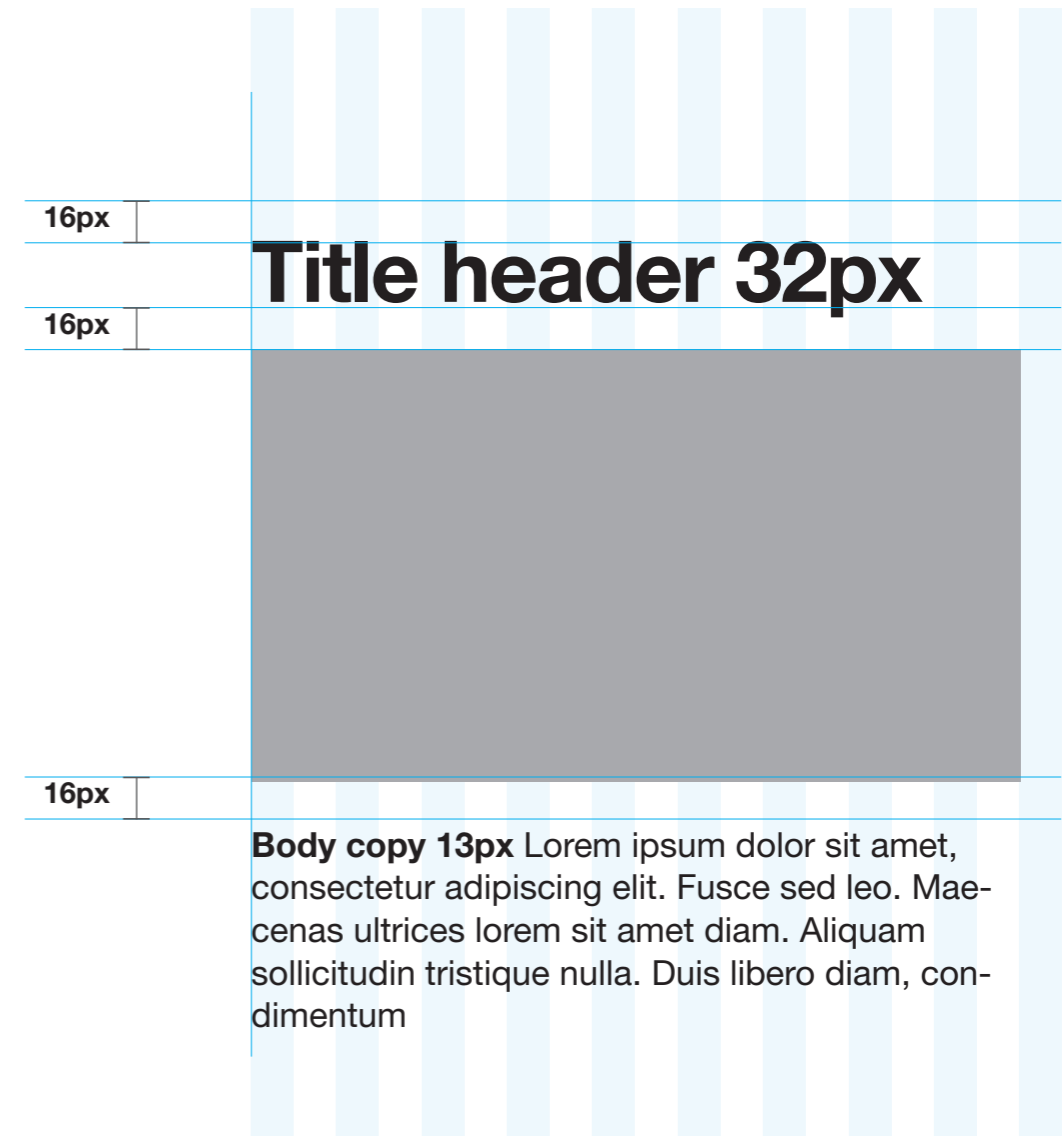
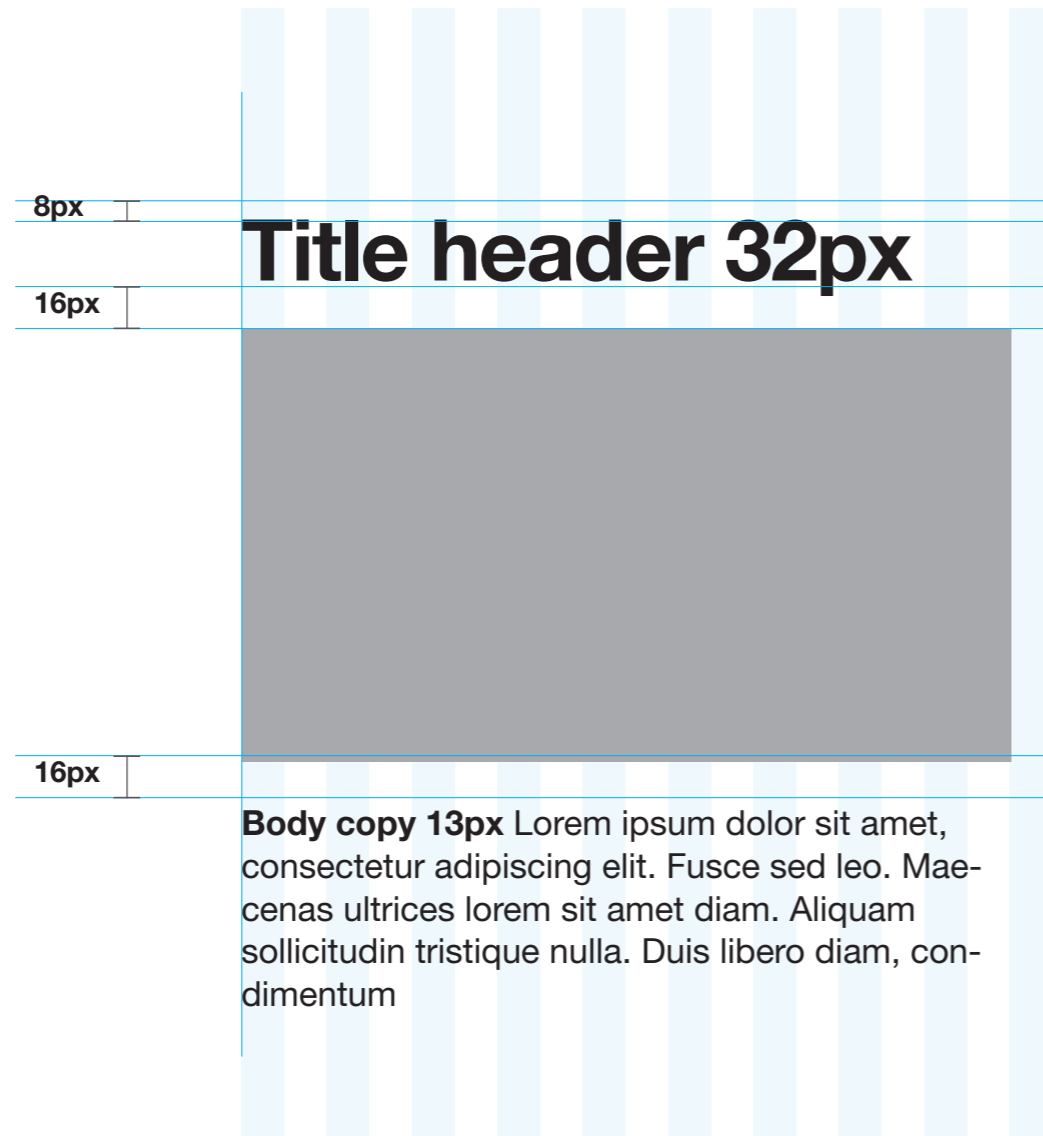
**Link – Nam dictum nibh eu arcu**

**Link – Donec egestas integer a mi**

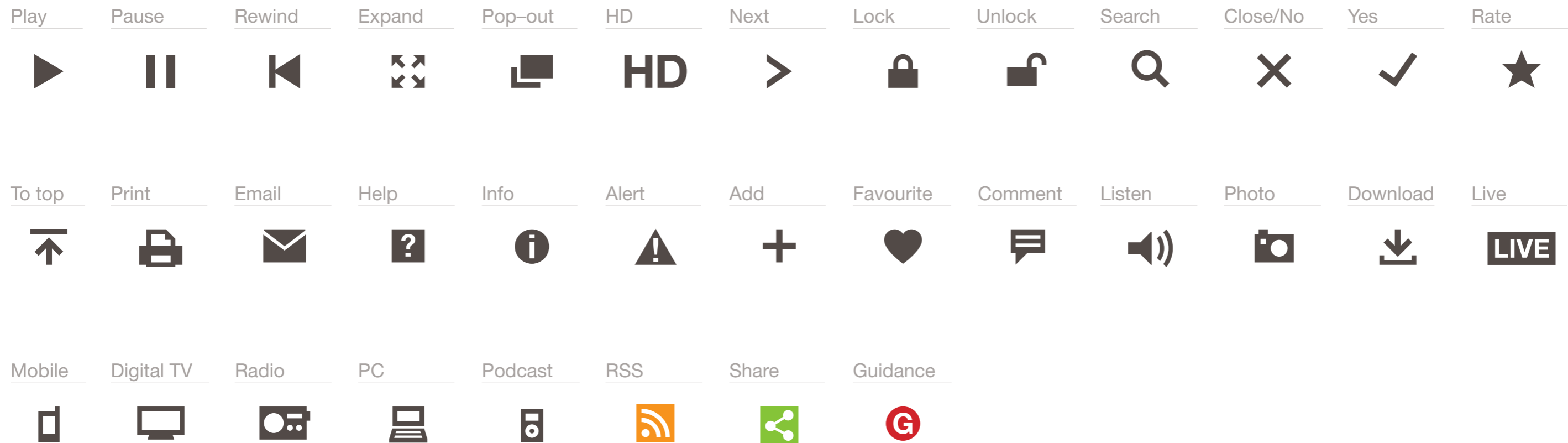
Our typographic style relies on **tight tracking, tight leading and large headers**. There should be consistent spacing around headers and body copy. Either 8px or 16px above and to the left when content is contained...



...or aligned to the grid when there is no container.



We have designed a **new set of icons** to work in harmony with the new visual language. The default **size is 13px** and icons can be used with or without a flat button container. These can be used in any colour unless otherwise specified.



Icons should appear to the left of text or in the top left corner of thumbnails.

**Header 36px**

8px

**Subheader 20px**

TIME STAMPS 11Px CAPITALS

Copy 13px Arial Bold on 16px leading Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit. Fusce sed leo. Maecenas ultrices lorem sit amet diam. Aliquam sollicitudin tristique nulla.

Copy 13px Arial Regular on 16px leading Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit. Fusce sed leo. Maecenas ultrices lorem sit amet diam. Aliquam sollicitudin tristique nulla.

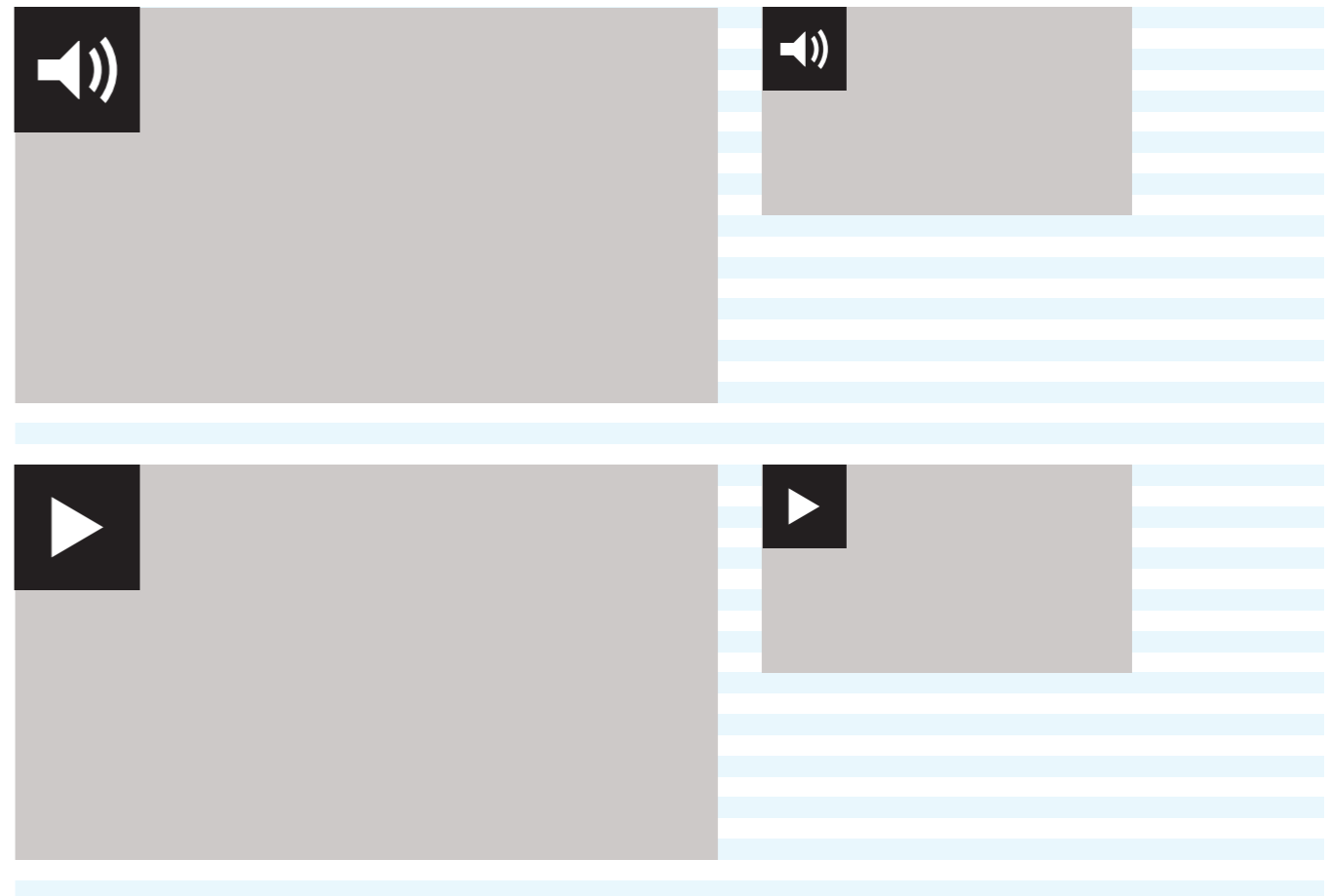
 **Link Suspendisse porta commodo leo. 13px**

 **Link Pellentesque mollis nisi eget purus 13px**

 **COMMENTS 11PX CAPITAL**

 **EMAIL 11PX CAPITAL**

 **PRINT 11PX CAPITAL**



Links should comply with existing standards and guidelines. They should be easily distinguishable from body copy using a combination of bold type and colour, along with underline or underline on hover. **On rollover links should change colour (and underline if under 24px).**

**Header 36px** 8px

**Subheader 20px**

TIME STAMPS 11Px CAPITALS

Body Copy 13px Arial Bold on 16px leading Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit. Fusce sed leo. Maecenas ultrices lorem sit amet diam. Aliquam sollicitudin tristique nulla.

Body Copy 13px Arial Regular on 16px leading Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit. Fusce sed leo. Maecenas ultrices lorem sit amet diam. Aliquam sollicitudin tristique nulla.

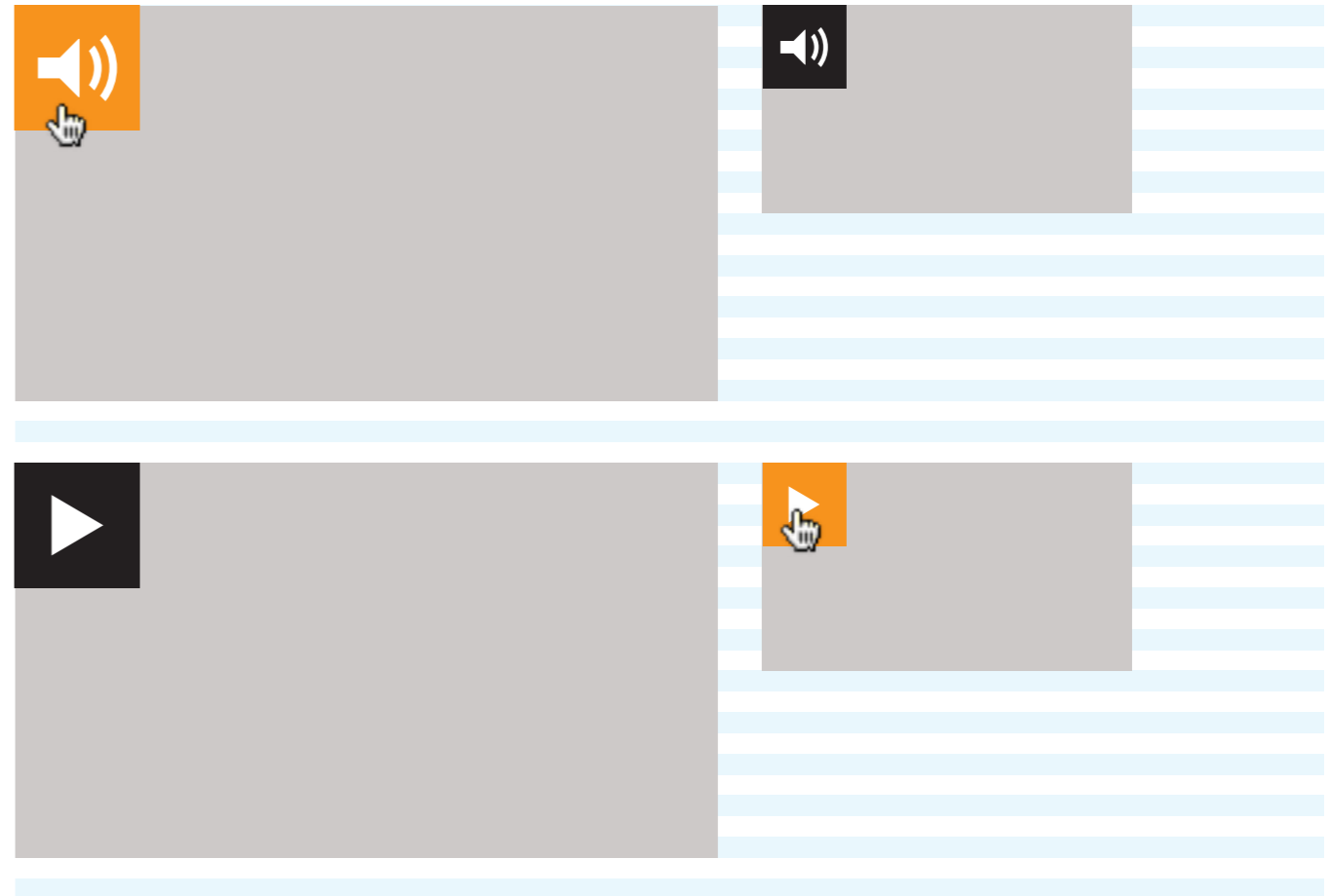
 [Link Suspendisse porta commodo leo. 13px](#)

 [Link Pellentesque mollis nisi eget purus 13px](#)

 COMMENTS 11PX CAPITAL

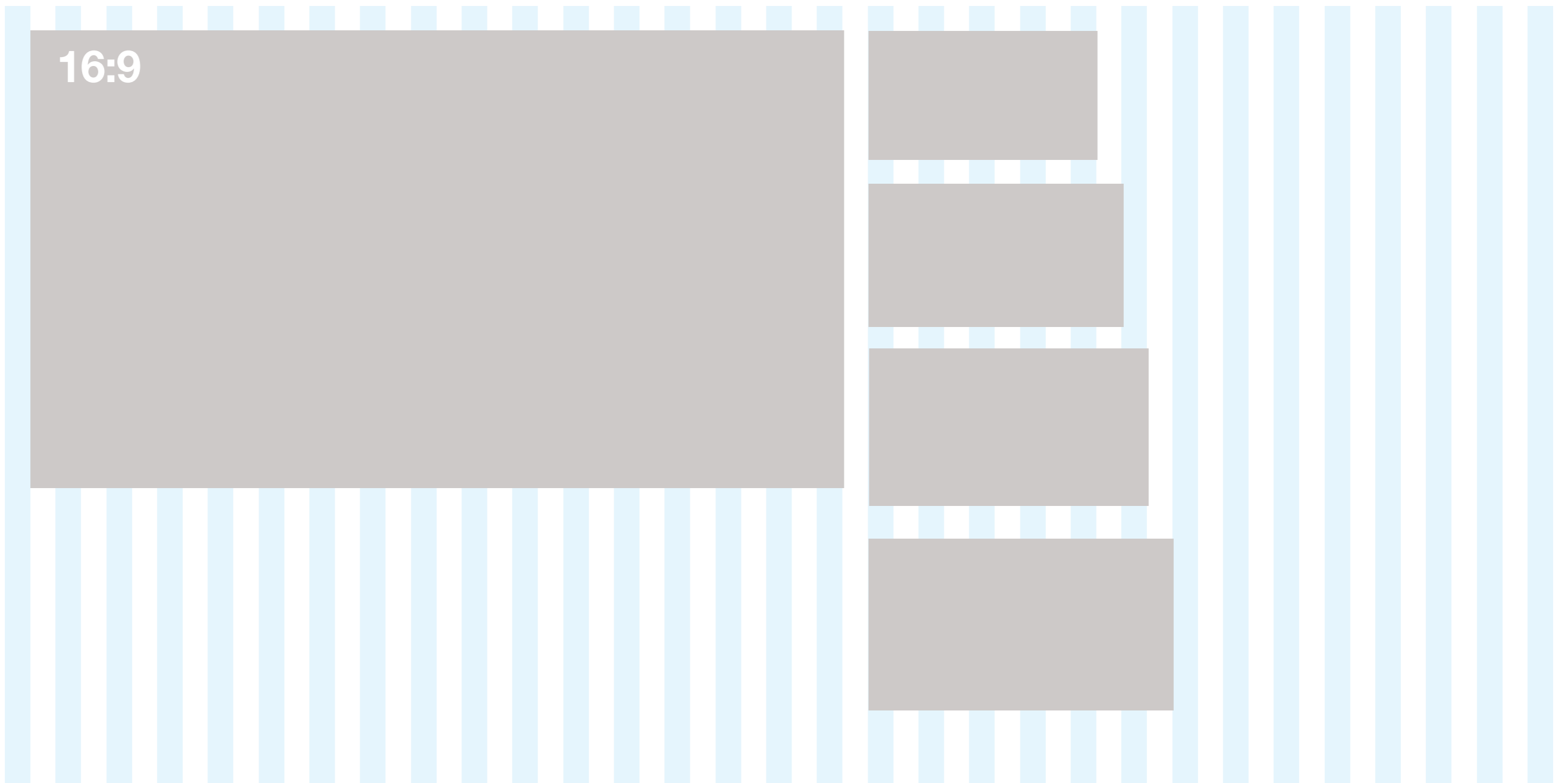
 EMAIL 11PX CAPITAL

 [PRINT 11PX CAPITAL](#)

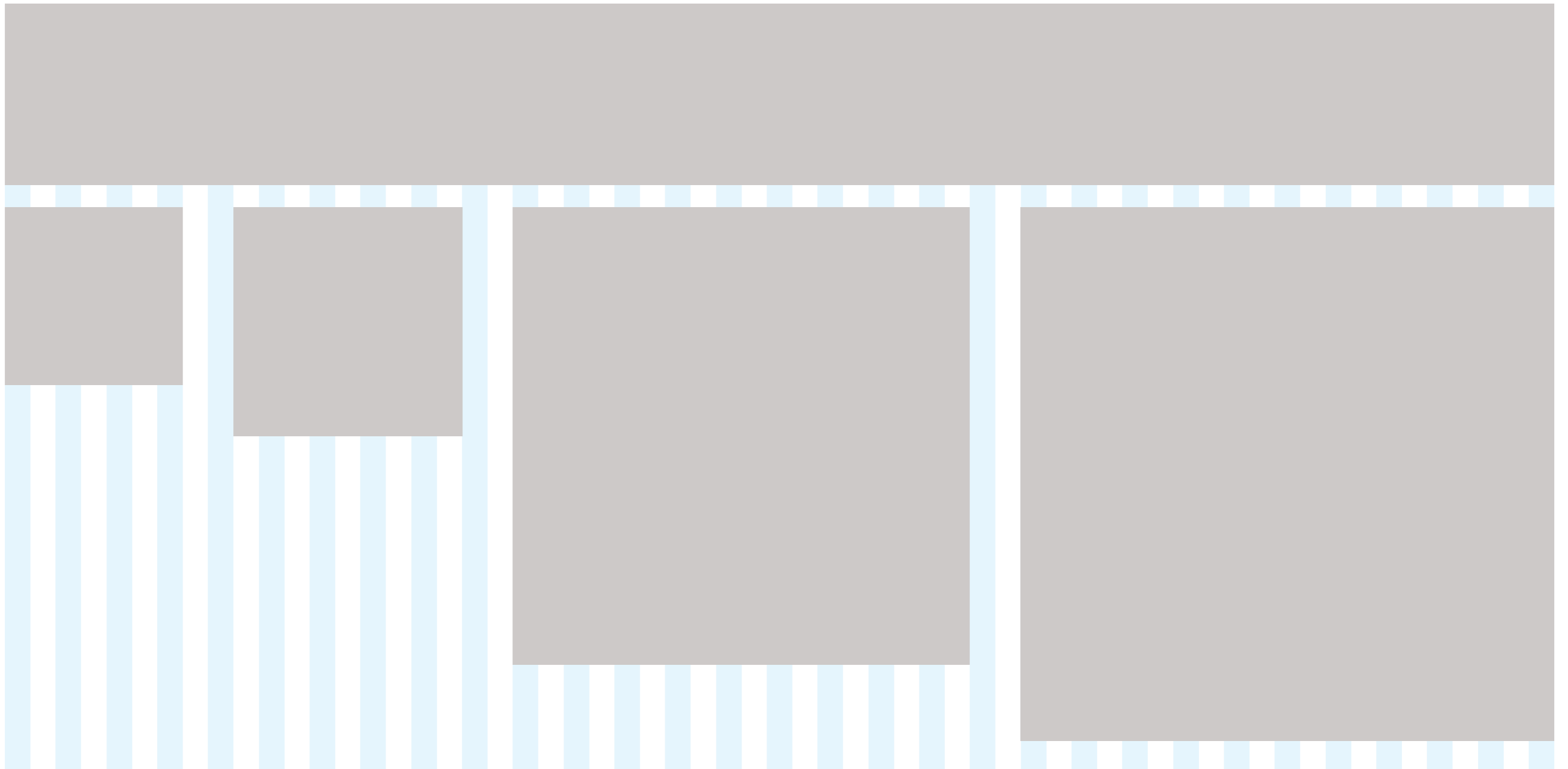




We recommend using **16:9 images at any size that aligns with the grid**. This is particularly important where there is likely to be significant re-use across BBC Online.



Backgrounds, banners, promos and cut-outs could be a variety of shapes and sizes as long as there is **alignment with the universal grid.**



# 04 Patterns

The design patterns library will be a living repository for simple, re-skinable page components. Several of these patterns are available at [bbc.co.uk/gel](http://bbc.co.uk/gel)

**Carousel**

**EMP**

**Autosuggest**

**Image gallery**

**Tooltips**

**Local navigation**

**Contextual navigation**

**Localisation**

**Pagination**

**Overlay panels**

**Identity**

**Infographics**

**Local search**

**Accordions**

**Form elements**

**Drag and drop**

**Editor**

**Slider**

**Sortable**

**Timeline**

**Mapping**

**Legacy content**

**Vote**

# 05 Thanks

**BBC**

Marcelo Marer  
Bronwyn van der Merwe  
Liz Citron  
Jason Fields  
Adam Powers  
Duncan Swain  
Chris Sizemore  
Ben Gammon  
Steve Gibbons  
Michael Tiffany  
Paul Sissons  
Yuri Kang  
Mike Albers  
Jo Patterson  
Chris Hankins  
Frances McNamara  
Yasser Rashid  
Andy Braxton  
Sean McVeigh  
Dan Ogunkoya

Lyra Xharra-Loxha  
Dan Shallcross  
Adam Hutchinson  
Annoushka Ferrari  
Sarah Challis  
Olivia Rofail  
Mike Atherton  
Audrey Rapier  
Lynsey Smyth  
Sylwia Frankowska  
Nourdine Aarsalane  
Patrick Walsh  
Toby Mildon  
Isabel Nunes  
Mat Hampson  
Tom Cartwright  
Richard Hodgson  
Andrew Greenham  
Rowun Giles

**Research Studios**

Neville Brody  
Nick Hard  
James Nelson  
James Le Beau–Morley  
Jeff Knowles  
George Sheldrake  
Phil Rodgers

**Fitzroy & Finn**

Paul Finn

The GEL Steering Group, the Global Design Working Group  
and all contributing designers

**B B C** UX&D

For more information visit [bbc.co.uk/gel](http://bbc.co.uk/gel)