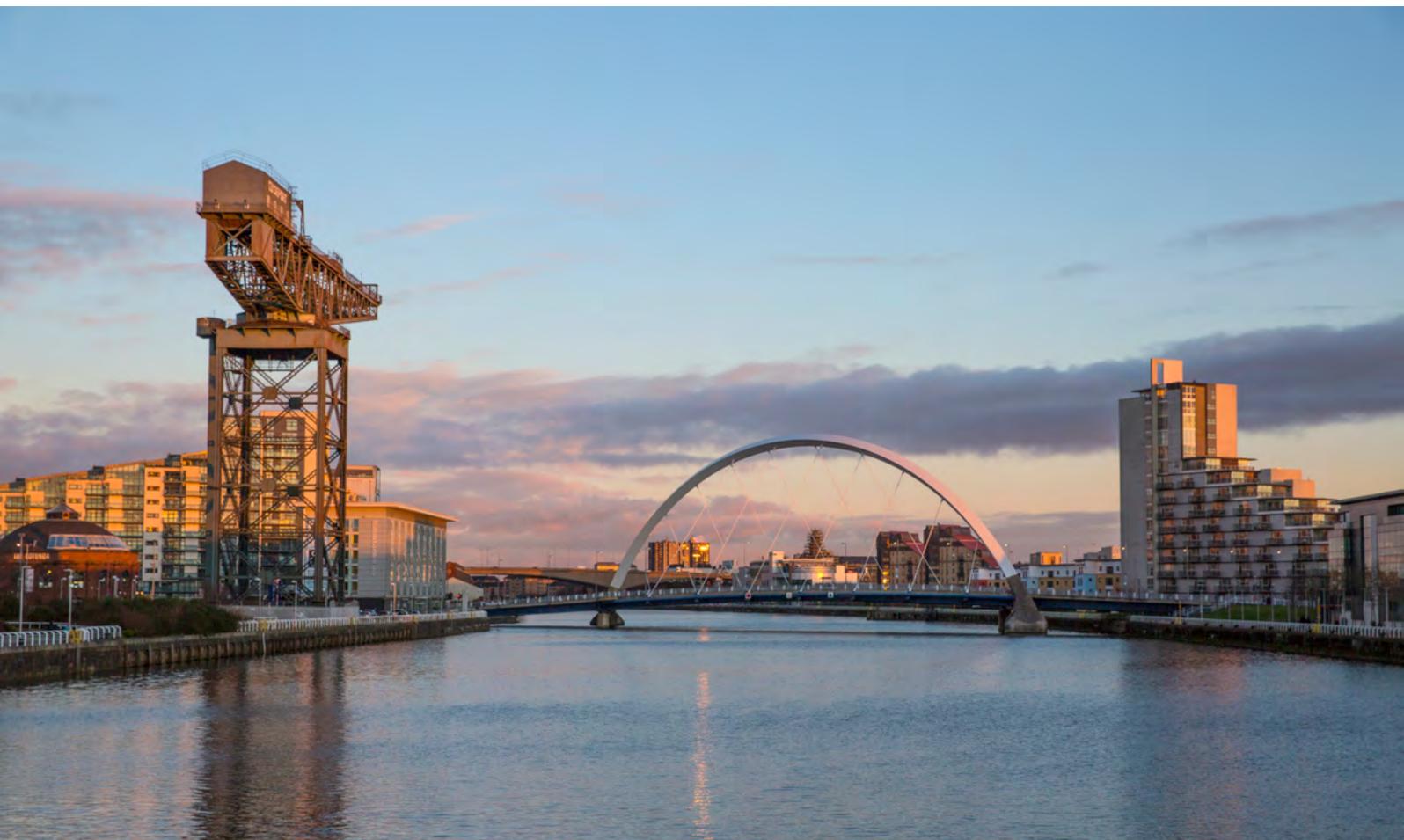




# Digital and Social Media Strategy 2026



# 1. Purpose

This document provides an overview of the Glasgow City Region (GCR) social media and digital channels, objectives and audiences, a summary of performance, and learning for the period January 2025 to December 2025. It builds on the previous year's strategy and performance to provide recommendations.

## 2. Summary Findings

Glasgow City Region's digital and social media performance remained strong in 2025. We saw improvements in engagement and reach across most of our channels, and continued to see growth on our largest platforms.

**LinkedIn** continued to be our main social media channel, growing by **+1,525 followers (+38%)** and maintaining an **engagement rate of 6.54%, more than double platform and sector engagement rate benchmarks**. This demonstrates that our content on LinkedIn is reaching the right audiences and resonating with our followers.

Our **website** also performed particularly well over the last year. **Pageviews increased by 16%** year-on-year, and engagement improved significantly with visitors viewing **50% more pages per active user** and **spending more than twice as long on the site**. Our average **Google Search ranking improved from 22.7 to 11.9**, meaning we now typically appear on the first page of Google search results for relevant terms or search queries.

**E-marketing** activities for our general and Intelligence Hub newsletters also continue to be one of our best performing channels. Engagement increased substantially, with our click rate – the percentage of people who clicked on a link to our website or content after opening the email – going from **21.85% to 35.08% on average, significantly above overall and industry benchmarks**. Our subscriber list also continued to grow.

Our performance on **X** was slightly less successful and reflects wider platform challenges. Reach and impressions declined, due to algorithm and platform changes, however our **engagement rate remained high** – which suggests that our content continues to be interesting and relevant for those who do see it. Challenges with the platform itself mean we will reposition X as a targeted engagement channel, and adapt our approach on X to cater to key algorithm changes.

Our performance on **YouTube** remained closely linked to our publishing activity. Although growth slowed during quieter months, with less video uploads, project videos (including aerial footage) and case studies continued to be our best-performing content.

Looking ahead to 2026, our priorities are:

- **To continue to grow LinkedIn** as our main social media channel and to trial longer, expert-led content types such as blogs or articles, which is increasingly prioritised by LinkedIn's algorithm, helping to increase visibility (how many people our content is shown to).
- **To make our website a trusted and reliable source of information** for both visitors and search engines such as Google, improving how our content is ranked on Google (where it

appears in results and whether it appears in AI summaries); and to adapt to changes in how people search as a result of the growing use of AI.

- **To grow our email subscriber list** and improve our email communications, including implementation of the Tractivity email marketing software.
- **To refocus our strategy on X**, and react and adapt to algorithm changes.
- **To increase our posting consistency** on YouTube and trial short-form video content.

We will also **explore new channels, content formats and initiatives** to broaden our reach and support continued audience growth. This includes: scoping podcasts and webinars to engage key audiences; equipping the GCR team with templates and guidance to promote our channels; and strengthening event branding online with an agreed process and template to share events on Eventbrite or Tractivity.

Alongside this, we will continue to prioritise audience growth across all main channels, with a focus on increasing awareness of Glasgow City Region and establishing it as a well-known and well-regarded organisation. This is particularly relevant in response to recent announcements, as we aim to increase the Region's profile and move towards a new entity.

Our 2026 strategy will also have a greater emphasis on the quality of engagement – how people interact with our content, how often they return, and how long they spend.

We will focus on building credibility and positioning ourselves as a trustworthy, well-informed and reliable source of information and news. This will strengthen our reputation with key audiences, establish our channels as go-to sources of information, and support changes in search engine and social media algorithms that increasingly prioritise demonstrated expertise.

# 3. Contents

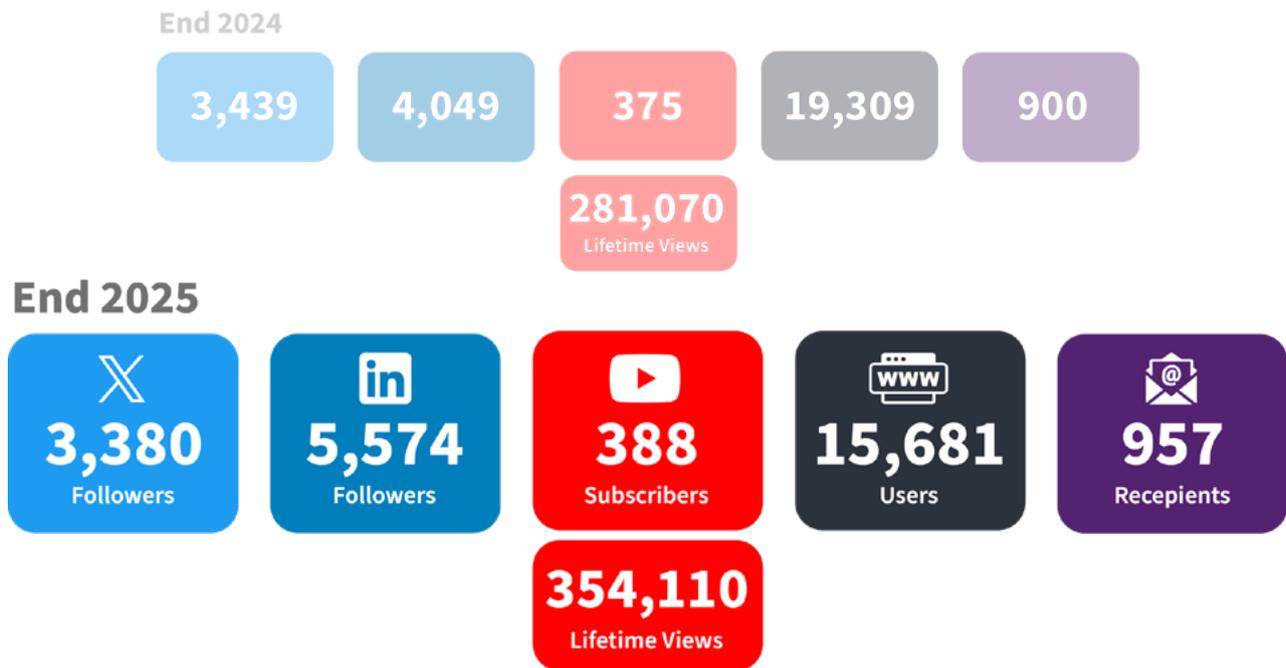
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## 4. Digital and Social Media Presence

### 4.1. Audiences

GCR continued to focus our social media and digital presence across five channels: LinkedIn, X (previously known as Twitter), YouTube, our website, and email (newsletters and briefings).

Our social media audiences and audience growth are shown below, with figures for end December 2024 shown against figures for end December 2025.



In 2024 LinkedIn overtook X as our social media account with the largest audience. In 2025, LinkedIn continued to be our main social media account, with a total 5,574 followers by December 2025 and an audience growth rate of 38% in 2025 – performing strongly against growth rates for similar-sized organisations (35-40%)<sup>1</sup>. Our month-on-month follower growth averaged 3%, more than double the average monthly growth rate across all LinkedIn pages (1.42%)<sup>2</sup>.

Our audience on X saw a small decline. As with the previous year, this is unsurprising and likely reflects a decline in X’s overall user base (active daily users)<sup>3</sup>. Kepios analysis of advertising data indicates that UK users fell from 22.9 million in early 2025<sup>4</sup> to 19.0 million by late 2025<sup>5</sup> – a loss of almost 4 million UK users (17%). Comparatively, our X following declined by just 2% over the same period.

Additionally, the small decline in website users is offset by an increase in website pageviews (see below). This suggests higher engagement in 2025, with users viewing more pages and/or returning to the site more frequently.

1 Social Insider. (© 2025). 2025 LinkedIn Benchmarks, Social Insider.

2 Social Status. (© 2026). [LinkedIn Growth Rate Benchmark Monthly historical data](#), Social Status.

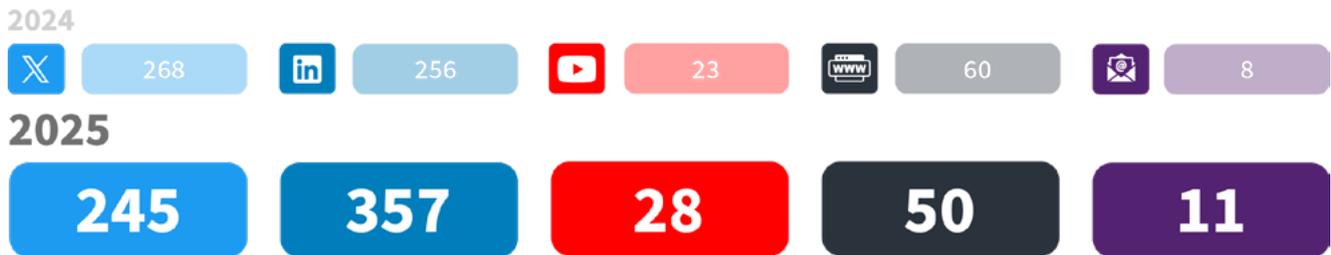
3 Murray, Conor. (2025). [Bluesky And X Users Plummet Year After Trump’s Election Win – Truth Social Makes Small Gains](#), Forbes, 15 August.

4 Kemp, Simon. (2025). [Digital 2025: The United Kingdom](#), DataReportal, 25 February.

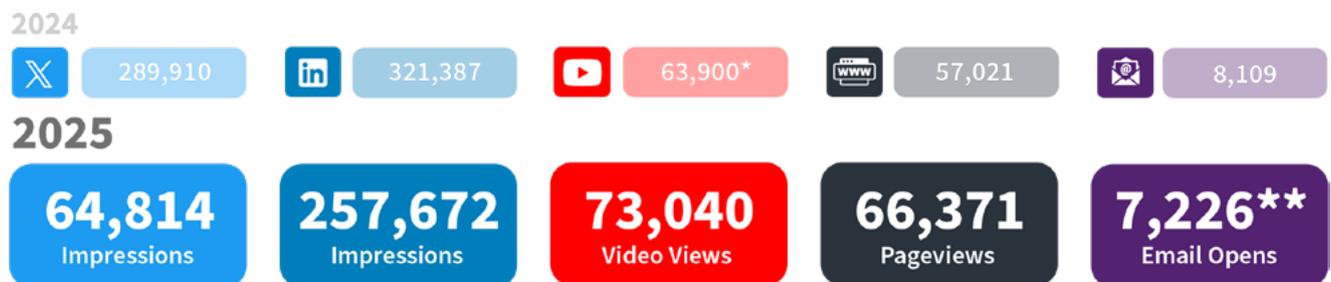
5 Kemp, Simon. (2025). [Digital 2026: The United Kingdom](#), DataReportal, 5 November.

## 4.2. Posts and Impressions

We continued to post regularly across our channels in 2025. The number of times we posted on social media, published a video on YouTube, published a news item on the website, or issued a newsletter or briefing is shown below (comparing figures for 2024 and 2025).



The number of impressions – how many times our content was shown to or viewed by a user – is shown below (comparing figures for 2024 to 2025).



\*2024 video views on YouTube shown above do not include views on videos as part of the paid advertising campaign for the Multiply123 programme.

\*\*Email open figures do not include opens for three emails (two monthly briefings and one newsletter) sent in early 2025, due to an analytics error in our email marketing software. Based on our average open rates – 951 per newsletter and 1,081 per Intelligence Hub briefing – we estimate around **10,300 total email opens in 2025**.

Notably, our X channels saw a significant reduction in impressions. This is expanded upon further in section [9.2. The X Algorithm](#), but largely comes down to algorithm changes which:

- Prioritise content which receives early conversational engagement such as retweets and replies.
- Prioritise content from paid (X Premium) users, providing 2-4x more initial reach for tweets from paid accounts.
- A greater penalty (30-50% reach reduction) for tweets which include external links.

Despite a reduction in impressions, users who did see our content on X remained engaged and continued to interact with tweets. Our engagement remained high across all of our channels, measured via:

- Engagement rate (X, LinkedIn, Email) – how often our audience engages with (likes, comments, shares, clicks on links within) our content.
- Average session duration (website) – how long, on average, users are active on our web pages.

2024



2025



Online, users are spending more than twice as much time on our website, compared to 2024. This indicates that visitors were more engaged and spent longer interacting with content – particularly as the number of recorded events (such as clicks, downloads) remained the same, meaning the increased session duration reflects longer reading or browsing behaviour. This suggests more intentional visits in 2025 and less low-intent or unengaged visitors.

Our email click rate also increased significantly, meaning that recipients are more actively engaging with email content (clicking on links more often). This suggests that email communications are reaching an interested and relevant audience. This could be driven by a number of things, such as:

- More relevant or more interesting content,
- Email being considered a more important or trustworthy channel for our audience,
- A more ‘intentional’ subscriber list – new subscribers are actively interested in and engaging with the content.

## 5. Vision and Objectives

The GCR Communications, Marketing and Stakeholder Engagement Strategy<sup>6</sup> was first completed in August 2018, building on the 2016/17 strategy initially developed for the City Deal programme.

This strategy sets out a number of key responsibilities for the GCR communications and marketing team as well as the wider GCR Communications and Marketing Group. These include:

1. To identify, share and forward plan key milestones;
2. To work in a coordinated way, sharing information across the partnership;
3. To ensure that activities support stakeholder engagement – including setting out clear roles and responsibilities, and ensuring access to information;
4. To ensure that relevant local, Regional and national organisations are engaged and informed about all opportunities and partnerships, to maximise the benefit for the Region.

Our Digital and Social Media vision and objectives build on these key objectives – and remain unchanged over the last year.

### Our Vision

“ To inspire confidence in Glasgow City Region, fostering engagement and opportunity, by amplifying the Region’s success stories, communicating in an open and transparent way, working collaboratively with and supporting partners, and demonstrating the Region’s progress and achievements to stakeholders and to the Region’s residents. ”

### Our Objectives

1. Raise awareness of Glasgow City Region activities for communities and residents within the Region, who will directly benefit from the work.
2. Promote a positive impression of and inspire confidence in Glasgow City Region and the Glasgow City Region Programme Management Office (PMO), in particular to the Scottish and UK Governments.
3. Create and attract new opportunities for the Region with partners and stakeholders.
4. Raise awareness of Glasgow City Region’s success outside the Region, including to other major city regions.

### Target Audiences

Our primary target audiences are:

1. Glasgow City Region residents (the general public) and local businesses

<sup>6</sup> Glasgow City Region Communications and Marketing Group. (2018). *Communication, Marketing and Stakeholder Engagement Strategy*.

2. The UK and Scottish Governments
3. Stakeholders and partner organisations
4. Other UK City Regions
5. GCR Businesses

In 2023, we identified and curated a brand voice and presence on social media that aligned with our vision and was focused on being friendly, helpful and approachable. We will continue with this approach in 2026.



## 6. New Approaches and Future Channels

Alongside strengthening our existing channels, we will explore a small number of new formats and initiatives to increase our reach and support continued audience growth. These will also make our content more accessible to new audiences and reflect changing audience behaviours including increased demand for audio and video content.

These approaches will be done on a trial basis, with small pilots to assess performance and resource requirements before full adoption.

Planned new approaches include:

### 6.1. Podcasts and Webinars



We will scope opportunities to trial short audio and webinar content, with a particular focus on podcast audio, to provide new ways for stakeholders to engage with our content.

Potential pilot content includes:

- Short podcast **summaries of Economic Briefings from the Intelligence Hub**, highlighting key insights and trends.
- **Team or partner spotlights** featuring conversations with colleagues about their work and its impact.
- **Programme and project showcases**, particularly linked to programmes such as the Investment Zone, Innovation Accelerator and Local Innovation Partnerships Fund, helping to explain the programmes and projects through interviews with project leads.

This type of content will strengthen our position as an expert, trusted source of information – while reaching audiences who may not engage with written content such as reports, briefings or website news items.

### 6.2. Events

We will look to improve consistency in the communication and marketing of events for the Glasgow City Region team which, at present, are managed by different colleagues across the team.

This will include a clear process for promoting events, including ensuring all events are posted to a GCR account on Eventbrite or Tractivity and promoted on social media.

We'll also consider how to integrate event sign-ups with our e-marketing list.

## 6.3. Team Involvement

The introduction of templates, guidance and activities to help the wider GCR team to consistently promote our channels, including:

- **Templates to add to the end of presentations and reports** which link to our channels (follow us on social media, sign up to our newsletter).
- The creation of a **simple social media handbook** for colleagues to refer to when posting about GCR activities or work on personal accounts.
- **Sharing key messages** around major announcements and media releases to encourage colleagues to optionally share this content and ensure consistent messaging.

## 7. Goals and Targets

### 7.1. 2025 Performance

In our 2025 Digital and Social Media Strategy, we set 17 targets across 5 channels. We met 12 of these, a 71% success rate.

Overall, engagement remained strong across all channels. On LinkedIn, we achieved an above-target engagement rate of 6.5%, performing well above both the overall platform average of 2.8% and the sector (government) average of 2.26% , while both YouTube and the website exceeded their impressions targets (video views and pageviews respectively).

Our website performed particularly well in 2025. This reflects a combination of continued technical optimisation by our appointed agency, a greater focus on publishing fresh content (including regular Director's Blogs, the regular embedded Intelligence Hub briefings and news items), and ongoing improvements to site design and infrastructure to enhance user experience. Notably, users spent significantly longer on the site on average in 2025, as highlighted above, indicating deeper engagement with content.

We also progressed improvements to our email marketing, issuing regular newsletters and preparing to transition to a new email marketing software. Although subscriber growth did not meet its target, this was largely due to the updated timeline for implementing the new software, which was initially expected in 2025, after which we planned to increase promotion of the newsletter(s). As a result, this promotional activity has been deferred to early to mid-2026, which is where we will expect to see improved subscriber growth. Encouragingly, engagement rates increased, suggesting that the existing subscriber base remains engaged.

We did not meet three of four LinkedIn targets in 2025. However, follower growth remained strong against growth rates for similar-sized organisations (35-40%). Additionally, as audience size increases, percentage growth rates naturally lower. Resource constraints during the year meant less time was available to curate higher-effort content or to explore new content types (such as long-form posts), which likely limited impressions and follower growth.

*Sources for benchmarks and other statistics can be found in the relevant sections below.*

#### LinkedIn

-  **1. To grow our follower numbers by +2,000 in 2025.**  
Our follower numbers grew by +1,557 for 5,574 followers in total.
-  **2. To achieve 25,000+ impressions on average each month.**  
We achieved 21,400 impressions on average each month.
-  **3. To keep our engagement rate above 6.5% on average.**  
Our engagement rate was 6.5% on average.
-  **4. To post at least six long-form articles or blogs and monitor their performance.**  
We did not utilise long-form content on LinkedIn.

## X

-  5. For our follower numbers to remain in a net increase by the end of 2025.  
We saw a decrease of -15 followers.
-  6. To share at least 20 posts per month.  
We shared 20 posts per month on average.
-  7. To explore other channel options (Bluesky, Threads) and monitor X's performance.  
We continued to explore other channel options, including creating a Bluesky account in order to reserve the Glasgow City Region handle / username.

## YouTube

-  8. To post at least one public video per month on our YouTube channel.  
We published an average of two videos per month on YouTube.
-  9. To post at least 20 in-house videos.  
We shared 21 in-house videos.
-  10. To grow our subscriber numbers by +175 subscribers.  
We gained 13 subscribers in 2025.
-  11. To achieve 70,000 organic video views in 2025.  
We received 73,040 organic video views.

## Website

-  12. To post at least nine Director's Blogs.  
We shared nine blogs in 2025.
-  13. To achieve 5,000+ pageviews per month.  
We achieved 5,531 pageviews on average per month.
-  14. To increase our Google Search ranking above 22.7.  
Our Google Search ranking jumped more than 10 places to 11.9 by the end of December 2025.
-  15. To complete a website review and update our key pages.  
We completed work to review key webpages and the menu bar, and began work to review the full website, which will continue into 2026.

## E-marketing

-  16. To issue four email newsletters.  
We shared four newsletters.
-  17. To grow our unique subscriber numbers by +154 (for 600 total).  
We gained 67 subscribers in 2025 for 455 total subscribers.
-  18. To continue to explore contact management systems and email marketing software.  
We explored a number of options and identified a preferred system, [Tractivity](#), which we aim to purchase and implement in early 2026.

## 7.2. Targets for 2026

We have determined the following targets for our digital social media performance in 2026, taking into account the previous year's performance, platform benchmarks, and ongoing platform changes.

As with previous years, our performance will be monitored on a monthly basis and the strategy updated as needed.

### LinkedIn

1. +2,200 followers in 2026 (40% growth).
2. Maintain 6% engagement rate or higher.
3. Promote any new starts over Grade 9, where appropriate, with a photo, welcome and short bio.
4. Post 30+ posts per month.
5. Ensure 90% of posts include an image, photo, carousel or video (visual content).
6. Share two insight-led / long-form posts (blogs or articles) per month.

### X

7. Maintain a 4% engagement rate or higher.
8. Post 20+ posts per month.
9. Ensure less than 25% of posts include an external link.
10. Post 5+ replies per week.
11. Review whether to trial X Premium.

### YouTube

12. Post 2+ videos per month.
13. Achieve 70,000 video views (maintain reach).
14. +30 subscribers in 2026 (8% growth).
15. Share six short-form YouTube shorts in 2026.

### Website

16. Achieve 75,000+ pageviews.
17. Maintain 4.5+ pages per active user.
18. Improve Google Search ranking to top 10 ( $\leq 10$ ).
19. Post 9+ Director's Blogs.
20. Review and update key webpages.

## **E-marketing**

21. Finalise the e-marketing and contact management strategy by March 2026.
22. +100 subscribers in 2026 (20% growth).
23. Maintain 30% or higher engagement rate.
24. Send 12 emails (newsletters, briefings or other).
25. Fully migrate to Tractivity by mid-2026.

## **New Approaches and Future Channels (pilot)**

26. Scope and trial podcast / webinar content.
27. Establish a process for team members around managing and promoting open events.
28. Create and share a short social media handbook for the team.
29. Review the impact of new approaches at the end of the year, and present recommendations on next steps.

## 8. LinkedIn

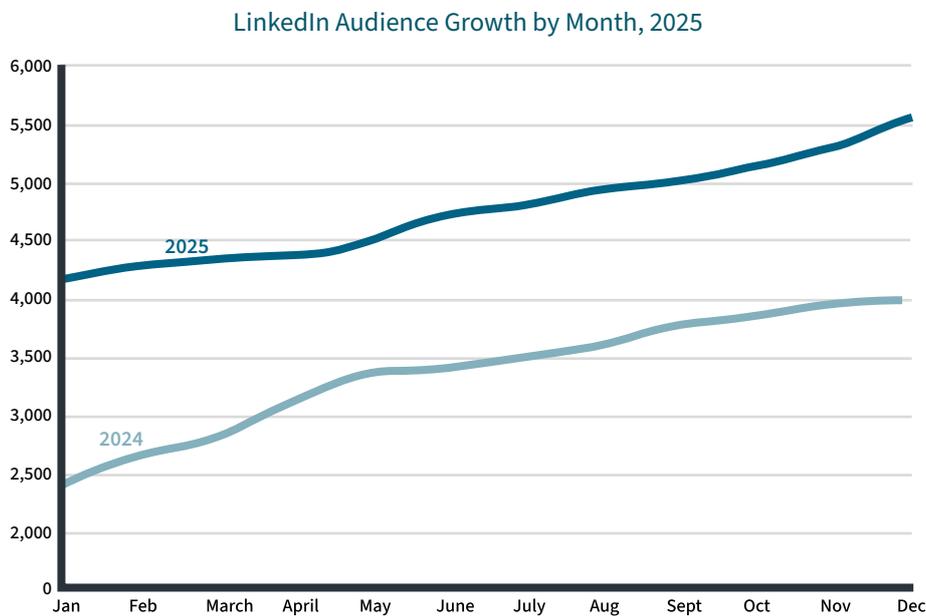
This section sets out performance statistics and analysis specific to our LinkedIn channel.

The Glasgow City Region LinkedIn channel was launched in February 2022. In 2024, it became our social media channel with both the largest audience and the greatest reach (impressions), a position it maintained throughout 2025.

### 8.1. 2025 Performance



#### Audience Growth

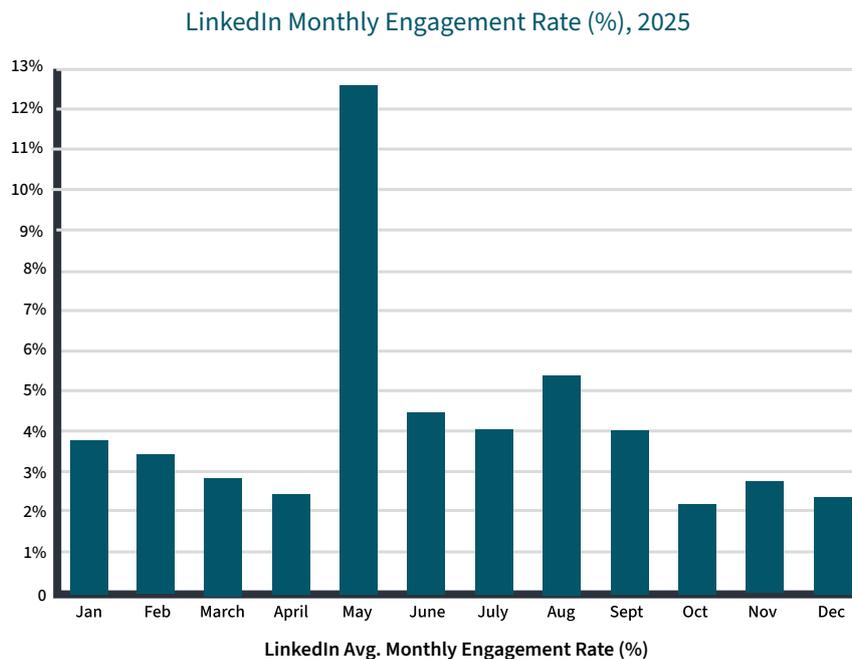


Our audience growth rate in 2025 was 38%, performing strongly against the average growth rates for similar-sized organisations<sup>7</sup>. While this percentage is lower than in 2024, this reflects the natural effect of a growing page: as follower numbers increase, percentage growth rates slow, even when the number of followers gained remains high.

In absolute terms, we added +1,525 new followers during the year, demonstrating continued interest in Glasgow City Region's content and activity.

<sup>7</sup> Social Insider. (© 2025). [2025 LinkedIn Benchmarks](#), Social Insider.

## Engagement



Alongside continued audience growth, engagement on our LinkedIn channel remained strong throughout 2025. Our content generated consistent engagement including reactions, comments, and reposts, demonstrating that our followers are actively engaging with posts.

Our engagement rate remained high at 6.54% on average, performing well above both the overall platform average of 2.8%<sup>8</sup> and the sector (government) average of 2.26%<sup>9</sup>. Several months in the mid to late-year significantly exceeded these benchmarks with engagement rates between 7-12%, driven by high-performing posts such as the opening of the Renfrew Bridge (17.3% engagement rate), one million crossings on the Govan to Partick Bridge (12.9%), the launch of Chemify’s chemputation facility (26.6%), and updates on Byres Road phase one (29.7%).

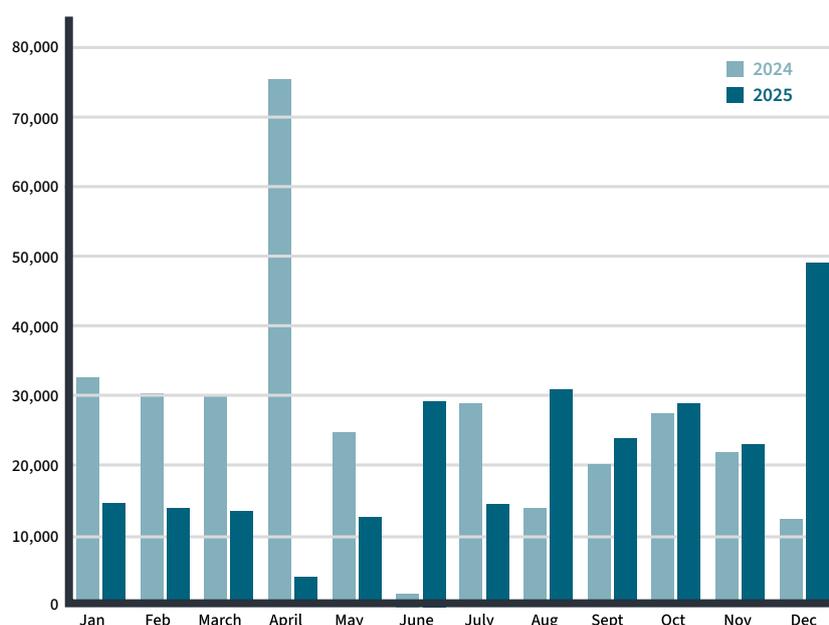
Our best-performing posts focused on visible, place-based projects and milestones that people see, use or have a direct interest in – such as major local infrastructure improvements (Renfrew Bridge, Govan to Partick Bridge and Byres Road) or clear economic benefits like new jobs (Chemify). Content that feels relevant to people’s everyday lives and demonstrates tangible impact consistently drives our highest levels of interest and interaction.

8 Newberry, Christina. (2025). [Engagement rate benchmarks and formulas: 2025 update](#). Hootsuite Blog, 31 January.

9 Hootsuite. (2026). GCR Analytics: Industry Benchmarking (01/01/25-31/12/25).

## Reach and Visibility

LinkedIn Total Impressions by Month, 2024 against 2025



Our reach also remained strong, with 257,672 total impressions across the year and monthly impressions regularly exceeding 20,000, peaking at almost 50,000 in December.

## Best Performing Content

Our top-performing posts in 2025 included:

Top Performing Posts by Reactions	Reactions	Content
<a href="#">Renfrew Bridge opening</a>	344	Multiple images / photos
<a href="#">Welcome: Strategic Spatial Planning Group Manager</a> (Heather Claridge)	289	Team update + photo
<a href="#">New £64.5m City Deal project green light</a>	167	Text + link to news item
<a href="#">Appointment of AtkinsRéalis Clyde Masterplan consultants</a>	136	Team / project update
<a href="#">Work starts on new Balgray Railway Station</a>	110	Video

Top Performing Posts by Impressions	Impressions	Content
<a href="#">Appointment of AtkinsRéalis Clyde Masterplan consultants</a>	23,863	Team / project update
<a href="#">Welcome: Strategic Spatial Planning Group Manager</a> (Heather Claridge)	9,398	Team update + photo
<a href="#">Renfrew Bridge opening</a>	5,541	Multiple images / photos
<a href="#">New £64.5m City Deal project green light</a>	5,479	Text + link to news item
<a href="#">Open Call for Health &amp; Life Sciences projects</a>	5,109	Project update + graphic

Top Performing Posts by Shares	Shares	Content
<a href="#">Open Call for Health &amp; Life Sciences projects</a>	39	Project update + graphic
<a href="#">We are Hiring: Economic Analyst (Graduate)</a>	24	Team update – hiring
<a href="#">GCR Intelligence Hub publishes case for a Devolution Deal</a>	19	Project update + graphic
<a href="#">Investment Zone reaches key milestone</a>	13	Project update + graphic
<a href="#">Appointment of AtkinsRéalis Clyde Masterplan consultants</a>	12	Team / project update

Analysis of our highest-performing content in 2025 suggests some clear themes for the content that resonates strongly with our audience.

- Posts featuring **people, milestones, and tangible project progress** consistently generated the strongest engagement.
- **Team updates and staff announcements** accompanied by photos – such as welcoming new colleagues or partners – performed well for reach and reactions.
- **Major infrastructure or investment milestones** received high levels of interaction and visibility.

Content that included visual elements such as photos or graphics hugely out-performed text-only posts.

This aligns with research – the best-performing LinkedIn posts in 2025 were: multi-image posts, documents (carousels), videos, and image posts<sup>10</sup>. The best content types include success stories, company highlights and employee milestones, and professional achievements<sup>11,12</sup>.

Looking ahead, these insights suggest we should prioritise:

- More people-led and team stories.
- Continue to share regular project milestones and progress updates.
- Continue to use images and graphics on almost all posts.
- Continue to share opportunities (jobs, open calls) and tag relevant partners or individuals.

## Summary

Our 2025 performance demonstrates that our channel is moving from a rapid ‘early growth’ phase to a more established audience base.

While percentage growth rates have naturally evened out, our page continued to see strong absolute follower increases and high engagement rates. This suggests that we are reaching the right audiences – including stakeholders and partners – who are actively interested in and engaged with our content.

Looking ahead, our focus will shift from fast growth towards **stable growth and increased**

10 Hutchinson, Andrew. (2025). [Report Looks at Best-Performing LinkedIn Post Types for 2025](#), 14 April.

11 Radulescu, Anda. (2025). [What to Post on LinkedIn: 11 Ideas for Brands and Creators](#), 4 August.

12 Haigen, Will. (2025). [15 high-performing LinkedIn post ideas for UK brands](#), 28 July.

**engagement**, prioritising: consistent posting, high-quality content, and formats that encourage interaction.

## 8.2. The LinkedIn Algorithm

LinkedIn, like other social media platforms, utilises an algorithm to determine what posts show, and where in the feed, to which users. It aims to identify the most engaging posts or content in order to show higher-quality, more relevant content to each individual.

In late 2025 to early 2026, the LinkedIn algorithm changed how it ranks content. It increased its emphasis on **expert insight**, **industry relevance**, and **meaningful conversations**.

As in previous years, the algorithm continues to use a three-step process which focuses on<sup>13,14</sup>:

1. **Classification**: determining if the content is:
  - a. Spam (too many hashtags, multiple links, too many irrelevant tags)
  - b. Low-Quality (poorly written, too broad)
  - c. High-Quality (well written, strong and relevant hashtags, tags people who are likely to engage)
2. The **Golden Hour Test**: testing the content with a limited group of followers to measure early engagement and interest. Content that performs well during this period is then shown to a larger audience.
3. **Ongoing Evaluation**: the most valuable content is delivered to users that LinkedIn deems relevant, determined via:
  - a. Identify: the user's location, career, skills etc.
  - b. Interests: how relevant is the topic to the user? Which companies or individuals are tagged?
  - c. Previous Engagement: has the user engaged with similar content previously?

The key changes in 2026 to how this process ranks content include<sup>15</sup>:

- Increased importance on **expert content**: the algorithm now reads a page profile including headline, about section and (where relevant) experience to verify a page or person's authority and match it to the post topic, to ensure posts are high-quality. There is speculation that this is also to filter out AI-written content<sup>16</sup>.
- Reduced reliance on hashtags, replaced by **topic and text detection**: the algorithm scans the text of the post and uses interest graphs to categorise the content, instead of using hashtags. Although there is no penalty for using hashtags.
- Increased reliance on **comment quality**: more than just quantity, the algorithm detects whether replies meaningfully contribute to the topic.
- **New performance metrics** including **save** and **send**: bookmarks now have more weight than a like, with the algorithm interpreting it as content "worth coming back to"<sup>16</sup>.
- **AI-driven analysis** of a user's interests and skills.

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13 Barhart, Brent. (2024). *How the LinkedIn algorithm works in 2025*, Spout Social, 8 January.

14 Melania. (2025). *The LinkedIn algorithm explained (2026 guide)*, SocialBee, 11 December.

15 Cook, Jodie. (2026). *The LinkedIn Algorithm Changed Again. Here's What's New For 2026*, Forbes, 12 January.

16 Hidaoui, Anas. (2026) *LinkedIn Algorithm 2026: How to Beat the New Changes*, LinkedIn, 3 January.

### 8.3. 2026 Strategy

Our 2025 performance demonstrates that our LinkedIn page is now an established channel that is an effective way to reach stakeholders, partners, and Regional audiences. Our audience growth remains strong and, importantly, engagement rates are consistently above platform and sector benchmarks.

In 2026, our focus will shift from fast audience growth towards sustained, high-quality growth, and increased engagement.

Our focus will be on prioritising content that encourages meaningful interactions and aligns with the LinkedIn algorithm's emphasis on expertise and relevance. By using this to drive higher engagement, evidence shows that this will increase our reach and our follower count.

Based on our 2025 performance and recent algorithm changes, our approach is set out below.

#### What we will do more of:

- **Images and photos:** Include an image/photo or graphic (visual element) on almost all posts to improve visibility and increase reactions and impressions, reflecting the consistently stronger performance of image-led content.
- **People-led content:** Share more team updates, partner highlights and behind-the-scenes stories – these are shown to perform well with our audience. This includes promoting any new starts over a Grade 9 (where appropriate) on LinkedIn with a photograph, a welcome message and short biography.
- **Project milestones and progress updates:** Continue to regularly showcase milestones and key project announcements.
- **Opportunities and calls-to-action:** Continue to share jobs and funding calls, and other opportunities, which promote sharing.
- **Posting more frequently:** Post slightly more content, more regularly – this has shown to increase performance metrics as well as to better feed into the algorithm's preferences.
- **Expert insight:** Post more insight-led or specialist content, such as long-form posts (blogs and articles), to demonstrate expertise. This content aligns with the algorithm, and also increases our page's overall authority ranking. This could include:
  - Economic commentary from the Intelligence Hub (briefings, blogs on methodology and research);
  - Infrastructure project case studies – that touch on methodology and decision-making;
  - Spotlights on team members and their role / what their work involves; and
  - Case studies or spotlights on Innovation Accelerator or Investment Zone projects.

#### What we will trial:

- **More document / carousel posts:** We shared some carousel posts in 2025, but not enough to get a clear picture of their performance against other content. Trial more of these in order to review their performance.
- **More audience-interaction posts:** Trial some interactive posts such as polls or discussion questions. These tend to perform well on average on LinkedIn, but we have little evidence of

how they perform with our audience.

- **Post timing:** Test different days and times of posting to maximise early engagement during the algorithm’s ‘Golden Hour’.

### What we will do less of:

- **Text-only / link posts:** Reduce posts which only include links / link cards with no images.
- **Hashtags:** Use fewer hashtags, and use targeted hashtags more as a search tool. Focus more on keywords and overall topic.
- **Irregular posting:** Avoid inconsistent posting such as weeks with significantly less posts.

### KPIs

Building on this, our KPIs for 2026 are:

Focus	Target	Justification
<b>Growth</b>	+2,200 followers	Our LinkedIn channel performed strongly against industry benchmarks for similar-sized organisations. Maintaining our target at the top-end of this 35-40% benchmark reflects a realistic ambition to grow.
<b>Engagement</b>	Maintain 6% engagement rate	Our engagement rate significantly out-performed the LinkedIn overall and sector averages. Maintaining 6% or higher ensures we prioritise content quality and meaningful interaction, especially as our page gets bigger and our growth rate naturally slows.
<b>Content</b>	Promote any new starts over Grade 9 (where appropriate) with a photo, welcome and short bio	People and team-focused content continues to perform exceptionally well on LinkedIn with our audience.
<b>Consistency &amp; Volume</b>	30+ posts per month	Months where we posted 32 times on average saw strong reach and higher engagement levels, as well as slightly increased follower growth.
<b>Content Quality</b>	90% of posts to include a visual	Multimedia posts significantly outperformed text-only content in 2025 – both on our channel and in general.
<b>‘Expert’ Content</b>	Minimum two insight-led / long-form posts per month	LinkedIn’s algorithm updates prefer authoritative and expert content. The algorithm also favours bookmarks over likes, implying longer or more referenceable content is higher value. Longer-form content therefore not only is likely to perform well on its own, but is also likely to increase our page’s credibility and topic ranking, supporting better performance on all of our other content.

## 9. X

This section sets out performance statistics and analysis specific to our X channel.

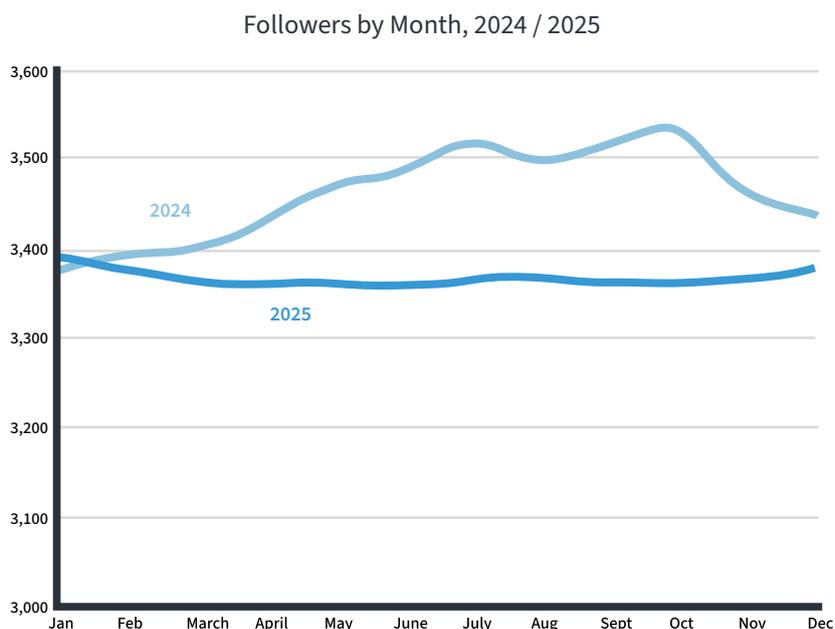
The Glasgow City Region X (previously known as Twitter) channel uses the handle @GlasgowCityRgn, which was changed in September 2021 from @GlasgowCityDeal to better reflect a wider focus on the Region's activities.

As set out in our previous strategy, in October 2022, Tesla CEO Elon Musk completed the acquisition of the Twitter platform, which has since undergone a number of key changes including renaming the platform to X, introducing a monthly subscription model – including paid access to analytics, and a number of additional feature and algorithm updates<sup>17, 18</sup>.

### 9.1. 2025 Performance



#### Audience Growth



Our audience growth rate in 2025 was -2%, reflecting a small decline in our follower base on X. There is limited information on the average growth rate of X accounts in 2025, and no data for industry-specific benchmarks, however one source suggests a global average growth of 0.10%<sup>19</sup> for the year.

17 Sucio, Peter. (2023). [How Elon Musk Changed Twitter A Year and \\$44 Billion Later](#), Forbes, 8 November.

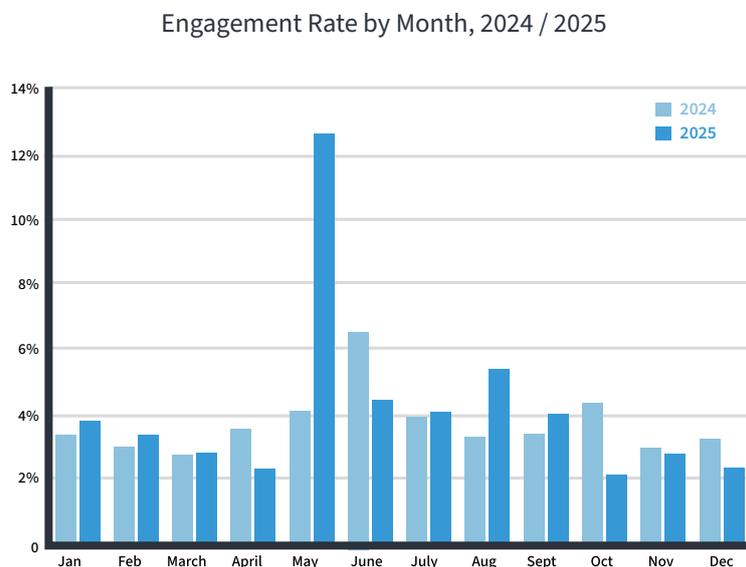
18 Coop, Thomas. (2024). [What Has Changed with X \(Formerly Twitter\) Since Elon Musk's Takeover](#), 9 Meters, 22 November.

19 Social Status. (2026). [Average X \(Twitter\) Growth Rate last month](#), Social Status.

It is also worth noting that there has been a decline in X's overall userbase<sup>20</sup>. In the UK in particular, advertising data indicates that the UK users fell from 22.9 million users in early 2025<sup>21</sup> to 19.0 million users in late 2025<sup>22</sup> – a 17% decline.

In absolute terms, we lost 59 followers during the year.

## Engagement



Despite a small audience decline, engagement rates on our X channel remained consistently high at 4.16% on average, holding steady between 2 and 4% with a spike in May – substantially above reported platform benchmarks which range from 0.05%<sup>23</sup> to 0.12%<sup>24</sup>. This suggests that while fewer users are seeing our content – both through reduced followers and a drop in impressions, explained further below – those who did see our content were more likely to interact with it.

This pattern suggests that our reduced performance on X in 2025 was driven primarily by platform-level changes, including the X algorithm, rather than content quality. Although our overall reach declined and we saw an overall loss of followers, the strength and steady performance of our engagement rate demonstrates that our posts continue to resonate with the users who do see them.

## Reach and Visibility

Our X channels saw a significant reduction in impressions in 2025, generating 64,814 impressions – a 78% decrease compared to 2024 (289,901 impressions).

Our posting patterns remained primarily the same year-on-year: we shared similar content types – mostly images, graphics, and some link posts; we used the same tone of voice; we continued to use hashtags and tags; and we posted with a similar frequency, averaging 20 posts per month compared to

20 Murray, Conor. (2025). [Bluesky And X Users Plummet Year After Trump's Election Win – Truth Social Makes Small Gains](#), Forbes, 15 August.

21 Kemp, Simon. (2025). [Digital 2025: The United Kingdom](#), DataReportal, 25 February.

22 Kemp, Simon. (2025). [Digital 2026: The United Kingdom](#), DataReportal, 5 November.

23 Social Status. (© 2026). [Average X \(Twitter\) Engagement Rate last month](#), Social Status.

24 Social Insider (© 2025). [2026 Social Media Benchmarks](#), Social Insider.

22 in 2024.

This suggests that our drop in impressions is likely to reflect algorithm changes on the platform. Evidence suggests these changes<sup>25</sup>:

- Prioritise content which receives early conversational engagement such as retweets and replies.
- Prioritise content from paid (X Premium) users, providing 2-4x more initial reach for tweets from paid accounts.
- Provide a greater penalty (30-50% reach reduction) for tweets which include external links.

This is expanded upon further in section [9.2 The X Algorithm](#).

## Best Performing Content

Our top-performing posts in 2025 included:

Top Performing Posts by Engagements	Engagements	Content
<a href="#">Renfrew Bridge Opening</a>	344	Multiple images / photos
<a href="#">Launch of Chemify's Chemputation facility</a>	207	Multiple images / photos
<a href="#">2025 upcoming milestones</a>	90	Multiple images / photos
<a href="#">GCR Cabinet at Glasgow Airport</a>	63	Photo
<a href="#">Govan to Partick Bridge passes 600,000 crossings</a>	58	Photo

Top Performing Posts by Impressions	Impressions	Content
<a href="#">Govan to Partick Bridge passes 600,000 crossings</a>	5,133	Photo
<a href="#">Launch of Chemify's Chemputation facility</a>	4,109	Multiple images / photos
<a href="#">Renfrew Bridge Opening</a>	2,666	Multiple images / photos
<a href="#">5GIR / SCSP Summary</a>	2,629	Project update + graphic
<a href="#">Annual Performance Report: Key Milestones</a>	1,858	Video

Top Performing Posts by Retweets	Retweets	Content
<a href="#">Renfrew Bridge Opening</a>	8	Multiple images / photos
<a href="#">Launch of Chemify's Chemputation facility</a>	7	Multiple images / photos
<a href="#">Meat Market / Bellgrove streets upgrade</a>	5	Video
<a href="#">Clyde Peatlands summary</a>	4	Project update + graphic
<a href="#">GCR secures 5G Innovation Region extension</a>	4	Project update + graphic

Analysis of our highest-performing content in 2025 on X suggests a small number of consistent themes.

<sup>25</sup> Hashmeta. (© 2012 – 2026). [Major Twitter Algorithm Changes in 2025](#), Hasmeta.

- Posts highlighting **tangible project milestones** – particularly those supported by photos – generated the highest levels of engagement, impressions and shares.
- **Visual posts** (with multiple photos / images) consistently outperformed link posts or text-only posts.

However, the reduction in overall reach means that differences between different content types were less pronounced. This suggests that while content type – visual posts – is important, platform distribution and algorithm changes will have a much greater impact on visibility than content alone.

Looking ahead, we will continue to prioritise project milestones and visual updates.

## Summary

Our 2025 performance demonstrates that our X channel is no longer a high-reach platform, in the same way as in previous years and as first suggested in last year’s strategy. However, while both impressions and audience size declined – reflecting wider platform changes – engagement rates remained consistently strong and significantly above reported benchmarks. This demonstrates that while fewer users are seeing our posts, those who do see them remain engaged.

This evidence suggests that the reduced visibility is primarily driven by platform and algorithm changes. As a result, opportunities to reach audiences organically on X are likely to remain limited in the short-term.

Looking ahead, and taking this into account, we will adjust our strategy to view X as a targeted channel – focusing on sharing project milestones and visual updates with our existing, and engaged, audience, rather than primarily using the channel for reach.

We will continue to optimise our approach in line with algorithm changes and monitor what appears to perform the best.

## 9.2. The X Algorithm

In 2023, X (formerly Twitter) published the source code for its algorithm for the platform’s ‘For You’ timeline – which acts as the default home page for users and shows X-recommended content. This represented a shift where users would see X-recommended content first, instead of a reverse chronological timeline of posts from accounts the user is following<sup>26</sup>.

In 2025, there are three key points of note in the X algorithm:

### Early Engagement is Key

In 2025, the X algorithm continued to prioritise content based on predicted engagement (reposts, replies, likes). The effects of this ranking became more pronounced – with even more weighting placed on early engagement such as retweets (20x weighting), quote tweets (15x weighting) and replies (13.5x weighting) and less weighting placed on link clicks (11x) and likes (1x – the lowest value)<sup>27</sup>.

### Priority for X Premium (paid) Users

<sup>26</sup> McLachlan, Stacey. (2024). *The X (Twitter) algorithm explained: 2024 guide*, Hootsuite, 7 October.

<sup>27</sup> Hashmeta. (© 2012 – 2026). *Major Twitter Algorithm Changes in 2025*, Hashmeta.

Additionally, and importantly, X implemented an algorithm boost for X Premium (paid) subscribers<sup>28</sup>:

- Engagements (replies, likes, retweets) from paid users are ranked more highly than from non-paid users (increasing for each subscription tier)<sup>29, 30</sup>.
- Tweets from paid accounts receive a higher engagement ‘score’ for similar engagement levels.
- Tweets are initially shown to 2-4x as many users (via the Boost option available to premium users)<sup>31</sup>.

### Less Visibility for External Links

Lastly, X increased the ‘penalty’ applied to tweets which link to an external site – from a 20-30% reach reduction in 2023-2024, to a 30-50% reach reduction in 2025<sup>32</sup>.

## 9.3. 2026 Strategy

Our 2025 performance suggests that X is no longer a high-reach channel, with both audience size and impressions having declined. However, engagement rates remained consistently strong and well above platform benchmarks – demonstrating that followers who see our content remain highly engaged.

As outlined above, our posting activity and style remained broadly consistent year-on-year. This suggests that reduced reach is primarily driven by platform and algorithm changes, rather than the content itself. In particular, prioritisation of paid accounts, reduced visibility for external links, and increased weighting on early engagement present key challenges.

In 2026, we will reposition X as a targeted engagement channel, focusing on maintaining our existing audience and reinforcing key messages.

We will also adjust our approach on X to best align with the changing algorithm.

### What we will do more of:

- **Photo-led content:** Using images to support stronger engagement.
- **Project milestones:** Continue to share clear project updates, which perform well with our existing audience.
- **Short, concise posts:** Summarise key messages within posts instead of linking externally.
- **Posting more frequently:** Post slightly more content, more regularly – this has shown to increase performance metrics as well as to better feed into the algorithm’s preferences.

### What we will trial:

- **Active engagement / replies:** Engage more directly in-platform – reply to comments, reply to posts, and engage with partner content.
- **Post timing:** Test different days and times of posting to test engagement and reach.

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28 Hashmeta. (© 2012 – 2026). [Major Twitter Algorithm Changes in 2025](#), Hashmeta.

29 X. (n.d.). [Upgrade to Premium](#), X.

30 @premium. (2024). [X Post: Big news for creators! We've made improvements to our revenue...](#), 9 October.

31 X Corp. (©2026). [Boost](#), X Business.

32 Hashmeta. (© 2012 – 2026). [Major Twitter Algorithm Changes in 2025](#), Hashmeta.

- **X Premium:** explore whether an X Premium subscription may be worthwhile – particularly for increased visibility and access to analytics tools.

### What we will do less of:

- **Links in posts:** Heavily reduce reliance on posts which link to external websites, even when accompanied by visual content.

### KPIs

Building on this, our KPIs for 2026 are:

Focus	Target	Justification
<b>Engagement</b>	Maintain a 4% engagement rate	Our 2025 engagement rate of 4.16% significantly exceeded platform benchmarks. If we are able to maintain this, particularly if other changes increase our reach slightly, this shows continued strong engagement.
<b>Consistency &amp; Volume</b>	Minimum 20 posts per month	Continuing to post regularly in order to maintain a presence on the platform, particularly as it loses users in the UK.
<b>Content</b>	<25% of posts to include external links	Evidence indicates posts with links receive reduced reach.
<b>Engagement</b>	5+ replies per week	The algorithm increasingly prioritises conversations such as replies. Actively participating in discussions may increase visibility beyond our followers.
<b>Explore X Premium</b>	Review whether we want to trial X Premium	Accounts with X Premium receive greater initial visibility. We will review whether this is worth the cost, and whether to implement a trial to see if this impacts impressions.

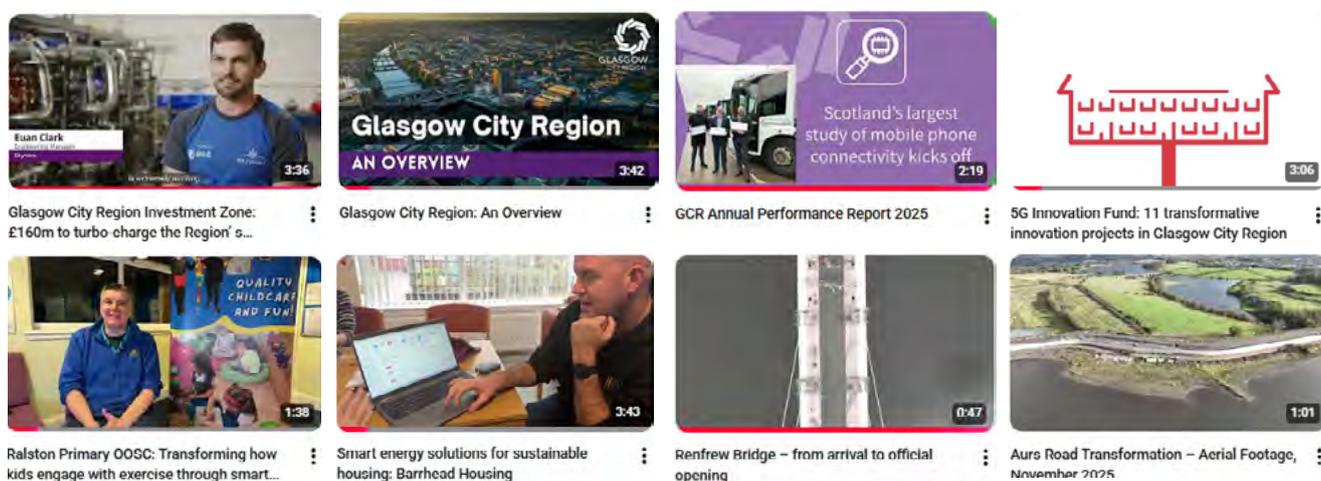
## 10. YouTube

This section sets out performance statistics and analysis specific to our YouTube channel.

At the end of 2025, our YouTube channel hosted 149 public videos and in its lifetime has generated 354,110 all-time views.

In 2025 our videos were viewed 73,040 times and we gained 13 new subscribers for a total of 388 subscribers by the end of the year.

Video content shared over the last year included case studies for the Region's Smart and Connected Social Places (SCSP) programme, a summary video of the Annual Performance Report, an overview video for the Investment Zone, an updated overview video for Glasgow City Region, and various project videos / aerial footage.



This included 12 case study videos produced in-house for the SCSP programme.

### 10.1. 2025 Performance



Our audience growth rate in 2025 was 4.8% on YouTube – a growth of 13 subscribers. This remains well above the platform average of 0.44%<sup>33</sup>, however, slower than our channel growth in 2024. This is likely linked to reduced activity throughout the year – while we posted a high number of videos in early 2025, we had much lower video output in the mid to late-year due to competing priorities and resource issues. This suggests that growth on the channels remains closely linked to the level of investment and the number of videos published.

<sup>33</sup> Social Status. (2025). [YouTube Growth Rate Benchmark Monthly historical data](#), Social Status.

## Reach and Visibility

Reach (video views) on YouTube reduced in 2025 compared with 2024, with monthly views remaining steady but lower throughout the year.

In 2024, several months generated higher video views, with views regularly exceeding 10,000 per month. These typically aligned with periods of higher video output. In contrast, 2025 saw fewer new uploads with many months publishing no new videos. As a result, monthly views were generally lower.

This suggests that our YouTube performance is closely linked to our publishing frequency. Looking forward, increasing the number and consistency of new videos is likely to have the greatest impact on improving reach and subscriber growth.

## Best Performing Content

Our top-performing videos in 2025 included:

Top Performing Videos by Views	Views	Content
Aurs Road Overview (East Renfrewshire Council)	1,090	Project updates
Govan to Partick Bridge installation video	1,067	Project updates
Inverclyde Ocean Terminal case study	518	Project case study
Renfrew Bridge drone footage (during construction)	408	Project updates
Balgray Station artists' impression video	396	Project updates

Analysis of our best-performing videos in 2025 is consistent with previous years. Our top-performing content remains videos that focus on **project updates and case studies**, particularly City Deal project videos, including the Govan to Partick Bridge, Inverclyde Ocean Terminal and the Renfrew Bridge.

Videos that include real footage – showing construction or completed projects – perform better than animations or explainers.

Looking ahead, this suggests our key priority should be **increased output (producing more videos)** and continuing to focus on **tangible, visible project progress** such as videos of infrastructure projects or manufacturing.

## 10.2. How YouTube Works

Like other platforms, YouTube uses an algorithm to recommend videos to users based on their interests, their viewing history and engagement patterns. Recommendations account for 70% of what people watch on the platform<sup>34</sup>.

The algorithm prioritises videos that viewers are more likely to watch and engage with. This is based on<sup>35</sup>:

- **Retention / Engagement:** do viewers stay on the video (watch time), or like / comment / share?

34 Kiro, Hana. (2022). [Hated that video? YouTube's algorithm might push you another just like it](#), MIT Technology Review, 20 September.

35 Macready, H. and Stanton, L. (2025). [How the YouTube algorithm works in 2025](#), Hootsuite Blog, 14 February.

- **Topic:** is the video topic either – aligned with the user’s interests (subscribed channels) or aligned with the user’s activity (previously watched videos).

Channels that publish consistently, and that publish videos that users are interested in (watch for a longer period of time) are more likely to show up in recommendations.

YouTube has also increased its focus on short-form content through YouTube Shorts, launched in 2021 to compete with TikTok<sup>36</sup>. Similar to TikTok, Shorts focuses on portrait-style short-form videos (up to 3 minutes long)<sup>37</sup>. Shorts are shown both on the home page and in a separate feed, and have grown rapidly in popularity – going from 70 billion daily views in 2024<sup>38</sup> to over 200 billion daily views in 2025<sup>39</sup>. This presents an opportunity for Glasgow City Region to reach new audiences.

### 10.3. 2026 Strategy

Our 2025 performance shows that YouTube remains a valuable platform for showcasing project progress and the real impact of the Region’s programmes and projects. It helps ‘bring to life’ the projects – with our YouTube audience most engaged with videos that show this tangibly. While overall views and subscriber growth were lower than in 2025, this appears largely linked to our publishing activity / output.

#### What we will do more of:

- **Project updates and case studies:** creating a higher volume of videos that focus on tangible projects, and publishing these steadily throughout the year. This includes engaging with the member councils to share relevant content on our channel.
- **Repurposing content:** re-using footage or older video content in order to ensure consistent output throughout the year.
- **Consistent posting:** posting content steadily, instead of in large ‘batches’ all at once.

#### What we will trial:

- **Short-form videos:** Trialling YouTube shorts – re-using content from full-length videos.
- **Re-sharing old content:** Trialling text ‘posts’ on YouTube to re-share older, high-performing content, in order to remain relevant.

#### What we will do less of:

- **‘Batch’ posting:** posting lots of videos all at once.
- **Animations and explainers:** these don’t appear to perform well with our audience.

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36 Oreate AI. (2026). [Did Youtube Shorts Come Before Tiktok](#), Oreate AI Blog, 7 January.  
 37 YouTube. (© 2026). [Get started creating YouTube shorts](#), YouTube Help.  
 38 Tila, Christy. (2025). [YouTube Shorts: daily views 2023](#), Statista, 27 November.  
 39 Cobb, Kayla. (2025). [YouTube Shorts Now Averages 200 Billion Daily Views](#), The Wrap, 18 June.

## KPIs

Building on this, our KPIs for 2026 are:

Focus	Target	Justification
<b>Publishing Consistency</b>	2+ videos per month	2024-2025 performance shows that higher video output means increased views and more subscribers.
<b>Reach</b>	70,000+ video views	Our 2025 video views remained steady but low. Increasing our video output should increase this, closer to the previous year's levels.
<b>Subscriber Growth</b>	+30 subscribers (8% growth)	2025 growth of 4.8% is still well above platform averages. However, we can still expect this to increase with more consistent uploads – particularly if we focus on content that our audience enjoys (project videos and case studies), which YouTube is more likely to show to a larger audience.
<b>Short-Form Videos</b>	Publish at least six YouTube shorts	Shorts are a rapidly growing video format on YouTube, presenting an opportunity to reach new subscribers. Trialling the performance of shorts throughout 2026 will let us test their performance.

# 11. Website

This section sets out performance statistics and analysis specific to our website.

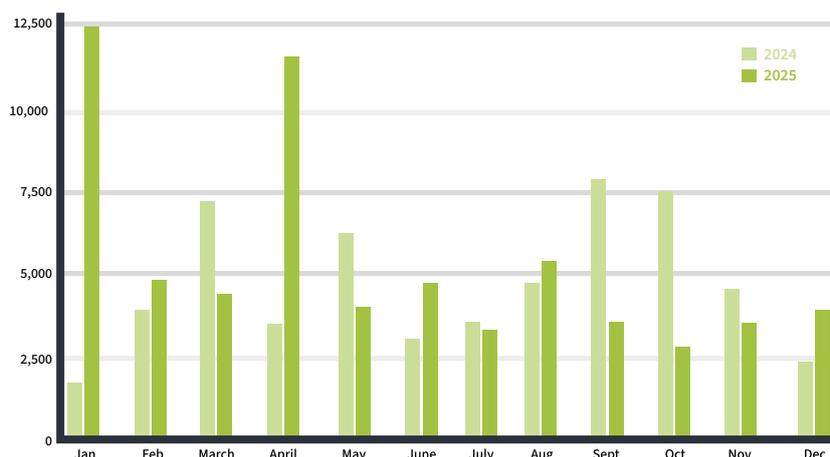
In August 2023, we began working with a design agency on a website refresh which launched in early 2024. In 2025, we further updated the design of the website home page to better reflect the Region’s brand.

In 2025, we also started work to fully review and refresh the full website content – including the website menu bar and content on the site’s main pages. This work will continue in 2026 with key content updates expected in early 2026.

## 11.1. 2025 Performance

<b>Users</b> <b>15,681</b>	<b>Pageviews</b> <b>66,371</b>	<b>Session Duration</b> <b>3min 55</b>	<b>Director’s Blogs</b> <b>9</b>	<b>Blog Pageviews</b> <b>1,420</b>	<b>Google Search Ranking</b> <b>11.9</b>
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### Reach (Pageviews)



Our website pageviews grew in 2025, with the site receiving 66,371 pageviews – a 16% increase on 2024 performance (57,021).

Traffic remained mostly consistent throughout the year, with peaks in January and April, largely to the site’s home page. These peaks on 10 January and 2 April don’t appear to be linked to specific announcements.

While the total number of users declined year-on-year (19,309 to 15,681), the increase in pageviews indicates that this is driven by returning visitors, who are viewing more pages per session. This suggests that the website remains a valuable and trusted source of information.

As in previous years, our top performing pages for pageviews were:

1. Home Page
2. News
3. City Deal
4. Meet the Team

## 5. Investment Zone

These results are consistent with previous years and show that visitors primarily use the website to access core information about the Region (home, news, and key programme pages). Our news page as the second most visited page shows that the website functions as a key source of information and updates for our audience.

However, additional notable pages which received a high number of pageviews include:

- Clyde Mission
- News item – Renfrew Bridge
- Intelligence Hub
- Mobile Phone Coverage
- News item – £64.5m City Deal project
- News item - £30m for LIPF

These pages were largely linked to major announcements, such as funding decisions or infrastructure milestones, further indicating that our audience visits the website to access updates and news. News-led content continues to be a strong driver of website visits.

Additionally, the five online economic briefings published on the website throughout 2025 received a total of 1,158 recorded pageviews.

The nine Director’s Blogs published on the website throughout 2025 received a total of 1,420 recorded pageviews.

## Engagement

Engagement on the website improved significantly in 2025, with users spending longer on the site and interacting with more pages per visit.

On average, visitors viewed **4.86 pages per active user** – a 50% increase on 2024’s average of 3.23 pages per active user. This indicates that each visitor is exploring multiple pages / sections on the website rather than leaving quickly.

Average session duration also increased from 1min 48 sec to **3min 55 sec**. Visitors are spending more than twice as much time on our website, compared to 2024.

This suggests stronger engagement from returning visitors – who are viewing more pages per visit and spending longer on the site.

This improvement in engagement may be linked to recent updates to the website’s design, including the introduction of ‘breadcrumb’ navigation which makes it easier for visitors to understand where they are on the site and to move between related pages; and on quicker publishing of news items – supported by multiple images and headings to break up content and make it more engaging.

The top performing pages for engagement time – time that people have spent actively on each webpage – were:

1. [News item – GCR funding boost for social landlords and tenants](#)
2. [News item – Sauchiehall Avenue now complete](#)

3. [Living Wage Action Group](#)
4. [Economic Briefing August 2025](#)
5. [News item – Consultation on Broomielaw and Clyde Street](#)

This suggests that users are actively consuming the content, with most of the top-performing pages for engagement time being detailed news items, an economic briefing, or a key programme or group space. These types of pages typically contain more information, encouraging visitors to spend longer reading and exploring the content.

Notably, **all five of last year’s online economic briefings appear in the top 20 pages for longest total engagement time**. This reflects the continued demand for this content, with audiences spending longer reviewing the analysis and insights. It reinforces the value of these briefings as trusted, in-depth resources for our partners and stakeholders.

## Visibility (Google Search)

Our visibility in Google remained strong throughout 2025 – including significant improvements on 2024’s performance.

Throughout 2025, the website generated a high number of impressions – between 120,000 to 200,000 impressions per month on Google – resulting in 1,500 to 2,300 clicks per month, with an average click through rate of 1.22%.

Our average search position improved from 22.7 to 11.9 by the end of 2025, meaning Glasgow City Region’s pages in Google Search results typically show on the first one to two pages of results. This also means that for terms that are more relevant to our site, we are likely showing up near the very top of results. For example, we are in the top position on average for the searches: glasgow city region, clyde mission, glasgow city deal, glasgow city region investment zone, and others.

This is important, as the top search result in Google receives almost 40% of all clicks, followed by 18% in second place, and 10% in third place, down to only 1.6% by 10th position<sup>40</sup>. Additionally, over 50% of our users (57%) find us through organic search (such as Google).

This demonstrates that the website is continuing to perform well on Google – meaning we are posting content that has the correct keywords and is relevant and interesting for people searching for these terms.

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40 Timmerman, Rob. (2024). [A Data-Driven Guide to Google CTR by Position in 2025](#), Timmerman Group, 24 January.

## Best Performing Content

Our top-performing pages in 2025 included:

Top Performing Pages by Pageviews	Pageviews
<a href="#">Home Page</a>	25,421
<a href="#">News</a>	1,978
<a href="#">City Deal</a>	1,809
<a href="#">Meet the Team</a>	1,379
<a href="#">Investment Zone</a>	1,184

Top Performing Pages by Avg. Engagement Time	Time
<a href="#">GCR funding boost for SCSP (news item)</a>	4min 23
<a href="#">Sauchiehall St Avenue completed (news item)</a>	4min 15
<a href="#">Living Wage Action Group space</a>	3min 59
<a href="#">Economic Briefing August 2025</a>	3min 19
<a href="#">Consultation on Broomielaw</a>	3min 01

### 5.1. AI and Google Search

In the last year, we have seen significant changes to how people find and view content. Search behaviour has evolved, and is continuing to, with the introduction of AI and AI-generated summaries within Google search results, which were first rolled out in the UK in 2024<sup>41</sup>.

Google AI summaries, which now show at the very top of the page for most search queries, provide an AI-generated summary of a user's question as well as links to the webpages where the content has been taken from<sup>42</sup>.

This has been reported to have a negative impact on website traffic, with a drop in traffic from Google. Research from Pew Research Center suggests users are almost half as likely to click on a search result link when there is an AI summary than when there is not<sup>43</sup>, and a study by Authoritas analytics company found that sites that previously ranked first in search results can lose around 79% of traffic if there is an AI summary at the top of the search results – although Google has disputed these findings<sup>44</sup>, claiming that user behaviour is partly to blame, with younger generations moving to short-form video or forums more than to traditional sites<sup>45</sup>.

41 Venkatachary, Srinivasan. (2024). [AI Overview in Search are coming to more places around the world](#), The Keyword (Google), 28 October.

42 Botify. (2024). [What Are Google AI Overview and How Do They Work?](#), Botify, 8 December.

43 Chapkis, Athena. and Lieb, Anna. (2025). [Google users are less likely to click on links when an AI summary appears in the results](#), Pew Research Center, 22 July.

44 Salvage, Michael. (2025). [AI summaries cause 'devastating' drop in audiences, online news media told](#), The Guardian, 24 July.

45 Goodwin, Danny. (2025). [Google's Liz Reid: The real search shift is behavioral, not AI](#), Search Engine Land, 16 October.

Importantly, Google Search Ranking – once the most important indicator of click-through success – is no longer as important. Research shows that up to 80% of sources cited in AI summaries don't organically rank in the search results, and holding a top-three position in organic Google search results only gives an 8% chance of being featured in the AI overview<sup>46</sup>.

Instead, showing up in an AI overview relies on shifting from traditional Search Engine Optimisation (SEO) to a new model, called Generative Engine Optimisation (GEO). This comes down to **positioning your website as an authoritative, trustworthy source, and answering real, audience questions quickly and clearly**<sup>47</sup>. Multiple sources suggest the best way to do this is to:

- 1. Improve your website's authority:** the key way to do this is to focus on Experience, Expertise, Authoritativeness and Trustworthiness (E-EAT), which is a key part of Google's Search Quality Rater Guidelines<sup>47, 48, 49</sup>.
  - a. Ensure the main content is high quality – such as well-written, well-researched, and original.
  - b. Ensure your site includes information about the website and the creator – such as who is responsible for the site, and who created the content on the page (the author), even if this is an alias.
  - c. Position the website as an expert source on the topic. The reputation of a website is important.
  - d. This can also include creating Pillar Content, which is a comprehensive, long-form page on an overarching theme – which acts as a 'cluster' for all other content within that theme<sup>50</sup>.
- 2. Answer real questions, clearly and quickly:**
  - a. Try to structure content in a way that answers the questions that real people might ask on Google, including headers like “What is Google AI Overviews” or “How can I get my website featured?”
  - b. Page content should give concise answers, almost immediately, to the questions above.
  - c. Content should be structured clearly, with concise paragraphs, bullet points and distinct headings; and clear summaries towards the top of the page that are in a 'snippet' format. Think about writing in a way that AI summaries can quote.
- 3. Correctly label content:** make sure schema markup (structured data) is set up correctly.

### 3.1. 2026 Strategy

Our 2025 performance demonstrates that the website remains an important and well-performing channel for Glasgow City Region. Pageviews increased, engagement levels improved significantly, and organic search continues to act as our main source of website traffic.

Importantly, visitors are spending longer on the site and viewing more pages per session.

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46 SellersCommerce. (2025). *Google's AI Overview Statistics (2025)*, SellersCommerce, 25 August.

47 Hunter, Richard. (2025). *How to Feature in Google's AI Overviews*, Moore-Wilson, 13 May.

48 Warren, Sarah. (© 2024). *The Casual Guide to Getting Your Business Seen in Google AI Overviews Search*, On Brand.

49 Google. (2023). *Search Quality Rater Guidelines: An Overview*, Google, November.

50 O'Brien, Clodagh. (2024). *What are Content Pillars and Why are They Important?* Digital Marketing Institute, 27 August.

However, search behaviour is changing rapidly. The introduction of AI-generated summaries, particularly in Google Search, is significantly reducing visibility and traffic from organic Google search. Traditional Search Engine Optimisation (SEO) alone is no longer as effective, with greater emphasis on Generative Engine Optimisation (GEO) which relies on demonstrating authority, directly answering visitor's questions, and providing clear information early-on in a page. This presents an opportunity for Glasgow City Region to present its website as an authoritative, trustworthy and citeable source for information on Regional programmes and projects.

In 2026 our focus will be on strengthening the website's authority and visibility. This will include continuing to progress improvements to the structure and clarity of our website content, publishing high-quality updates, and trialling new approaches in order to adapt to changing search behaviours.

### What we will do more of:

- **Project and programme summaries:** clear, detailed pages that showcase the delivery and outcomes of projects and programmes.
- **Structure and readability improvements:** adapting how we write content, particularly on key website pages, to include headings, distinct summaries, and concise information.
- **Internal linking:** visitors are spending more time on the website and viewing more pages per session. Improving our links between different pages and sections will encourage visitors to stay on and navigate within the site.
- **Refreshing content:** refreshing the banners and boxes shown on the home page at regular intervals / following key announcements.

### What we will trial:

- **GEO Techniques:** piloting content structured around user questions, and concise summaries at the top of key pages – with 'snippet-ready' answers.
- **Pillar Content:** using our project and programme pages (e.g. Investment Zone, City Deal) as pillar pages – and tagging / linking to relevant news items or sub-pages as sub-content.
- **Authorship:** trialling adding an author tag to news items – even if the author page is just 'Glasgow City Region'.

### What we will do less of:

- **Unstructured pages:** pages without headings, bullets or any structure to break up content.

## KPIs

Building on this, our KPIs for 2026 are:

Focus	Target	Justification
<b>Reach</b>	75,000+ pageviews (15% growth)	Maintaining steady growth at the same rate as the previous year – taking into account changes to traffic as a result of AI summaries.
<b>Engagement</b>	Maintain 4.5+ pages per active user	Maintain performance well above industry benchmarks, to ensure our audience remains engaged with content.
<b>Search Position</b>	Improving Google Search Ranking to top 10 (<= 10)	Search remains our primary discover channel, even with major changes to user search behaviour. We want to continue to strengthen our position in organic search rankings.
<b>Director’s Blogs</b>	9+ Director’s Blogs	Maintain consistent publishing of Director’s Blogs.
<b>Content &amp; Website Authority</b>	Review and update key pages	Continue work to review the website content. As part of this, structure key programme / project pages into ‘Pillar Content’ (structuring with headings and linking out to related pages / news items).

## 4. E-Marketing

This section sets out performance statistics and analysis specific to our email communications, including our email newsletter and Intelligence Hub briefings.

In February 2023 we took over issue of the Intelligence Hub’s regular briefings, to be issued from the Glasgow City Region mailbox. In April 2024 we launched a new online format and design for the briefings, which was further updated in October 2024.

In 2025, we also developed an Email Marketing Strategy for the Region. Part of this work recommended the adoption of a new email marketing software, and [Tractivity](#) was identified as the most relevant and cost-effective solution. We will adopt Tractivity in 2026, and progress some of the additional recommendations presented in the Email Marketing Strategy.

We will also work with the Region’s 5G Innovation team to integrate their event attendees and e-marketing list with our newsletter subscriber list.

### 4.1. 2025 Performance



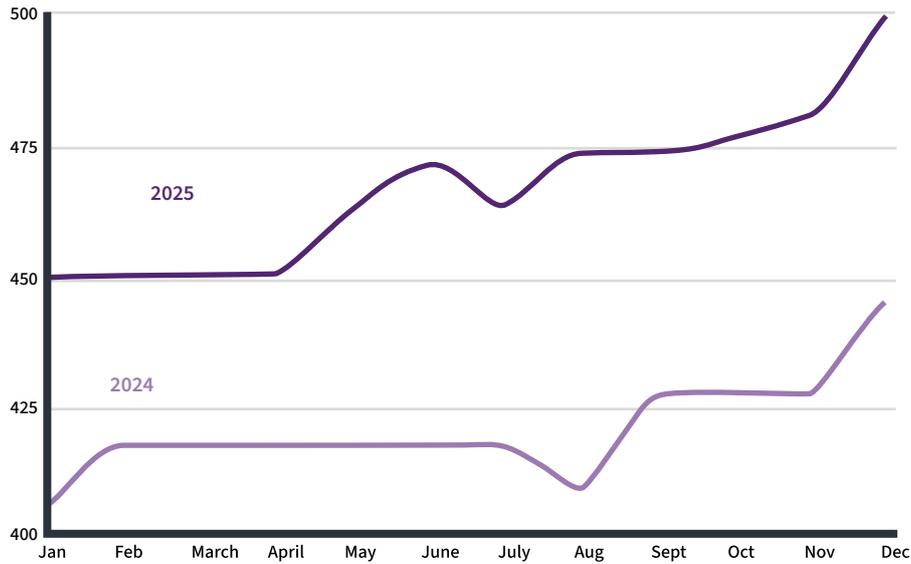
\*Open figures do not include opens for three emails (two monthly briefings and one newsletter) sent in early 2025, due to an analytics error in our email marketing software. Based on our average open rates – 951 per newsletter and 1,081 per Intelligence Hub briefing – we estimate around **10,300 total opens**.

### Reach

Our full recipient list is made up of two types of contact:

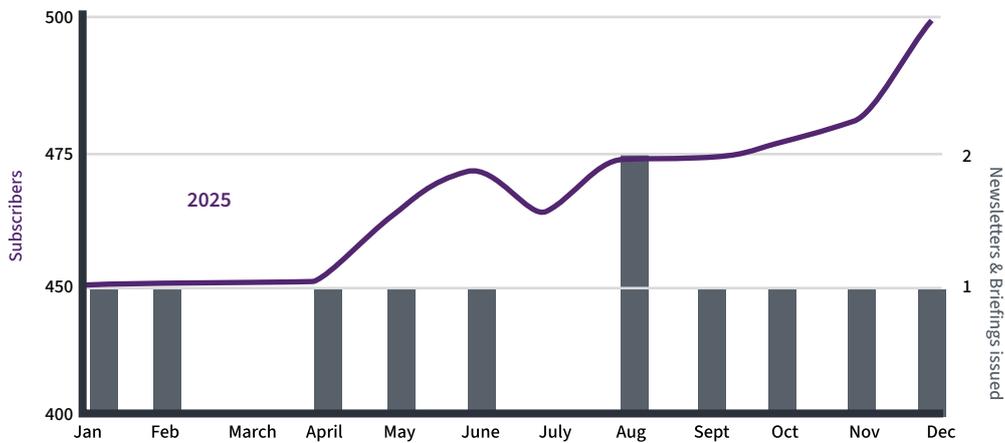
- **Stakeholders:** partners and members of relevant groups who receive communications automatically (unless opted out); and
- **Subscribers:** individuals who sign up directly via the Glasgow City Region website.

Total Subscribers over Time, 2024 / 2025



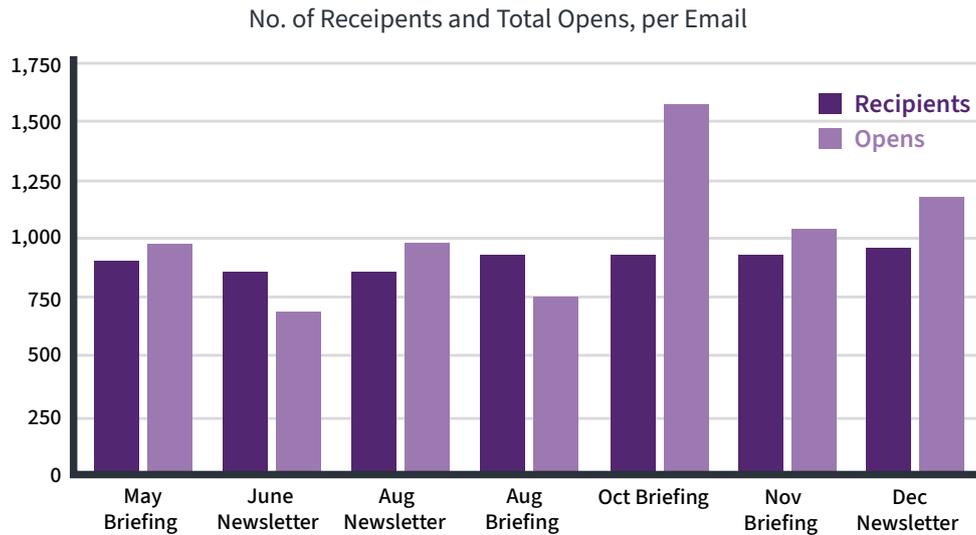
Our subscriber list continued to grow steadily in 2025, gaining 54 new subscribers for 12.1% annual growth and an average monthly growth rate of 1.16%. This is about average for small businesses or niche email audiences, who see 1-3% organic monthly growth<sup>51</sup> – although it is difficult to find growth rate benchmarks. These figures also account for the routine removal of invalid or outdated email addresses, typically where a recipient has changed job.

Subscribers Over Time against No. of Email Communications Issued



Emails were sent to between 850 and 950 recipients on average. Each email was opened 1,025 times on average – 951 times for an email newsletter and 1,081 times for an economic briefing. This indicates we continue to reach a large proportion of recipients, and that the emails remain engaging.

51 UK Marketing Management. (© 2026). [Email List Growth Rate](#), UK Marketing Management.



## Engagement

Engagement within our email communications improved noticeably in 2025. Our average email click rate increased from 21.85% to 35.08%, meaning recipients were significantly more likely to interact with content / click on links within the email. This performance sits well above reported averages of 2.3%<sup>52</sup> and 2.62%<sup>53</sup>, and the industry (Government & Politics) average of 2.8%<sup>51</sup>.

## Best Performing Content

Our top-performing emails in 2025 were:

Email Subject	Engagement Rate
GCR Intelligence Hub Economic Briefing May 2025	66.29%
GCR Intelligence Hub Briefing: August 2025	41.06%
August 2025 Newsletter	31.40%
December 2025 Newsletter	30.27%

Within these top performing emails, the most-clicked links were:

52 Campaign Monitor. (© 2026). [What are good open rates, CTRs, & CTORs for email campaigns?](#) Campaign Monitor.  
 53 MailChimp. (© 2001-2025). [Email Marketing Benchmarks and Metrics Businesses Should Track](#), MailChimp.

Link Text	Linked To	Clicks
Read the Briefing on our Website	Economic Briefing (online)	247
Read the Full Briefing	Economic Briefing (online)	254
Read More	December 2025 Director’s Blog	71
Read More	November 2025 Director’s Blog	64
Read More	LIPF £30m funding announced (news item)	44
latest performance report	Annual Performance Report	42
More News	News page	36
Devolution Deal proposal document	Devolution Deal – Emerging Proposal paper	31
Heat Decarbonisation Fund	Clyde Mission Heat Decarbonisation Fund	30
Read More	Annual Performance Report (news item)	29
Read More	Balgray Station breaking ground (news item)	24

Engagement patterns differed slightly by email type.

Clicks within the economic briefings were, as expected, highly concentrated on the primary “read the full briefing” links.

By contrast, newsletter clicks were spread more evenly across multiple stories and links. For example, in the August newsletter the most-clicked link accounted for only 14% of total clicks, with the remaining clicks distributed across several project updates, reports and news items. A similar pattern was seen in December, with strong engagement across Director’s Blogs, programme updates and policy documents. This suggests three clear trends:

- **Economic briefings continue to perform well:** recipients who receive this email are likely to open it, and likely to click to view the briefing online.
- **Project milestones and tangible updates** consistently get high engagement / link clicks.
- **Recipients engage with multiple links per email**, rather than just one headline item. This indicates that content that is selected for newsletters is relevant and engaging, and that recipients are interested in email newsletters that provide a selection of different stories and links.

## 4.2. 2026 Strategy

Our 2025 performance demonstrates that email remains one of the Region’s most effective and reliable channels.

While audience growth was steady, engagement levels increased significantly and sit well above typical benchmarks, indicating our email audience is interested in our content and highly targeted.

In 2026, our focus will be on growing this channel further, including implementing a new email marketing platform (Tractivity) to enable more accurate analytics, better management of our contact list – including segmentation and personalisation, and more targeted communications – such as topic-specific newsletters.

We will also work to coordinate activity across the Region by combining contact lists and messaging

where appropriate across relevant teams, including the 5G Innovation Region team and the GCR Green Network team.

### What we will do more of:

- **Regular communications:** continuing to send newsletters and briefings on a regular basis.
- **Cross-promotion:** using the newsletter to drive traffic to the relevant website pages.
- **Promotion:** following implementation of the email marketing software, we will increase promotion of the email newsletter, promoting sign-up across the website and social media.

### What we will trial:

- **Tractivity:** as set out in our Email Marketing Strategy, we will adopt Tractivity on a pilot basis to manage email communications.
- **Audience Segmentation:** we will trial more targeted audience lists (e.g. topic or interest-based newsletters).

### What we will do less of:

- **Irregular scheduling:** long gaps between email communications.

### KPIs

Building on this, our KPIs for 2026 are:

Focus	Target	Justification
<b>Reach</b>	+100 subscribers (20% growth)	Above 2025's 12% growth in order to reflect increased promotion and activity.
<b>Engagement</b>	Maintain 30%+ engagement rate	Maintain performance well above industry benchmarks, to ensure our audience remains engaged with content.
<b>Consistency</b>	Send 12 emails (newsletters, briefings or other)	Maintain consistency to support recognition. Increasing our newsletters in 2025 resulted in increased engagement, meaning our audience reacts well to slightly more frequent communications.
<b>Platform</b>	Fully migrate to Tractivity by mid-2026	As set out in our Email Marketing Strategy.



**GLASGOW**  
CITY REGION

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