

South Derbyshire District Council

Implementing e-government Statement

October 2002

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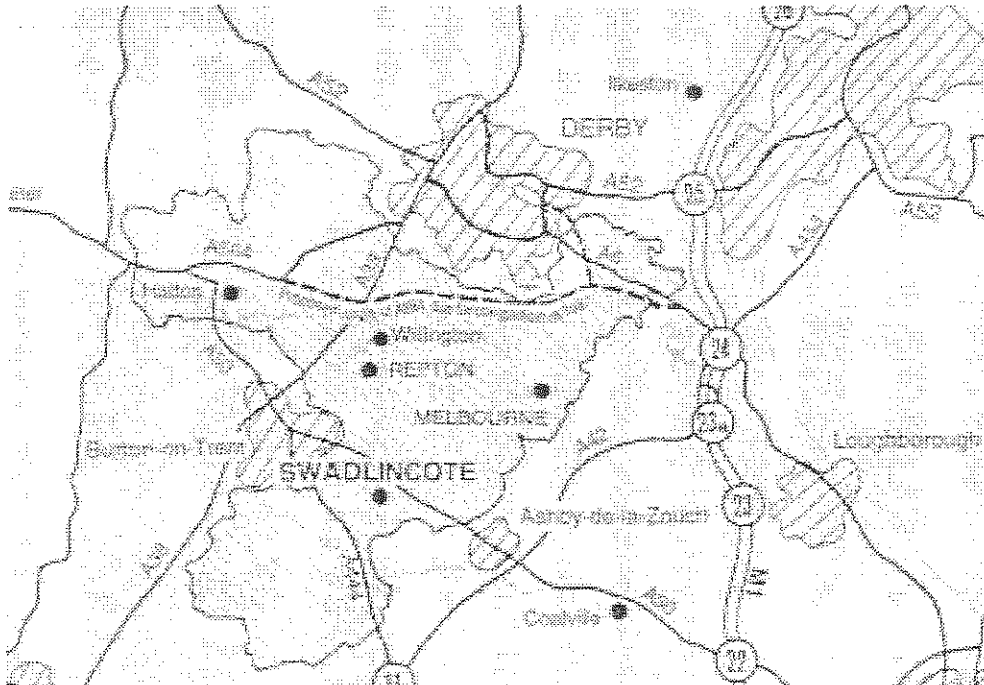
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South Derbyshire District Council

1. The Council's Vision and Objectives

1.1 Introduction

The Council is one of South Derbyshire's largest businesses. We employ 310 people and currently spend about £27million annually.



Source:

South Derbyshire District Council is based in Swadlincote which is shown on the above map, this means that our administrative offices are not always practical for people living in the rural area's of the district. As part of our e-Derbyshire strategy it is very important our services are made accessible to citizens living across the whole District regardless of their location.

Partnerships with surrounding areas such as Burton-upon-Trent and Derby are also important. Many South Derbyshire residents naturally look to these areas to work, shop and for their leisure pursuits. Closer links with these areas can improve access to Council information.

Some other facts and figures about the Council and the area:

- for almost two decades, South Derbyshire has been the fastest growing district in Derbyshire. The current population is estimated to be 82,500.

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- unemployment levels are low (2.4% compared with 4.0% nationally). However, the standard of living in some parts of the district is poor, with individuals excluded for financial and other reasons from playing a full part in the life of the community. The areas concerned are mainly Swadlincote and the villages of the former South Derbyshire Coalfield.
- about 25% of the National Forest area lies in South Derbyshire
- 22 Conservation Areas (areas of special architectural or historic importance) have been designated
- the district has 3 Leisure Centres (at Swadlincote, Etwall and Melbourne), 45 playgrounds and parks and 6 cemeteries
- 72% of homes are in Council Tax bands A-C
- 3725 homes are rented from the Council.

Like all businesses, we need to plan for the future and to have a clear idea about what sort of organisation we need to become in order to meet the needs and aspirations of the community.

1.2 Our Vision

E-Government is an essential tool in helping the Council to deliver its strategic vision.

In July 2001 our stated vision was to be:

'a top performing Council which cares, gives quality, value for money services and promotes quality of life'

in 2002 this has progressed

'to promote and enhance the social, economic and environmental wellbeing of the community through the provision of cost effective, customer focused services'

South Derbyshire Corporate Plan 2002-3

Guiding Principles

The Council has established a number of guiding principles to govern the way it operates. In essence these describe the type of Council we want to be. The principles are set out in italics, together with an explanation of how the IEG Statement sets out to facilitate these guiding principles, where relevant.

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- ❑ *making decisions openly and with integrity*
- ❑ *being accountable to the people of South Derbyshire for our decisions*
- ❑ *involving the community in choices about services and local priorities*

Essentially, these principles are about the way we interact with the people that we serve. In terms of the IEG Statement:-

- We have developed a new web-site to increase the information available to local residents. In particular this provides
 - ✓ information on all Council decisions
 - ✓ a means for the public to provide feedback to the Council about its services
 - ✓ a means of providing information for consultation purposes – including key Council strategies (e.g. the IEG Statement)
- ❑ *being open and responsive to change*
- ❑ *treating people fairly and promoting equality of opportunity in employment and service provision*
- ❑ *providing reliable and responsive services to our customers*
- We are looking at ways to provide more equal access to information and Council services to people living away from the main administrative offices.
- We want ultimately to be able to provide 24/7 services in a number of different forms using the Council web-site for information purposes and using on line transactions e.g. payments, applications for services via the web-site and also call centres and call management systems.
- For a small council we can enhance reliability by using IT systems to help us work more closely with other councils to share expertise and indeed peaks and troughs in workload that help us to deliver a more consistent service.
- ❑ *working with partners in the public, private and voluntary sectors to achieve more than we can on our own*
- We recognise we can make even better use of IT resources by working in partnership with other Councils.
 - ✓ We are part of the Derbyshire IT Partnership which has secured some £2m of Government IT funding aimed at joining up local councils and public bodies across the County
 - ✓ We have received £1.25m invest to save funding by working in partnership with 4 other local councils in Derbyshire as a means of improving key benefits services.
- We also want the Council web-site to become a focus for community-based information.

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- *ensuring that the actions we take are sustainable in the long term*
 - The Council is concentrating on putting in place key building blocks for delivering effective IT Solutions. This includes upgrading the Council network and infrastructure.
 - This recognises that new technology is only as good as the underlying network that it supports.
 - ✓ The purchase of new servers to carry our initiatives forwards.
 - ✓ The purchase of desktop and mobile technology to improve the speed of service delivery.
 - ✓ Installation and upgrade of the Council's internal and external communications infrastructure via a new internet server and access channels.
- *valuing employees and the essential role they play in service provision*
 - We recognise that effective use of IT can help the wellbeing of staff by promoting more flexible working arrangements.
 - We can make ourselves a more attractive employer by using technology to provide the flexibility to vary the time and location of work for many of our staff.

Council Key Aims

We recognise that over the next 3 years the way we deliver services will need to change as we try to achieve our challenging vision. However it is important that the way we operate is not simply a means in itself. The key will always be whether we have made a change to the quality and effectiveness of the services our customers receive not just the way in which they are delivered.

The Council's Key Aims in terms of service delivery are set out below:-

- 1** *to strengthen and develop the local economy through support for business development and inward investment.*
- 2** *to safeguard and enhance the natural and built environment*
- 3** *to address the needs of South Derbyshire residents for good quality homes, of a variety of tenures, located in well planned and safe environments*
- 4** *to promote the health and welfare of all sections of the community, including access to leisure and cultural activities*

- 5 *to secure continuous improvements in the quality and efficiency of services provided by the Council*
- 6 *to manage resources efficiently and effectively*
- 7 *to listen to, represent and provide leadership to the people of South Derbyshire in local, regional and national arenas*
- 8 *to support the development of the National Forest and its enjoyment by residents and visitors*

1.4 The National Vision Delivered at a Local Level

The national strategy sets out a vision for e-government. As is the case with many national strategies this can be very general and apply more readily to much larger organisations than our own. Nevertheless we have tried to translate this vision to make it relevant to South Derbyshire District Council and the people that it serves.

Joined up Services

As a district council we are one of three tiers of local government that operate in our area. This can be confusing to the customer, who simply want their "council" be it county district or parish to sort out their problem.

- We are investigating joining with the County Council and other Derbyshire Districts to introduce a call centre to deal with all council enquiries within our district. Government funding has been secured for this.
- We want to make our own web-site the focus for community information across the whole of South Derbyshire by improving local links and being part of the Derbyshire portal improving access to electronic services across Derbyshire.

Accessible – with some 51 parishes spread over yy hectares we cover a diverse area. This can means that our services and offices are not allways physically accessible for the people of South Derbyshire. With yy% of the population of working age and zz in work, often outside the district, many residents want to access our services outside of normal office hours.

- We want our web-site to provide more information and access to services 24 hours a day 7 days a week (24/7)
- We want to extend phone contact with our offices beyond the 9 to 5 to allow people to have their basic queries answered by a voice at the other end of the line.
- Provide the local community with an effective and useful web portal for council services, local information and exchange of ideas, promoting a greater sense of community for the area.

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Delivered or supported electronically – we recognise that savings can be made by helping people to provide information on line and carry out transactions on line.

- We want people to be able to pay their council bills, apply for services, provide feedback on our services on line and we want to reply back to them on-line.
- We are committed to the NLIS project.
- Provide officers and members better access to information so that they can deal with members of the public more effectively.

Delivered Jointly – as a relatively small Council we recognise that we can gain much by working in partnership with other councils.

- Where possible, we are seeking to use similar systems to our neighbours and indeed are seeking to procure systems jointly with them. (Invest to Save Bid for Revenues & Benefits)
- We want to be able to share expertise with other Councils and look at how we can use IT to deliver services in partnership as a means of providing more consistent and quality services.

Delivered Seamlessly – much of our information is property based and customers can be frustrated when they have to inform a number of councils and indeed departments that their property details have changed.

- We are committed to the land and property gazeteer as a means of simplifying property based transactions and holding information on properties in a central area.
- To improve the internal communication between different parts of the Council, so that inefficiency and duplication is eliminated.

Open and Accountable – we have a real challenge to regain the interest and enthusiasm of the public in the services we provide. In this we are little different to other Council and indeed we like to think that we invest more time and effort into seeking their views than many of our neighbours.

- We want to use our web-site as a means of providing more information about Council decisions and how they affect the public
- We want to provide easier access for members of the public to consultation papers and seek their views and feedback on the way we deliver our services.
- To improve the quality of management information regarding South Derbyshire District Council's performance in the delivery of services to its customers to improve the quality of decision making.

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Used by e-citizens – it is little use providing electronic information if local people do not want or do not have the knowledge and skills to access this information.

- We take whatever opportunity we have to publicise the Council web-site as a source of key information.
- We want to work in partnership with other public bodies to promote this access to services but we also rely on awareness raising at the national level.

2. Priority Outcomes & Services

2.1 Our Phased Approach to achieving E-Government

PHASE 1

Like any other major change, e-government relies on strong foundations if it is to be successful. We are placing great emphasis on making sure that these strong foundations are in place.

These include:-

- **Putting in place the key e-government infrastructure**
 - ✓ The Council has updated and upgraded its existing web-site to extend the range and quality of information available and also to begin to move to greater interaction
 - ✓ The council is reviewing its GIS requirements with a view to enabling greater public access to map-based information
 - ✓ Document Management is already used within the Council and we are looking to extend its use more widely.
- **Reviewing and updating the council's core computer systems to ensure that they are compatible with electronic service delivery.**
 - ✓ The Council will replace its financial information system in 2003. This will provide a major step forward in e-enabling the whole range of council financial transactions, including e-procurement.
 - ✓ The Council will replace its revenues and benefits system in 2003 again with a view to enabling more electronic transactions
 - ✓ Planning and Building Control systems will be upgraded to enable more interactive public access to the information they hold as well as enabling the public to apply for services through this route.
- **Ensuring that the Council network is robust and can handle increased traffic generated by new council systems**
 - ✓ The Council will upgrade its network by 2003 to make sure it can handle extra data traffic
 - ✓ The Council will look to introduce more sophisticated telephony based on new technology to provide more flexible call handling.
- **Joining key national projects to ensure that this Council is keeping in step with national e-government plans**
 - ✓ We are moving to full compliance with the National Land and Property Gazetteer project
 - ✓ The council is contributing to the National Land Information Service Project.

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PHASE 2

Implementing e-government requires considerable resources. The Government is making a contribution to some of these costs but still the largest share is to be found by local councils. As a small local council we need to look at how we can take advantage of the benefits of e-government at an affordable price. This means that the next phase of e-government development will depend heavily on working in partnership with other councils.

Some of the things we are hoping to implement in this way include the following.

- Single e-Procurement system in Derbyshire, with a view to moving to paperless invoicing and payment services, together with faster payments to businesses.
- Shared geographical information systems, with multiple layers of shared information. This would support planning applications, property portfolios, Crime and Disorder Act, road design, strategic applications and mapping systems.
- Shared local government portal to improve access to services provided by local councils, public bodies and voluntary organisations in the Derbyshire and South Derbyshire area.
- Development of joint contact centre and customer relationship management system as a means of extending access to our services beyond core hours and improving efficiency in terms of a first line response to our customers questions and request for service.

In this second phase we also want to ensure that we are making a difference in the way our staff work and use technology

- We will pilot more home working as an efficient means of undertaking tasks and helping to recruit and retain key staff.

PHASE 3

This is really at a more national perspective. We recognise that to move forward in the following areas requires support and co-ordination at a regional and national level.

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- LASER project to join up electoral registration systems and pave the way for electronic voting.
- Digital TV as a means of expanding access to key council information systems.

The table below identifies the key projects and the benefits we consider that they will produce.

1	Citizen access to on-line information systems and information	Increased access to community information and involvement. Access points available to all sections of population.	Any savings will depend on approach to financing citizen access. Reduced reliance on office-based services and reduced election costs.	
2	Establish on-line partnership links	Common use of GIS. Improved delivery of services.	Lower licence charges	
3	Enhancement to SDDC web site (e-forms)	Greater provision of information to the community, ability to access 24/7 services On-line payments, enquiries, on-line form filling, bulletin boards	Reduced reliance on office-based services. Save management costs through time for professional staff.	2001-2005
4	Web-enablement of existing systems	Allow on-line access to citizens of South Derbyshire to planning, health, housing, 24/7 accessibility.	Professional staff savings. Administration savings.	2001/02/03
5	Contact Centre set-up	Improved access towards ALL services in Derbyshire via one-call number. Shift work allows better adaptation to working patterns.		
6	NLPG/NLIS integration	Move towards common national property database. Ease of enquiries.	Reduction in administration costs.	2002
7	Revenue Systems Replacement	Web-enabled access to on-line information for payers and claimants. Greater local accountability. 24/7 access.	Expected savings from 250,000 annual central support costs. Reduced reliance on in-house development. Reduced processing/administration cost	April 2003
8	Financial Systems Replacement	Web enabled access to on-line information. On-line payments and invoicing, improved management reporting.	Expected savings from central support costs. Reduced reliance on in-house development.	April 2003
9	E-procurement	Give access to current negotiated prices from recommended suppliers. Speed up process of tendering, procurement of services, payments.	Lower administration costs and lower costs for supplied goods and services. Overall est. savings of 10% with savings up to 15% for hardware.	
10	Develop Intranet	Better in-house information delivery and reduce duplication and printed material. Allow recommended equipment specifications to be publicised and orders to be generated on-line. Links to extranet services.	Reduction of print costs. Reduced administration costs.	2001-2005
11	Extension to Document Image Processing	Reduce storage of paper-based information. Speed up enquiries. Move closer to one point of information access. Enable close partnership & joint working.	Reduced storage costs, reduction of paper-based procedures and lower administration charges.	
12	Enable home-working.	Better access for principal officers, council staff and members. Flexibility and better quality of work	Reduced administration costs. Potential reduction of office accommodation costs.	2003/04

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		environments.		
13	Infrastructure development/ upgrade	24/7 access to existing and new systems. Enable the infrastructure to be able to take-on the increased traffic efficiently. Maximise access times, security and minimise risk – towards BS7799.	Reduced administration costs. Efficiency savings. Empower speed of access.	2001/ 2002
14	Skills/ESD Training	Ability to maintain ESD systems. Develop integration. Manage projects. Improved risk management through release of reliance on 3rd party suppliers.	Contract savings.	2001- 2005

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3.0 Self Assessment of Local E-Organisation

In 2001 we conducted a self assessment of our services in-line with the stated IEG aims. The conclusions indicated that the Council was on-target with stated government objectives for IEG in year 1 of the process, however, the audits conducted allowed us to address areas for improvement towards the successful implementation of ESD.

In March of this year the Government published its national e-government strategy, almost 12 months after requesting local councils to prepare their own implementing e-government strategies.

This section considers how this Council is delivering and indeed plans to deliver against the five key themes identified in the national strategy.

3.1 Theme 1 - Transactions

The table below shows how the Council seeks to achieve the 100% e-government target as defined by the Best Value Performance Indicator 157. Essentially it look at how many ways there are to achieve different types of electronic transaction e.g. using internet, digital tv, kiosks etc and how many of these have been implemented already.

This indicator has evolved and undergone considerable change since its inception and as still far from certain. In essence it provides a moving target that is even more challenging to hit than a static one.

Interaction Type		Actual 2001/2	Forecast			Target Dec 05
			2002/3	2003/4	2004/5	
Providing Information	Types %	5 40%	5 40%	5 60%	5 60%	5 100%
Collecting Revenue	Types %	6 33%	6 67%	6 100%	6 100%	6 100%
Benefits & Grants	Types %	2 nil	2 nil	2 50%	2 50%	2 100%
Consultation	Types %	3 nil	3 nil	3 33%	3 33%	3 100%
Regulation	Types %	2 nil	2 nil	2 50%	2 50%	2 100%
Application for Services	Types %	2 nil	2 nil	2 50%	2 50%	2 100%
Booking Services	Types %	4 nil	4 nil	4 50%	4 50%	4 100%
Paying for Services	Types %	1 nil	1 nil	1 100%	1 100%	1 100%
Access to Business	Types %	1 nil	1 nil	1 100%	1 100%	1 100%
Procurement	Types %	2 nil	2 nil	2 nil	2 50%	2 100%
Total	Types %	28 14%	6 21%	18 64%	19 68%	28 100%

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No doubt the measurement of this target will continue to evolve and it would be unrealistic for any council to claim that when they achieve 100% as defined in their current statements all their services will be truly e-enabled. Technology changes and so do the demands of our customers. Nevertheless the target still provides a means of helping us to track how we are striving to use new technology to improve public access to our services.

The key areas of activity to achieve this target are listed in detail in Section 2 above and are summarised below:-

- **Web-site** – to provide more interactive 24/7 transactions
- **Customer Relationship Management System/contact centre** – to extend hours of access to front line advice to council residents and improve efficiency of service delivery
- **Kiosks** – to provide information on Council services and basic transactions at remoter locations within the district
- **Financial Management System** – to facilitate electronic payments and collection of revenue as well as procurement of goods and services
- **E-forms** – to make it easier for customers to apply for services on-line and cut down on costs of processing
- **Online surgery and bulletin boards** – as a means of expanding opportunities for consultation and seeking public views
- **Web Portal** – to join up access to Council and indeed other public sector services across Derbyshire and within South Derbyshire.
- **Procurement** – initially this will look at national schemes but will depend on how cost effective they prove and whether they give the opportunity to encourage local suppliers and business.

In addition the plans will also consider opportunities to take advantage of the following technologies if these arise.

- **Digital TV** – to improve access to services for those who do not have access to the internet but can access digital TV. This will depend on private sector activity within our area.
- **On-line voting – LASER** – the council is committed towards embracing this national project as it becomes defined.
- **Smart Cards** – we would only seek to introduce this system in partnership with other bodies.