



Natural  
Environment  
Research Council

GLASGOW  
CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

# EMBEDDING DOUGHNUT ECONOMICS IN GLASGOW'S LOCAL BUSINESSES

## COLLABORATION BETWEEN GALLANT AND GLASGOW CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

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### AUTHORS

TABITHA TINKLER-FERGUSON<sup>1</sup> AND JO  
WINTERBOTTOM<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> GLASGOW CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

<sup>2</sup> UNIVERSITY OF GLASGOW





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- Aida Mas Baghaie, C40 Cities
- Leonora Grcheva, Doughnut Economics Action Lab
- Dr Sarah Lester, University of Glasgow
- Dr Emma Morton, Glasgow City Council

Graphic Design By Cameron Mackay

## ACRONYMS

COP	Conference of the Parties
DEAL	Doughnut Economic Action Lab
GALLANT	Glasgow as a Living Lab Accelerating Novel Transformation
GCOC	Glasgow Chamber of Commerce
PI	Principal Investigator
SME	Small to Medium-sized Enterprise
WP	Work Package
WS	Workstream

## 1. INTRODUCTION

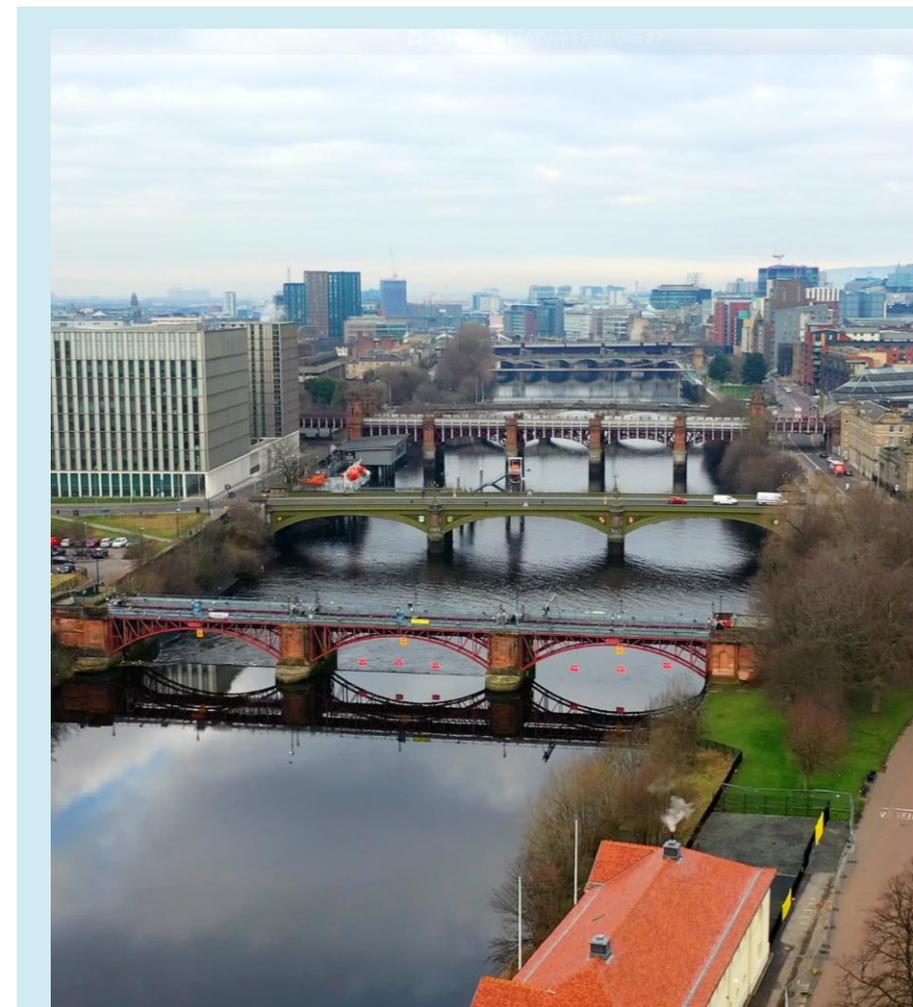
This report outlines a programme of work conducted in collaboration between [GALLANT](#) researchers and Glasgow [Chamber of Commerce](#) between November 2023 and August 2025.

The overall aim was to socialise the [Doughnut Economics framework](#) within Glasgow businesses to raise the profile of businesses already operating in line with the Doughnut Economics framework and to support further implementation.

Building on existing relationships, Glasgow Chamber of Commerce has facilitated creative spaces for people from local businesses to engage with each other and GALLANT researchers as well as representatives from the [Doughnut Economics Action Lab](#) (DEAL) and [C40 Cities](#).

Following a workshop in November 2023, Glasgow Chamber of Commerce undertook a desktop scoping of the policy landscape, facilitated further engagement opportunities, identified case studies of good practice and administered and supported a GALLANT funded Demonstrator project.

Working in collaboration with Glasgow Chamber of Commerce, GALLANT hopes to inspire local businesses to explore how their business models could be aligned with the Doughnut Economics framework and support its wider adoption across the Chamber's network.



**Figure 1** Aerial view of the Clyde River, Glasgow. Photo Credit: Cameron Mackay Productions.



## 2. BACKGROUND

### 2.1 GALLANT

The University of Glasgow, in partnership with Glasgow City Council, are working on a £10.5 million research programme funded by UKRI NERC as part of their [Changing the Environment](#) investment. For 5 years (ending in January 2027) University researchers are helping the city move towards climate resilience whilst tackling health, social and economic inequalities.

[GALLANT](#) is structured into five Work Packages to address social and ecological challenges in Glasgow.

#### **WP1: FLOOD ADAPTATION AND RIVERSCAPES**

WP1 examines the effects of rising sea levels and tidal changes in the River Clyde, using numerical modelling of tidal flooding, cost-benefit analyses of flood mitigation, and climate adaptation within spatial planning and public sector decision-making. It explores how flood-prone land can be repurposed by businesses in economically viable ways.

#### **WP2: RESTORING BIODIVERSITY**

WP2 promotes urban greenspace management as interconnected wildlife corridors, rather than isolated patches. Research focuses on ecosystem services, habitat connectivity, and nature-based solutions to support biodiversity in Glasgow.

#### **WP3: REGENERATING DERELICT LAND**

WP3 trials innovative regeneration of derelict and polluted land by using technology that mineralises greenhouse gases and traps organic pollutants in building materials. Research includes CO2 absorption, carbon sequestration, and innovative solutions for derelict sites.

#### **WP4: PROMOTING ACTIVE TRAVEL**

WP4 works with communities to increase active travel, including walking, wheeling and cycling to reduce car usage, improve air quality, and cut carbon emissions. It identifies barriers to active travel and maps travel patterns and social factors that influence transport behaviours.

#### **WP5: LOW CARBON SUSTAINABLE ENERGY**

WP5 focuses on Glasgow's energy transition, reviewing energy demand and exploring sustainable, low carbon energy solutions. Research includes energy-harvesting technologies and heat network development.



To support the Work Packages, GALLANT also mobilise three overarching and cross-cutting Workstreams:

### **WS1: SYSTEMS TRANSFORMATION**

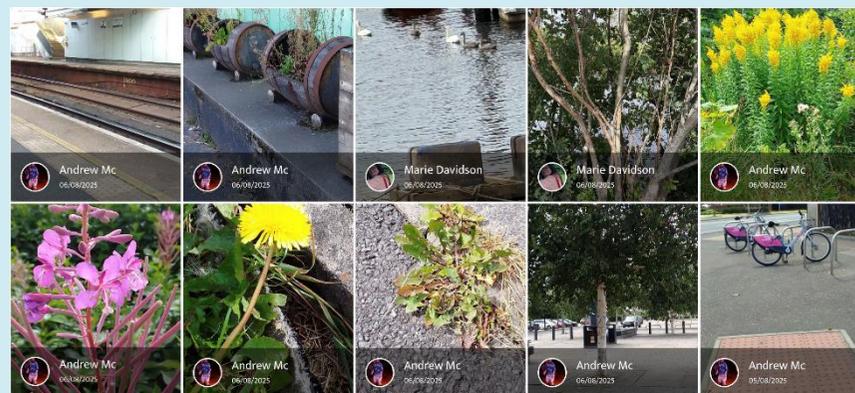
WS1 integrates insights from all WPs, collaborating with diverse stakeholders to influence policy and drive action. It fosters a shared understanding, vision and commitment to drive progress and maintain momentum for systemic change. Using the Doughnut Economics framework, WS1 developed the Thriving Glasgow Portrait (see 2.2) as a shared vision for the future. The team are now working towards building understanding of Glasgow’s current systems and capacity for systems change at the city scale, aligning place-based climate action with Glasgow’s net zero ambitions.

### **WS2: COMMUNITY COLLABORATION**

This phased approach engages Glasgow’s diverse communities as co-researchers through participatory action research. The second phase involves community science initiatives in composting, flooding and trees, stories about nature, active travel, and energy mapping brought together through the [communiMap](#) and culminating in local festivals and events.

### **WS3: DATA ANALYTICS**

In partnership with the Urban Big Data Centre at the University of Glasgow, this workstream coordinates data analytics across the project. Through the development of the GALLANT Data Hub, they facilitate data discovery, interactions with external partners, interactive visualisations, and leverage AI data to further understand sustainability in Glasgow.



**Figure 2:** Latest shots from CommuniMap, showing images taken by community members in Glasgow, as of 07/08/2025. Taken from [communiMap.net](#), created by GALLANT WS2.

## 2.2 Thriving City Portrait

In November 2021, during COP26, Glasgow joined the C40 [Thriving Cities Initiative](#) (TCI). Following this, Glasgow City Council and the University of Glasgow developed the [Thriving Glasgow Portrait](#) using methodologies established by [C40 Cities](#) and [DEAL](#).

The Thriving Glasgow Portrait applies the Doughnut Economics framework to present a vision for Glasgow as a city that thrives socially and ecologically. Developed from the United Nations' [Sustainable Development Goals](#) (SDGs) and Planetary Boundary [research](#), the Portrait is presented through four lenses:

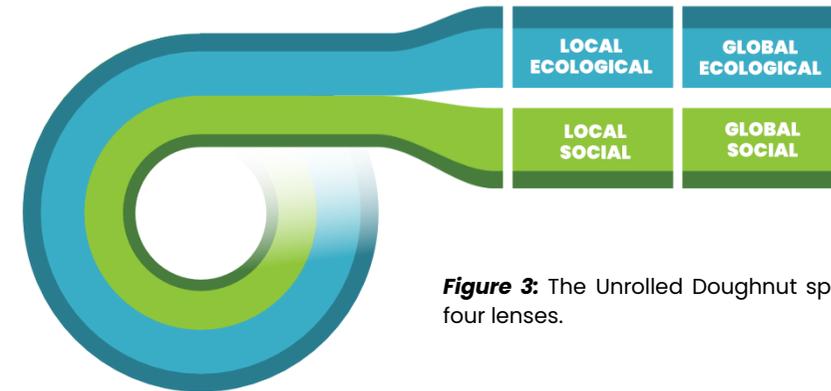
**Local-Social:** Ensuring all Glaswegians thrive by meeting essential social needs in a fair and sustainable way.

**Local-Ecological:** Addresses how Glasgow can thrive by maximising environmental benefits.

**Global-Social:** Supports the wellbeing of people worldwide through Glasgow's consumption and interactions.

**Global-Ecological:** Considers Glasgow's impact on global ecological systems.

For more information visit the [Glasgow Doughnut Website](#).



**Figure 3:** The Unrolled Doughnut split into four lenses.

The Portrait was developed through a collaborative and participatory process that involved diverse stakeholders across Glasgow's public, private, academic and community sectors.

This engagement, alongside desk-based research, supported the development of 44 'thriving definitions', demonstrating a vision that illustrates how Glasgow could become a thriving city through strategic decision-making, collaboration across sectors, and inspiring systemic change.

The Thriving Glasgow Portrait definitions were approved at Glasgow City Council Administration Committee in August 2023 and the final report was launched in November 2023.

By situating local priorities within a global context, the Thriving Glasgow Portrait provides a place-based model that is both regenerative and distributive in a way that can be scaled to other cities.



## 2.3 Glasgow Chamber of Commerce

To reach the business sector, GALLANT has chosen to collaborate with Glasgow [Chamber of Commerce](#) (GCOC). Using its convening power through combined influence and partnerships, GCOC is at the forefront of climate action in Scotland. Building on the successful [Circular Glasgow](#) initiative developed in 2016 and 'Climate Chamber brand' established during COP26, GCOC has driven climate action via an impactful range of legacy projects, setting a trend for the British Chambers of Commerce network in climate engagement and business leadership and opportunities for peer-to-peer learning. Initiatives include :

- [Circular Glasgow Network](#) – a unique business-led initiative focusing on innovation and inspiring businesses to adopt circular business models and strategies with over 300 members.
- [Congress of Business](#) – a movement dedicated to driving action to enable businesses to address net zero.
- [Circular Glasgow Supper Clubs](#) – designed to gather thought leaders and business leaders in a relaxed but purpose-led context, generating momentum around more circular practices.
- [My Climate Path](#) – equips the next generation of workforce to transition to net zero.
- [Step Up to Net Zero](#) – has offered over 90 fully funded four-to-six-month work placements to support Glasgow's businesses in reaching net zero ambitions.

- [Plate Up For Glasgow](#) – successful campaign working with the hospitality sector to reduce food waste.
- [Grounds for Recycling](#) – engaging Glasgow venues to divert used coffee grounds from food waste bins.

Such partnerships aim to engage the business community to identify demonstrator projects and explore interventions that support a just transition towards a Thriving Glasgow, balancing ecological limits with human wellbeing.



**Figure 4:** Chamber of Commerce event at Civic House, Glasgow. Photo Credit: Chamber of Commerce.



### 3. GETTING STARTED

THRIVING GLASGOW BUSINESS WORKSHOP, NOVEMBER 2023

On 26th November 2023, Glasgow [Chamber of Commerce](#) facilitated the Glasgow Thriving Business workshop to catalyse action across sectors and communities. The aim was to explore how Doughnut Economics principles can be embedded in business practices to transition Glasgow into a city that thrives within planetary boundaries.

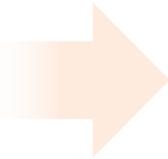
Led by [C40 Cities](#) and the [Doughnut Economics Action Lab](#) (DEAL), and inspired by presentations from GALLANT, Glasgow City Council, C40 Cities and DEAL, the participants explored what was already being achieved and how this could support the integration of the Doughnut Economics framework to scale sustainable changes.

#### Organisations Represented

- DF Concerts
- ACS Clothing
- BE-ST
- C40 Thriving Cities
- Doughnut Economics Action Lab
- Friends of Wilson
- Glasgow Chamber of Commerce
- Glasgow City Council
- Harley Haddow
- Independent Artist
- Loco Homes
- Material Change
- Material Source
- Mott McDonald
- O'Donnell Brown
- PWC Scotland
- Scottish Power Networks
- Sculpture Placement Group
- SWG3
- University of Glasgow



Key Feedback Themes	
<b>Collaboration</b>	There is significant potential for partnerships among businesses, public sector bodies and communities to drive systemic change.
<b>Taking Action</b>	Ambitious planning exists, but translating frameworks like Doughnut Economics into concrete, long-lasting action that improve both socio-economic outcomes and the environment remains a challenge.
<b>Environmental Responsibility</b>	Businesses are increasingly integrating social and environmental responsibilities into their models in diverse ways.
<b>Grassroots Engagement</b>	To mobilise communities, a systems-thinking approach needs to be simplified and incentivised to ensure enthusiastic and effective participation at all levels.
<b>Case Studies &amp; Storytelling</b>	Leveraging examples of best practice from within Glasgow and beyond illustrates what works well and inspires further action.
<b>Industry Partnerships &amp; Accreditation</b>	Encouraging businesses to work towards accreditation such as B Corp certification and embedding circular principles into their practices can provide greater accountability and accelerate progress.
<b>Focused Workshops</b>	Future sessions should be more specific and action-oriented around Glasgow's circular economy vision to drive meaningful change.
<b>Infrastructure &amp; Connectivity</b>	A stronger focus on circular approaches will strengthen sustainable transport, procurement and waste management.
<b>Measurable Social &amp; Economic Impact</b>	Success should be defined through metrics such as reducing social inequality, improved public health, and a thriving local economy.
<b>Behavioural &amp; Attitudinal Shift</b>	Challenging fixed mindsets by embracing bold ideas and fostering solutions-driven, creative approaches can cultivate longer-term, positive approaches.



Proposed Next Steps	
<b>Mapping Existing Business Activities</b>	Identify businesses whose practices already align with GALLANT themes and are working towards the Thriving Definitions.
<b>Strengthening Business-Academic Collaboration</b>	Facilitate partnerships between businesses and academia to accelerate sustainable innovation in a holistic way.
<b>Targeted Workshops</b>	Future workshops should aim to be dynamic and purpose-led, bringing together diverse stakeholders to explore collaborative solutions for a thriving Glasgow.
<b>Developing an Open Dialogue</b>	Encourage discussions across public and private sectors to identify common barriers and enablers for regenerative design and circular economy implementation.
<b>A Thriving Glasgow</b>	Foster long-term momentum towards a city that integrates regenerative design, distributive and circular actions at scale, moving towards a thriving Glasgow.



## 3. BUILDING THE PICTURE

### EXISTING RESOURCES & ACTIVITY

Glasgow [Chamber of Commerce](#) undertook a desktop scoping of the relevant existing resources and support available to businesses.

#### 4.1 INTERNATIONAL LEVEL

[Doughnut Economics Action Lab](#) (DEAL) offers variety of [resources](#) to support businesses to adopt the Doughnut Economics framework into their operations. These include practical online [tools](#) to guide businesses towards more regenerative and distributive practices so they can operate within the ecological ceiling and social foundation. DEAL also offer workshops that explore and redesign business operations in line with Doughnut principles to organisations at different stages in their journey.

Furthermore, tools are available to [educational institutions](#) to provide interesting and playful methods of learning while tools supporting policy changes for [local governments](#) ensure that strategic changes can be assessed at community and city level.

DEAL also spotlights [case studies](#) that demonstrate the practical application of these tools. For example, a [bank](#) that prioritises social and environmental outcomes over profit maximisation, and a [women-led cooperative](#) that applies Doughnut principles to support local development and sustainable production of luxury clothing

[B Corp](#) is a non-profit network organisation which offers certification for business which embed certain standards of social and environmental performance into their operations, based on self-assessments.

#### 4.2 GLASGOW-BASED INITIATIVES

- [LEZ Community Support Fund](#): Grants for community-led projects that improve air quality and reduce harmful vehicle emissions, contribute to climate change mitigation or adaptation.
- Funded by Glasgow City Council and the UK Government Shared Prosperity Fund, [Step Up to Net Zero](#) provides businesses and organisations with tailored action plans and dedicated placements to help them reach their sustainability goals. The programme builds skills and knowledge in areas such as energy efficiency, low-carbon transport and circular economy practices, and supports local businesses with their net zero targets.
- [Cathy McCormack Community Activism Fund](#): Small grants for community organisations addressing social, economic and environmental injustices.
- [Food and Climate Action Fund](#): Promotes local food production and awareness raising around sustainable food systems.

## 4.4 Other Plans and Strategies

Policy/ Strategy	Strategic Aim	Relevance to Businesses	Support/ Opportunities
<b><u>Glasgow City Food Plan</u></b>	Ensuring equitable access to nutritious, sustainable food.	Encourages businesses to engage in sustainable sourcing, reduce waste, and support local supply chains.	Fosters innovation & collaboration in food production, distribution & retail; potential for local procurement.
<b><u>Local Biodiversity Action Plan</u></b>	Managing green spaces, rewilding, and integrating biodiversity into city planning and community engagement.	Encourages integration of green infrastructure and nature-based solutions within business operations.	Offers guidance supporting biodiversity; potential partnerships and funding for environmental work.
<b><u>Glasgow Green Business Grant</u></b>	Provide financial assistance for SMEs pursuing environmental improvements and reducing environmental impact.	Reduces capital barriers to green investment and supports environmental goals across sectors.	Offers up to £10,000 in funding for energy efficiency, waste reduction, renewables, & lower-carbon transport.
<b><u>Glasgow Transport Strategy</u></b>	Promoting sustainable, inclusive transport to reduce emissions and address transport inequalities in a way that prioritises social inclusion.	Highlights the need for sustainable logistics, fleet decarbonisation, and employee travel planning.	Supports adoption of active travel infrastructure, electric vehicles, and low-emission transport systems.
<b><u>Glasgow Climate Plan</u></b>	Strengthening climate resilience through adaptive urban planning and nature-based solutions.	Provides a framework for aligning business strategies with climate targets and regulations.	Facilitates access to funding streams, climate partnerships, and guidance on emissions & climate resilience.
<b><u>Circular Economy Route Map for Glasgow</u></b>	To embed circular economy principles across sectors by 2045.	Advocates for circular business models, waste reduction, green infrastructure and collaboration between government, businesses and residents.	Creates economic incentives for reuse, remanufacturing, and service-based models; supports innovation and diversification.
<b><u>Green and Thriving Neighbourhoods</u></b>	A Pathway to Net Zero, Featuring the '15-Minute City': Interrelated approaches to creating through sustainable urban planning, emissions reductions, social inclusivity & community engagement.	Emphasises local economic development through place-based regeneration and green investment.	Encourages business involvement in community infrastructure, local employment, and nature-positive urban development.



## 5. FROM AMBITION TO ACTION: LIVING LAB, JANUARY 2025

In January 2025, GALLANT commissioned Glasgow [Chamber of Commerce](#) to facilitate a workshop bringing together targeted businesses from across industries in the city, and colleagues from GALLANT. The primary purpose of the workshop was to move from ambition into action, identifying synergies between academic research and business needs and prioritising actions. Taking into account earlier feedback from businesses, the focus was on mobilisation beyond discussions to implement tangible changes and defining pragmatic steps for progress.

### 5.1 Workshop Approach

The workshop took place at Civic House, operated by [Agile City](#), an organisation taking a creative and socially engaged approach to cultivating a low carbon future for Glasgow. Agile City works closely with businesses and communities to develop their local area to support both the natural environment and those who engage with it.

Businesses were chosen based on the positive impact of their current practices in the city, and their potential for wider impact, particularly in areas such as energy, flooding, and biodiversity.

Participants were introduced to the Doughnut Economics framework, and the GALLANT Work Packages and Workstreams.

Providing an opportunity for academics and the business community to come together, participants were encouraged to share ambitions in a way that would mobilise city-wide transformation by enacting ideas and practices of Doughnut Economics. It also fostered a space for constructive dialogue between academic and practice-based knowledge. Even where ambitions diverged, participants explored how different perspectives can be integrated to support mutual learning and cross-sector benefits.

### 5.2 Key Findings from Group Discussions

#### EMOTIONAL ENGAGEMENT TO MOTIVATE BEHAVIOUR CHANGE

The workshop discussions emphasised the psychological mechanisms that motivate behavioural change, particularly the need for trust, reliability, and emotional engagement. Personal narratives were seen as more effective catalysts than data-driven or moralistic approaches. Connecting to something people cared about was highlighted as having the potential to foster greater engagement for projects through a common goal in a specific community. For example, a film set thirty years in the future showing football fans the potential impact of their team's football grounds being flooded with heavy rain, demonstrating how a sense of loss is a strong motivator for change along with what can be achieved.



## COMMUNITY COLLABORATION AND TRUST

Collaboration also emerged as a key theme, recognising the need to leverage existing academic and community knowledge to bring together previously disconnected groups. Participants emphasised the importance of trust at a local level, criticising a lack of consultation with communities. For example, public playing fields in Easterhouse were transformed into rewilded parklands, resulting in the displacement of local residents.

It was highlighted that community members should be actively involved in decision-making to avoid top-down interventions that feel imposed rather than taking an inclusive, community-led approach. Participants discussed the potential for grassroots initiatives to support tenants within new buildings with high energy performance certificate (EPC) ratings. Current practice of issuing information booklets was viewed as having limited success leading to suboptimal use of energy controls. A community-led approach to information sharing in this context was proposed as a potential remedy to improve both cost and energy-efficiency and foster a sense of community.

### Organisations Represented

Glasgow Tool Library
GOMO Kimchi
Verture
Two Racoons
University of Glasgow
Glasgow Chamber of Commerce
Sculpture Placement Group
National Theatre of Scotland
McTaggart Construction
Austin-Smith:Lord
Dear Green Coffee
DF Concerts
Agile City
We Are Material UK
MAST Architects
O'Donnell Brown
Tron Theatre



## 5. NEXT STEPS

The 2025 workshop galvanised connections between research and business practices that will be critical in creating the foundation for Glasgow to flourish socially and ecologically in a way that has both a positive local and global impact.

### Case Studies

GCOC and GALLANT have worked together to develop a series of [case studies](#), including the National Theatre of Scotland, Dear Green Coffee Roasters, and The Glasgow Tool Library, showcasing tangible business-led initiatives aligning with the Doughnut model and GALLANT's key projects.

### Demonstrator Project

Expressions of Interest for seed funding were reviewed, and an award was made to support an initiative aligned with GALLANT's Work Packages and the Doughnut Economics framework.

### Further Engagement

Streamlined communication of the Doughnut Economics framework will be necessary for broader adoption by communities and businesses across the city. Future work will focus on translating insights into scalable, practical strategies to enable businesses to contribute to a thriving Glasgow. Further developments will acknowledge the interdependencies between dimensions and adopt a systems thinking approach. GALLANT will also leverage the GCOC's extensive network to integrate the framework more widely.



**Figure 6:** Chamber of Commerce event at Civic House, Glasgow. Photo Credit: Chamber of Commerce.



## 7. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

This programme of work highlights the growing momentum across Glasgow to embed the Doughnut Economics framework within business practices, the policy landscape and community-led action. Collaboration between GALLANT, Glasgow Chamber of Commerce and the business community reflects a promising trajectory towards systemic transformation at city scale.

The initial engagement in November 2023 highlighted the need to develop tangible examples and demonstration projects to bring the Doughnut Economics Framework to life .

The strategies, policy frameworks and tools available to businesses are supportive of regenerative and distributive economic models. Programmes such as [Step Up to Net Zero](#) also act as key enablers, showing how different dimensions can be implemented and supported in practice.

The workshop in January 2025 highlighted the importance of forming connections with individuals and developing trust within communities. Adequate support for early adopters is required to ensure they become advocates and more tangible efforts are needed to turn intentions into concrete actions.

To build on this foundation, future actions should focus on maintaining and deepening engagement with the business community, scaling demonstrator projects, and establishing clear metrics for social, environmental and economic progress. By fostering a shared understanding and vision for collective action, Glasgow has the potential to lead as an exemplar for cities seeking to thrive within planetary boundaries.



**Figure 4:** Busy day on Buchanan Street, Glasgow. Photo by Artur Kraft.