

# How Glasgow is Transforming into a Leading Technology and Innovation Hub

While Edinburgh is still the place to be, further west things are stirring.

Glasgow, Scotland's vibrant and historic city, is undergoing a remarkable transformation. Once known as a powerhouse of industry, particularly for shipbuilding, locomotives, and textiles, Glasgow is rapidly emerging as a leading technology and innovation hub.

Through targeted investments in key technologies like IoT, unwavering cross-sector collaboration, and proactive challenge mitigation, Glasgow is primed to become a global innovation powerhouse.

## Building a Strong Foundation

Glasgow's industrial past has left a lasting legacy that fuels its current transformation. The city's skilled engineering workforce, a product of its industrial heritage, is a valuable asset for the emerging tech sector.

Additionally, world-renowned universities like the University of Glasgow and the University of Strathclyde have a long history of research and development, contributing significantly to Glasgow's transformation into a leading technology-driven city. Notably, Alexander Graham Bell's invention of the telephone in Glasgow showcases the city's early aptitude for technological innovation.

Building upon this strong foundation, Glasgow City Council has played a crucial role in fostering an entrepreneurial

ecosystem to nurture startups and young businesses. Organisations like Scottish Enterprise, working alongside Glasgow City Council, provide financial support, mentorship, and access to resources for these businesses. Initiatives like the “Tech Scaler” program equip promising [Glasgow App development](#) companies with the tools and guidance needed to scale their businesses and compete on the global tech stage.

Similarly, the “Innovation Accelerator” program offers tailored support to early-stage ventures, helping them navigate the challenges of launching and growing their ideas.

An additional noteworthy development is the creation of Dealroom, an open-access database showcasing Glasgow’s tech ecosystem. Glasgow City Council champions this platform, which provides investors and businesses with valuable data on startups, accelerators, and meetups within the city.

By fostering transparency and facilitating connections, Dealroom strengthens Glasgow’s position as a leading tech cluster and attracts international investment.

## **The Rise of the Internet of Things (IoT)**

Glasgow’s ambitions in the tech sector extend far beyond traditional industries. The city has set its sights on becoming Europe’s largest IoT innovation hub.

Smart things and IoT refer to the network of physical devices embedded with sensors and software, allowing them to collect and exchange data. This technology has the potential to revolutionise various industries, from manufacturing and logistics to healthcare and smart cities.

To achieve its ambitious IoT goals, Glasgow has secured a £2.5 million investment partnership between the UK Government, Glasgow City Council, and the Smart Things Accelerator Centre

(STAC).

This collaboration, championed by Councillor Ricky Bell, Deputy Leader of Glasgow City, aims to create a thriving ecosystem for IoT development and deployment. A key component of this initiative is the creation of “thebeyond,” a state-of-the-art facility located at SkyPark, Finnieston.



Photo by Brian Aitkenhead on Unsplash

“Thebeyond” will serve as an incubator and accelerator for Glasgow’s burgeoning IoT industry, providing startups with co-working spaces, access to cutting-edge technology labs, and mentorship from industry experts. The ambitious target is to house 100 tech companies within “thebeyond” by the end of 2024, creating a dynamic hub for innovation and collaboration. This will further solidify Glasgow’s reputation as a leading IoT cluster and attract international investment.

Looking beyond IoT, Glasgow is also positioning itself as a leader in various emerging technologies alongside smart things

and IoT. Artificial Intelligence (AI) has the potential to transform numerous sectors, and Glasgow is attracting businesses developing AI applications in healthcare, finance, and robotics.

Robotics is another area of focus, with potential applications in manufacturing, logistics, and healthcare. Nanotechnology, a field dealing with manipulating matter at the atomic and molecular level, holds immense promise for advancements in materials science, medicine, and electronics. Glasgow is actively encouraging research and development in these areas, fostering a diverse and dynamic tech ecosystem poised to compete on the global tech stage.

Additionally, the city is promoting MedTech, which focuses on developing innovative medical technologies to improve healthcare outcomes, and CleanTech, which aims to create sustainable solutions for energy generation and environmental protection.

These areas, along with smart things and IoT, hold significant potential for economic growth, positive social impact, and attracting international investment.

## **Cultivating a Collaborative Environment**

Collaboration is the cornerstone of successful innovation ecosystems. Glasgow understands this principle and actively fosters partnerships between startups, universities, established businesses, and industry experts.

Universities like the University of Strathclyde offer expertise and research capabilities in key technologies, while established companies provide valuable mentorship and industry insights.

Startups, on the other hand, bring fresh ideas, agility, and a

willingness to take risks. This collaborative environment allows for knowledge sharing, cross-pollination of ideas, and the development of groundbreaking solutions that enhance life and industry.

Furthermore, Glasgow has secured the support of industry veterans from leading companies like Dyson, Meta (formerly Facebook), and Volvo Cars. These experienced professionals offer invaluable guidance to young businesses within the “thebeyond” tech companies, helping them navigate the complexities of the tech industry and develop commercially viable products.

Their mentorship provides startups with a distinct advantage, increasing their chances of success in the competitive global markets. This collaboration between industry leaders and Glasgow’s homegrown innovation further strengthens the city’s reputation as a leading tech cluster.

Additionally, Glasgow is actively promoting open-source data platforms like Dealroom and knowledge-sharing initiatives. Sharing data and fostering open collaboration allows for faster innovation and accelerates the development of new technologies in smart things and IoT, as well as other key future technologies.

By embracing open data practices, Glasgow demonstrates its commitment to transparency and collaboration, further attracting international investment and positioning itself as a global leader in technology innovation.

## **Benefits of Glasgow’s Transformation**

Glasgow’s transformation into a leading technology and innovation hub promises a multitude of benefits for the city and its residents.

Economically, the development of a thriving tech sector is expected to create a significant number of high-paying jobs in various fields, attracting skilled professionals and boosting the overall economy. Investment in tech startups is likely to increase, leading to the creation of new businesses and fostering a more dynamic and entrepreneurial environment. This economic growth will have a ripple effect, benefiting various sectors beyond technology, such as retail, hospitality, and professional services.

[Glasgow's tech transformation](#) has an equally promising social impact. Advancements in fields like AI and MedTech have the potential to revolutionise healthcare services. AI-powered diagnostics and personalised medicine can lead to faster and more accurate diagnoses, while advancements in medical robotics can improve surgical precision and patient outcomes.

Additionally, technology can play a crucial role in improving social services by streamlining processes, increasing efficiency, and providing better support to vulnerable populations.

Educational institutions can leverage technology to enhance learning experiences, personalise education, and make it more accessible for everyone. Ultimately, Glasgow's focus on innovation, particularly in healthcare and education, has the potential to improve the overall quality of life for its residents.

Glasgow's commitment to CleanTech has significant environmental benefits. By focusing on developing sustainable solutions for energy generation and promoting energy efficiency, the city can reduce its carbon footprint and mitigate the effects of climate change.

The narrative surrounding Glasgow's transformation extends beyond the mere creation of a leading tech cluster. Its commitment to CleanTech signifies a holistic approach to

progress, weaving together economic prosperity with environmental sustainability. By fostering innovation in clean energy solutions and energy efficiency technologies, Glasgow unlocks a multitude of benefits.

These elevate Glasgow's position in the global fight against climate change. As a city actively developing and deploying clean technologies, Glasgow has become a frontrunner in showcasing the viability and effectiveness of sustainable solutions. This leadership role can inspire and influence other cities to adopt similar strategies, accelerating the global transition towards a more sustainable future.

## **Challenges and the Road Ahead**

Despite the exciting potential, Glasgow's journey towards becoming a leading tech hub is not without challenges. Attracting and retaining top tech talent is crucial for sustained growth. The city needs to create an attractive environment for skilled professionals, offering competitive salaries, good career prospects, and a high quality of life.

Additionally, ensuring inclusive growth is essential. The benefits of Glasgow's tech transformation should be distributed equitably, ensuring that all residents have the opportunity to participate in and benefit from the city's economic prosperity.

## **Conclusion**

The optimism surrounding Glasgow's tech transformation is undeniable. The city has a strong foundation in engineering and research, a supportive ecosystem fostered by Glasgow City Council and Scottish Enterprise, and a clear vision for the future. By putting their money behind hot tech like IoT and working together like a well-oiled machine across different industries, Glasgow is gearing up to be a major player in

global innovation.

Glasgow's transformation serves as an inspiration for other cities around the world, demonstrating the power of innovation to drive economic growth, improve social well-being, and create a more sustainable future.

By leveraging its rich history, fostering a collaborative environment, and embracing cutting-edge technologies, Glasgow is creating a future filled with exciting possibilities. The city's journey is a testament to its spirit of innovation and resilience, and its success will undoubtedly inspire other cities to embark on their journeys towards becoming leading technology and innovation hubs.