
REPORT TO:	FINANCE AND MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE	AGENDA ITEM: 11
DATE OF MEETING:	20TH JUNE 2013	CATEGORY: DELEGATED
REPORT FROM:	DIRECTOR OF FINANCE AND CORPORATE SERVICES	OPEN
MEMBERS' CONTACT POINT:	KEVIN STACKHOUSE Kevin.Stackhouse@south-derbys.gov.uk	DOC:
SUBJECT:	COMMUNICATIONS ANNUAL REPORT 2012/13 AND ACTION PLAN 2013/14	REF:
WARD(S) AFFECTED:	ALL	TERMS OF REFERENCE:

1.0 Recommendations

- 1.1 That performance against the Communications Action Plan 2012/13 detailed at **Appendix 1** and the key achievements for the year ending 31st March 2013 are noted.
- 1.2 That the Council's revised Communications Action Plan for 2013/14 detailed in **Appendix 2** is agreed.
- 1.3 That the updated Corporate Communications Campaigns, detailed in **Appendix 3** are approved.

2.0 Purpose of Report

- 2.1 This report looks back at the outcomes achieved in external and internal communications during 2012/13 and presents a revised action plan for 2013/14 that details how communication activities will be delivered and support the key priorities set down in the Corporate Plan 2009/14.

3.0 Executive Summary

- 3.1 This is the annual communications report and details the achievements of the approach to external and internal communications, along with an evaluation of the effectiveness of the 2012/13 corporate campaigns.
- 3.2 The Communications Team's work in external communications through strengthening brand and corporate identity guidelines and advances in e-communications has increased the awareness of South Derbyshire District Council across the district, regionally and nationally. Improvements in internal communications have had a positive impact on the workforce.

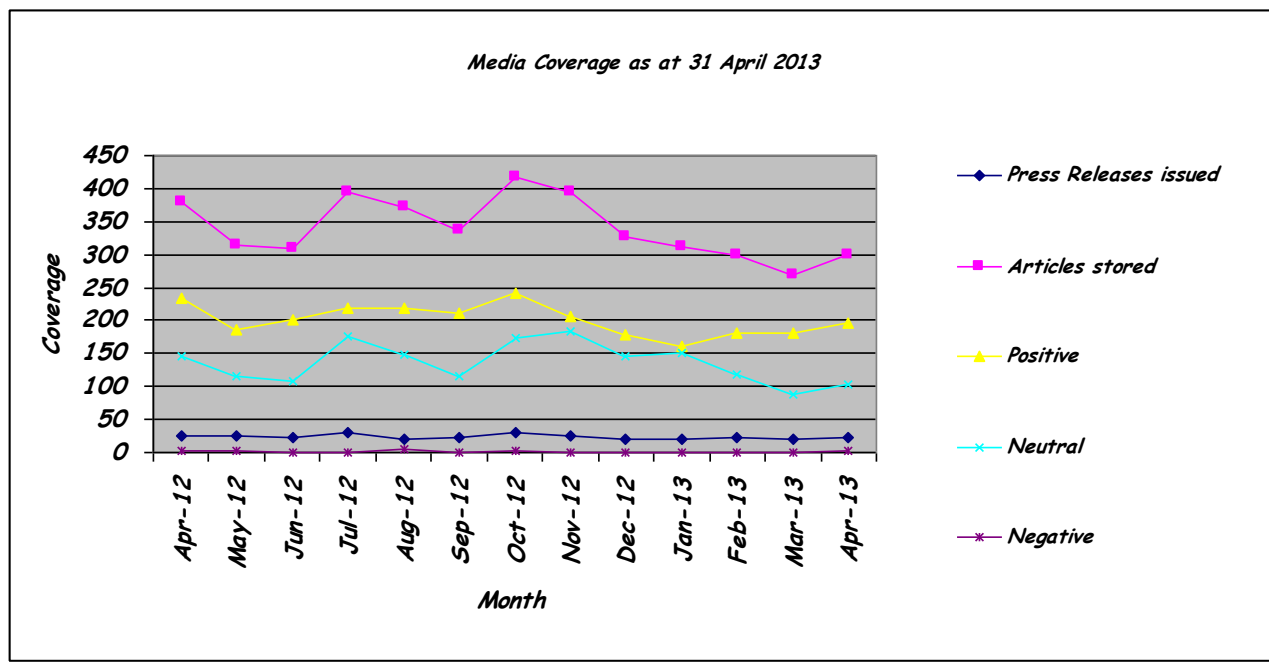
4.0 Detail

- 4.1 The Communications Team uses media management, design, social media and marketing, the website and the intranet along with reputation and brand management to inform residents, businesses, tourists, partners and stakeholders about the services and levels of performance provided by South Derbyshire District Council.
- 4.2 Over the last 12 months the growth in the use of social media as part of the Council's media campaign has increased dramatically. This trend is expected to continue and increase in the future. This will be reflected in the development of a new Communications and Social Media Strategy during 2013/14 which will highlight how the Council will manage communications moving forward.

External communications

- 4.3 The District Council's reputation has been successfully promoted using targeted campaigns linked to the Corporate Plan priorities.
- 4.4 Increased positive media coverage, showcasing our achievements as an organisation as well as those of individual Councillors and members of staff, has provided case studies directly linked to our strategic priorities and corporate responsibilities.
- 4.5 Regular articles have appeared in local newspapers, such as the Burton Mail and Derby Telegraph and magazines including Derbyshire Life. This is supported with increased coverage by local community outlets as well as regular appearances of officers and members on local radio stations including Radio Derby and Touch FM to promote Council and community activity. A number of events have also secured television coverage, with features on the Pancake Races and on the blossoming reputation of Swadlincote.
- 4.6 On average, 23 press releases have been issued each month. Latest figures show an increase in the amount of coverage in the media, particularly positive coverage. The amount of negative coverage remains very low. A breakdown of all activity over the year is shown in Graph 1 below.

Graph 1 – Media Coverage between April 2012 and March 2013



A total of 2,622 positive, 1,771 neutral and 19 negative stories about South Derbyshire District Council were recorded in 2012/13. This is compared to 2,237 positive, 1,778 neutral and 43 negative stories in 2011/12.

Local output has undoubtedly been assisted by the introduction of the Swadlincote Post, a free weekly newspaper distributed to 10,000 households. Our relationship also remains strong with other publications covering the district.

Our standing with regional titles also continues to go from strength to strength, with Regenerate the Midlands, for example, running a three page article on the 'renaissance' of Swadlincote. Our national profile is also on the rise, as exemplified by the in depth profile on Swadlincote Market by Market Trader magazine.

4.7 **Web** – Online access channels are increasingly being used as the way people access the information they need from the Council. This year 319,301 visits were made to the website with the number of page views 1,005,803. 21.5 percent of visits were made via mobile platforms (phones and tablets) with over 70% of mobile engagement made through Apple devices. This represents a 123% increase over the previous year and demonstrates the rapid increase in the use of mobile devices by the Council's customer base.

The most popular sections of the website during 2012/13 were:

Service	Page Views	Increase in views	Rationale	Link to comms activity
Community and living	42,428	+37%	Biggest increases for community events – bonfire & fireworks and Christmas lights and Community Grants.	Aligns with activity promoting the events on Twitter
Council and	126,678	+25%	Council tax,	Reflecting

Democracy			benefits, jobs and careers, and contact us pages showing increases throughout the year.	changes in Economic situation
Environment	91,737	+20.4%	Biggest increase was for household recycling, flooding and Licensing information.	Recycling and Flooding increases link directly to bad weather in winter months and activity on Twitter
Planning and Building Control	145,839	+16.72%	Biggest increase was for planning policy pages.	Huge increase in activity during Oct (+420%, Nov +140%, Dec +280% reflecting local plan social media activity)

4.8 **Social Media** - With social media channels being increasingly used by our customer base and rising expectations of being able to access information online 24/7, we maximised our online communications through the collaborative use of social media channels and the website, along with innovative ways of presenting information. We have developed the main channels as shown below:

4.8.1 **Twitter** – As a result of using Twitter to promote the Local Plan Consultation our resident engagement has increased considerably. Our informal style struck a chord with followers impressed with our rapid responses and their issues being addressed openly. New ‘Local Plan followers’ continued to engage with us through the winter flooding problems, when there were difficulties with refuse and recycling due to the bad weather and on more popular events such as the Christmas lights.

4.8.2 We have pushed forward with the development of hashtags to link and track conversations e.g. #sddcllocalplan. In addition, engaging with existing hashtags #FF and #EastMidlandsHour has resulted in our messages reaching wider audiences. Use of Hoot suite has enabled us to start scheduling messages which means that our presence can be maintained 24/7 as appropriate. Adding followers linked to specific initiatives (e.g. Farmers’ market traders, photographers for 2020Vision, sports personalities for Olympic Legacy) has helped to develop engagement and reach new and larger audiences.

4.8.3 **Facebook** – We have worked with services to develop their presence on this social media channel. There are now Facebook pages for The National Forest Walking Festival, Housing Services, the Safer South Derbyshire Partnership, our Commercial Team and South Derbyshire Sport. Each is developing its own follower base but they follow one another to ensure messages are communicated as widely as possible.

4.8.4 **Blogs** – Three new blogs have been established:

- Local Plan
- Safer Neighbourhood Wardens

- Virtual Visitor Book for the 2020VISION street gallery.

The blogs have allowed services to engage with their followers in a more informal and immediate way than through the website, building their audiences by posting comments and images. The Local Plan Blog received over 3,600 page views and gave access to documents, video, FAQs and online magazine format publications in support of the consultation process. The Virtual Visitor Book captured 42 comments praising the 2020VISION project and encouraging further activity. The Neighbourhood Wardens blog meanwhile has brought together some of the important initiatives they have been involved with around dog fouling, stray dogs and helping residents during the winter flooding.

4.9 Local Development Framework

- 4.9.1 The main showcase for our social media activity this year was to support the Local Development Framework consultation. So, in what is thought to be a first for this kind of planning blueprint, we developed an extensive social media campaign to coincide with the road shows at no additional cost to the taxpayer. Our approach saw a touch of the traditional and a sprinkling of spontaneity. At each of the road shows, the scene was set, explaining what was proposed and where.
- 4.9.2 Attendees were asked to provide their views, which were broadcast through social networking channels to stimulate healthy debate. During the course of 16 consultation events, over 600 Tweets, covering a diverse range of subjects, were sent out, with a quarter re-tweeted to 34,340 more followers. Most importantly, wave after wave of two, three and four way conversations were held with groups and individuals wanting to offer an opinion or suggestion.
- 4.9.3 Figures show the blog, containing a dozen posts, attracted 3,616 page views, while hundreds of newcomers started following the Council's Twitter feed. Crucially, 2,849 residents soaked in the specially set up Preferred Growth Strategy page on the website, dwarfing visits to material on the previous two consultation phases combined by almost 2,000 residents. Through intelligent signposting and continuous output, documents connected to the strategy were downloaded 1,485 times while residents scoured additional pages of information relating to the wider Local Plan over 10,000 times. And, showing the campaign's impact, 297 consultees provided 1,497 comments on the blueprint – a jump of 40 and 52 per cent respectively from previous consultations.
- 4.10 **Graphic Design** – Strong corporate branding is used by the Council on all major publications. The photography used within publications is of genuine South Derbyshire locations and people. Design projects throughout the last year supported statutory functions including the election canvas, Housing News, the Annual Report and the 'What's on' guide.
- 4.11 **Communications Report** - This year we revamped the monthly Communications report that is produced for staff/members. This electronic report summarises all the main activities in the campaigns as well as web/social media activity and non-campaign issues which have occurred. The report shows the work completed across the Council as part of our corporate campaign themes along with photos and other relevant information to capture outcomes achieved with photos and other relevant information to capture the outcomes achieved.
- 4.12 **Corporate campaigns 2012-2013**

During the last year, activity has been focussed around five corporate campaigns to support the delivery of key priorities identified in the Corporate Plan 2009-2014. The campaigns included the following:

4.12.1 Promoting the district and supporting economic growth

This campaign centered on promoting the work of the Council in the opportunities it provides for tourism, economic development and job creation across the district. Main achievements have included:

- Enhancing South Derbyshire's blossoming reputation as a vibrant tourist destination in the heart of The National Forest.
- Promoting the work done to help make Swadlincote a better place to live, work and visit. Developments such as the Pipeworks and the up and coming golf course have received wide ranging media coverage.
- Raising the profile of the South Derbyshire Business Advice Service while shining the spotlight on the achievements of smaller companies

4.12.2 Improved Value for Money

This campaign focused on communicating the message that the Council is ensuring that proper arrangements are in place to enable resources to be used efficiently and effectively whilst driving down costs and further improving the customer experience. Highlights from this campaign included:

- Showcasing the Council's award winning activities, such as Swadlincote scooping the best small outdoor market award from The National Association of British Market Authorities.
- Production of the Annual Report, outlining how Council Tax is spent and some of our key achievements.
- Celebrating some the ways the Council is doing more with less during the age of austerity (grants, innovative ways of providing services) and the recognition this has received in audit reports.

4.12.3 Improved Recycling

The aim of this campaign was to communicate the change that is happening to the recycling service over the next year, clearly articulating the vision for the service by managing the short-term messages whilst focusing on the longer-term vision. Activities included:

- More effective mechanisms have been put in place to alert residents when inclement weather affects refuse and recycling collections, with our Twitter account and website offering real time information.
- Continued support has been given to documenting the ongoing roll out of the new recycling service. Potential methods of publicising the scheme, including brand design and leafleting are under consideration.

- Partnership working has been undertaken with Derbyshire County Council to promote the fact that recycling paper is easy and helps to divert tonnes of waste away from landfill.

4.12.4 Improved lifestyles built on the legacy of the Olympics

This campaign supported sporting, leisure and cultural activities in the run up to, during and following the Olympics. The main activity included:

- Continuation of the Burton Mail leisure article for the fifth consecutive year, enabling us to highlight up and coming events.
- A sustained output of information designed to inspire and motivate residents to get fit, healthy and active during and after the Olympics.
- Highlighting how we are 'igniting the legacy' in the wake of the greatest show on earth. This includes the external funding obtained for projects such as the Eureka Park restoration and plans to enhance leisure facilities in Melbourne.

4.12.5 Improved feeling of safety and security

This promoted the message that South Derbyshire is a safe place to live and the activities that are happening across the district to promote community cohesion and deter crime and Anti Social Behaviour. Activities included:

- Showcasing key events, including Liberation Day and community road shows, to provide details about the services and products available to communities to help protect against crime.
- Assisting the Safer South Derbyshire Partnership to set up a Facebook page to put informative articles, pictures, alerts, events and maps at people's fingertips 24 hours a day, seven days a week.
- Illustrating how individuals demonstrating anti social behaviour are being made accountable for their actions and the role those members of the public can play in bringing them to justice.

Internal Communications

4.13 'Better', our eye-catching electronic staff magazine, continues to be a lively and interesting read providing a wide range of information for staff/members to keep them up to date with activities across the Council. Over the last year we have continued to improve 'Better' by keeping this fresh and contemporary with new features such as the quick questions with Councillors.

5.0 Looking Ahead

5.1 Our external work will primarily focus on the achievement of the key priorities under the Corporate Plan 2009/14 through the provision of corporate campaigns. Internally, our work will focus on developing the online internal communications channels. An Action Plan is appended but a summary of some of the key actions that need to take place in 2013/14 are covered below:

- Producing a new Communications and Social Media Strategy for the Council that sets the future direction for our communications activity.
- Building on corporate campaigns linked to the delivery of the key priorities within the Corporate Plan.

- Continue to develop the relationship with the media and that an approved response given to all media enquires within two working days.
- Production of staff magazines (Better and Hub)
- Reinventing internal communications channels to develop online delivery.
- Delivery of media training for officers.
- Maintaining accurate information on the Council's website with new content edited and published within agreed timescales.
- Continuing to develop the use of Social Media to improve communication by increasing the number of effective channels to convey messages to improve the reputation of the Council.
- Introducing a new campaign – ‘Democracy in the Digital Age’ – to engage residents in the democratic process in unique, imaginative ways. We will also be celebrating the 40th year of South Derbyshire District Council.

6.0 Financial Implications

6.1 All activities in the last year have been funded from existing resources and it is intended to continue developing and innovating communications without increased expenditure.

7.0 Corporate Implications

7.1 The Communications Team delivers on those projects set out in the Corporate Communications Strategy, which all link back to the Council's Corporate Plan themes and priorities.

7.2 Communications campaigns are directed towards improving the reputation of the Council and improving satisfaction with Council Services.

8.0 Community Implications

8.1 Through improving accessibility to information and promoting the work of the Council, members of the Community will be better informed about their area and the services provided. This will enable the Community to better understand the challenges and opportunities that are present and provide them with different channels to offer their views on how the District should be developed in the future.

9.0 Conclusions

9.1 Through its Action Plan for 2013/14 the Council will further develop its reputation locally, regionally and nationally. The Council will through its commitment to residents, staff, partners, businesses and visitors, keep them better informed and involved so that they can better influence the quality and nature of Council services in South Derbyshire.

10.0 Background Papers

None

Appendix 1 - Communications Action Plan 2012/13

Area	Actions Required	KPI	Progress
Media Management			
Media Management	To successfully deliver the Corporate Communications Campaigns.	Campaign delivered and outcomes achieved	All campaigns delivered on target and outcomes achieved.
Media Management	To continue to develop the relationship with the media and that an approved response given to all media enquires within 2 working days.	90% within 2 working days	100%
Media Management	Monthly internal newsletter/s (Better and The Hub) produced, approved and circulated to the client and partnership.	Monthly circulation	Newsletter/s circulated
Media Management	Achievement of actions within the Council's Communications Action Plan, to achieve 90% completion.	90% completion	10/11 actions delivered (91%)
Media Management	Delivery of social media training for officers/members.	1 session held for both officers and members	Social Media Training session held in February 2013.
Internal Comms			
Internal Comms	Developing the internal communications channels (Newsletters, blogs and briefings) following the internal communications survey.	Internal Communication Channels developed following survey.	Following the last internal communications survey, improvements have been made to Better and Blogs.
Graphic Design			
Graphic Design	To carry out Graphic Design work as agreed with the Council.	95% of all edits within 3 days 90% of new projects within 2 weeks.	100%

Area	Actions Required	KPI	Progress
Web/Social media			
Web and Social Media	Maintaining accurate information on the Council's website with new content edited and published within agreed timescales.	Content published within 3 days (90%)	99%
Web and Social Media	Develop the use of Social Media and online tools to improve communication by increasing the number of effective channels available to convey messages to improve the reputation of the Council.	<p>Social media training – members</p> <p>Evaluate benefits of extending use of SMS messaging service</p> <p>Review cost and effectiveness of online tools, incorporating where appropriate</p>	<p>Social Media Training session delivered.</p> <p>Social Media Campaign used to great success as part of the LDF consultation.</p> <p>Improved cross-referencing of media channels achieved increased reach of messages and improved access to information e.g. tweets included links to targeted information/images on website/blogs.</p> <p>2 new blogs successfully set up – Local Plan & 2020Vision Virtual Visitor Book.</p> <p>Presentation of documents as online magazine readers increased readership and audience.</p>
Web and Social Media	Undertake a review of the Council website/intranet sites.	Report produced with recommendations over future options.	Review of the website/intranet sites has been delayed to 2013.
Print Services			
Print	To carry out Print work for the Council.	90% of all print jobs completed as per timescales agreed with user.	100% as at 31/3/13

Appendix 2 - Communications Action Plan 2013/14

Area	Actions Required	KPI	Target Date
Strategy	Development of a new Communications and Social Media Strategy.	Strategy developed and approved.	30/11/13
Media Management	To successfully deliver the Corporate Communications Campaigns.	Campaign delivered and outcomes achieved	31/03/14
Media Management	To continue to develop the relationship with the media and ensure an approved response is given to all media enquires within 2 working days.	90% within 2 working days	Monthly
Media Management	Achievement of actions within the Council's Communications Action Plan, to achieve 90% completion.	90% completion	31/03/14
Media Management	Delivery of media training for officers	Session held for officers	31/03/14
Internal Communications	Internal newsletters (Better) produced, approved and circulated to the client and partnership.	Monthly circulation for Better	Monthly
Internal Communications	Development of internal online communications.	Internal communication channels developed	31/12/13
Web and Social Media	Maintaining accurate information on the Council's website with new content edited and published within agreed timescales.	90% content published within 3 days	31/03/14
Web and Social Media	Consolidate and develop the use of Social Media and online tools to support and increase the effectiveness of corporate campaigns.	Success evaluated against appropriate targets for social media for each campaign.	31/03/14
Web and Social Media	Undertake a review of the Council intranet.	Report produced with recommendations over future options.	31/12/13
Graphic Design	Carry out Graphic Design work as agreed with the Council.	Work to support key corporate projects	31/03/14
Print	To carry out Print work for the Council.	90% of all print jobs completed as per timescales agreed with user.	Quarterly

Appendix 3 - Corporate Campaigns 2013/14

Name	Description	Director	Theme	Measures/Projects
Safer Communities	Promoting the message that South Derbyshire is a safe place to live and the activities that are happening across the district to promote community cohesion and deter crime and Anti Social Behaviour.	Community and Planning Housing and Environment	Safe and Secure	<p>Measures</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce the number of ASB calls to service. • Reduce proportion of people who feel unsafe when outside in their own neighbourhoods at night-time. • Reduce proportion of people who feel unsafe when in their own homes at night-time. <p>Projects</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus the Safer Neighbourhood Wardens on the prevention of anti-social behaviour and enviro-crime. • Work with Partners to ensure diversionary activities are being delivered in 'target' locations. • Ensure 'Safer Neighbourhood' funding is used effectively to combat local crime and disorder issues. • Work with our Partners and communities to reduce acquisitive crime across the District. • Putting Victims First – Work with our Partners to revise the Anti social Behaviour (ASB) Policy and ensure we provide an enhanced service to vulnerable victims of ASB.
Igniting the Olympic legacy	Supporting the full range of sporting, leisure and cultural activities building on the legacy of the Olympics	Community and Planning	Lifestyle Choices	<p>Measures</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adult participation in sport. • Number of participants in sports, physical activity and health, play schemes, cultural and environmental activity and Leisure Centres. <p>Projects</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support communities in delivering cultural events across the district. • Deliver improved leisure facilities for the Community. • To increase levels of participation in sport, health and physical activities.
A cleaner and greener South Derbyshire	Communicating the changes that are happening across the district to make it cleaner and greener, particularly the introduction of the new recycling service.	Housing and Environment	Sustainable Growth and Opportunity	<p>Measures</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Residual household waste per head of population. • Household waste recycled and composted. <p>Projects</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop the opportunities for increasing the range of materials recycled through the re-tendering exercise.

Name	Description	Director	Theme	Measures/Projects
South Derbyshire: Open for Business	Promoting the work of the Council in the opportunities it provides for tourism, economic development and job creation across the district.	Chief Executive	Sustainable Growth and Opportunity	<p>Measures</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Total Visitor Spend. • Total Number of Visitors. • Net additional commercial / employment floor space created. • Net additional homes provided. <p>Projects</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhance the vitality of the district's town centres. • Deliver the 'National Forest' Tourism Action Plan. • Promote inward investment and business development
Cutting costs not services	Communicating the message that the Council is ensuring that proper arrangements are in place to enable resources to be used efficiently and effectively whilst driving down costs and improving the customer experience.	Finance and Corporate Services	Value for Money	<p>Measures</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Publish a 'fit for purpose' Medium Term Financial Plan • Disposal of assets deemed 'surplus to requirements' to generate income. • Maximising the take up of grant income for the Council. • On-going efficiency savings. • Achieve an external 'fit for purpose' Code of Corporate Governance assessment. • Percentage of satisfied customers contacting or dealing with the Council. <p>Projects</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementation of Welfare Reform and the new Local Council Tax Support Scheme. • Continue the programme of procurement and service transformation reviews. • Implement next stages of the Paper Lite Strategy. • Move towards an e-Committee solution. • Continue to communicate and engage with our communities to ensure that the Council is delivering services appropriately. • Implement the next stages of the Customer Access Strategy.

Name	Description	Director	Theme	Measures/Projects
Democracy in the Digital Age	Putting instant accessible information at the fingertips of residents.	Chief Executive	Value for Money	<p>Measures</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Achieve an external ‘fit for purpose’ Code of Corporate Governance assessment. • Percentage of satisfied customers contacting or dealing with the Council. <p>Projects</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement next stages of the Paper Lite Strategy. • Move towards an e-Committee solution. • Continue to communicate and engage with our communities to ensure that the Council is delivering services appropriately. • Implement the next stages of the Customer Access Strategy.
Celebrating 40 years of SDDC	Celebrating the evolution of the Council, democracy and the district over the past 40 years.	Chief Executive	Value for Money	<p>Measures</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Percentage of satisfied customers contacting or dealing with the Council. <p>Projects</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to communicate and engage with our communities to ensure that the Council is delivering services appropriately.