



# Sustainable Tourism & Conventions Action Plan 2023 - 2025

Progress report for 2023/24

**Glasgow**life

**GLASGOW  
CONVENTION  
BUREAU**

This plan is a second phase Sustainability Plan for Tourism & Conventions in Glasgow. It sets out key short to medium-term actions which focus on driving and supporting change across the sector.

As the strategic lead for tourism and conventions, Glasgow Life's role is to support our city to adopt a cohesive and balanced approach to managing our destination's visitor economy. We aim to develop the tourism and conventions sector to benefit our citizens, our economy and environment. The actions in the sustainability plan align with our commitment to Tourism Declares a Climate Emergency and the Glasgow Declaration to take Climate Action.

The actions within this plan feed into and directly

- support [Strategic Priority 5](#) (page 20) of the Glasgow 2030 Tourism Strategy
- support [Glasgow's Climate Plan](#)
- support the national tourism strategy [Scotland Outlook 2030](#)
- align to [UN Sustainable Development Goals](#).

## Rationale

We are committed to implementing a balanced approach with greater focus on shaping positive and environmental impacts alongside economic benefits.

As our industry works hard to renew itself, it is ever more important that we support the sector to adopt more sustainable practices.

Strengthening their capacity to be resilient, to respond to customer expectations, and show that tourism can have a positive impact whilst helping to meet net zero ambitions are all key fundamentals.

## We aim to do this by working through three strategic areas:

### Building a Sustainable Tourism Sector

Supporting industry to be more sustainable through training, accreditation and signposting to resources.

### Developing Our Sustainable City Offer

Working with internal teams and external stakeholders to strengthen our sustainable credentials and adapt our processes to champion green change.

### Showcasing Our Sustainable City Destination

Translating the green conversation to actions which are meaningful, free or low cost. Avoiding use of jargon, celebrating, and promoting successes in the industry.

Glasgow Life has responsibility for key elements of destination management and will continue to work closely with stakeholders, industry, and services as we strengthen our sustainable and inclusive visitor economy.

The table overleaf sets out the priority actions for Tourism and Conventions and how they contribute to the successful delivery of other city sustainability plans.



**Aileen Crawford**

Head of Tourism and Conventions  
Glasgow Life

# Building a Sustainable Tourism Sector

## 1. Accessible, Resilient & Welcoming



Glasgow Climate  
Action Plan  
Priority 1 & 2

Tourism & Conventions Actions	Measure	Timescales	Progress for 2023/24
<p><b>1.1.</b> Support businesses to access available funding streams and sign up to green accreditation schemes</p>	<p>70% of city centre hotel rooms to be signed up to a green accreditation scheme by March 2023 check where we are now.</p> <p>60% of leisure &amp; business members to have green credentials and online accessibility guides</p>	March 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>41% of city centre hotels rooms have a 3rd party sustainability accreditation.</li> <li>36% and 20% of leisure and business members have a 3rd party sustainability accreditation and/or an online accessibility guide respectively.</li> </ul>
<p><b>1.2.</b> Implement new contract with AccessAble to ensure 200+ key city and public service venues have up to date online accessibility information guides</p>	<p>Number of accessibility venue audits conducted / renewed</p> <p>Number of new / upgraded online accessibility guides available for Glasgow venues</p> <p>60% of leisure &amp; business members to have online accessibility guides</p>	March 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Online accessibility guides were reviewed for over 200 Glasgow venues. A total of 18 venues were visited by surveyors to conduct a fuller review of any venue changes including for City Halls, SEC and Kimpton Blythswood Square Hotel. A new accessible guide was created for the <a href="#">Burrell Collection</a></li> <li>Glasgow Life will continue to partner with AccessAble for 2024-25 to support the provision of online access information for city residents and visitors.</li> </ul>

Tourism & Conventions Actions	Measure	Timescales	Progress for 2023/24
<p><b>1.3.</b> Work with VisitScotland and AccessAble to raise awareness on the importance of accessibility, its business benefit and the training opportunities which are available.</p>	<p>Number of workshops and webinars delivered</p> <p>Number of attendees and participants</p>	<p>June 2024</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The team hosted an Accessibility workshop for a group of city hotels in November 2023. Working closely with VisitScotland, AccessAble and with guest speaker Robin Sheppard of <a href="#">Bespoke Hotels</a>, the session looked at the opportunity and value of the accessible market for overnight stays. Following the workshop, <a href="#">The Address created a new online access page</a>.</li> </ul>
<p><b>1.4.</b> Continue to signpost our members to support and funding linked to greener practices e.g., Glasgow Chamber of Commerce ‘Step up to Net Zero’ scheme, Scottish Enterprise, VisitScotland toolkits, WRAP, Zero Waste Scotland, free toolkits to make your own guides.</p>	<p>Inclusion in member comms; e-updates, webinar content, member event speakers, blogs</p>	<p>March 2024</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A new, <a href="#">Visit Glasgow</a>, website was developing bringing together three websites for conference/event organisers, visitors and local businesses. The new website allows us to tell Glasgow’s sustainability story more cohesively across all our audiences. <a href="#">New content</a> has been added directing businesses to resources, support and funding opportunities.</li> </ul>
<p><b>1.5.</b> Roll out new accessible event planning guides and continue to be a leading conference destination for the medical and life sciences field, by supporting delegates living with certain medical conditions to attend their own UK, European or international conferences in our city</p>	<p>Number of new guide downloads</p>	<p>March 2025</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Web traffic for the <a href="#">Glasgow Convention Bureau website</a> is available for Jan-July 2023 only as the site is being redeveloped. Accessibility content on the website was accessed over 240 times.</li> </ul>



Tourism & Conventions Actions	Measure	Timescales	Progress for 2023/24
<p><b>1.6.</b> Adapt tourism governance structures to be more inclusive and representative</p>	<p>Published changes / forward plans to existing tourism partnership structures.</p>	<p>March 2025</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Changes have been introduced to the 2 tourism industry groups; <a href="#">Glasgow Tourism Advisory Forum</a> and Glasgow Tourism &amp; Events Network to ensure that they reflect the ambition of the <a href="#">Glasgow 2030 Tourism Strategy</a>.</li> </ul>
<p><b>1.7.</b> Ensure marketing and imagery in our communication and campaigns is more representative of our city residents</p>	<p>Review marketing toolkit imagery and use in destination comms/campaigns</p>	<p>June 2024</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A photoshoot with influencer and disabled travel blogger Emma Muldoon was hosted at the Scottish Event Campus, Kelvingrove Art Gallery &amp; Museum and the Burrell Collection.</li> <li>• Upcoming B2B photography has been arranged, where part of the brief is for accessible and sustainable signage and features to be captured at various locations and venues throughout the city.</li> </ul>
<p><b>1.8.</b> Ensure all teams members participate in Equality and Diversity training</p>	<p>Maintain register of completed staff training</p>	<p>March 2024</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A programme of online training on EDI has continued to be rolled out across Glasgow Life. 15 members of the Tourism and Conventions team participated in an accessibility training session hosted by AccessAble in March 2024.</li> </ul>

## 2. Improve Environmental and Social Impact via our Suppliers / Supported Partners



Glasgow Climate  
Action Plan  
Priority 1 & 2

Tourism & Conventions Actions	Measure	Timescales	Progress for 2023/24
<p><b>2.1.</b> Continue to encourage city/partner DMCs and PCOs to create their own sustainability policy, share it publicly, and have it signed by their executive.</p>		ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 77% of our member PCO and DMCs have a sustainability plan that is shared on their website. We have set up a discount to incentivise these businesses to join a 3rd party sustainability accreditation scheme. We feature news and opportunities on sustainability in our member communications and events.</li> </ul>
<p><b>2.2.</b> Monitor feedback from our conference organisers on their perception of Glasgow as a sustainable and healthy meeting destination.</p>	<p>Through post-event evaluation we aim that 50%+ of all our conferences supporting programmes will have sustainability themes included by the end of 2025</p>	December 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conference organisers in Glasgow were asked; “Glasgow is in the top ten in the Global Destination Sustainability Index of cities. Can you give any examples where your meeting was ‘green’?”</li> <li>• Feedback from organisers in 2023 and 2024 showed 77% had prioritised green activity (it was either deemed essential or one of the top factors considered). Organisers were also asked; “When selecting venues / hotels for your meeting, how essential was sustainability?” 88% indicated it was important to their decision making.</li> </ul>

Tourism & Conventions Actions	Measure	Timescales	Progress for 2023/24
<p><b>2.3.</b> Work with event organisers to encourage conference supporting programmes to have sustainability aspects.</p>	<p>As per 2.2.</p>	<p>As per 2.2.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Organisers were asked “Looking at the impact and legacy of your meeting, are there any examples that you can cite of the wider impact of the event?” 98% of respondents were able to provide examples of some kind of impact).</li> <li>• Sustainability and impact are raised and discussed with 100% of conference clients and are discussed both at the bid stage and after a conference has confirmed to Glasgow. Clients are then supported to encourage their conference to be as sustainable as possible.</li> </ul>



### 3. Glasgow’s Food Offer



Glasgow Climate  
Action Plan  
Priority 1 & 2

Tourism & Conventions Actions	Measure	Timescales	Progress for 2023/24
<p><b>3.1.</b> Support the promotion of restaurants and venues that offer local, organic and seasonal menus</p>	<p>Inclusion in consumer comms and campaigns</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Scottish restaurants</a> in Glasgow where visitors can enjoy locally sourced are promoted regularly. <a href="#">Vegan and vegetarian</a> is promoted throughout the city. <a href="#">Tours in Glasgow</a> showcase Scottish cuisine and encourages visitors to explore the city by foot.</li> </ul>
<p><b>3.2.</b> Utilise our Food Ambassador role to raise awareness of local issues and respond to the needs of our restaurants</p>		<p>Complete</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Food Tourism Ambassador role, supported by Scotland Food and Drink and the Scottish Tourism Alliance, came to an end in late 2023. Glasgow Life continues to work closely with the sector via <a href="#">Experience Food and Drink Glasgow</a>, with the Chair-person now a member of the <a href="#">Glasgow Tourism &amp; Events Network</a>. We have also supported a range of activity for the sector with regular comms and support of the Glasgow Food &amp; Drink month and Restaurant Week, April 2024.</li> </ul>

Tourism & Conventions Actions	Measure	Timescales	Progress for 2023/24
<p><b>3.3.</b> Promote Food and Drink related support and training opportunities e.g., Hospitality Industry Trust, Food and Drink Scotland to businesses etc. Provide guidance and encourage sustainable food practices e.g., <a href="#">Grounds for Recycling</a></p>	<p>Inclusion in industry comms; e-updates, blogs and webinars</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We feature news and opportunities on sustainability in our member communications and events. Specifically, we have supported the inaugural Glasgow Food and Drink Month (April 2024), Glasgow Cocktail Week (April 2024), Full of Beans campaign (2023), <a href="#">Grounds for Recycling</a> (2023) are already in discussion with Circular Glasgow on the planning of their next campaign in 2025. Our <a href="#">new website</a> includes links to useful food and drinks support agencies.</li> </ul>

# Developing Our Sustainable City Offer

## 4. Maintaining our City's Sustainable Credentials



Glasgow Climate Action Plan  
Priority 3

Tourism & Conventions Actions	Measure	Timescales	Progress for 2023/24
<p><b>4.1.</b> Strive to maintain a top 10 position on the Global Destination Sustainability Index (the number of destinations on the index increased by 30% between 22-23).</p>	Glasgow's position on GDS Index for 2023	Annually in October until 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Glasgow ranked 8th position on the <a href="#">GDS Index</a> which monitors the economic, environmental, and social impact of the city's tourism sector. Glasgow was also scored as number 1 in Western Europe. There are over 100 participant destinations in the index and the city's high position reflects Glasgow's commitment to sustainability.</li> </ul>
<p><b>4.2.</b> Retain additional 3<sup>rd</sup> party green destination accreditation status e.g., EarthCheck</p>	Retain Earthcheck Bronze status or equivalent accreditation	November 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>After a review, it was agreed that the GDS Index particularly strengthened the city's sustainability journey, therefore focus and resource should be applied there.</li> </ul>
<p><b>4.3.</b> Retain Glasgow's Sustainable Food Places accreditation</p>	Retain Glasgow's Sustainable Food Places accreditation	ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Glasgow has successfully moved from a Bronze Sustainable Food Places accreditation to <a href="#">Silver!</a> This reflects the commitment and established food systems in the city which support sustainable and healthy food.</li> </ul>

Tourism & Conventions Actions	Measure	Timescales	Progress for 2023/24
<p><b>4.4.</b> Glasgow Convention Bureau (GCB) will continue to be a supporter of the Net Zero Carbon Events Initiative and signatory of the Pledge</p>	<p>Pledge to Net Zero Carbon Events Initiative</p>	<p>ongoing</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Glasgow Convention Bureau continues to be a signatory of the Net Zero Carbon Events Initiative Pledge.</li> </ul>
<p><b>4.5.</b> Maintain our commitment to the Glasgow Declaration on Climate Action in Tourism and Tourism Declares a Climate Emergency</p>	<p>Glasgow Declaration on Climate Action in Tourism Tourism Declares a Climate Emergency</p>	<p>ongoing</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We continue to be committed to the <a href="#">Glasgow Declaration</a> on Climate Action in Tourism and Tourism Declares a Climate Emergency.</li> </ul>

## 5. Responsible Tourism: Extending Visitor Stays



Tourism & Conventions Actions	Measure	Timescales	Progress for 2023/24
<b>5.1.</b> Work with industry, Destination Management Companies, Glasgow Life Destination Marketing team and partners to promote the city for longer stays, to add Glasgow to their itineraries and develop bookable experiences	Average length of stay for domestic / international leisure visitors and delegates and travel trade.	June 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Glasgow Life has worked with USA-based tour operator, CIE Tours, who launched a new 5-night Glasgow-based group tour called Scottish Daytripper, which uses the city as a base to explore the west of Scotland.</li> <li>B2C marketing campaigns were delivered with Expedia in USA and Skyscanner in Germany promoting Glasgow as a gateway to Scotland and supporting the promotion of longer stays in the city.</li> </ul>
	No. of online bookable offers on People Make Glasgow (PMG) site	June 2025	
	Baseline target (no of bookable products for Glasgow on OTA's e.g., Expedia, Virgin Experience Days)	June 2025	
	Economic impact of city travel trade business	March 2024	
<b>5.2.</b> Support industry / ticketing agents / Online Tour Operators to develop online bookable products	As per 5.1.	As per 5.1.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In 2023 we continued to educate businesses on the opportunity of working with travel trade and the benefits of selling their products via an OTA. There are currently 181 Glasgow experiences selling on Get Your Guide and Viator (an increase of 78 in the last twelve months). Survey results from industry economic benefit pending.</li> </ul>

Tourism & Conventions Actions	Measure	Timescales	Progress for 2023/24
<p><b>5.3.</b> Work with surrounding regions to extend stays and strengthen Glasgow as a base for visitors in Scotland.</p>	<p>As per 5.1.</p>	<p>As per 5.1.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The new <a href="#">VisitScotland Regional Director</a> for Glasgow is now in post and will take forward the Glasgow City Region Partners group to coordinate joint activity.</li> <li>• The surrounding regions are included in recent campaigns such as Scenes and Scenery, a campaign with Avanti, plus the Mackintosh campaign which included the V &amp; A in Dundee and Hillhouse in Helensburgh. In addition, our <a href="#">20 things to do near Glasgow</a> feature has been developed.</li> </ul>





Tourism & Conventions Actions	Measure	Timescales	Progress for 2023/24
<p><b>6.3.</b> Maximise the profile and impact of the UCI Cycling to support activities and assets of active travel partners e.g. OVO Bikes, city cycle routes, cycle repair location points across the city.</p>	<p>As per 6.1.</p>	<p>As per 6.1.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ahead of the 2023 <a href="#">UCI</a> Cycling World Championships new cycling photography was commissioned, highlighting multiple areas in the city to cycle. We worked with OVO Bikes to promote an easy way to access bikes within the city. Cycling content on the destination <a href="#">website</a> was then updated to showcase cycle routes, bike tours and cycling facilities within the city.</li> </ul>

## 7. Resident Engagement



Glasgow Climate  
Action Plan  
Priority 1

Tourism & Conventions Actions	Measure	Timescales	Progress for 2023/24
<p><b>7.1.</b> Ensure citizen engagement is incorporated in any destination large scale project or strategy development</p>		<p>March 2025</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No update available.</li> </ul>
<p><b>7.2.</b> Share online resident survey to gather views on the city’s visitor economy in order to inform 2025-26 action planning</p>			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tourism sector related questions have been submitted for inclusion in this year’s Glasgow Household survey. This will support us reaching a much wider audience.</li> </ul>

## 8. Measurement & Evidencing



Glasgow Climate  
Action Plan  
Priority 5

Tourism & Convention Actions	Measure	Timescales	Progress for 2023/24
<p><b>8.1.</b> Continue to embed and report using new social / environmental measures e.g. city cycle lane distances, social impacts of conferences, number of event volunteers</p>		<p>March 2024</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The <a href="#">Glasgow 2030 Tourism Strategy</a> was launched in October 2023 and incorporates a Tourism Logic Model which illustrates how the strategy will support the city to deliver positive environmental and social outcomes and impact across the sector (p.22-23). The Strategy references a number of top level KPIs which also reflect greater focus on sustainability performance, resident sentiment and 3rd party green accreditation (p.24).</li> <li>• The <a href="#">Glasgow Tourism Action Plan 2024-26</a>, developed to support the delivery of the Strategy, prioritises sustainability and inclusion (p.19 – 22). There are several actions which set out to deliver positive sustainable impact (2.1, 2.5, 2.6,3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 5.1, 5.2, 5.5, 5.6, 5.7, 5.8) alongside actions which aim to support inclusive activity (3.4, 5.3, 5.4, 5.6, 5.7, 5.8, 5.11).</li> </ul>
<p><b>8.2.</b> Continue to share and learn from visitor economy data e.g., <a href="#">STEAM</a> with partner destinations and agencies to enable greater benchmarking and to minimise seasonality</p>		<p>June 2024</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The most recent <a href="#">STEAM</a> tourism economic impact report for Glasgow relates to 2022. The top-level findings from this report have been <a href="#">shared widely</a> and have been used to set targets for our <a href="#">Glasgow 2030 Tourism Strategy</a> (p. 21).</li> </ul>

# Showcasing Our Sustainable City Destination

## 9. Comms / Enhancing Wider Sustainable Choices to our Visitors



**Glasgow Climate Action Plan**  
Priority 1, 3, 4 & 5

Tourism & Convention Actions	Measure	Timescales	Progress for 2023/24
<p><b>9.1.</b> Continue to develop itineraries and visitor experiences with sustainable / accessible businesses</p>	<p>Social media posts / blogs / PR releases</p> <p>Member showcase features on social media to highlight member green credentials</p> <p>User numbers to destination website</p>	<p>March 2024</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The city promotes the suggested <a href="#">accessible days out</a> in a Glasgow blog produced by AccessAble and VisitScotland. The <a href="#">Mackintosh itinerary</a> and <a href="#">Discover Scotland</a> itineraries identify those businesses which have 3rd party green accreditation and online accessibility guides.</li> </ul>
<p><b>9.2.</b> Continue to work with public transport operators to support visitor itineraries</p>	<p>As per 9.1.</p>	<p>As per 9.1.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Glasgow Life partnered with Caledonian Sleeper and Avanti West Coast on campaigns to promote visiting Glasgow by train. We have also supported each company by providing information around Glasgow, promoting their services on our website and any deals and competitions via our social or email channels. In 2024, we are planning to partner again with Avanti West Coast.</li> </ul>

Tourism & Convention Actions	Measure	Timescales	Progress for 2023/24
<p><b>9.3.</b> Increase coverage of positive social impacts, green choices, a welcoming and inclusive city on our destination &amp; B2B websites – to raise awareness, celebrate best practice and to make it easier for businesses to get involved / be inspired.</p>	<p>As per 9.1.</p>	<p>As per 9.1.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A range of activity has been delivered to support the city’s focus on inclusion. A blog, to coincide with Purple Tuesday, details the work delivered across the year including our partnership with <a href="#">AccessAble</a>, an Accessibility workshop for city hotels and creation of a brand new digital accessibility guide for <a href="#">The Burrell Collection</a>.</li> <li>• Coverage has been added to the brand-new tourism B2B website on sustainability and accessibility and news section including a new video reflecting on our accessibility work through 2023 and celebrating local businesses who have been recognised with award success.</li> </ul>
<p><b>9.4.</b> Continue to promoting Glasgow’s plant based, locally and sustainably sourced food and drink offer</p>	<p>As per 9.1.</p>	<p>As per 9.1.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Scottish restaurants in Glasgow where visitors can enjoy locally sourced are promoted <a href="#">regularly</a> alongside <a href="#">Vegan and vegetarian</a>.</li> </ul>
<p><b>9.5.</b> Continue to develop the Convention Bureau meeting planners toolkit with details on leading sustainable businesses and experiences</p>	<p>As per 9.1.</p>	<p>As per 9.1</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The <a href="#">Meeting Planners toolkit</a> has been updated throughout the year to help organisers plan more <a href="#">sustainable events</a> and to connect with local <a href="#">social enterprises</a>, charities and <a href="#">food outlets</a> which utilise sustainable food practices.</li> <li>• Our <a href="#">Positive Impact</a> team provide assistance to maximise the wider impact of city conferences.</li> </ul>



Tourism & Convention Actions	Measure	Timescales	Progress for 2023/24
<p><b>9.6.</b> Continue to promote green spaces, outdoor activities and volunteering in community parks and gardens to our conference delegates</p>	<p>As per 9.1.</p>	<p>As per 9.1.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The <a href="#">Meeting Planners toolkit</a> on the Convention Bureau website promotes where to get <a href="#">active</a> and sustainable days out.</li> </ul>



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