Digital Glasgow Annual Report 2025

1. Introduction

Glasgow's Digital Glasgow Strategy 2024 to2030 sets out an ambitious vision for a digitally inclusive city, one where technology empowers residents, drives economic growth, and modernises public services for everyone's benefit.

The purpose of this Annual Report 2025 is to highlight the progress we have made over the past year, structured around our core values and three strategic missions: building **a fair and empowered digital society**, fostering **an inclusive digital economy**, and delivering **sustainable, innovative digital public services**.

The report provides clear evidence of progress, supported by measurable results and real-world examples from 2025. We conclude by sharing some of the challenges that we have faced and by acknowledging the teams and partners whose collaboration has been essential to our achievements.

2. Delivering on Our Core Values

At the heart of the Digital Glasgow Strategy are five core values, co-designed with Elected Members and key stakeholders, to ensure our digital transformation is ethical, inclusive, and citizen centred. These values serve as guiding principles across all missions and projects, shaping decisions and success measures beyond pure metrics.

The core values are:

- Accessible and Inclusive
- Protective and Secure
- Open and Transparent
- Participative and Empowering
- Collaborative and Partnership working

This year, we put these values into practice in various ways. For example,

1. **Accessible and Inclusive**. The main Council website now meets **95% of the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) accessibility standards** (an improvement from 88% last year) making our digital services much more accessible. We remain committed to enhancing accessibility further so that everyone can benefit fully.

   In 2025, Glasgow Life expanded its Assisted Digital programme across 17 community libraries, supporting over 2,800 residents to access online services. The Assisted Digital programme is designed to help individuals who may lack confidence or experience in using digital technology, providing hands-on support and guidance to enable them to carry out essential tasks such as accessing council services, applying for benefits, or navigating online forms. Trained staff and volunteers offer personalised assistance, ensuring everyone can use digital platforms safely and effectively, regardless of their prior experience or abilities.

   Our commitment is to ensure that everyone can benefit fully from our digital services. By providing direct assistance and prioritising accessible design, we are continually enhancing our digital offerings so that more people can access and enjoy these services with ease and confidence.

2. **Protective and Secure**. We are dedicated to protecting privacy, data, and digital rights throughout all our services. In 2025, we made substantial enhancements to our security posture and initiated a comprehensive transformation programme to further mitigate risks. Additionally, we have engaged a specialised security advisory service to bolster our cyber resilience and ensure access to additional expert guidance on emerging threats.

3. **Open and Transparent.** In 2025 we demonstrated our dedication to Open and Transparent governance through the progress made on open data, including adding over 20 new highly valuable datasets to our Open Data publishing site[1] (including real-time air quality, transport statistics, and a detailed 3D digital model[2] of the city) while also improving the portal's usability with interactive data stories, an app gallery, and clearer categorisation.

4. **Participative and Empowering.** We are continuing to build opportunities for people to shape and engage with Glasgow's digital future. In 2025, we hosted the Digital Inclusion Open Space event, which brought together over 40 third sector and public sector organisations and community representatives to share experiences and co-design priorities for digital inclusion. A follow-up event is being held in December to coincide with the international "Digital Rights Days" that is being organised by the Cities Coalition for Digital Rights[3].

   We also supported a series of 5G Innovation Region "Smart and Connected Social Places" trials and showcase events, giving residents, businesses, and public sector partners the chance to explore emerging technologies and their potential applications. These activities have helped create more space for dialogue, experimentation, and community input—ensuring that digital transformation is increasingly shaped by the people it's designed to serve.

5. **Collaborative and Partnership Working.** In 2025, we strengthened collaboration at local, regional, and national levels to advance digital transformation for the benefit of all in Glasgow.

   - **Internationally**: We continue to actively engage with cities from across Europe and the world through our membership of the **Eurocities Digital Forum** and the **Cities Coalition for Digital Rights**.

   - **Nationally**: We continued our active participation with the **Digital Office for Scottish Local Government**[4], supporting COSLA's work with Scottish Government to the refresh of Scotland's Digital Strategy[5], and worked with the Scottish Government's Digital Inclusion Alliance, sharing best practice and shaping policy on digital inclusion. At a UK level Glasgow worked with Wigan Council and other UK Councils to develop a template AI Governance Framework[6] via the Cooperative Councils Innovation Network.

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[1] https://data.glasgow.gov.uk/
[2] https://data.glasgow.gov.uk/pages/3d-urban-model
[3] https://citiesfordigitalrights.org/
[4] https://www.digitaloffice.scot/
[5] https://www.gov.scot/publications/digital-strategy-scotland-vision-statement/pages/2/
[6] https://www.councils.coop/project/coop-values-driven-ai/

- **Regionally**: Across the Glasgow City Region, we partnered with Councils across the region through the UK Government Department for Science, Innovation and Technology (DSIT)-funded 5G Innovation Region programme, "Smart and Connected Social Places." Notable collaborative projects included mobile coverage mapping using sensor-equipped refuse vehicles and piloting 5G-enabled care technologies in care settings.

- **Locally**: Our work with public sector partners, third sector organisations such as the Glasgow Council for the Voluntary Sector (GCVS), universities (Glasgow Caledonian University, University of Strathclyde, University of Glasgow), City of Glasgow College, has been pivotal. These partnerships have driven data innovation, digital skills development, STEM outreach, broadening engagement and delivering solutions tailored to Glasgow's communities.

3. Delivering on Mission One: A Fair and Empowered Digital Society

Mission One of the Digital Glasgow Strategy aims to ensure that all Glaswegians can benefit from digital technology. This means improving digital inclusion and equality (so everyone has the connectivity, devices and skills they need), building confidence and trust in digital services (so people feel able and safe using online public services), and increasing citizen participation in the digital aspects of civic life.

In practical terms, Mission One is about tackling the digital divide – making sure no one is left behind as services go online as well as fostering an environment where people trust and willingly use digital tools to improve their lives and communities. Achieving a fair and empowered digital society is crucial in Glasgow, where despite progress, around **7% of residents still do not have internet access** and many others lack basic digital skills. This section outlines how we delivered against Mission One's outcomes and action plan in 2025.

Mission One has three primary outcomes (or goals) set by the strategy:

> 1. **Improve Digital Inclusion and Equality,**
>
> 2. **Build Confidence and Trust in Digital Services,** and
>
> 3. **Increase Involvement and Participation**.

Below we summarise progress in each area with examples of achievements:

Mission 1, Outcome 1 - Digital Inclusion and Equality:

Over the past year, Glasgow expanded support for residents who are digitally excluded. In partnership with Glasgow Life and third-sector organisations, we provided **free or low-cost devices, internet access, and training** to those most in need. For example, Glasgow Life provided laptops and connectivity to more than 200 learners from low-income households, allowing them to access Glasgow Code Learning[7]'s courses and other online training. The North West Glasgow Voluntary Sector Network's "Plugged In" device recycling programme has made a significant difference by refurbishing donated laptops and tablets and redistributing them to individuals and families in need.

A **Digital Inclusion Open Space event** was held in November 2024. The event was co-hosted by Glasgow City Council, Glasgow Council for the Voluntary Sector (GCVS) and Glasgow Life. Approx. 40 participants from charities, public services, and colleges came together to map the current support landscape and identify gaps. As a result, stakeholders agreed to

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[7] https://www.glasgowlife.org.uk/libraries/work-money-and-learning/glasgow-code-learning

establish a city-wide **Digital Inclusion Working Group** to coordinate efforts, create a shared identity for inclusion initiatives, and develop a single online directory of digital support services. A follow up event has been held in December 2025 as part of the international Digital Rights Days[8]. The event, entitled "Working Together for Digital Inclusion in Glasgow", explored how public sector, third sector, and academic sector partners can better work together to: 1. Strengthen coordination, 2. Adopt a more targeted data-driven approach, 3. Improving referral pathways and signposting, 4. Building skills and media literacy. These steps, taken in response to community feedback, are ensuring a more joined-up approach so that anyone in Glasgow who needs digital help can find it easily.

On the ground, our libraries remained a vital resource, with over ***400,000 usages of library computers or WiFi in 2025***, and Glasgow Life's network of trained Digi-Pal volunteers provided one-on-one assistance daily across the city's 31 Community Libraries.

Through such efforts, we are slowly narrowing the digital divide – though we recognise challenges persist (see Challenges section).

Mission One, Outcome 2 - Confidence and Trust in Digital Services:

In 2025 there was significant uptake of online council services, often with guidance from our digital support staff. Glasgow Life's **Assisted Digital service** (available in libraries and community hubs) supported **over 2,800 individuals** in using the *myGlasgow* online services portal for services like Council Tax reduction applications, School Clothing Grants and free school meal forms, as well as wider support services such as Scottish Welfare Fund claims and Universal Credit applications. This means thousands of people who might otherwise struggle with online processes successfully accessed services digitally, with staff or volunteers walking them through it, then connecting them with local essential digital skills training, allowing them to self-serve in future. This high number demonstrates growing trust – residents are willing to try online applications knowing help is at hand if needed.

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[8] The "Digital Rights
Days" is a global celebration aimed at promoting and defending digital rights. It emphasises the importance of everyone's right to access, use, and create digital technologies and content, ensuring protection of privacy, freedom of expression, and access to information online. It is organised by the Cities Coalition for Digital Rights, which Glasgow is a member of.

Mission 1, Outcome 3 - Participation and Empowerment:

The city has also made progress in openness and participation. The data.glasgow.gov.uk[9] open data publishing platform continued to grow, offering new datasets on transport, environment, health, and community assets. In 2025, new "data stories" -interactive visualisations and case studies - helped residents and organisations see the real-world impact of open data, such as using air quality and travel data to inform local initiatives. The development of Glasgow's 3D digital twin advanced, with the project's first phase creating an interactive model of the city centre and key neighbourhoods. This tool, integrated with open data, is now used by planners and community groups to simulate developments and monitor urban change.

Overall, Mission One's initiatives in 2025 concentrated on creating the foundations for **scaling up support** for those who need it and **empowering citizens** in the digital realm. We have seen positive early outcomes – such as high assisted digital uptake and collaborative momentum on inclusion – but we know that achieving a fully digitally included society requires sustained effort at a local and national level. These actions have built a strong foundation, and lessons from 2025 (including what worked well and what gaps remain) will inform our plans for 2026, where we aim to deepen and broaden this mission's impact.

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[9] https://data.glasgow.gov.uk/

4. Delivering on Mission Two: An Inclusive Digital Economy

Mission Two focuses on how digital technology can be used to grow Glasgow's economy in a way that benefits all communities. It covers improving the city's **digital infrastructure** to provide residents and businesses with excellent connectivity, developing the **digital skills pipeline** and creating pathways for all to access digital jobs, and supporting **innovation and growth in our tech ecosystem**.

In short, Mission Two is about ensuring Glasgow's digital economy is **inclusive** – that we attract investment and innovation, while equipping local people and businesses to share in the benefits. Key themes include expanding connectivity (broadband and 5G), enhancing digital skills and education, and fostering the conditions for tech startups, scale-ups and SMEs to thrive.

Mission Two's outcomes (goals) are to:

1. **Improve digital connectivity and inclusion for economic growth,**
2. **Develop the pipeline of digital skills providing opportunities for all,** and
3. **Improve opportunities for Glasgow's tech ecosystem**.

Here's how 2025 unfolded for each of these outcomes:

Mission 1, Outcome 1 - Connectivity and Infrastructure
Glasgow's proactive telecoms strategy has positioned itself as a **national leader in digital infrastructure**, which underpins economic growth, smart city initiatives, and digital inclusion.

This year saw major steps to improve Glasgow's digital infrastructure. In terms of broadband, Glasgow continued to benefit from private sector investment in full-fibre networks underpinned by the work of Glasgow's pioneering Telecoms Unit. By the end of 2025, roughly **85% of premises** in the city could access gigabit-capable broadband (up from ~75% two years ago).

An industry report published in April 2025 by connectivity intelligence company Ookla **ranked Glasgow as top of the UK leaderboard for 5G speed tests[10]**, which it attributed to its proactive approach and the creation of a dedicated Telecoms Unit. Ookla noted that cities with streamlined processes for telecoms deployment achieve the best outcomes, and Glasgow is cited as best practice.

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[10] Mind the Gap: London's 5G Performance Lags Behind Other UK Cities | Ookla®

The city is part of three pioneering 5G programmes funded by the UK Government Department of Science, Innovation and Technology (DSIT):

    i. UK Government's **5G Innovation Region (5GIR)** programme, and in 2025 the Glasgow City Region successfully [secured additional funding from the Department for Science, Innovation and Technology (DSIT)](#)[11] to extend local 5G initiatives.

    ii. The **SCONDA project**[12] delivered in partnership with Three UK and the Advanced Wireless Technology Group (AWTG), which has used innovative "small cells" Open RAN technology for the first time in the UK to double the 5G speeds on the Three network within the city centre.

    iii. The **ON-SIDE**[13] project delivered in partnership with the University of Strathclyde, University of Glasgow, AMD and the BBC, which has explored how private 5G networks can help to maintain capacity during large events.

These improvements reflect the city's ongoing commitment to digital inclusion and infrastructure enhancement, helping to position Glasgow as a leading digital city in the UK.

See the [Telecoms Unit case study](#)[14] on the Digital Glasgow Strategy website for how collaborative work with industry is accelerating investment in the city's digital infrastructure.

Mission 2, Outcome 2 - Digital Skills and Opportunities for All:

In 2025, Glasgow further established itself as a hub for digital skills development.

In October, **Glasgow No-Code** was launched - a pilot programme bringing together local government, further education, entrepreneur support and industry to help turn ideas into real products, fast. Whether a student, tutor, or early-stage founder, this is all about providing the tools to build without needing to code (and helping the city grow a new wave of digital talent). The intent is on building a local network of certified no-coders to put Glasgow at the forefront of accessible tech and growing the digital SME base, while demonstrating a No-Code approach with the potential to drive innovation and tackle digital challenges for businesses at a local level.

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[11] [5G Innovation Regions: successful regions (updated 19 March 2025) - GOV.UK](#)
[12] [Three UK doubles Glasgow city centre speeds with UK-first Open RAN rollout - Three Media Centre](#)
[13] https://www.onside5g.org/
[14] https://invest-glasgow.foleon.com/digital-glasgow-strategy/digital-glasgow-strategy-2024-2030/contents

The Council has commissioned the pilot, enabled by UK Shared Prosperity Funding. City of Glasgow College, Glasgow Clyde College and Glasgow Kelvin College will be reaching out into the local community to find students and founders that may benefit from the Glasgow No-Code offering. Royal Bank/ Natwest Accelerator will provide wraparound support and Greater Things is the partner responsible for the delivery of bootcamps and app development.

The Digital Economy team also instigated, led and part-funded CivTech Challenge 10.5 – together with co-sponsors The Data Lab - around how we might better use technology to better understand the demand and supply of professional digital skills in the Glasgow City Region. This progressed through exploration phase where we then worked with our successful delivery partner, Talent Engine, to progress to MVP (Minimal Viable Product) and a pitch at Demo Day. While we have a good technical solution with capacity to map and foresight the digital skills the Region requires to support growth of the UK Government IS-8 Clusters, in order to unlock further funding from Scottish Government, we require partner resource to project manage through a Pre-Commercial Stage to be market-ready – where we currently lack capacity to progress.

The Glasgow Code Learning (GCL) programme (run by Glasgow Life in partnership with Glasgow Clyde College and supported by industry) continued to offer free, flexible courses ranging from basic digital literacy to advanced coding bootcamps. This year, **364 learners completed courses in software development, AI and data science, and cyber security**. Many of these participants were people changing careers or those who hadn't followed a traditional academic path – exactly the groups we want to support to ensure the tech sector is open to all. In 2025 **over half of the programme's learners were from a minority ethnic group**, **51% were female** and **23% had a disability**. With 1-1 mentoring and employability support included, learners gained confidence, new skills and improved career prospects. The programme's wraparound support includes a free laptop loan scheme and free connectivity. One example of a success story that demonstrates the tangible impact of this approach is a GCL graduate who, after completing a 9-week cyber security course, secured a three-month paid internship at a local tech company through a new pilot initiative connecting training to jobs. That individual has since been offered a full-time junior developer role.

To inspire the next generation, we also supported STEM engagement in schools. The SmartSTEMs programme (in partnership with Glasgow-based charity SmartSTEMs[15]) delivered digital workshops to pupils in primary and secondary schools across the city, focusing on under-represented groups in

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[15] https://smartstems.org/what-we-do/

STEM. In one highlight event in June, more than **500 school pupils** gathered at Glasgow Caledonian University for a day of hands-on STEM activities as part of SmartSTEMs' outreach – exposing young people to coding, robotics and tech career paths in an exciting way. The feedback from teachers and students was overwhelmingly positive, noting increased enthusiasm for tech subjects. Glasgow's libraries also continue to offer Coderdojo – weekly drop-in creative coding classes aimed at inspiring young people to use a range of coding tools creatively and consider moving into a career in STEM.

Beyond formal programmes, Glasgow's colleges and universities continued to align with this mission. For instance, the University of Glasgow launched new short courses in data analytics open to the public, and Glasgow Caledonian University's outreach team worked with young people on computing projects.

The Council also worked closely with **Skills Development Scotland** and our Regional Economic Partnership to address digital skills gaps, feeding into a Glasgow City Region Digital Skills Action Plan that identifies future demand and how to meet it.

In summary, 2025 saw a varied approach to enhancing digital skills: foundational skills for those lacking them, advanced training for those pursuing digital careers, and initiatives to excite young people about tech. These efforts aim to ensure local talent is ready to fill the growing number of digital roles, making the economy truly inclusive.

Mission 2, Outcome 3 - Inclusive Innovation and Tech Ecosystem Growth

Glasgow's technology sector continued its strong momentum in 2025, attracting recognition at the national level. Notably, the **city was featured as a case study in TechUK's Local Digital Index 2024 report**[16], highlighted alongside Manchester as a flourishing tech hub outside London. The case study praised Glasgow City Region's approach to ecosystem development – citing factors like robust investment in innovation districts, and effective collaboration between government, academia and industry.

Of particular note was the implementation of the Digital Economy's Glasgow City Region Tech Ecosystem Platform (an open-access online database built with Dealroom.co) to map and showcase our region's startups, scale-ups, investors, and support organisations. This platform, the first of its kind for a UK city region earning it pride of place for **Best Use of Data at the City**

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[16] https://techuk-digital-index.thedatacity.com/assets/static/2024_glasgow_city_region_case_study.pdf

Nation Place Global Awards[17] - provides real-time insights into the health of the tech economy and helps connect local entrepreneurs with investors and partners. It has already been used extensively by the Digital Economy team to promote the city's distinct cluster strengths – with deep-dives this year in **Smart Things**, Space Tech and Medical Devices and supplying regular insights into the City Region's 50 Startups To Watch, highlighting those startups and scaleup companies ripe for further investment.

The Council's Economic Development team also continued direct support for the tech community. Through the Tech Ecosystem Event and Meetup Subsidies (micro-grants enabled by UK Shared Prosperity Funding), the Digital Economy team boosted market square activity for the third year running, supporting tech events of different types and size alongside regular meetups, **helping over 5000 members of the tech community meet, connect and build their networks and opportunities**.

One example was a Women in Tech Hackathon held in spring which brought together over 60 female students and professionals to work on social tech challenges – an event we supported with venue space and sponsorship, aligning with our commitment to diversity in tech.

Importantly, we remain focused on inclusive growth – encouraging tech activity not just in city centre 'tech quarters' but across all communities, providing particular support to those sectors of the ecosystem that don't often appear in the limelight or attract national funding, e.g. edtech, gaming and creative tech. By nurturing local tech businesses and attracting external investment, we aim to grow the digital sector in a way that creates quality jobs accessible to Glaswegians. 2025's outcomes, such as growth in venture funding (**Glasgow regional startups have raised £136 million in venture capital YTD** and a record £400m of equity investment over the past three years, bucking the national trend) and an increase in the total valuation of our tech companies (**now over £5.6 billion, +13% over the past 5 years**), indicate that Glasgow's tech ecosystem is on a strong upward trajectory. (For more, see the Tech Ecosystem Platform case study, which details this initiative and its impact).

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[17] https://www.citynationplace.com/data-wizardry-and-the-future-of-glasgows-tech-ecosystem

5. Delivering on Mission Three: Sustainable and Innovative Digital Public Services

Mission Three is about transforming how public services are delivered in Glasgow through digital innovation, making them more efficient, user-friendly, and future-ready. This mission focuses on improving the **efficiency, resilience, and agility of internal operations** so the Council and partners can serve citizens better, enhancing the **customer experience** of services ensuring services are easy to use and accessible, and leveraging **innovation and data to achieve better outcomes** for people and the city. In essence, it covers modernising our technology infrastructure, digitising processes, adopting new tools like AI or data analytics responsibly, and ensuring that services not only go digital but do so in a way that benefits everyone and aligns with our core values.

Mission Three's outcomes are to:

1. **Improve the efficiency, resilience and agility of operations,**
2. **Improve the customer experience of public services,**
3. **Deliver better outcomes through innovation and data use**.

During 2025, we made notable progress in each area:

Mission 3, Outcome 1 - Efficient, Resilient and Agile Operations

A major focus this year was the continued delivery of the Council's **Road to Multi-Source Strategy (R2MS)**. Approved in September 2023, R2MS is a highly complex, long-term programme that is transforming the Council's delivery model for digital and ICT services. The key features of R2MS are:

(1) the disaggregation of ICT and digital services into five service towers,

(2) the phased procurement of each tower, and

(3) the creation and continued development of an in-house Service Integration and Management (SIAM) function within Digital Services.

R2MS is allowing the Council to have greater control and flexibility over how it delivers and uses digital, data and technology to continue enabling every part of the Council Family and it is already delivering significant improvements across our infrastructure and user experience.

- Through the early part of 2025, focus was on negotiating and agreeing the terms of a contract extension with CGI, and this commenced on 1 April 2025. This was aligned to a **Service Modernisation Programme**, that consisted of 15 individual projects to modernise and improve service delivery and

technological infrastructure for the benefit of all users across the Council Family. This included:

- o Introduction of a new **Customer Thermometer** feedback tool to allow users who contact the Service Desk to raise a request or log an issue to share their experiences. Since launch in April 2025, the average user satisfaction rate has been 84% who are satisfied or very satisfied with the service received.
- o Investment in the Council's **own IT service management tooling**, known as Service Now Athena. This has enabled us to request and manage change more efficiently across multiple Managed Service Providers (MSPs) whilst operating in a controlled way as we progress R2MS.
- o Implementation of new tools – AIOPs, NexThink and UXM - to provide enhanced insight and data on the performance of our estate and greater intelligence on user experience.
- o Allowing users who request certain IT goods and services to use an expanded online **Service Catalogue** for a slicker, quicker and more user-friendly experience, with a wider range of materials now available in a single location.
- o Further investment in our **disaster recovery and back up capabilities**, to ensure we can restore services quickly in the event of disruption, and a programme of disaster recovery testing.

In addition, the Council has also invested in a new **Tech Bar** providing face to face ICT support to all Council Family employees as an additional option for staff who prefer in person assistance with IT matters. Since launch in March 2025, the Tech Bar has supported over 700 visits.

Similarly, electronic storage lockers called **Smart Lockers** have been introduced to streamline the process of collecting and returning ICT equipment, providing users with the flexibility to pick up or drop off devices at their convenience. Whether they need to collect a new device, replace a faulty one, or pick up peripherals, the Smart Lockers are designed to make the process easier.

- In 2024, **Network Services** was the first service tower to be procured. Into 2025, a complex transition programme was undertaken to ensure services were ready to commence with the new Managed Service Provider, Commsworld, from 1 April 2025. One of the earliest benefits of this was the upgrade of bandwidth at 63 wireless access network (WAN) sites across Glasgow Health and Social Care Partnership and Glasgow Life. 11 sites received 1000% increase in bandwidth; 48 sites saw a 500% increase, and 4 a 200% increase.
- Extensive work has also been undertaken to procure the second service tower, **Compute and Storage Services**, with service commencement expected in 2026. This is another significant milestone that will continue to enhance the resilience of services and infrastructure.

To ensure this new operating model can be delivered successfully and securely, the Council has invested in Digital Services to develop and mature the capability and capacity of the team to work across four divisions:

(1) Digital Strategy and Change;

(2) Business Relationships;

(3) Operations and Cybersecurity, and

(4) Digital Services Management Office.

We invested in **cyber security improvements** to ensure resilience. The Council ran a comprehensive staff awareness campaign on cyber threats, with over **6,000 employees completing mandatory cyber security e-learning**. These efforts have led to greater understanding and awareness across staff and a reduction in minor incidents, such as phishing emails, which were down compared to 2024 (by approximately 15%). Additionally, recognising the increasing importance of data protection, we provided advanced GDPR training to all project leads of digital initiatives. Strengthening these foundations ensures that as we digitise more services, we do so with strong oversight and security.

Highlighting the need for continued focus on this critical and ever-evolving area, in summer 2025, the Council was impacted by a cyber incident at a third-party sub-contractor. There was no loss of personal information, and the Council has reiterated the critical importance of continued investment and focus on cyber security and business continuity, taking the opportunity to learn lessons that will benefit preparedness for any similar event, ensuring we are even better equipped to defend against future threats. These steps ensure we continue to protect the city's digital infrastructure and maintain public trust, even as the threat landscape evolves.

A further hugely exciting development for staff was the pilot of **Microsoft 365 Copilot**, which is an AI assistant intended to boost productivity. A "Proof of Value" pilot project was delivered involving **128 members of staff** from across the Council and Glasgow Life, giving them access to Copilot in tools like Word, Excel, and Teams. Innovative use cases were explored, including:

- Minute-taking from audio transcription of meetings
- Preparation of committee reports
- Development of training content
- Documentation of user and system requirements
- Preparing responses to customer enquiries
- Managing emails

Feedback was overwhelmingly positive. In a survey of pilot users, **over 90% reported it helped them work more efficiently**, with many citing a 30–40% time saving on tasks like writing first drafts of reports, improved quality, and **60% of users reporting improved wellbeing** from administrative burden being reduced. Based on these results and the high demand to continue use, a business case has been prepared for wider rollout in 2026. This careful introduction of AI, coupled with strong governance, including our AI Register and the planned development of an AI Framework, exemplifies how we are innovating internally while maintaining trust and ethics, underpinning the core values set out in the Digital Glasgow Strategy.

Mission 3, Outcome 2 - Improved Customer Experience

In 2025, we continued to modernise the way people interact with Council services. A notable improvement was the expansion of the **MyGlasgow online portal**, which now offers a "one-stop shop" for over 50 services ranging from reporting a missed bin to paying council tax. We added new functions for example, **online booking for bulk waste pick-up** was introduced in March, replacing what used to require a phone call; within a few months, 65% of such requests came through the online system.

To ensure **digital services are user-friendly**, we took a user-centred design approach. The Council's web team simplified the website navigation based on common search terms, rewrote dozens of service pages in plain English, and improved accessibility (such as adding text-to-speech capability). We even involved members of the public in testing the redesigned pages, and their feedback directly influenced the final layouts. As a result of these changes, our main website's accessibility score (as measured by an independent audit) improved to **95% compliance with WCAG standards** (up from 88% the previous year

Glasgow Life has taken a significant step in digital innovation by introducing an AI-powered chatbot that makes it much easier for people to find the information they are looking for from their website. The project provides valuable learning for Glasgow City Council which itself is developing plans to introduce AI agents for handling customer enquiries.

Mission 3, Outcome 3 - Better Outcomes through Innovation and Data

In addition to service improvements, Mission Three is about harnessing innovation to address broader issues and improve decision-making and improve social, economic and environmental outcomes.

One powerful example in 2025 was how we used **data integration to support Homelessness Services**. Previously, data on homelessness cases, available temporary accommodation, and social housing lets were spread across systems in different Services. This year, analysts from Digital Services worked with Homelessness Services and Housing teams to build a **live data dashboard** that brings together key metrics in real time. This dashboard includes the number of people in temporary accommodation, the number of social housing properties becoming available (lets) each month, and progress towards the policy target of securing 60% of social housing lets for homeless households. By having this information readily available on one place, managers can take decisions in real time (for example, if lets are below the needed rate, they can engage housing associations earlier to free up more flats for those in need). A detailed story on this can be found in the [Supporting Homeless Services case study](#)[18].

Another area of innovation this year has been the **digitisation of telecare services**, ensuring that vulnerable residents continue to receive reliable support as technology advances. 2025 has seen years of planning come to fruition for the digitisation of Glasgow's telecare service, culminating in the Glasgow Health and Care Partnership receiving a **Gold Level 2 Award from the Digital Office for Scottish Local Government** in July. This is a critical step to guarantee that services remain uninterrupted and resilient as the UK approaches the nationwide switch off of the analogue telephony network. By acting now, we are futureproofing our support for those most in need, avoiding potential service disruption and ensuring no one is left behind.

Beyond safeguarding continuity however, this transition opens up exciting opportunities for innovation within care services. Digital infrastructure enables greater responsiveness, flexibility, and **integration with emerging technologies, such as voice assistants and smart devices**. These advances can transform the way care is delivered—making it more personalised, proactive, and accessible. The shift to digital telecare is, therefore, not just about readiness for change, but about harnessing new capabilities to enrich the lives of vulnerable residents and drive forward the transformation of community support. Glasgow has piloted the use of voice

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[18] https://invest-glasgow.foleon.com/digital-glasgow-strategy/digital-glasgow-strategy-2024-2030/supporting-homeless-services-case-study

assistants such as Amazon Alexa through its 5G Innovation Region "**Smart and Connected Places**" programme. This forward-thinking initiative enables eligible residents to receive reminders, safety alerts, and wellbeing checks directly via smart speakers to maximise people's independence. By integrating voice technology, telecare has become even more accessible and responsive, providing additional reassurance and convenience for both service users and their families. Early feedback from the pilot highlights how this approach makes support more adaptable to individual needs, further enriching the lives of vulnerable residents and advancing the transformation of community care.

Similar **AI-based smart traffic** cameras have been installed to improve traffic management and road safety. One deployment has been used to sequence traffic lights to allow the safe passage of traffic in front of an emergency vehicle, the second is to enable the prioritisation of buses along a main corridor.

Building on the Council's commitment to digital innovation, AI-powered smart traffic cameras have also been introduced to enhance traffic management and road safety. These advanced systems have been deployed in two key areas: firstly, to intelligently sequence traffic lights and facilitate the safe and efficient passage of emergency vehicles; and secondly, to prioritise buses along major corridors, improving public transport reliability and flow.

Finally, Glasgow is advancing its citywide 3 dimensional (3D) model as a **digital twin**[19] to support decision-making. This tool enables digital testing of scenarios, such as visualizing road layout changes for public feedback, mapping tree canopy coverage, and evaluating renewable energy deployment strategies.

Collectively, these digital advancements demonstrate Glasgow's unwavering commitment to delivering modern, inclusive and innovative public services that make a tangible difference to residents' daily lives.

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[19] 3D Urban Model | Glasgow Open Data Hub

6. **Challenges: Overcoming Barriers to Digital**

As we continue to advance our digital agenda, it is important to acknowledge the challenges we have encountered along the way. Our journey has required us to navigate a range of obstacles, each presenting opportunities for learning and growth. Being transparent about these helps us address them going forward:

- **Digital exclusion persists:** Despite extensive inclusion efforts, not everyone is online or confident digitally - approx. **7% of Glaswegians lack internet access at home**, and a significant portion have limited digital skills. Many of those digitally excluded are older adults, people with disabilities, or low-income households. This means some residents struggle to benefit from online services or the digital economy. In 2025, we encountered this challenge when promoting new digital services – for example, uptake of the revamped online portal in certain communities was slower, likely due to lack of awareness or ability. We addressed this by increasing but it remains a core challenge. We must continue investing in digital inclusion, or risk leaving behind those who could benefit most from digital services.

- Additionally, **confidence and trust issues** are a barrier for some, as concerns about privacy, fraud, or simply fear of "doing something wrong" online prevent a number of people from engaging. Overcoming this will require ongoing support and reassurance, and providing alternatives for as long as needed so that no citizen is disadvantaged by the push toward digital.

- **Resource and capacity constraints:** Implementing a city-wide digital strategy is ambitious against a backdrop of tight budgets and finite staffing. In 2025, we had to carefully prioritise projects due to **limited financial resources**. On the staffing side, **capacity and skills gaps** presented challenges. The Council, like many organisations, faces competition for digital talent. We mitigated some of this by bringing in short-term expertise through consultancy or partnering with universities for specific tasks, but this is not a sustainable solution. It remains a balancing act to ensure continuity of quality services while at the same time seeking to transform them. We continue to encourage innovative approaches to addressing this challenge through, for example, upskilling current staff, securing additional funding (and prudent phasing of projects so as to maximise the chance of success).

- **Change management:** Digital transformation is widely recognised, including by bodies such as Audit Scotland, as a journey that extends beyond technology to encompass evolving ways of working and organisational culture. Across Scotland, public sector organisations have seen that the shift to new digital tools and platforms brings both opportunities and challenges. National reports highlight that successful transformation relies on clear

communication, engagement, and ongoing support for both staff and citizens as they adapt to new systems and services.

- Reflecting these recognised sector-wide trends, our approach in Glasgow has emphasised transparent information about new technologies, such as AI pilots, ensuring staff and residents understand the benefits and intended use. We continue to encourage participation and collaboration across teams, consistent with best practice recommendations, to break down silos and enable integrated, user-focused service delivery. Similarly, building public trust by offering reliable and accessible digital options, while maintaining support for those who prefer more traditional methods, remains a key focus, aligned with national guidance for inclusive digital change. As we build a modern digital culture, our priorities remain engagement, trust, and continuous improvement, guided by sector benchmarks and lessons learned across Scotland.

- **Technology integration and legacy systems:** Glasgow City Council, like any large organisation, has many **legacy IT systems**. Integrating these or replacing them is highly complex and requires significant planning and investment.

- **Maintaining public trust and ethical standards:** Upholding public trust and ethical standards remains crucial as digital services expand and the use of data increases. Clear communication about data usage, decision-making processes, and the nature of digital interactions is essential to reassure the public. For example, transparency in labelling automated systems and ensuring users have access to human support can help address concerns about interacting with technology.

- In line with our Core Values set in the strategy, Glasgow is committed to the highest ethical standards and is developing an AI Framework to formalise our approach to ensuring safe and fair adoption of AI. Until it's fully established, we're navigating cautiously for example, we limited the AI pilot to assistive tasks and not any automated decision-making.

- **External dependencies and policy changes:** Some factors affecting our digital projects are outside our direct control. For instance, telecommunications upgrades depend on national providers – if they delay a rollout, our local plans get delayed. Similarly, changes in national policy or funding streams can introduce uncertainty. Additionally, as technology evolves, our strategy must adapt – the scale of the rapid rise of generative AI in late 2024/2025 is an example that wasn't fully accounted for when the strategy was written, so we've had to be agile in incorporating AI-related actions. Keeping up with such a fast-moving landscape is a constant challenge; we must remain flexible and ready to seize new opportunities and mitigate risks that emerge

In facing these challenges, we have learned valuable lessons that are factored into our priorities for 2026.

7. Challenges: Overcoming Barriers to Digital

Building on progress and lessons learned in 2025, we have identified key **priorities for 2026** to further advance the Digital Glasgow Strategy. These priorities align with our three missions and focus on accelerating transformation while addressing the challenges noted above. They include:

1. Expand digital inclusion efforts,

2. Embed and mature the new ICT and digital services operating model,

3. Develop and embed the AI Framework,

4. Customer-centric service redesign and channel shift,

5. Further improve connectivity and Smart City infrastructure (and applications),

6. Foster digital skills and culture within the Council.

8. Conclusion

In conclusion, the progress made in 2025 has laid a strong foundation for continued advancement next year. Throughout our efforts, we have not only accelerated digital transformation but have remained steadfast in upholding the core values at the heart of the Digital Glasgow Strategy. By promoting digital inclusion, supporting responsible use of innovative technologies, and embedding a customer-centric approach, we have worked to balance the pursuit of innovation with the protection of individual rights. Our ongoing commitment to these principles ensures that the strategy will deliver meaningful and equitable benefits for all citizens as we move into 2026 and beyond.

9. Acknowledgements

In 2025, delivering Glasgow's digital strategy was a cross-sector effort, with contributions from government bodies, private companies, academic institutions, and community organisations. These partners participated in consultations, provided funding, formed strategic partnerships, and were actively involved in projects, events, and reports that drove the strategy forward.

We thank each organisation for your valuable support and impact on the strategy. Your dedication and partnership have been instrumental in our journey as a city, and we are genuinely excited to continue working closely together as we strive for even greater progress in 2026 and the years ahead.

- Amazon Web Services
- AMD
- AWTG
- Barclays Eagle Lab
- BBC Scotland
- Boldyn Networks
- CENSIS
- Cisco
- Cities Coalition for Digital Rights
- Cities Today Institute
- CityFibre
- City of Glasgow College
- CivTech™ Scotland
- Commsworld
- Connected Places Catapult
- Cooperative Councils Innovation Network (CCIN)
- Cornerstone
- Corporate Project Solutions (CPS)
- Data Lab Scotland
- DataVita
- Dealroom.co
- EE
- ESRI
- Eurocities Digital Forum
- Glasgow Caledonian University
- Glasgow Chamber of Commerce
- Glasgow City Council
- Glasgow City Health and Social Care Partnership
- Glasgow City Innovation District
- Glasgow City Region
- Glasgow Council for the Voluntary Sector (GCVS)
- Glasgow Life
- Glasgow Riverside Innovation District
- Glasgow's voluntary and community sector organisations
- The Glasgow tech community
- Greater Things
- Intelligens Consulting

- Jobs and Business Glasgow
- Local schools and education providers
- Mavenir
- Mhor Collective
- Microsoft UK
- Natwest Group
- Neutral Wireless Limited
- NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde
- Ofcom
- Openreach
- PI Works
- Scottish Enterprise
- Scottish Government
- Scotland 5G Centre
- Scottish Wireless Limited
- Skills Development Scotland
- SmartSTEMs
- Smart Things Accelerator Centre (STAC)
- Streetwave
- Talent Engine
- TechScaler
- TechUK
- The Department of Science, Innovation and Technology (DSIT)
- The Digital Office for Scottish Local Government
- ThreeUK
- University of Glasgow
- University of Strathclyde
- Virgin Media O2
- VivaCity
- Vodafone

…and all of our vital technology providers and partners whose products and services are essential for keeping city operations running smoothly.