



# Customer Access Strategy

Together we're putting our customers at the heart of all we do

## Need this information in a different way?

We recognise that people who request or receive information from us, may need it provided in a different way.

- We want everyone to be able to understand us.
- We want everyone to be able to access our information.
- We want to communicate effectively with you.

We offer SignLive, which provides online video interpreting. On request we will provide other formats including large print; Braille; British Sign Language DVD; easy read; audio and electronic formats; and translations of written materials into other languages.

**Please contact us: Email: [customer.services@southderbyshire.gov.uk](mailto:customer.services@southderbyshire.gov.uk)**



**South  
Derbyshire**  
District Council

# Foreword

## Providing excellent customer service is at the heart of everything we do.

This is the ambition of this Customer access strategy: to make sure our customers receive the best service possible – whether this is a resident paying their Council Tax or housing rent, tenants looking to a new home or start up businesses making enquiries about new premises.

No matter who you are or why you need to contact us, we are committed to ensuring you are satisfied that you have received a response from us in a timely way.

We remain committed to the principles of equality, diversity and inclusion and this strategy shows how we will build on the customer service we currently provide over the next three years to give all our customers equal access to the services we provide.

We will also continue to work with partners to signpost people to other services available in the district.

We are proud of the services we provide and it remains our vision to make South Derbyshire a great place to live, visit and invest.



**Dr Justin Ives**  
Chief Executive



**Councillor Robert Pearson**  
Council Leader

# Our Corporate Plan

**Our vision is to make South Derbyshire a great place to live, visit and invest.**

**Our three key priority areas are:**

**our environment, our people, our future.**

## ➔ Our environment

Improve the environment of the district ▶ Tackle climate change ▶ Enhance the attractiveness of South Derbyshire

## ➔ Our people

Engage with our communities ▶ Supporting and safeguarding the most vulnerable ▶ Deliver excellent services

## ➔ Our future

Develop skills and careers ▶ Support economic growth and infrastructure ▶ Transforming the Council



**Our customer access strategy aims to deliver on key aims outlined under the above themes including:**

## **Deliver excellent services**

- Ensure consistency in the way we serve our customers
- Use methods of communication for customers to provide and receive information
- Use technology to effectively connect with our communities

## **Transforming the Council**

- Provide modern ways of working that support us to deliver services to meet changing needs

# Why do we need a customer access strategy?

Our Customer Access Strategy 2023 to 2026 sets out how we will further strengthen customer relationships, improve experiences and increase satisfaction. We will ensure our services are provided in the way our customers require them.

Our customers are at the heart of what we do. Our strategy will focus on the whole organisation, shaping how the Council will continue to transform service delivery; providing excellent service to customers and delivering value for money to the taxpayer.

In order to meet the needs of customers, South Derbyshire District Council must provide services that are :-

- Easily accessible
- Simple to use
- Effective
- Streamlined
- Convenient
- Cost effective
- Robust
- Secure

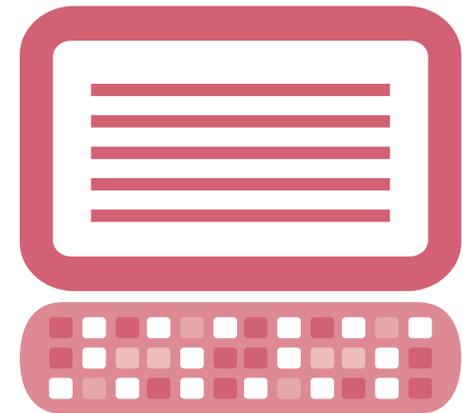


# Provide clear, consistent and accessible services to all our customers

Ensure consistency in the way we deal with our customers and provide modern ways of working that support us to deliver services to meet changing needs.

## What we will do:

- Launch new digital services that are easy to access such as web chat – whether by computer, your tablet, by phone or via social media.
- Adopt Plain English across all our services and ensure our information is easy to understand.
- Use images where possible so more customers can self-serve, even if they face language or literacy barriers.
- Review our website content and continuously review the search words and phrases our customers use, so our online search results are more accurate.
- We recognise that access to our services through digital means is not available to everyone, therefore we will ensure that customers can continue to contact us and receive our services face to face where necessary.
- Ensure our services are designed to support customers with additional needs and we will support and continue to promote initiatives such as SignLive and the Sunflower Scheme.



# Improving the way customers can contact us

Ensure technology enables us to effectively connect with our communities and provide modern ways of working that support us to deliver services to meet changing needs.

## What we will do:

- Make it easier for customers to book and pay for events, report local issues and request services.
- We will encourage customers to upload digital copies of documents online, instead of asking them to provide original paper versions.
- Receive the majority of calls in our contact centre, so that we can handle more queries at first point of contact.
- Ensure customers benefit from the best possible technological enhancements – from call recording software, through to compliant payment processes.
- Publish as much information on our website for our customers to access quickly and easily.
- Continue to offer a range of social media channels for customers to interact with the Council.
- Provide and promote assistive technologies including interpretation and other services to support all our customers.



# Engage our customers and keep them up to date

**Have in place methods of communication that enable customers to provide and receive information.**

## What we will do:

- Develop and promote online customer account facilities to show customers their history of transactions with the council, allow them to check on progress and request further help and support, across our services – from housing, planning and waste and recycling, through to environmental health and Council Tax.
- Introduce ongoing engagement with our customers to better understand their needs to help inform future services.
- Learn and listen to enable us to understand our customers' needs better - such as recognising when a customer has individual needs such as large print documents, or are classed as vulnerable.
- Introduce real time technology to enable our customers to be kept up to date with their service requests – such as letting someone know their bulky waste has been collected.
- Develop a series of informative email/SMS responses, so customers know what to expect, when they will get a response, and what the next steps are where appropriate.



## Next Steps

The Customer Access Strategy will be supported by a detailed Operational Plan aligned to our Corporate Plan, Digital First and Infrastructure Strategies.

We have developed customer standards which will focus on improving Council's responsiveness to customers, improve accountability and embed customer experience principles in our daily culture.

We will publish and report on our journey to improve customer experience and continually engage with and listen to customers to improve their experience when contacting us for help, information, advice or support.

**If you would like more information on this strategy please contact [customer.services@southderbyshire.gov.uk](mailto:customer.services@southderbyshire.gov.uk)**

