



Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy 2021-2025



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Please contact us:

Email: equalities@southderbyshire.gov.uk



Definitions

Throughout this document equality, diversity and inclusion are referenced.

Equality, diversity and inclusion are different things, but they need to be progressed together. Equality of opportunity will only exist when we recognise and value difference and work together for inclusion.

Below are our definitions:

Equality means fairness: we must ensure that individuals, or groups are not treated less favourably or differently.

We must also ensure that those who may be disadvantaged can have access to the same and fair opportunities.

Diversity is recognising, respecting and celebrating each other's differences. A diverse environment is one with a wide range of backgrounds and mindsets, which allows for an empowered culture of creativity and innovation.

Inclusion means creating an environment where everyone feels welcome and valued.



Foreword

Equality, diversity and inclusion are an integral part of everyday life for us at South Derbyshire District Council, in the services we provide and the communities we serve. We are committed to putting these issues at the centre of our decision-making processes to ensure we can best meet the needs of our residents.

One of our corporate values is; “We have respect for everyone” and through this strategy and action plan, we aim to embed this in everything we do.

We are pleased with the positive response to the engagement events we organised in partnership with South Derbyshire CVS, a local charity working to improve the quality of life for people in South Derbyshire. It shows that people and community groups place a lot of importance on promoting equality, diversity and inclusion in our society and we share its commitment.

We will continue to engage with our community groups and residents – both longer-established and our new arrivals, those who are vulnerable and those at risk of being marginalised. We want to ensure all voices are heard.

This strategy and action plan outlines the work we have done to embed equality, diversity and inclusion throughout our Corporate Plan and our values. We have made progress. However, it is clear from the information we have collected and the feedback we have received, that there can be a difference in experience and outcomes for certain groups. We are committed to playing our part in bringing about changes to ensure everyone is treated fairly. To support this, we have gathered information and consulted on our strategy and the development of our plan to understand what we can do to make improvements so that everyone is treated fairly.

Our strategy presents the outcomes of this work and our commitment to improvement. We want to make a difference and we will continue to involve as many stakeholders as possible to ensure that this strategy has a positive impact on staff, residents, customers, and partners.

On behalf of the Leadership Team, Elected Members and Council Officers, we look forward to carrying out this work so that we can deliver even fairer, more accessible and inclusive services for everyone that live, visit and invest in South Derbyshire.



Frank McArdle
Chief
Executive



Councillor
Kevin Richards
Council Leader



Councillor Andrew
Churchill
Leader,
Conservative Group



Councillor Martin
Fitzpatrick
Leader,
Independent Group

About South Derbyshire

South Derbyshire is a local government district in Derbyshire. The population of the District at the 2011 Census was 94,611 and according to Derbyshire Observatory estimates, it was 107,261 in 2019.

The population is further estimated to increase to 108,600 by 2025 – this is a 23 per cent increase from the 88,000 residents in 2005. It is the fastest growing District in Derbyshire and one of the fastest in England.

South Derbyshire is a thriving, attractive place to live, work and invest with a mixture of well-developed urban areas and historic rural settlements. It has been transformed during the past few decades from a clay and mining area to a successful District with tourist attractions that bring in more than two million visitors each year, modern community and leisure facilities and activities for residents and visitors alike to enjoy. It contains a third of the National Forest.

The District boasts 3,500 business enterprises, among them international names such as JCB, Nestle and Toyota Motor Manufacturing UK.

Population

The most recent figures (from the Office for National Statistics survey 2019) shows;

- The population of South Derbyshire was 107,261 and with a gender split of approximately 51 per cent females and 49 per cent males (these figures have been rounded). The remainder either have not specified or do not identify as either male or female.
- The average age of people is 40, while the median age is also 40.
- By religion, the population includes 64.0 per cent Christian, 26.4 per cent no religion, 1.5 per cent Sikh, 0.3 per cent Muslim, 0.3 per cent Hindu, 0.2 per cent Buddhist. 6,221 people did not state a religion.
- 93.6 per cent of people living in South Derbyshire were born in England. 98.3 per cent of people living in South Derbyshire speak English. The other top languages spoken are 0.4 per cent Punjabi, 0.3 per cent Polish, 0.1 per cent German, 0.1 per cent Chinese, and 0.1 per cent French.
- 52.3 per cent of people are married, 13.4 per cent cohabit with a member of the opposite sex, 0.7 per cent live with a partner of the same sex, 19.3 per cent are single and have never married or been in a registered same sex partnership, 7.8 per cent are separated or divorced. There are 4,399 widowed people living in South Derbyshire.

Occupations of South Derbyshire residents

The top occupations listed by people in South Derbyshire are:

- Skilled trades
- Managers, directors and senior officials
- Associate professional and technical
- Administrative and secretarial
- Process, plant and machine operatives
- Caring, leisure and other services

Accessing services digitally

In an increasingly digital age, those who are not engaging with the digital world are at risk of being left behind. Digital skills are increasingly important for connecting with others, accessing information, services and job opportunities. Lack of digital access disproportionately affects vulnerable and low income groups, the elderly and those more marginalized communities within our society. Whilst the number of adults who do not use the internet has been declining, 7.5% of adults in the UK still do not use the internet (down from 8.4% in 2018.)

- In Derbyshire the figure is slightly higher at 10.4% for East Derbyshire (Chesterfield, Bolsover, North East Derbyshire)
- 8.9% in South and West Derbyshire (South Derbyshire, High Peak, Derbyshire Dales, Erewash, Amber Valley)
- This equates to 62,000 people across the County who have not accessed the internet in the last 3 months.
- The groups vulnerable to social digital exclusion include people who are older, socially isolated, living in poverty, homeless, substance misusers, young people, those with low literacy levels and those with language barriers, people living with dementia, learning disability, learning difficulties and people with long term health conditions.
- Nationally, there is a distinct gap in internet usage between the age categories of 16 to 64 and 65 years and over. Over 90% of people aged between 16 and 64 use the internet compared to 83.2% aged 65 to 74 and only 47% aged 75 and over.
- Nationally, the ethnicity gap in internet usage has narrowed over time as the proportion of internet non-users has declined. In 2019, the highest percentage of adults to use the internet were of Chinese Asian/Asian British ethnic background at 98.6% and the lowest percentage of adults to use the internet were of Northern Irish background at 86.7%.
- Nationally, in 2019 the number of disabled adults who were recent internet users reached over 10 million for the first time, this has increased 14% since 2014 to 78.3%. In comparison 94.8% of adults who were not disabled accessed the internet.

To address digital inclusion the Council recognises the need to ensure that services which are provided digitally are accessible, efficient and easy to use. In addition and equally important is the need to support and signpost people to gain the skills, confidence and access to equipment & wi-fi required to be able to access information and services digitally.

Significant progress has been made around the digital inclusion agenda. At South Derbyshire District Council we have transformed our services so that our customers can access a range of services using a variety of methods including website, on-line forms and social media. We have introduced a system for customers to make payments to the Council using an online payment system or calling a touchtone payment line.

In the District, there have been upgrades to telephone exchanges and roadside cabinets that contain the technology needed to give homes and businesses access to fibre broadband. Delivered as part of the Digital Derbyshire project, the work means residents and businesses in the areas concerned can now order fibre broadband from an internet service provider of their choice, providing them with faster speeds and smoother service delivery.

Residents not benefitting from broadband upgrades are being encouraged to apply to the Better Broadband Subsidy Scheme which provides grants to help improve broadband services.

South Derbyshire District Council has worked with partners including Digital Derbyshire to support businesses to improve their digital capabilities.

South Derbyshire District Council will continue to develop digitally inclusive services and the key focus will be::

- Making sure our online systems are easy to use and working with our partners to provide the skills and opportunity to use them, so they can get the service they want when they want it.
- Using a range of approaches, not just online, to communicate to everyone about our services.
- Continue to work with key partners on internet connectivity for residents and also supporting local businesses to have the digital/online tools they need to create jobs and prosperity helping us offer a better quality of life to the people of South Derbyshire.
- Giving the employees of South Derbyshire District Council the skills and equipment they need to work flexibly and putting digital skills at the heart of recruitment and training.

South Derbyshire District Council cannot complete all this work independently. A lot of the actions, in particular around digital exclusion, will need strong and collaborative working between South Derbyshire District Council with multi-agency bodies to make real progress. However, South Derbyshire will continue to seek out opportunities to increase digital inclusion.

About the Council

South Derbyshire District Council was formed in 1974 as a merger of the Swadlincote Urban District along with Repton Rural District and part of South East Derbyshire Rural District.

The Civic Offices are in Swadlincote and the Council provides local services, including waste collections and recycling, street cleansing, maintaining award-winning parks and open spaces, housing services including council housing, repairs and supporting vulnerable tenants, environmental protection, customer services including revenues and benefits, planning, economic development, markets and town centre events and tourism in partnership with other organisations. Each of these services are supported by corporate functions such as Human Resources, Communications, Policy and Performance, IT, Customer Services, Finance, Property Services and Legal and Democratic services.

The Council's workforce

The Council employs around 340 people in full, part-time, and temporary posts across a wide range of occupations.

It is important to the Council that we are an inclusive employer, and we attract, appoint and retain the best workforce, that reflects the diversity of the communities we serve. We monitor our workforce to find out whether it broadly reflects our community and to ensure our practices are free from discrimination, helping us to deliver appropriate and accessible services.

The Council collects equality information on its workforce to provide an overview of our progress and identify areas for further action. This includes meeting the requirements in the Equality Act 2010 and the Public Sector Equality Duty, where we are required to publish workforce information.

The Council makes its recruitment and selection process fair and transparent to encourage applications from under-represented groups and offers a range of different flexible working options to recognise the different needs of our current and future workforce. The Council is a Disability Confident employer.

Through apprenticeships and other national and local schemes, the Council offers paid and unpaid on-the-job training placements to provide people and those who need to gain support before entering or re-entering employment with opportunities to get valuable work experience.

The Council publishes a gender pay gap report each year on its website.

Our commitment to Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion

The Chief Executive is ultimately responsible for the delivery of the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy and Action Plan.

The Council's Leadership Team and Elected Members lead and actively drive our commitment to equality, diversity, and inclusion. This ensures that all services are fair, inclusive, and accessible and that we work with partners, businesses and other groups to promote, influence and raise awareness across the District.

The Leadership Team has responsibility for managing the Council and works with Heads of Service to oversee progress made and outcomes achieved against the Council's Corporate Plan. The delivery of the equality actions is a responsibility shared by all Elected Members and Officers, contractors, partners, stakeholders, and residents.

Corporate Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Steering Group

A Corporate Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Steering Group will plan and monitor our work.

The group will be led by a member of the Leadership Team and include Elected Member Equality Champions and Officers of the Council. It will also include representatives from community, voluntary and faith-based groups.

The group will:

- Monitor the Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Action Plan.
- Publish an annual report on Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion to inform people of our progress, celebrate our achievements and to continue engagement with our future plans, as well as meeting our legislative requirements.
- Advise, monitor, and review equality impact assessments.
- Share information and learning across the Council relating to Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion.

- Recommend and monitor Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion training.
- Engage with community, voluntary and faith-based groups, partners, and residents to raise awareness of equality, diversity, and inclusion and to work together on actions to reduce exclusion, discrimination, and victimisation.

Equality for South Derbyshire residents

Being equal means making sure that life is fair for everyone. This is supported through the Equality Act (2010) that requires all public bodies to demonstrate how they will give *“due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between different people when carrying out their activities.”* This is called the Equality Duty.

Under the Equality Duty, the Council needs to:

- Make sure that people are treated fairly and do not experience discrimination, harassment, or victimisation.
- Give special thought to make life fairer for everybody and ensure everyone has opportunities; and
- Help people who are different from one another to understand each other.

There are some groups who are treated less fairly than most. These groups need support and understanding to make life fairer. These are defined as people with ‘protected characteristics’ under the Equality Act. The protected characteristics are:

- Sex – male, female, or non-binary
- Disability – physical or mental impairment which has a substantial, long-term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities
- Age – people of different ages
- Race – people who come from different cultures, who may live in a different way or have a different skin colour
- Religion or belief – people of different religions and those with no religious beliefs
- Pregnancy and maternity – someone who is pregnant or breastfeeding
- Sexual orientation – a person's sexual orientation towards persons of the same sex, persons of the opposite sex, or persons of either sex.
- Marriage or civil partnership – a person who is married or in a civil partnership
- Gender reassignment – any person who is undergoing, proposing to undergo, or has undergone a process (or part of a process) of reassigning their sex/gender

People can experience discrimination or disadvantage because of other things that contribute to their identity. Creating an inclusive District also means recognising and minimising other causes of inequality or exclusion, such as low income, social or geographical isolation, living in poor housing or suffering poor health.

In line with the Equality Duty, the Council must also publish information to show how it is meeting this duty in its role as an employer and a service provider and how this affects people with protected characteristics. The Council will report on the progress made every year.

Developing the Draft Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy and Action Plan

Between April and November 2020, the Council carried out a series of internal and public consultation events in partnership with South Derbyshire CVS. These included using multi-media platforms as well as audio conferencing, telephone calls and emails.

Information, to inform the Council's approach, was gathered from different sources including information that was available to us from services we deliver and details on our own workforce.

Workshops took place with Council Officers, Trade Unions and Elected Members. The Council wanted to ensure our actions were focused and would influence and shape the way we deliver the services for the future.

People taking part in the public consultation events included voluntary, community and faith-based groups; neighbouring councils, partners who work with us delivering services and individuals who have a particular interest in equality, diversity, and inclusion.

The consultation showed our proposed actions should focus on areas of inequality. It is important to be clear on our actions and the need for us to signpost and raise awareness of other services that are available in our District and wider. The Council does not wish to duplicate the work of others, but to add value and make a real difference to people's lives.

This work has led to the development of our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy and Action Plan which includes our equality objectives. These objectives will enable us to focus on improving aspects of equality, diversity, and inclusion.

Our equality objectives for the next four years are as follows:

1. Encourage and enable a skilled and diverse workforce, to build a culture of equality, diversity, and inclusion in everything we do
2. Demonstrate inclusive leadership, partnership, and a clear organisational commitment to being a leader in equality, diversity, and inclusion in the District
3. Involve and enable diverse communities to play an active role in society and put the residents' voice at the heart of decision-making
4. Deliver responsive services and customer care that is accessible and inclusive to individuals' needs and respects cultural differences
5. Understand the District's diverse communities and embed that understanding in how policy and practice are shaped across the Council.

The equality objectives reflect the themes in the Council's Corporate Plan.

Equality, diversity, and inclusion is viewed as "business as usual" but further, targeted work will address specific inequalities for different groups. Taken together, these five high-level equality objectives relate to each aspect of the Council's role as an employer, a provider of services and our role in bringing communities together.

Monitoring and reporting on progress

The Council wants to be the best it can be in equality, diversity, and inclusion. It is committed to working to improve and to address inequality in South Derbyshire.

To ensure this happens the Council will:

- publish information explaining the progress it is making towards achieving our equality objectives and review how we are doing.
- listen to and understand the diverse needs of communities and improve how we collect information across different services to better understand the impact of our actions.
- be open and transparent about our progress, sharing information and learning from experience.
- review our equality objectives every four years or more regularly where a clear need has been identified.
- use Equality Impact Assessments as part of our decision-making process by Committees and Officers to determine the equality impact of our initiatives.
- collect information about residents and service users to inform policies and services we directly provide for the community.
- use staff surveys to collect information about our employees and use it to check that employment procedures and practices are fair, inclusive, and transparent and continues our commitment towards creating a skilled and diverse workforce.
- share best practice with partners so that we can collaborate, learn from others, and continually improve.

Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion action plan

Appendix A outlines each of our proposed equality, diversity and inclusion objectives and actions for the next four years. If you would like to provide any feedback or suggestions then please email equalities@southderbyshire.gov.uk

Appendix A Draft Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Action Plan 2021-2025

Our Equality Objectives

After consulting about our plan, we have decided on five equality **objectives**.

An **objective** is a goal we are aiming to achieve.

Our equality objectives are:

- Enable a diverse workforce
- Be a leader in equality, diversity, and inclusion
- Involve our diverse communities in decision-making
- Deliver services that are accessible and inclusive to individual's needs
- Understand our diverse communities

To help achieve these, we have set actions for each. These are set out on the following pages.

Where this document says “we” or “our”, it is referring to South Derbyshire District Council.

Enable a diverse workforce

Training

- Review and deliver equality, diversity and inclusion training for Council Officers and Elected Members.
- Promote employment and training opportunities.
- Continue to deliver an apprenticeship programme in partnership with local colleges and other providers.

Monitoring

- | | |
|---------|--|
| Actions | • Identify under-representation in the Council's workforce that is reflective of the working age of our community and develop positive action initiatives to promote diversity in the workplace. |
| | • Publish a gender pay gap report and report on any issues and actions taken. |
| | • Use the Stonewall workplace equality index to assess achievements and progress in LGBTQ+ inclusion. |
| | • Produce a set of standard equality and diversity monitoring categories so that Council Officers, residents, and customers can declare information in a consistent manner. |
| | • Review our recruitment process to ensure we proactively encourage diversity when people apply for jobs at the Council. |
| | • Design and deliver an annual employee engagement survey. |

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to carry out an employee risk assessment should an employee's circumstances change in relation to any of the protected characteristics and put in place reasonable adjustments where necessary.
Promotion and raising awareness	
Actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Publish an annual report on progress made, achievements and further actions to deliver on the key outcomes in the Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Action Plan 2021 - 2025.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote the Access to Work scheme and any other national/local schemes that enable financial or other support for current or future employees.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collate and maintain data on equality, diversity, and inclusion as a shared resource available on the Council's internal and external web pages.



Be a leader in Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion

Leadership

Actions

- Use equality, diversity, and inclusion best practice to inform Council activity.
- The Council's Leadership Team and Elected Members lead and actively drive equality, diversity, and inclusion.
- Review the Corporate Equalities, Diversity and Inclusion Steering Group governance and terms of reference.

Policy, Strategies and Planning

- Develop and implement an Equality Impact Assessment Framework.
- Carry out an Equality Impact Assessment when considering new or changes to existing policy, service, or processes.



Involve our diverse communities in decision-making

Communication

Actions

- Review our website and Council information and implement a set of standards to ensure it is accessible.
- Develop a programme of targeted communications to celebrate the diversity of our communities.

Decision making process

Actions

- Review the involvement of diverse communities within the District with guidance on how they may be involved in the democratic processes of the Council.
- Review planning consultation practices to encourage and enable groups that are not currently engaged in the planning process to get involved.
- Review and evaluate the Community Grants programme for voluntary, community and faith-based groups.
- Produce the Communications and Engagement strategy to enable residents, partners, and customers to be involved in the development of the Council's Plans that have an impact on the District.

Deliver services that meet everyone is needs

Accessibility

Actions

- Use building regulation to ensure that developments meet the necessary standards for disabled access and other accessibility standards.
- Use the Council's Local Plan to develop best practice in terms of accessible homes.
- Review parks and open spaces to enable access for people with a disability.
- Review Council-owned public buildings to enable access for people with a disability.
- Make portable hearing loops available for Council meetings.
- Implement and promote initiatives such as SignLive and the Hidden Disabilities Sunflower scheme to enable people with a disability to access Council services.
- Make available appropriate communication channels to inform staff, residents, customers and our partners of ongoing and future work.

Signposting	
Actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop the Council's website to signpost people to services that are delivered in partnership with other organisations.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop an approach with partners to use community programmes to reduce social isolation and improve mental health.
Protecting	
Actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop internal safeguarding information to assist Council Officers with making safeguarding referrals.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliver the Safer Homes and Sanctuary Scheme services to improve home security for victims of crime and domestic abuse.



Digital Inclusion

Actions

- Enhance the on-line process for applying to join the Housing Register and for viewing and expressing an interest in vacant Council properties.
- Provide direct on-line access to housing rent accounts and repair ordering.
- Host the multi-agency welfare group which will continue to support tenants and other residents through the on-line Universal Credit process to minimise delays in processing claims.
- Develop a Customer Access Strategy that will make it easier and quicker to gain access to Council services and takes into account the needs of service users.
- Work with partners to raise awareness and support action around digital exclusion.
- Signpost our staff, residents, customers and partners to digital support services.
- Develop online systems that are user friendly for our staff, elected members, residents, customers and partners to gain access to Council services.
- To work with partners to develop a joined up Telecare service that enables vulnerable or elderly people to retain their independence.

Understand our diverse communities

Engagement

- Report on our comments, compliments and complaints and take positive action to address any equality, diversity and inclusion issues.
- Continue to promote inclusion and develop support for children and young people from marginalised groups.

Reduce hate crime

- | | |
|---------|---|
| Actions | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Monitor and analyse data collected on harassment and hate crime and take appropriate action to address issues identified. |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Continue to provide information and raise awareness on how to report hate crime and where to get support. |

Reduce exclusion

- | | |
|---------|---|
| Actions | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Use the older persons survey, to address the specific needs of the elderly population particularly around housing, social care and health and wellbeing. |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Work in partnership with transport services to improve accessibility in rural areas as part of planning proposals for new developments or new site allocations. |

Events	
Actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Hold at least one annual equality, diversity and inclusion community event.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ensure the Council delivers cultural events which are inclusive and reflect the diverse community.

