



**South
Derbyshire
District Council**



Communications Strategy 2016 – 2021

People Place Progress

www.south-derbys.gov.uk



**South
Derbyshire
District Council**

Ahead of the Game

Effective communication is key to the success of any business or organisation.

Establishing a two-way conversation that engages stakeholders, informs about services, celebrates achievement and creates a culture of openness, honesty and trust is crucial to long-term prosperity.

However, in a crowded marketplace of social media and digital channels at the centre of a world with information available on tap, standing out from the crowd can be far from easy.

South Derbyshire District Council prides itself on its track record of delivering high-quality services to those living in, working in and visiting one of the fastest-growing areas in the country.

Like all local authorities, though, it is facing up to the tough task of further developing and improving these services against a backdrop of reduced core funding, financial pressures, a changing media landscape and soaring expectations.

The Council must identify £1 million of budget savings and additional income by March 31, 2023, in line with the Medium Term Financial Plan. Never has the mantra of 'doing more with less' been so relevant.

In its previous Corporate Communications Strategy, the focus was put firmly on moving away from traditional reactive communication to a pro-active online approach. During its lifespan the Channel Shift Strategy was launched, while internally a new intranet was designed and implemented.

The trend is reflected across the Local Government sector. Research into the communications practices of other authorities has shown a clear evolution towards digital methods across the board.

While the work of the Communications team is central to keeping residents, customers, stakeholders and other parties informed, it is not exclusive to it. Consistency of message both internally and externally, to and from all staff and Elected Members is pivotal in maintaining high levels of performance.

This strategy maps out how, in line with its Equality Policy and against the priorities laid down in its Corporate Plan, South Derbyshire District Council will continue to embrace the fast-changing world of communications to stay ahead of the game for the benefit of those it serves.

Communications Priorities

Our Top 10





Day-to-day Communications



Promoting and raising awareness of what the Council does



Promoting the Council's values and priorities



Demonstrating how the Council spends public money



Publicising Council events, activities and opportunities



Upholding and playing a key role in the democratic process



Helping to deliver digital services and solutions



Developing channels for effective engagement



Highlighting partnership and community working



Maximising commercial opportunities



Creating modern and consistent branding



Doing more with less



Supporting staff and Elected Members in communicating effectively

Aim

'To deliver consistently high-class, effective, efficient and measurable communications across all channels to support the priorities of the Council's Corporate Plan, ensuring stakeholders are well-informed and satisfied.'

How We Communicate



Social Media



SDDC Website



The Media



Better Online (the intranet)



Housing e-bulletin (quarterly)



Face-to-face Customer Services/ Councillor Surgeries



Internal Communications Staff briefings, Email, One-to-ones



Council / Committee Meetings



SMS & IVR Messages



Consultation Exercises and Events



Reports and Policy Documents



Branding Posters, Leaflets etc.

Our Stakeholders

- South Derbyshire residents
- Service users
- Council staff
- Elected Members
- Parish councils
- Local businesses
- Visitors/tourists
- Local, regional and national media
- Derbyshire County Council and neighbouring authorities
- Partner organisations
- Community organisations/the third sector
- D2N2 Local Enterprise Partnership



Here is a closer look at our key communications channels:

The Media

While the Council's long-established strong relationship with the local media continues, the landscape has changed considerably in the past decade – particularly with regard to the print media.

The ever-increasing popularity of the internet and digital world has hit circulation figures hard.

However, local titles can now boast a bigger audience than ever before thanks to use of their website and social media platforms.

The Reach PLC Burton Mail, for example, currently attracts around 70,000 unique visitors (UVs) to its website each month, while its Facebook page has just under 25,000 'likes'. The Derby Telegraph has launched its new Derbyshire Live website and has more than 72,000 Facebook likes.

This has led to a 'reverse publishing' model where news is shared through digital channels before it is even considered for print, with members of the public encouraged to be content providers or 'citizen journalists.' It is this group of activists, armed with the tools and ever more keen to play their part in local life, that the Council must consider how best to engage.

The Council's Communications team distributes on average 10 press releases and deals with around 20 media queries in a typical month, with statements issued where necessary to uphold the authority's reputation and radio/television interview opportunities arranged as requested.

While times have changed, a significant proportion of residents still rely on newspapers, radio and television for their news in South Derbyshire, a predominantly rural District where for many outlying villages broadband speeds are a major issue.

The Council's model of distributing press releases, uploading them to its website and backing that up with promotion through social media channels to drive web traffic, is still a relevant one. Research has shown that it reflects the media practices of 15 'most suitable groups' - other local authorities of a similar size to South Derbyshire District Council and with similar characteristics in terms of their populations and urban/rural mix.

Strong content, complemented by images and video where appropriate, is crucial to positive engagement.



The Website

A new website with a fresh look and feel, simpler navigation, streamlined, jargon-free content and an improved site search facility was launched in October 2017.

To allow people to apply, report, request or pay for a service, more than 65 easy to use online forms are part of it.

Innovative tools such as online mapping have been designed to enhance the user experience. Visitors can enter their postcode in the address search at the top of the website homepage to find out more about their local services, including bin collection dates and nearby planning applications.

To make it easier to be kept informed of Council news, residents can subscribe to our RSS feed to automatically receive the latest headlines straight to their inbox.

The new website also provides accessibility features to support those with visual impairments.

These and other features have been introduced as a result of extensive research, usability testing, data analysis and online feedback.

With 20,000 people visiting our website every month, it is important our online services are flexible and functional to meet customer needs.

More new features will follow to ensure our website continues to evolve. This includes introducing a personalised MySouthDerbyshire customer account and online public event booking.



Social Media

The Council has embraced social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter and YouTube to provide authentic, open and honest conversations about key services that matter to residents.

Through two-way interactions, social media enables residents to feel inspired, interact and gain a better insight into their District. It presents information to the target demographic in an engaging, visual and timely format.

Our Twitter account (@SDDC) has 7,456 followers. Our Facebook pages total up to 17,036 fans. The Council has a YouTube account which will also be utilised in line with the Social Media Strategy being launched in 2018/19.

Demand is growing. According to research conducted by Comms 2.0, an expert learning portal for communications professionals, social media enquiries have increased for 86% of organisations over the past year.

In 2016, 54% of our users said that our social media content was good or excellent.

In 2017, 82% of our users said that our social media content was good or excellent. User satisfaction has improved as our messages are becoming more in-tune with topics that residents want and need to be informed about.





Internal Communications

Our Internal Communications Strategy identifies the way forward for engaging and communicating with employees, setting out the aims, aspirations, channels and action plan to achieve this.

Our internal communications efforts strive to unite our staff and Elected Members, create a sense of pride, instil our values and reflect the aims of the Corporate Plan, demonstrating to everyone the part they play.

The current channels include team meetings, team briefs, one-to-ones, email, Better online (the intranet) and noticeboards. A survey conducted in 2017, to help understand the quality of these channels, saw 91 per cent of people say they were either satisfied or very satisfied with internal communications overall.

The very latest trends and influences are being considered, alongside the needs of staff, as the Council looks to maintain a quality system of internal communications with the following objectives:

- Improve the flow of communication between the Leadership Team, Elected Members and staff to ensure team members understand key messages and the impact of them.
- Allow questions and feedback to be shared between directorates and up and down the communication chain.
- Define and promote the internal communication channels available, including the purpose and audience for each channel.
- Increase the use of Better Online (the intranet) by introducing phase II, which will see restructuring, a new design and wider use of online forms. We will also develop new features and promote content to users.
- Embed the Corporate Plan 2016-21 and ensure that staff understand their role in delivering it.



Branding

Since the introduction of the Corporate Plan 2016-21, the Council's approach to branding has strengthened.

Using pre-existing corporate colours, our design style has been modernised and refreshed. The corporate themes of People, Place and Progress appear throughout literature and online resources.

A Venn diagram watermark is being used to link the Corporate Plan and branded materials together, the key elements of the design style being:

- The Venn diagram watermark;
- Primary colours including specific shades of purple and green;
- A set of secondary colours to be used that complement the primary colours;
- Use of photographs to showcase the District; and
- Use of icons and vectors to illustrate or add visual impact.

The refreshed look is now used across the Council throughout official documents and digital channels, with templates created to ensure consistent use of the brand.

With local authorities under increasing pressure to deliver more with less, branding and its use in terms of innovation, commercialisation and marketing is perhaps more important than ever.



Consultation

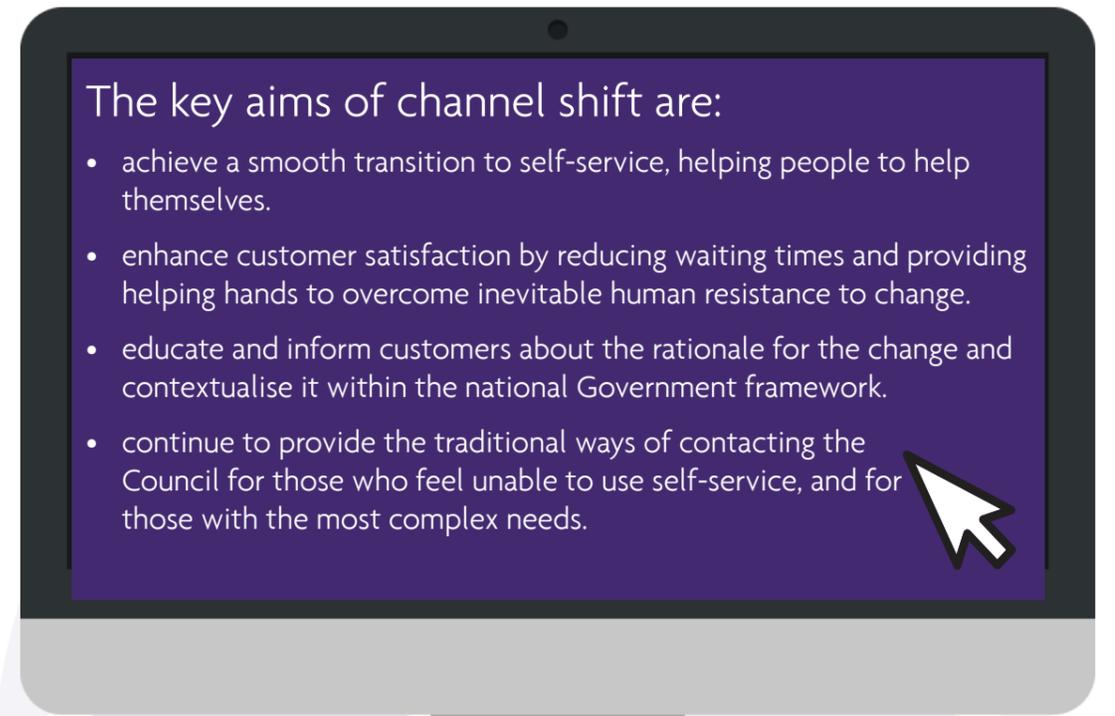
The Council has a statutory duty to consult on various matters affecting the community and its focus is on creating a culture of empowerment and engagement in public services, by ensuring that people have more opportunities to have their say.

This change is reflected in the Council's Consultation and Engagement Strategy, which aims to support strong, active and inclusive communities who are informed and involved in decision-making, with the ultimate aim of enhancing the quality of life across South Derbyshire.

Media relations and communications play an important role and help ensure that residents are kept up to date with services, as well as being informed about all Council consultations and community engagement events.

Each year a Consultation Annual Report is presented to Elected Members, detailing how consultation activities support the delivery of key priorities.





The key aims of channel shift are:

- achieve a smooth transition to self-service, helping people to help themselves.
- enhance customer satisfaction by reducing waiting times and providing helping hands to overcome inevitable human resistance to change.
- educate and inform customers about the rationale for the change and contextualise it within the national Government framework.
- continue to provide the traditional ways of contacting the Council for those who feel unable to use self-service, and for those with the most complex needs.

Channel Shift and a Digital Future

It has been a time of unprecedented change for local authorities. In South Derbyshire, where there are now more than 41,000 homes registered to pay Council Tax and a population of around 100,000, the demand on services is higher than ever before.

Customer Services has borne the brunt of this demand and, faced with an increasingly complex and fast-changing Benefits system to administer, staff were typically handling between 6,000 and 7,000 face-to-face contacts each month by the end of 2014, with an average handling time of seven minutes per customer.

Aside from the lengthy queues and waiting times, face-to-face contact is expensive.

Set against a national Government agenda of digital inclusion, something had to give – and the Channel Shift Strategy was born.

Aiming to get customers ‘online, not in line’ and fitting hand in hand with the ethos of doing more with less, a process of gathering, processing and analysing information begun. The end goal was to not only provide customers with the means to self-serve, but positively encourage them to do so by designing services so good that they would prefer to.

Analysis of the data gave a clear picture of the face-to-face customer demographic, as well as an indication that a high proportion would be more than happy to use the internet, via mobiles and tablets, to access services.

Armed with the information, the Communications Team set about developing intervention strategies to ensure that not only would demand be met, but that essential resources in Customer Services would be freed up.

These have included launching a new Council website based on traffic trends, introducing new telephony systems and payment machines, designing an online guide to Council Tax bills and creating a recycling video.

82%

of users have told us that our social media content is good and excellent.

The driver behind it all is the Government’s Digital Inclusion Strategy, which aims to make services ‘digital by default’ by increasing online access and giving people the necessary skills to use the internet.

The requirement for councils to fall in line with this strategy is compelling. Both nationally and locally there is a need to work more efficiently, while satisfying customer demand for quick and convenient access to services, at times and in ways that suit them.

Social media will play an important role as our audience continues to grow organically, attracted by strong content and the opportunity for instant and meaningful engagement with the Council.

However, the Council’s new website is our opportunity to achieve true channel shift by creating a transaction-led resource that will change the way people in South Derbyshire access information and conduct their business indefinitely.

It must become our primary customer information source and number one contact mechanism, a ‘shop window’ for all Council services including everything from recycling collection dates and paying Council Tax to checking business rates and looking at leisure activities.

Everyone within the Council needs to take ownership for the upkeep of the website, which demonstrates the vision for South Derbyshire and highlights the District’s desire and plans for growth.

Social media enquiries have increased for **86%** of public sector organisations over the past year.

There were **379,279** visits to the Council’s website in 2017/18

99% of 16 to 24-year-olds in the UK now use Social Media.

The total UK digital audience (active on laptops, desktops and mobile devices) is now more than **50 million**

Half of all UK smartphone users use their device to make online purchases, electronic payments or use online banking

Our Objectives

Set against the Corporate Plan objectives, a series of communications objectives have been agreed to reflect the Council's current focus. These objectives will be reviewed on an annual basis to ensure they remain relevant.

People

Corporate Plan objective	Communications objective
Enable people to live independently	Celebrate success stories, such as maintaining grant funding to the voluntary and community sector. Publicise the availability of new and adapted developments, as well as resident satisfaction and any successes relating to efforts to reduce tenancy turnover. Help to engage health professionals about the benefits of services like Telecare to broaden income streams.
Develop the workforce of South Derbyshire to support growth in relation to aspirations, employability, skills and travel to work	Continue to help build on the success of the Swadlincote Jobs and Skills Fair. Promote the Raising Aspirations (RISE) project, hold an awards evening and consult with secondary school pupils to ascertain levels of aspiration. Publicise the outcomes of this work. Increase awareness of volunteering opportunities and mentoring, both internally and within businesses in the District. Support the growth and development of community volunteers.
Protect and help support the most vulnerable, including those affected by financial challenges	Work with partner agencies to further initiatives that support the vulnerable, such as the Safe Place initiative. Prepare for Universal Credit roll-out; contact all affected tenants and promote transactional bank accounts. Promote applications for Benefits, discounts and relief through the use of e-forms to speed up the decision-making process and the security of personal information. Promote initiatives designed to keep people in their own homes, such as the Pilot Hospital Discharge Scheme, as well as sports and leisure activities for targeted groups. Continue to develop internal/cross-departmental processes to ensure effective shared knowledge and good practice.
Use existing tools and powers to take appropriate enforcement action	Publicise successful prosecutions and enforcement actions supported by or initiated by the Council, as well as partnership campaigns and initiatives with the police and other agencies. Assist with statutory consultation where appropriate. Promote the existence of possible new PSPO in Findern and of any further powers adopted during the year. Use Facebook to link our activity with national promotional events (Noise Action week, Food Safety Week etc).
Increase levels of participation in sport, health, environmental and physical activities	Continue to support the implementation of the Physical Activity, Sport and Recreation Strategy, with a focus on the wide variety of facilities, activities, opportunities and events available in South Derbyshire for people of all ages. Target younger audiences through social media engagement and via existing groups. Continue to use the website to make finding activities available in the District quick and easy.
Reduce the amount of waste sent to landfill	Continue to work through the Derbyshire Waste Partnership on promoting recycling and composting. Targeted campaigns across all channels to reach new audiences and educate residents – particularly those on new housing developments – on the importance of recycling, composting and reducing the amount of waste sent to landfill. Raise awareness of good recycling practices – what goes in which bin – and share top tips, particularly at peak times such as Christmas. Help to cement positive behavioural change brought about by Waste less, Save more on a local level, via the SnapBox, Picnic Rescue and Fab Foods projects.



Place

Corporate Plan objective	Communications objective
Facilitate and deliver a range of integrated and sustainable housing and community infrastructure	Support aspirations to increase the supply of affordable homes in the District and better understand housing needs. The Survey of Tenants and Residents (STAR) will be carried out to measure customer satisfaction. The results of this, together with any changes being made to service delivery as a result, will be publicised. Consultation will take place with a view to delivering key supplementary documents to the adopted South Derbyshire Local Plan, parts 1 and 2. Complement efforts to bring the District's empty homes back into use and identify the best communications methods for contacting those involved. Continue to support the delivery of outcomes from the Housing Strategy 2016-21. Consult on a new Allocations Policy via the website and a stakeholder event.
Enhance understanding of the planning process	Review content of the website to ensure it contains clear information, enhances clarity and helps to simplify the planning process for members of the public. Consult with interested parties on developing Neighbourhood Plans.
Help maintain low crime and anti-social behaviour levels in the District	Focus on events and outcomes that build on the District's reputation as a safe place to live, work and visit (in the financial year 2017-18, the District had 40.90 crimes per 1,000 population, compared to 80.42 in Derby City and 53.56 in Derbyshire as a whole). Support the delivery of actions within the Safer South Derbyshire Community Safety Partnership Plan. Keep the public informed of local crime issues and hotspots, while using appropriate channels to help to educate youngsters on issues including hate crime, drugs and sexual exploitation. Publicise the positive and diversionary activities taking place.
Connect with our communities, helping them feel safe and secure	Publicise Area Forums and other opportunities for community/tenant involvement. Promote attendance at Council meetings and the ability for members of the public to ask questions. Arm staff with the knowledge of how to reach residents and volunteers through digital/social media channels. Offer appropriate crime prevention advice in response to spikes in crime and at events such as Liberation Day, while celebrating community cohesion through initiatives like the Dreamscheme, the Go Grow gardening club and Safer Neighbourhood concept. Celebrate significant security investments in the Council's housing stock and improvements to its repairs service. Promote estate pop-up events at which residents can talk about improvements they feel could be made to their homes and communities.
Support provision of cultural facilities and activities throughout the District	Work closely with Swadlincote Tourist Information Centre and other organisations to promote the area's rich and diverse culture, and continue to gauge online feedback and evaluation of the National Forest Walking Festival. Support the roll-out of development plans for Green Bank and Etwall Leisure Centres and promote use of our community buildings.
Deliver services that keep the District clean and healthy	Promote events around responsible dog ownership and littering, utilising digital channels to spread the public health message where necessary. Continue to raise awareness of the public health impacts and interventions around improving air quality and minimising noise pollution. Support efforts to tackle fly-tipping, focusing particularly on the innovative solutions being used, publicising online reporting methods and highlighting enforcement action.



Progress

Corporate Plan objective

Work to attract further inward investment

Unlock development potential and ensure the continuing growth of vibrant town centres

Work to maximise the employment, training and leisure uses of The National Forest by residents and increase the visitor spend by tourists

Help to influence and develop the infrastructure for economic growth

Provide support to businesses and the not for profit sector and promote innovation and access to finance, including in rural areas

Communications objective

Build on the District's positive reputation of being 'open for business', celebrating the success of both large and small enterprises. Promote participation in Love Your Local Market Enterprise Fortnight. Herald the creation of new jobs and new business investments in South Derbyshire, as well as support efforts to keep unemployment rates low. Publicise the vacant commercial property bulletin, while supporting the delivery of actions within the Economic Development Strategy. Celebrate high-profile business visits such as from Toyota City.

Promote events and initiatives that help town centres to thrive. Further expand the use of the Swadlincote Town Team's social media offering to educate people of its purpose. Work with businesses where necessary to share key success stories and encourage their participation in initiatives like the Swadlincote Wedding Fair. Support the delivery of the Swadlincote Townscape Heritage Scheme. Promote consultation with stakeholders in connection with the Swadlincote Town Centre Vision and Strategy.

Focus on South Derbyshire's unique position at the heart of The National Forest, working with partners to market it as a facility that can encourage sporting participation and promote health. Raise awareness of activities, including those on offer at Rosliston Forestry Centre, in the What's On guide, through the website and social media channels. Continue to use the #SDwhatson hashtag to build a brand. Support tourism growth by heralding events such as the Festival of Leisure and International Food and Drink Festival.

Keep the community up to date with progress on delivery of key infrastructure projects, for example the Woodville Regeneration Route.

Support the South Derbyshire Business Advice Service, using case studies and targeted social media campaigns to promote potential opportunities. Promote the fact that guidance is offered to businesses or people thinking of starting a business. Celebrate business growth created through good environmental practices and positive regulation. Promote the Community Partnership Scheme and encourage applications.



Outcomes

Corporate Plan objective	Communications objective
Maintain financial health	Continue to promote the Council's ethos of doing more with less and play a key role in utilising marketing techniques to maximise commercial income. Undertake an audit of the way that customers transact with the Council and offer simpler online options. Assist with campaigns to minimise rent arrears and clamp down on benefit fraud.
Achieve good Corporate Governance	Produce the Council's annual report to demonstrate key achievements and promote the Annual Governance Statement. Ensure compliance with the Local Code of Corporate Governance and maintain an effective work programme. Continue to evolve the Corporate Plan 2016-21 and raise awareness of its role internally and externally.
Maintain customer focus	Through the new website and online forms, focus on shaping and improving services around customer demand and expectation. Respond to media enquiries within two working days and adopt a Social Media Strategy and Action Plan to increase following and provide innovative options (including use of video) for people to engage with the Council. Continue a phased roll-out of new branding, creating a clear corporate identity and focusing on reputational excellence. Support consultation work (e.g. changes to the Council Tax Reduction Support Scheme).
Minimise business risks and realise the benefits of technological opportunities	Pro-actively prepare for risk scenarios and focus on upholding the Council's reputation at all times. Support work internally to educate staff on anti-fraud processes, risk management strategy and new data protection regulations.
Promote and enable active democracy	Help to maintain a culture of openness and accountability through continuing good relations with residents and the media. Promote democracy with schools and young people and encourage voter registration on a continual basis. Support the delivery of any elections and efforts to revise the electoral register.
Enhance environmental standards	Support the development of public spaces and the work in fighting environmental crime and raising environmental/sustainability standards. Help implement and maintain the process(es) needed for internal and external communications relevant to the ISO14001 environmental management system or its alternative. Facilitate the consistent and reliable communication of compliance obligations, awareness and competency requirements and respond to relevant environmental communications, subject to the needs and expectations of interested parties. Focus on flooding awareness and educate residents on managing emergency incidents.
Maintain a skilled workforce	Communicate clearly with staff through internal channels, celebrating their achievements, providing regular and useful information and highlighting training/learning opportunities. Roll out action plan for phase two of Better online (the Intranet). Work against the Internal Communications Strategy to unite staff and ensure platforms are fit for purpose. Support the implementation of the Healthy Workplaces scheme across the organisation and help to compose/promote external awards entries where appropriate.
Promote inclusion	Promote activities taking place across the District aimed at people of all ages and backgrounds. Appreciate different audiences and the channels best suited to communicating with them. Build on the themes of our Corporate Equalities and Safeguarding work, raise awareness of individual responsibilities and focus on key projects such as promoting the Disability Confident employer scheme as part of the Council's recruitment procedure.



Communications Dashboard

Our Communications Dashboard has been designed to reflect our performance in terms of media coverage, social media, the website and Better Online, as well as key communications projects. It is updated monthly to help inform future communications activities and priorities. Below is the annual dashboard, which compares 2017/18 to 2016/17.

Social Media

Followers



Reach and engagement

On an average month, our central Facebook page has reached 179,162 users, with 20,299 engaging with our content. Twitter impressions - the number of times a Tweet is seen in a timeline - average 102,600 per month.

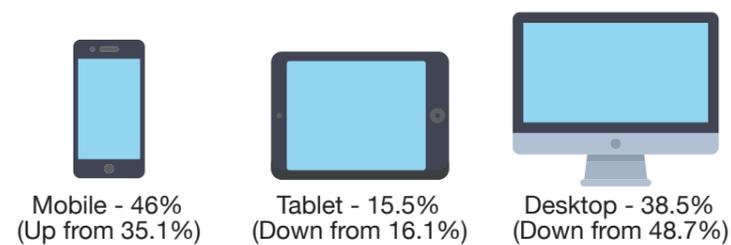
Video coverage



Between October 2017 and May 2018, 14,252 people viewed videos across our Facebook and Twitter central pages. This included bestowing the Freedom of South Derbyshire on the 1211 Swadlincote Squadron ATC.

Website

Devices used



Transactions



After going live in October, income from transactional payments made via the website has risen from £1,693,954 to £1,768,660 - an increase of £74,706. An average of 593 online forms are submitted per month.

Projects and Campaigns

Website

Feedback has been extremely positive about our new look website, which went live in October. Our two key aspirations - to provide a device responsive solution and to strengthen financial transactions - have been achieved.

Although difficult to compare like for like with the old website, due to fundamental differences in set up, emerging patterns and trends show it is proving to be another string to the bow of our Channel Shift Strategy and is providing more choice to residents than ever before. Work is still being undertaken on the 'back end' of the website to ensure the user experience is as smooth as possible before we look to set up bespoke online accounts for customers.

Social Media

Huge strides have been made to further our Social Media offering. A central Facebook page, sharing success stories, showcasing South Derbyshire and promoting events, has reached almost 1,000 followers in little over six months. The use of video, in particular, has proved popular.

We've also created a Social Media Strategy for 2018-2021, as well as an in depth Evidence Base and action plan. These documents will set the scene for us to clearly and consistently communicate our story and services through authentic, engaging and personal content.

Printed press

The increasing focus on a 'digital first' approach by the press was reflected in a drop in queries in 2017/18, with stories being sourced more and more through social media. Relationships remain strong with journalists and wide ranging publicity has been secured at a local, regional and national level. Only 0.70% of coverage has been negative.

Better Online (the intranet)



Top Search Terms

Pay | Leave | Overtime | Car |
 JEQ | Pay scales | Letter |
 ID badge | Sickness | Expenses



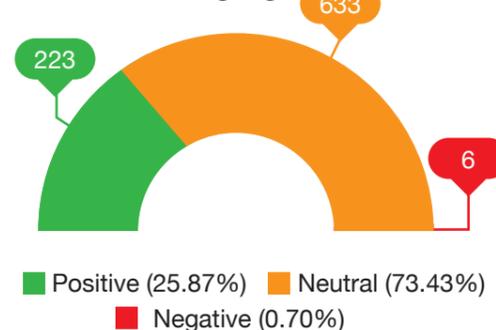
Most read articles

Introducing our new Conservation Officer
 Fresh Faces - Katherine Stanley
 Fresh Faces - Anthony Baxter
 Fresh Faces - Paul Whittingham



Media Coverage

Tone



Positive Transformation

Little over 25 years ago, the World Wide Web was born.

Today it has around 2.5 billion users across the globe, having transformed almost every aspect of public, private and work life, underpinning the economy, creating entire new industries and changing the way we all talk to each other.

The world of communications never stands still. While people's demand for news, information and services remains undimmed, the way they choose to access them has altered almost immeasurably.

Newspapers have long realised it. With print sales in sharp decline their focus has turned to an online audience which is often just as keen to share and participate in the news process as the paid employees of the media.

This strategy sets out a clear direction for the Council - while press releases will always have their place, digital communications is now king.

More than seven in 10 adults now have a social media profile. Smartphone users spend nearly two hours a day using the internet on their mobile phone. Almost 40 million mobile users could access 4G services at the last count.

The statistics are undeniable.

We must not lose sight of the fact, however, that 4.8 million UK adults today have still never used the internet. With research suggesting that possessing basic digital skills can help the average UK household save more than £700 a year, local authorities have a duty to ensure these people are not left behind.

Shaping digital services is about understanding customers' needs rather than wants. That means an 'inside out' approach, where the most successful councils are able to put themselves in a service user's shoes and create solutions that work for them.

With a new website now in place and increasingly popular social media channels to boot, South Derbyshire District Council is well placed at the forefront of the digital revolution. It is ready to engage with a modern audience and, based on their desires, to offer them what they want – news, information and services at their fingertips.

People, Place and Progress - this is a Communications Strategy that will help to engage residents fully with the vision to make South Derbyshire a better place to live, work and visit.

