



**Glasgow City Council**

**Economy, Housing, Transport and Regeneration City Policy Committee**

**Report by Kevin Rush, Director of Regional Economic Growth**

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**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT UPDATE**

**Purpose of Report:**

This report provides Committee with a background to the work carried out by Economic Development and an update of activity across the Division over the last 6 months.

**Recommendations:**

Committee is asked to:

- note the report; and
- discuss the activity of Economic Development over the period.

Ward No(s):

Citywide: ✓

Local member(s) advised: Yes  No  consulted: Yes  No

## 1. Introduction

- 1.1 This paper provides a background to the Economic Development function within the Council, providing information on the main areas it covers, as well as presenting key achievements since the previous report to Committee on 18 November 2025. It concludes with performance monitoring data regularly reported through the Chief Executive's Senior Management Team.

## 2. Background

- 2.1 Glasgow City Council's Economic Development team is responsible for delivering the city's [Economic Strategy](#), which defines the actions we are taking to deliver an inclusive, sustainable and more productive economy for our city.
- 2.2 The Division has a wide-ranging remit with teams working in collaboration with city partners to deliver our goals. There are ten key parts: Business Glasgow; Employment & Skills; Invest Glasgow; Green Economy, Innovation & International; Digital Economy; Grants & Monitoring; Glasgow Film Office; Strategic Projects; UK Local Growth Fund (UKLGF); and Marketing and Communications. Further detail of each area is provided within the [Economic Development Annual Report](#).
- 2.3 In addition, the Convention Bureau and Visit Glasgow moved into Economic Development in December 2025 to join Invest Glasgow and form the new Destination Management and Marketing Organisation (DMMO). Recruitment has taken place and the team has developed a strategy to engage with city stakeholders ahead of its launch at the end of the summer.

## 3. Key achievements over the last 6 months

### 3.1 *Business Glasgow*

- 3.1.1 The Business Growth team provides a range of business support interventions with the principal aims of increasing the number of start-ups in the city and helping existing SMEs grow. In Financial Year 25/26, the team directly supported 490 new businesses to start trading, 30 of which are Social Enterprises.
- 3.1.2 In-house business advisory services remain the most valuable offer. In addition to one-to-one and one-to-many interventions, delivered by Business Advisers, funding supports a range of programmes delivered by ecosystem partners. This includes the Glasgow Business Growth Framework, the Digital Expert Support programme as well as small start-up grants. Combined, these programmes delivered close to £1m of additional business support interventions to small businesses in Glasgow over the past financial year.
- 3.1.3 Glasgow's first Social Innovation Challenge Fund (SICF) concluded at the end of March 2026. Delivered in collaboration with community ecosystem partners, around 100 individuals from underrepresented groups benefitted from

bespoke business support and training. An expanded application process for the 2026/27 SICF has concluded, with recommendations presented to City Administration Committee in June 2026.

3.1.4 The Green Business Support programme continued to help small businesses in Glasgow learn about their carbon footprint and take steps to reduce it, mitigate and adapt to climate change. It also helped them to save money on energy bills. This is achieved through the Green Business Grant, the SME Carbon Baseline service, the Business Growth Framework, and the Step Up to Net Zero circular economy demonstrator. Across these projects, over £600K of investment was made to help small businesses in Glasgow.

### 3.2 *Tourism and Conventions Bureau*

3.2.1 The Tourism and Conventions team moved into Economic Development from Glasgow Life in December 2025, to become part of Destination Glasgow, the newly established Destination Management and Marketing Organisation for the city.

3.2.2 2024 STEAM data on the volume and value of tourism to Glasgow reported tourism contributed £2.39bn to the local economy, with over 4.72m visitors staying overnight in the city for at least 2 nights. The 2025 STEAM data will be reported in the autumn of 2026.

3.2.3 The Tourism team are custodians of the Glasgow Tourism Strategy to 2030. In March 2025 the first 2-year tourism action plan was successfully achieved, with all actions closed. The new 2026-28 Tourism action plan was approved by the Glasgow Tourism Advisory Forum at the March meeting.

3.2.4 The Tourism team collate the evidence required from partners and stakeholders to submit the Glasgow entry to the Global Destination Sustainability Index of over 100 international tourism and events cities. Glasgow was the first city in the UK to join the Index in 2016 and currently ranks 1<sup>st</sup> in the UK and 5<sup>th</sup> globally on this city sustainability ranking.

3.2.5 The Conventions team closed the 2025-26 financial year, reporting since 1<sup>st</sup> April 2025 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2026, the city benefited from £207m worth of economic impact from delegate spend from 530 conferences that attracted over 165,000 delegates. Glasgow continues to attract more international delegates than any other UK city outside London.

3.2.6 From 1<sup>st</sup> April 2026, there are 660 conferences confirmed through to 2030, welcoming 300,000 delegates, with an economic benefit of £445m.

3.2.7 At the March (SCOTO) Scottish Community Tourism Conference, Glasgow Convention Bureau launched the 'In Glasgow Meetings Mean More' initiative to encourage delegates and visitors to spend time and money with social enterprise and charities across the city. The SCOTO Conference was a spotlight for 20 social enterprises across the city to work with conference delegates in the future.

### 3.3 *Visit Glasgow*

3.3.1 The Visit Glasgow team has been implementing several strategic actions, such as increasing audience engagement, growing from 161,339 (Feb 2025) to 174,856 (Feb 2026): +13,517 followers.

- **PR Activity 2025**

Over 100 pieces of coverage were achieved, Glasgow businesses featured over 164 times, 62 journalists & influencers were hosted.

- **Website development**

An updated consumer site was launched: [visitglasgow.com](http://visitglasgow.com) with improved user journey and functionality as well as five new language hubs to better support search for international visitors.

- **Domestic campaigns**

Campaigns targeted London, South-East and North England, North Scotland and gained 25.47m impressions in 2025/6.

- **International work**

Campaigns targeted audiences in USA, Canada, Germany and France and gained 38.7m impressions.

- The Destination Team was invited to present the city brand in Turin in January 2026 following connections made through city twinning. The team also represented the city at Tartan Week in New York in April 2026.

### 3.4 *Green Economy, Innovation & International*

3.4.1 The Green Economy, Innovation and International function is a broad area covering three key elements of the Division's work and delivering a broad range of activity over the last year.

3.4.2 The Green Economy team has a strong focus on supporting a just transition for Glasgow's workers, businesses and communities in moving towards a net zero city and ensuring equity and fairness as they do so. It supported the work of the Council's cross-party Just Transition Working Group and drafted the group's report and 18 recommendations on this key agenda. Progress includes:

- The second annual update on the Just Transition recommendations presented to the Net Zero Committee on 20<sup>th</sup> January 2026;
- Maintaining a key focus on the delivery of the Just Transition Skills Action Plan and Green Grants programme for local businesses, as well as engaging with local communities to ensure that the transition is both meaningful to them and that they can play an active part in shaping it;
- Delivery of a second round of the Bloomberg-funded Youth Climate Action Fund, which has funded twenty projects with young Glaswegians, and with recent confirmation from Bloomberg of a third year of funding for this programme for 2026;

- Participation in the Malmo Commitment group of cities on inclusive and equitable communities, which supports urban policy makers with peer exchanges focused on meaningful engagement with local residents. It has convened dialogues over the past year on key areas such as transport policy and addressing intersectionality in climate planning;
- Establishing work on an EU Horizon-funded project, called GreenDEMO, with a range of European city partners on support for a green transition and ensuring that local people are at the heart of it. This project is part of a wider approach in the EU to enhancing local democracy and citizen engagement across cities around the sustainability agenda;
- Continuing to play an active role in the Global Resilient Cities Network, its Board being chaired by the Leader of the Council, and which links Glasgow to many other cities around the world on issues of climate, economic development and social justice.

3.4.3 The Climate Finance Manager continues to advance the development of the Model for Climate Investment. The approach is grounded in learning from existing models, openly addressing challenges and lessons learned and applying those insights to design a model that is right for Glasgow. The model focuses on project delivery of the Local Heat and Energy Efficiency Strategy (LHEES) but recognises the opportunity of establishing a Climate Investment Vehicle, embedding a robust, scalable financing framework to support and finance delivery. Central to this is understanding the roles and responsibilities required to drive progress, including the role of key partners such as the National Wealth Fund and the insurance sector in strengthening resilience, reducing risk, and improving investability.

3.4.4 A specialist internal and external team is currently compiling the Outline Business Case (OBC) structuring the evidence and justifying the commitment of investing in such a model, ensuring that all objectives are being met, that additional social value is secured for the city and ultimately, the correct model is chosen for the benefit of the city.

3.4.5 With community participation forming a considered part of our approach, we are now progressing our second Community Municipal Investment raise for £1 million with Abundance, having raised £1 million in 2025, giving local people a direct opportunity to invest in Glasgow's transition.

3.4.6 The Innovation team has continued to work closely with Glasgow City Region on a range of activities which look to build on and grow the local innovation ecosystem. These draw on local strengths in sectors such as advanced manufacturing, life sciences, net zero, quantum technology, financial services and digital and enabling technology. The principal areas of progress include:

- Completion of the Innovation Accelerator programme and ongoing support for its legacy, following a £43 million investment from the UK Government across 2023-26;
- Successful realisation of co-investment for the Innovation Accelerator project portfolio of more than 2:1 against national funding in its current delivery

phase, thereby exceeding the Treasury expectation of a 1:1 out-turn, and with further co-investment forecast for a greater return in coming years;

- Support for an industry-led Innovation Group as part of the Glasgow Economic Leadership arrangements;
- Work with Glasgow City Region to develop a portfolio submission for the £50 million Local Innovation Partnerships Fund, which is focused on the life sciences and enabling technologies cluster (submission to UKRI anticipated by the end of June);
- Collaboration with key local and national partners on the six themes of the Regional Innovation Action Plan, with work around inclusion and skills connecting to the further education sector and on the city's innovation identity alongside the Invest Glasgow and DMO teams to help promote it on a global stage;
- Further funding for the city's two Innovation Districts for 2025/6, mobilising UK Shared Prosperity Fund support of £680K, and with a strong focus on inclusive innovation.

3.4.7 The International team continues to work on implementing the city's International Strategy through engagement with local partners across academic and business communities in particular. Key activities in support of this agenda have included:

- Allocation of a budget from the UK Shared Prosperity Fund and then Local Growth Fund to support Glaswegian SMEs to attend overseas trade missions and events and support their internationalisation in terms of export growth and inward investment. This has a key focus on the city's principal innovation sectors and harnessing existing market links from both the Glasgow Chamber of Commerce and the Innovation Districts. These have included annual trade missions led by the Glasgow Chamber of Commerce to Singapore, Shanghai and Tartan Week in New York, as well as attendance at the Smart Cities Expo in Barcelona;
- Support for Council services in considering funding opportunities from international grants, particularly from the EU Horizon programme and, looking forward, from the UK rejoining Erasmus+;
- Hosting delegations from key market areas to support further international links and potential investment opportunities, especially in relation to innovation sectors. These include ones over the past six months from Denmark, the United States, and Finland on the life sciences in particular, allied to close collaboration with the work of both national governments through Scottish Development International and the Foreign Commonwealth & Development Office and Department for Business and Trade at UK level;
- Engagement with a range of global city networks on peer learning, cultural and educational links, and potential market opportunities

### 3.5 *Employment and Skills*

3.5.1 The Glasgow Futures programme has continued to provide employability support that targets those furthest from the labour market or experiencing in-

work poverty. Priority groups include those with disabilities, ethnic minority communities, parents, and young people.

3.5.2 The programme, which is governed by the Local Employability Partnership (LEP) and managed by Economic Development consists of over 30 projects, delivered by over 40 public and third sector organisations. 2025/26 delivery targets have been achieved, and provision will continue throughout 2026/27. The programme is detailed in the [Glasgow Futures Project Directory](#).

3.5.3 Members will be aware of the Glasgow Guarantee which, since 2014, has supported over 11,000 people into quality jobs or modern apprenticeships. This offer, which incentivises employers to create high quality jobs or apprenticeships and recruit work-ready employability participants, has now been integrated into the Glasgow Futures programme. This support will continue, now known as the Glasgow Futures Employer Recruitment Incentive.

3.5.4 The LEP seeks to ensure that person-centred support is balanced with industry labour and skill demands. This agenda is being progressed through a new Employer Engagement Challenge Fund that will see award of £5m grant-funding to a single partnership of providers who will collaborate to ensure a menu of opportunities is available for work-ready participants to move into employment or an apprenticeship. Opportunities will include paid work placements and training for work interventions. Applications are currently being scored by the LEP, and recommendations for funding will be presented to the City Administration Committee on 18<sup>th</sup> June for activity to commence in October 2026.

### 3.6 *Grants and Monitoring*

3.6.1 The Glasgow Communities Fund programme for 2026-2029 (GCF3) commenced on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2026, following approval of funding to 193 organisations by the CAC on 4<sup>th</sup> December 2025. The Performance Monitoring Framework for GCF3 is currently being reviewed and will be developed in collaboration with council family strategic lead officers and wider stakeholders, including funded organisations.

3.6.2 Glasgow's Holiday Programme for 2026/27 was approved by CAC on 23<sup>rd</sup> April 2026. The programme delivers enhanced provision across the city, bolstered by additional funding of £262,899 from the Whole Family Early Intervention Fund in recognition of the impact on child poverty. 59 organisations will deliver programmes of activity across the city, detail on delivery locations will be shared with Elected Members in June.

### 3.7 *Invest Glasgow*

- 3.7.1 Performance in 2025/26 has been positive with 62 company investments (36 new and 26 expansions). These investments to date have translated into 5,133 new job announcements and known Capital Expenditure of £591.69 million across the city and region.
- 3.7.2 The dominant sectors for project numbers in 2025/26 has been Engineering and Advanced Manufacturing (with 11 projects), Financial and Business services (10 projects) and the Digital Economy and Retail (both with 8 projects each). So far, the UK is the main source market with 28 projects, followed by the US (8 projects) and France (4 projects). Glasgow has landed 48 out of the 62 inward investment projects. A full breakdown of our KPIs can be provided on request to Invest Glasgow.
- 3.7.3 This quarter's standout projects for FDI investment in capital expenditure and jobs are:
- Linxon (Switzerland), a company that provides electrical infrastructure solutions, including the engineering and commissioning of power transmission and distribution systems, has opened a new office in Glasgow. The office supports the delivery of electricity transmission infrastructure projects for SSEN Transmission and SP Energy Networks, which are investing approximately £34bn over five years to upgrade Scotland's grid. It has created 25 new roles and serves the domestic market.
  - NORR Group (Canada), an architecture and engineering firm, has announced the creation of a dedicated interior design studio in Glasgow. The studio will increase its interior design services throughout its existing operations, with an investment of £2.96 million and 37 projected new jobs.
- 3.7.4 Invest Glasgow continues to work closely with colleagues in Scottish Development International (SDI) to bring a range of pipeline inward investment opportunities to a successful conclusion. A number of these enquiries involve the team hosting visits and presenting to a range of overseas companies. These outcomes will be reported in future performance updates.
- 3.7.5 Glasgow marked its first return to MIPIM since 2019 as part of the 'Scotland at MIPIM' delegation, re-establishing its presence on the global property stage. The delegation is now evaluating the impact of this year's participation and will present recommendations to shape and strengthen future engagement.
- 3.7.6 Planning for Team Glasgow's presence at UKREiiF 2026 is progressing at pace, positioning the City Region for a standout showcase at this flagship national event. Building on the strong impact of previous years, the team is curating a high-profile programme of speakers and events and developing compelling collateral designed to highlight the City Region's strengths and investment appeal.
- 3.7.7 Key actions include the creation of dynamic investment maps and a refreshed Pitchbook, both aimed at capturing the attention of investors seeking high-value opportunities. For the first time, this effort is being shaped

collaboratively with local authorities across the region, ensuring a comprehensive and strategically aligned portfolio of investment propositions.

- 3.7.8 To further elevate Team Glasgow's presence, an innovative visualisation agency has been commissioned to produce an immersive showpiece that brings to life the scale and diversity of development and investment opportunities available across the region.
- 3.7.9 The Glasgow Investment Group (GIG) is progressing to understand where capital investment is required across the council families and co-ordinating opportunities and asks to enable strategic delivery.

### 3.8 *Strategic Projects*

- 3.8.1 The Strategic Projects team are progressing work across several key areas of Economic Development to support the delivery of the Council's long-term strategic objectives. Current priorities include strengthening internal capacity, assessing how divisional activities contribute to tackling child poverty, improving the use of internal and external data sources, and enhancing stakeholder engagement.
- 3.8.2 Alongside this forward-looking work, the team is undertaking a review of the Glasgow Economic Strategy 2022–2030 considering the changing economic landscape. This review will report on thematic achievements to date and outline future priorities. It is anticipated that the findings will also provide valuable lessons learned from the current strategy, informing the development of the next iteration.

### 3.9 *Digital Economy*

- 3.9.1 Publication of the '[Why Glasgow?](#)' data-led storytelling series of deep-dives continues to shine a light on investable clusters of opportunity across the Regional innovation ecosystem. These video-led interactive reports, developed in conjunction with partner organisations and circulated to a broad business, investor and talent audience, have to date covered place-based strengths in: Smart Things; Space Tech; MedTech; and Critical Technologies (spanning Quantum, Photonics, Semiconductors and Sensing & Connectivity Tech). The value and impact of the reports to date have been boosted by a co-development approach with cluster partners at the Smart Things Accelerator Centre (STAC), West of Scotland Space Cluster, the Living Laboratory and Technology Scotland.
- 3.9.2 The Tech Ecosystem Event and Meetup subsidies initiative, funded by the UK Shared Prosperity Fund and delivered between 2023-2026 - has come to an end. During this period, the programme delivered a sustained programme of place-based intervention, supporting an estimated 13,000 participants, including students, early-stage founders, scaling businesses, investors, creative practitioners, academics and public-sector partners. The programme enabled improved access to networks, knowledge exchange and non-financial

business support. Targeted areas of support included: Space, EdTech and Gaming alongside Coding, Entrepreneurship & Inclusion.

3.9.3 The Glasgow No-Code pilot programme was launched and delivered in the second half of 2025-26 to help increase the number of digital SMEs in the city and address the digital skills gap, assisted by AI. The pilot has generated a meaningful pipeline of startup demand in a compressed delivery window: 108 applications started, 99 startups registered, 35 registered companies identified, and 17 accepted founders moving into the Minimum Viable Product (MVP) pathway by month-end April 2026. In parallel, 116 FE college students and campus community residents were supported with no-code training through a combination of remote and in-person bootcamps.

3.9.4 The Digital Economy and Invest Glasgow teams will support London Tech week in June, an event which is expected to host over 30,000 investors and companies. The delegation is delivering a 'Glasgow showcase' panel on the Department for Business & Trade (DBT) pavilion focusing on the city's deep tech offer with local startups representing quantum, semiconductor, photonics, space and medtech sectors. This is the first time Glasgow has supported the event with the team taking the opportunity to work alongside partners, including Barclays, Sustainable Ventures, TechUK and Dealroom.

#### 4. Performance Monitoring

4.1 The Chief Executive's Senior Management Team (SMT) meet quarterly to review wider service priorities and performance. The table below shows the outcomes, targets and performance reported over the 25/26 financial year:

Outcome/ Theme / Strategy	Milestone / Target 2025/26	Actual 2025/26	Performance Note	RAG (Red/ Amber/ Green)
Number of businesses receiving advice and support from GCC Business Team	1200	1254	The team exceeded this year's target and will build on this success by continually looking to forge new relationships across the ecosystem.	<b>G</b>
Number of Glasgow residents who started their own business as a result of our support	500	490	Staff absences contributed to the team falling slightly short of our ambitious target. This figure does not include the full number of new businesses that will commence trading as a result of support delivered via the Social Innovation Challenge Fund.	<b>G</b>
Number of businesses receiving	83	91	The Growth Team exceeded this year's target, with 91 Glasgow SMEs receiving	<b>G</b>

Outcome/ Theme / Strategy	Milestone / Target 2025/26	Actual 2025/26	Performance Note	RAG (Red/ Amber/ Green)
specialist consultancy support aimed at growing their business			valuable support through our framework of expert suppliers.	
Number of businesses receiving support aimed at enhancing business digital performance	40	66	The Business Growth team exceeded this year's target, supporting 66 small businesses to receive Digital support tailored to their individual needs.	<b>G</b>
Number of businesses supported through the Green Business Grant	15	13	Completing work within the 2025/26 financial year proved to be challenging for SMEs; therefore a number of SMEs supported in the last FY will conclude/undertake the work associated with their grant in 26/27.	<b>G</b>
Number of businesses supported through the Tech Grant (Event, Meet-up & Rent)	25	28		<b>G</b>
Number of jobs created by Glasgow Inward Investment Projects	2,000	2887	2,887 new jobs announced to date. A number of these are future projects with job estimates that will be confirmed in due course.	<b>G</b>
Number of new Investments	20	36		<b>G</b>
Number of company expansion projects	10	26		<b>G</b>
Number of anticipated children and young people identified as service beneficiaries by the Holiday Programme Providers.	39,697	31,754	Actual total is for Summer and October 2025. Anticipated Spring 2026 beneficiaries is 9,368. Spring monitoring data will be available in June.	<b>G</b>
Number of employability engagements	5,330	4,931	The number of actual engagements for 2025/26 will	<b>G</b>

Outcome/ Theme / Strategy	Milestone / Target 2025/26	Actual 2025/26	Performance Note	RAG (Red/ Amber/ Green)
			increase over the next reporting period due to delays in evidence being presented by projects.	
Total number of engagements who progressed into employment, Further/Higher education, modern apprenticeships, school, volunteering, self-employment.	2,334	2,158	The total number of actual progressions for 2025/26 will increase over the next reporting period due to delays in evidence being presented by projects.	<b>G</b>

## 5. Policy and Resource Implications

### Resource Implications:

*Financial:* None. Projects and activities are funded through a combination of GCC budgets complemented by Scottish and UK Government funding.

*Legal:* Legal Services provide guidance and support to a range of activity, including Subsidy Control and Grant Agreements.

*Personnel:* None. Activities are delivered by Economic Development staff or partners/city stakeholders

*Procurement:* Procurement advice and guidance is provided when necessary to ensure compliance when purchasing services.

**Council Strategic Plan:** The following Strategic Plan outcomes are supported:

Grand Challenge 1 – Reduce Poverty and inequality in our communities - Mission 3: Improve the health and wellbeing of our local communities and Mission 4: Support Glasgow to be a city that is active and culturally vibrant.

Grand Challenge 2 – Increase opportunity and prosperity for all our citizens - Mission 2: Support the growth of an innovative, resilient and net zero carbon economy.

Grand Challenge 3 – Fight the climate emergency in a just transition to a net zero Glasgow – Mission 2: Become a net zero carbon city by 2030

Grand Challenge 4 – Enable staff to deliver essential services in a sustainable, innovative and efficient way for our communities - Mission 1: Create safe, clean and thriving neighbourhoods.

### **Equality and Socio-Economic Impacts:**

*Does the proposal support the Council's Equality Outcomes 2021-25* Yes. Specifically Tackling Poverty, Reducing Health Inequalities and Empowering Communities

*What are the potential equality impacts as a result of this report?* The Council's activity as detailed in this paper has the potential to reduce poverty, create well-paid jobs and support inclusive growth.

*Please highlight if the policy/proposal will help address socio economic disadvantage.* The provision outlined in this paper is designed to support the most socio-economically disadvantaged individuals in the city. Projects will improve the physical environment, address social issues and increase economic activity.

### **Climate impacts:**

*Does the proposal support any Climate Plan actions? Please specify:* The work noted in this report both contributes to the key aims of the Climate Plan in relation to a greener economy and innovation for net zero, particularly through learning from global peer city networks.

*What are the potential climate impacts as a result of this proposal?* This work looks to align trade and investment with the city's net zero ambitions and therefore support a range of positive climate impacts.

*Will the proposal contribute to Glasgow's net zero carbon target?* Yes, this approach is a contributor to the realisation of the city's net zero target through supporting businesses in this sector to grow.

**Privacy and Data Protection impacts:** This report has no impacts upon privacy or data protection.

## **6. Recommendations**

Committee is asked to:

- note the report; and
- discuss the activity of Economic Development over the period.