South Derbyshire
District Council

ANNUAL REPORT 2025-26



2025-26

Foreword

Welcome to the Council's Annual Report for 2025-26. This document is a way for us to reflect on the actions and outcomes achieved in our Council Plan 2024-28 and our agreed priorities to:

Shape our Environment | Drive our Economy | Support our Communities | Transform our Council

Over 2025-26 we have worked with our partners across Derbyshire to build a vision for the future of local service delivery, as we look ahead to local government reorganisation and the creation of a new authority. With no formal Government decision until the summer of 2026, we had to prioritise the now; preserving the practises that are valued by our residents, as well as always looking for transformative ways to modernise the way we work, ensuring that our services, employees and partnerships are ready for that change when it comes.

We are now more determined than ever to showcase what South Derbyshire has to offer, and continually enhance the services we provide to our residents.

The prospect of change has not distracted us from our focus on delivering the best services we can for this District.
Progression with a new Leisure Centre and office facility, and Town Centre Masterplan for Swadlincote, accompanied by the delivery of our Local Plan 2022-2041, are just a few examples of the huge projects we are working on.



Cllr Robert Pearson
Leader of the Council



Dr Justin Ives
Chief Executive

This is our report to you. We continue to support our communities in the best way we can, as we transform South Derbyshire District Council, into a modern, responsive and efficient organisation, with residents' needs at its heart.



Council Plan 2024-28



Our Vision is to:

Work together to shape our environment, drive our economy and support our communities.

The Council has seven values to describe how we work to achieve our Vision.

Working together: Working as a team to serve our residents.

Accountability: Taking ownership of the services that we deliver.

Respect: We value and listen to each other.

Fairness: Offering equal opportunities for all.

Being Responsive: We have a ‘can do’ attitude and respond to the needs of others quickly, positively and appropriately.

Innovative: Looking for new solutions.

Excellence: Delivering our services to the highest possible standards.

About South Derbyshire

- Over 107,200 people live in South Derbyshire
- Fastest growing population in the County
- Home to 4,000 businesses
- 34,000 people employed in the District
- South Derbyshire has a gender split of approximately 51% females and 49% males, from those making a declaration.





- South Derbyshire covers over 100 square miles, with 2,392 hectares of green space and a third of the National Forest
- East Midlands Freeport has based its East Midlands Intermodal Park (EMIP) site within South Derbyshire, bringing investment and employment opportunities.

Key sectors include transport, equipment, manufacturing, construction, food and drink, visitor economy and transport and logistics.

The top occupations listed by people in South Derbyshire are:

- Managers, directors and senior officials
- Professional occupations
- Associate professional occupations
- Skilled trades occupations.



Your Councillors by ward

As at March 2026

Conservative | Labour | Liberal Democrats | Independent

Aston-on-Trent


Neil Atkin


Daniel Corbin


Peter Watson

Church Gresley


Alan Haynes


Gordon Rhind


Ben Stuart

Etwall


Andrew Kirke


David Muller

Hatton


Julie Patten

Hilton


Grahame Andrew


Jayne Davies

Hilton


Sundip Meghani

Linton


Daniel Pegg


Alistair Tilley

Melbourne


Jane Carroll

Melbourne


Matthew Gotheridge

Midway


Alan Jones


Louise Mulgrew


Robert Pearson

Newhall and Stanton


Sean Bambrick


Sarah Harrison


Kalila Storey

Repton


Kerry Haines


James Lowe

Seales


Amy Wheelton


Graham Wood

Stenson


David Shepherd


Lakhvinder Pal Singh

Swadlincote


Mick Mulgrew


Vonnie Redfern


Neil Tilley

Willington and Findern


Martyn Ford

Willington and Findern


Ian Hudson

Woodville


Angela Archer


Malcolm Gee


Stephen Taylor

Shape our Environment

A sustainable future, adapting to and mitigating climate change, to deliver our net zero commitments so that future generations can thrive.

What we said we would do:

- We will work with partners, key stakeholders and our communities to tackle climate change and strive to become carbon neutral by 2030.
- Improve biodiversity in the District and meet our ecological commitments.
- Improve our waste and recycling service performance.
- Optimise the use of the Council's assets and land.

How are we working to achieve this?

- 15 businesses across District supported to decarbonise their operations.
- Increased the amount of green space that has been rewilded or in conservation
- 99% of trade waste collections were made on time.
- No Mow Areas across the District to enhance biodiversity
- On track to reduce carbon emissions to <2,074 tonnes carbon dioxide equivalent.
- Plans put in place for brand new Food Waste collection service.
- Plans for new Leisure Centre and office submitted, on track for 2028 completion.
- £797,500 awarded in Warm Homes Local Grant for 2025-2028.
- 363kg of Waste collected and 42% recycled - beating the national average
- **Enhanced play areas in the District through a £280k investment.**



What are the highlights from the year?



We are committed to shaping our environment and creating places where people want to live; where our local wildlife can thrive and where residents can find space to enhance their own physical and mental wellbeing.

For the first time, in 2025-26 we achieved six Green Flags for our parks and play areas. We also created a wonderful new memorial garden at Eureka Park, in honour of the Bevin Boys, not to mention a ‘pocket park’ for preschool children in Melbourne. We are determined to make the best of all our parks and open spaces.

We continued in our work to promote biodiversity across the District, in tandem with policies such as our Grassland Management Strategy, which allows for some areas to reduce mowing, scatter wildflower seeds, and encourage greater numbers of bees, butterflies and bugs to return to their chosen habitats in South Derbyshire.

Over 700 free trees were distributed to residents during 2025-26, and three more open spaces have been protected through the Fields in Trust charity.



While our standard recycling rates didn’t hit our 44% target, residents still contributed to recycling 42% of household waste, which remains above the national average. With over 50,000 households to collect from, the service continues to complete hundreds of thousands of collections every quarter, maintaining performance in excess of 99% for scheduled services.

Throughout 2025-26 planning has been underway for the start of future weekly food waste collections. All food waste will be recycled by Severn Trent Green Power in their anaerobic digestion facility. This will then be turned into renewable energy, as well as bio-fertiliser, which is used by British farmers to grow their crops - putting food back on our plates!

Following consultation with over 450 residents and community groups, plans for a brand-new leisure development on Cadley Park in Swadlincote were submitted at the end of 2025. The development will replace the outdated Green Bank Leisure Centre, provide more parking spaces, and modern, spacious facilities. This will be built along with high quality facilities and office accommodation.



Drive our Economy

A thriving economy and place that has jobs, skills, education, infrastructure and opportunity.

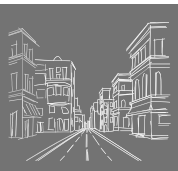
What we said we would do:

- Create an environment where a diverse range of new businesses may maximise their potential.
- Raise the social mobility of young people within the District.
- Enhance and attract inward investment in Swadlincote town centre.
- Improve the employability, prosperity and skills prospects of our residents.

How are we working to achieve this?



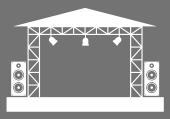
Activity programme enhanced social mobility of 100 disadvantaged young people across District.



Town Centre Masterplan approved and work continues to progress.



Increased bookings at Rosliston Forestry Centre lodges from 33% to 80% capacity



Supported key events such as Swad Live, Small Business Showcase, Festival of Words, Christmas programme.



85.5% of our local food businesses met the highest hygiene standards.



Beyond Barriers programme provided one-to-one support to 68 unemployed residents.



Supported 268 local business with training workshops and business grant schemes.



Supported inward investors, and working with major partners like East Midlands Freeport.

What are the highlights from the year?

Delivering on this priority would never be possible without the direct collaboration between our teams and wider community organisations. Whether this be organisations tackling unemployment, South Derbyshire Community Voluntary Support (CVS) working with us to identify service users requiring support, or signposting to a wider network.



We aim to improve the employability, prosperity and skills prospects of our residents and our work has given particular focus to supporting unemployed residents to build confidence and skills to improve their chances of finding employment.

In partnership with the Beyond Barriers programme, we have worked with unemployed residents to prepare them for work, particularly those with health or other personal barriers to overcome. We have also staged two successful jobs fairs locally, working with local partners and employers.



Tackling social mobility in young people living in a semi-rural area, is never an easy task, but through the 2025-26 programme, we have supported around 100 young people from Mercia Academy, Pingle Academy, Esteem South Academy and Derbyshire Adult Community Education Service through work experience opportunities, mentoring, workplace inspiration and pathways to employment.

Our Town Centre Masterplan has now been approved and a project team appointed. This plan, which includes proposals for the redevelopment of the Council's Civic Way site, presents the future of Swadlincote, takes into account the needs of regular visitors to the town centre, as well as those residents and businesses living within it.

Our commitment to supporting small business owners extended over the year with the introduction of our Business Grant Scheme, including energy audits of companies and support for efficiency measures, renewable energy generation and storage. Over the year, the South Derbyshire Business Advice Service has supported several hundred entrepreneurs, not least through the well-attended business training workshops and webinars.

We funded and supported a range of events in the town centre, from Swad Live and the Small Business Showcase, to the Festival of Words and the Christmas programme of events. Our Visitor Information Centre takes pride of place on the Delph, providing a range of information and guidance for residents and visitors alike.

And it's not just our town centres attracting visitors and driving our economy. In the heart of the National Forest, Rosliston Forestry Centre continues to be an asset. Its focus on building its offer and generating income has seen Rosliston's lodge bookings join forces with Sykes booking, which has seen bookings rise from 33% to 80% occupancy in the first six months.

Support our Communities

We will work with our partners to provide our communities with choice and access to achieve the standard of life and health that they want to achieve, through promoting positive health and well-being and empowering people to have independent and fulfilling lives.

What we said we would do:

- Improve the health and well-being of our communities.
- Support the most vulnerable people in our communities.
- Provide access to affordable housing.

How are we working to achieve this?

Inactivity levels in South Derbyshire reduced to 19.6%, below national average and local target.

Local plan targets met housing needs of existing and future residents.

We found more innovative ways for residents to access local Wellbeing Hubs.

Developed an Active Wellbeing Strategy to find better ways of improving physical activity and wellbeing.

Supported Derbyshire Police to monitor (and act on) ASB incidents and aim to reduce frequency of cases.

Held 16 new events and arts activities across the District alongside local partners.

Implemented strategy to help bring long-term empty homes back into use, including support to owner-occupiers.

Schools partnership delivered 45 sports competitions and 927 bikeability places.

What are the highlights from the year?

The health and wellbeing of our communities is of utmost importance. As a Council, we must do what we can to provide opportunities and spaces that help our residents to stay healthy and active.



Our local events bring our communities together, and in 2025-26 we held a large number of free-to-attend events, including the Festival of Leisure, four Music in the Park events, Wacky Wednesday, Dance in the Forest and our Christmas lights switch on; not to mention traditional commemorative occasions such as the 80th Anniversary of VE Day, Remembrance Day, Armed Forces Day and Armistice Day. These events were so popular, we had over 10,000 people attend.

We are dedicated to encouraging our creative community to thrive. We developed our Arts Strategy in 2025-26 and have either delivered or supported 16 events, including the Melbourne Arts Festival, Every Stitch a Story, creating community commissioned quilts focused on local heritage.

The Chair of the Council, Councillor Angela Archer, also delivered a number of Civic celebrations, as well as attending over 100 local community events across the course of the year; raising £1,365 for her chosen charity, Derbyshire Mind and supporting a number of other local causes.



Our Active Schools Partnership has been out and about delivering 45 sporting competitions reaching thousands of children and young people, 927 children developed their cycling skills through the Bikeability scheme, and our Active Holiday and Food Project (HAF) has delivered 2,394 places. The Summer Playscheme, featuring activities like forest schools, sports, and arts, was attended by 4,975 children and young people, far exceeding the anticipated 4,000 target.

The ‘Get Active in The Forest’ project delivered 145 Activity sessions, with 26 new volunteers trained – this equates to 1,895 volunteer hours, delivered by a total 76 walk leaders.



There have been 668,736 site visits to the Council's two leisure centres during 2025/26 compared to 652,813 in 2024/25. Our Exercise by Referral scheme also supported dozens of residents to become active again after illness or injury.

We have also worked hard to support our most vulnerable residents. A Safeguarding Audit resulted in a 'substantial assurance' rating. We provided support to the Community Voluntary Service's (CVS) Safer Homes Scheme, which provides security upgrades to residents at risk of domestic abuse, hate crime, or violence – such as new locks, reinforced locks, and security lighting. Through this scheme, 354 properties were secured.

In 2025-26 we were awarded a £797,500 Warm Homes Local Grant to improve the energy efficiency of private housing stock in the District over three financial years (2025-2028). So far, four homes in the District have had energy efficiency measures installed in the first year with works including the installation of solar PV and battery, loft insulation and electric storage heaters.

Overall satisfaction for Housing Services has risen to 69.9%, but it's the speed of repairs that has seen the largest increase in satisfaction - up 6% on last year's survey. Keeping the home safe received the highest satisfaction in the survey responses, scoring at 88.9%. We are also proud to say 100% of emergency repairs jobs in Council properties are completed on time.

Over the year we have delivered Housing Roadshows and started a series of drop-in events across the District to ensure that housing tenants have access to information and advice on housing issues and other services that support them.



Transform our Council

We will continue to deliver high quality, value for money services, that are available and accessible to our customers when they are needed. We will listen to feedback and use this to shape how we utilise technology and deploy our resources to improve the services we provide directly, or in partnership with others.

What we said we would do:

- Ensure our services have the right resources, are modern, responsive, efficient and effective.
- Effective management of services, ensuring financial resilience.
- Promote South Derbyshire locally, nationally and internationally.

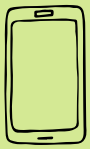
How are we working to achieve this?



Local Plan Consultation Part 1 completed.



Mental wellbeing support, identified in Equality, Diversity and Inclusion plan. Around 50 people supported each month.



We now have 36,490 customers interacting with us digitally.



Integrated a modernised digital system into our day-to-day waste management services.



Achieved Customer Service Excellence accreditation for whole Council.



Delivered a balanced budget for 2025-26.



Improved our employment deal through progressing our People Strategy, to be an Employer of Choice.



Raised profile of South Derbyshire with the achievement of 11 national awards.



Built relationships with partners to maximise opportunities through local government reorganisation.



Increased engagement with housing tenants and further developed the Tenant Voices Group.



Overall satisfaction with Housing Service increased to 69.9%, with notable improvements in repairs and home safety.

What are the highlights from the year?

In order to make sure we have the right resources to make our services modern, responsive, efficient and effective, we have to listen, make changes and continuously improve, based on customer feedback.

We are delighted to have achieved Customer Service Excellence accreditation for the whole Council, recognising our strong commitment to delivering high-quality, customer-focused services to residents, businesses, and communities across the District. Our commitment to inclusive and accessible services was recognised, alongside effective partnership working with local organisations to deliver coordinated and responsive support for residents.

More and more of you (36,490 customers) are interacting with us digitally. This is not only an improvement in accessibility for those that are able to use digital services, but it frees up our customer services teams to work more efficiently with those who are more digitally excluded.





Understanding the diverse needs of our customers is also important in delivering an efficient and accessible service, which our new Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy and Action Plan will help us to achieve.

We have already delivered on 75% of the actions in that Strategy, developing our events calendar to recognise a wider range of key national and international events, providing training for all teams on neurodiversity, as well as publishing our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Annual report that showcases the work the Council and its partners have done to support our communities.

Working together with our partners is vital, even more so as we look ahead to local government reorganisation. We are already working closely with our partnering Councils in Derbyshire, to help us understand how we can work together to provide the best services possible to our residents in the future.

We have improved our employment deal for the current and future workforce and provided career opportunities for staff through internal and external learning programmes, resulting in positive trends in our annual employee survey. This all contributes towards our aim to to be an ‘Employer of Choice’.

For the first time in 2025 we held a Colleague Awards, to recognise the talent and hard work of our employees. We are welcoming new starters and recognising the achievements of staff at quarterly Welcome and Recognition events with Leadership Team. We are using the apprenticeship scheme to provide career opportunities for young people and enabling employees to gain further qualifications, as well as hosting a graduate on the Local Government Association trainee programme to increase future leadership and management capability.



We are taking the story of South Derbyshire to a wider regional and national audience, as we were recognised in 11 different national and international awards during 2025-26, including the six annual Green Flag Awards, LGC Awards and the Customer Service Excellence accreditation, to name a few.

The Council has again produced a balanced budget and is proud to stand in the top 7% in the country for Council Tax collection rates, sitting at 98.8% for 2025-26 and 99.3% for the collection of Business Rates. At a time of increased pressure on individuals and small business finances, it is a testament to the Council that we are able to achieve these figures, which is down to a mix of support and enforcement; helping people to find ways to pay if they 'can't' and ensuring those who 'won't' pay, are met with action.

Significant progress has been made in housing improvements. There's still a way to go, but we continue to move consistently in the right direction. On average, the number of days it takes to turn around an empty home (void property) is currently 67 days, which has almost halved the time it takes in the past two years. We also saw improvements across the board in tenant satisfaction, following the Tenant Satisfaction Measures annual survey in 2025.

In just 12 months, we have also increased our understanding of the condition of our housing stock. We have surveyed 100% of the 163 flats in our blocks, and we now know the condition of 92% of our total housing stock, compared to 71.94% in 2024-25; an improvement which has been recognised by the National Regulator of Social Housing.



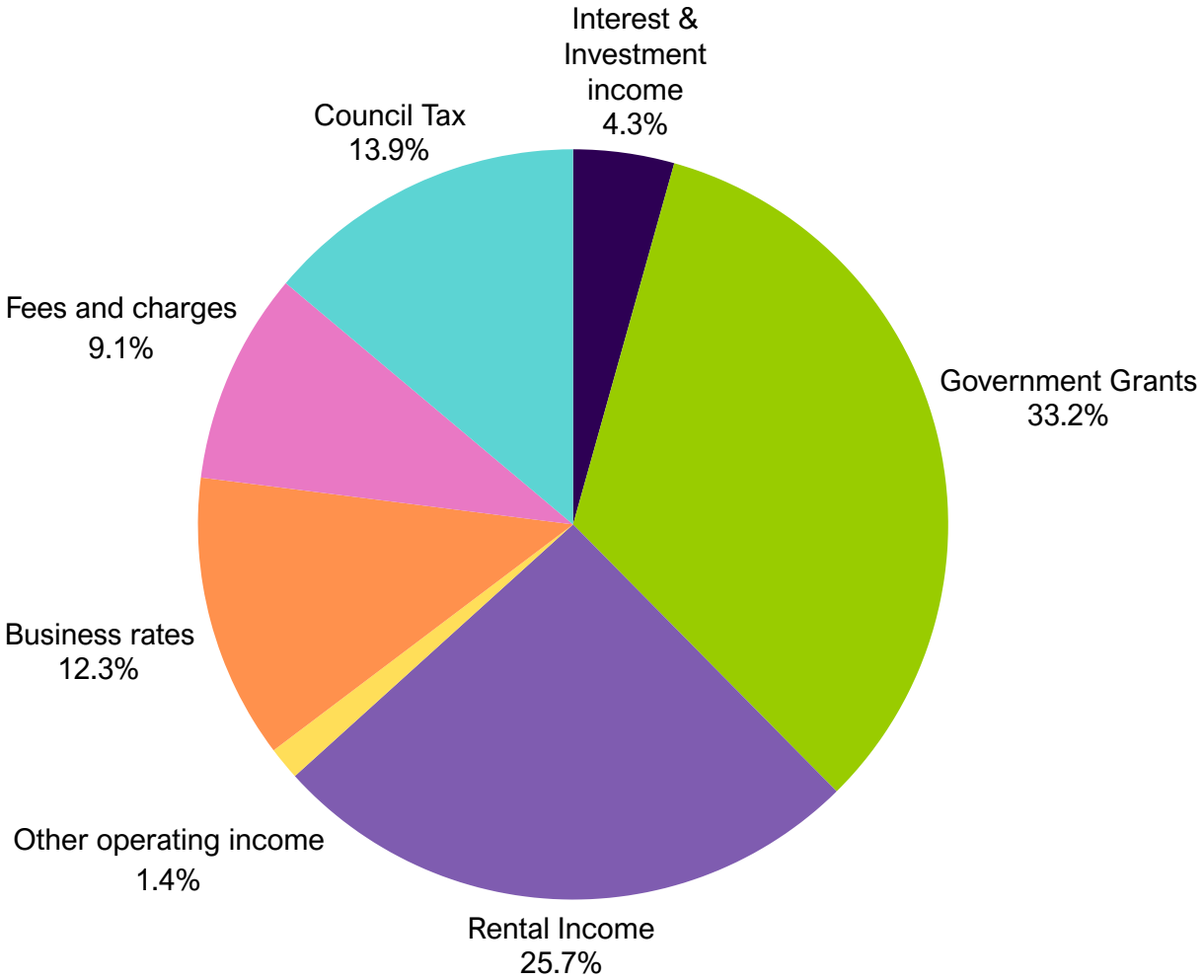
Finance 2025-26

When you pay your Council Tax, we keep only 10% to fund vital District Council services, including waste and recycling collections, street cleansing, maintaining award-winning parks and open spaces, environmental protection, customer services including revenues and benefits, economic development, markets, planning, town centre events and tourism. The rest of your Council Tax goes to fund services provided by Derbyshire County Council, the Fire Service and the Police.

South Derbyshire District Council's income for 2025-26

TOTAL INCOME £61.188m

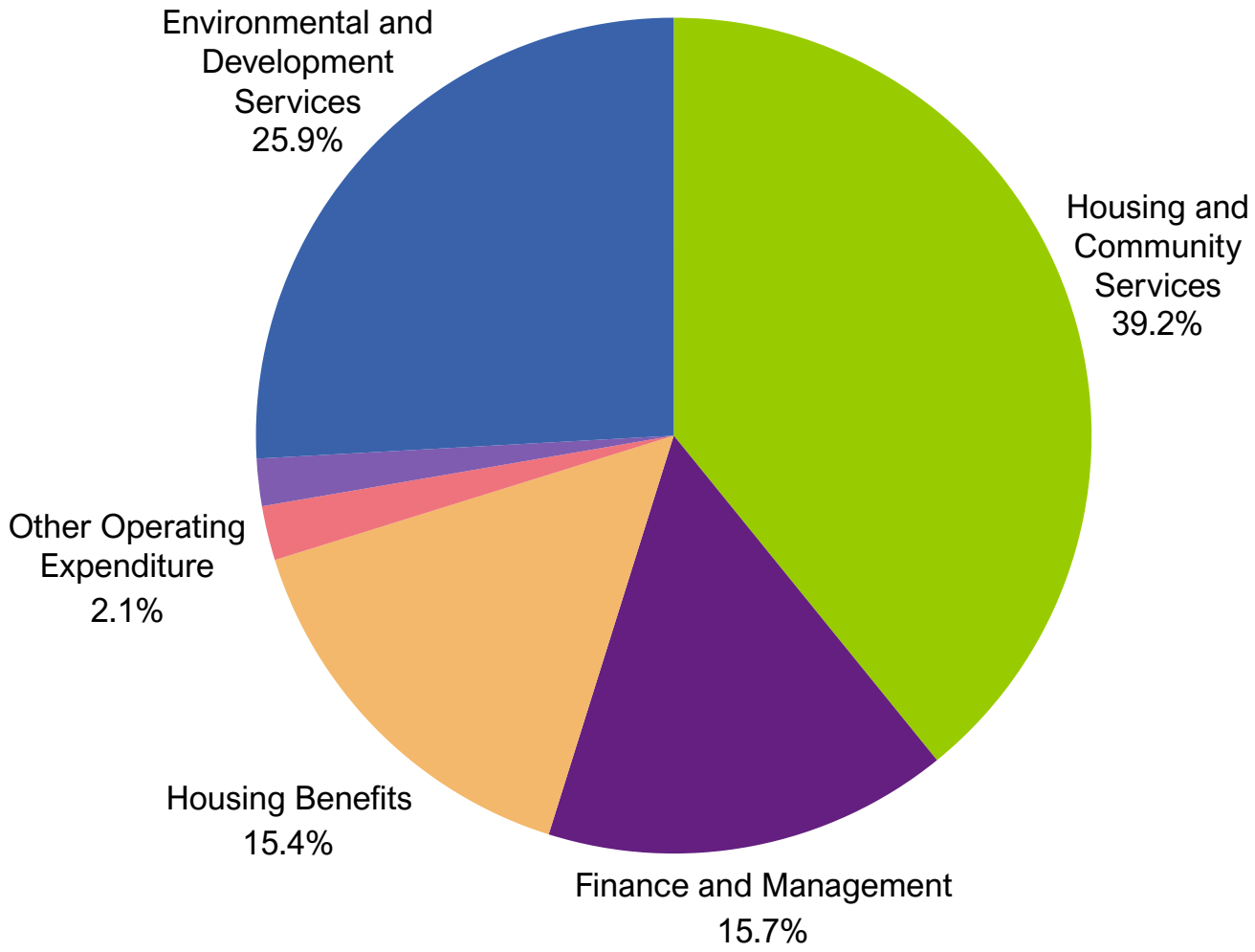
Interest & Investment income **£2.661m**
Government Grants **£20.345m**
Rental Income **£15.724m**
Other operating income **£0.868m**
Business Rates **£7.515m**
Fees and Charges **£5.584m**
Council Tax **£8.492m**



South Derbyshire District Council's expenditure for 2025-26

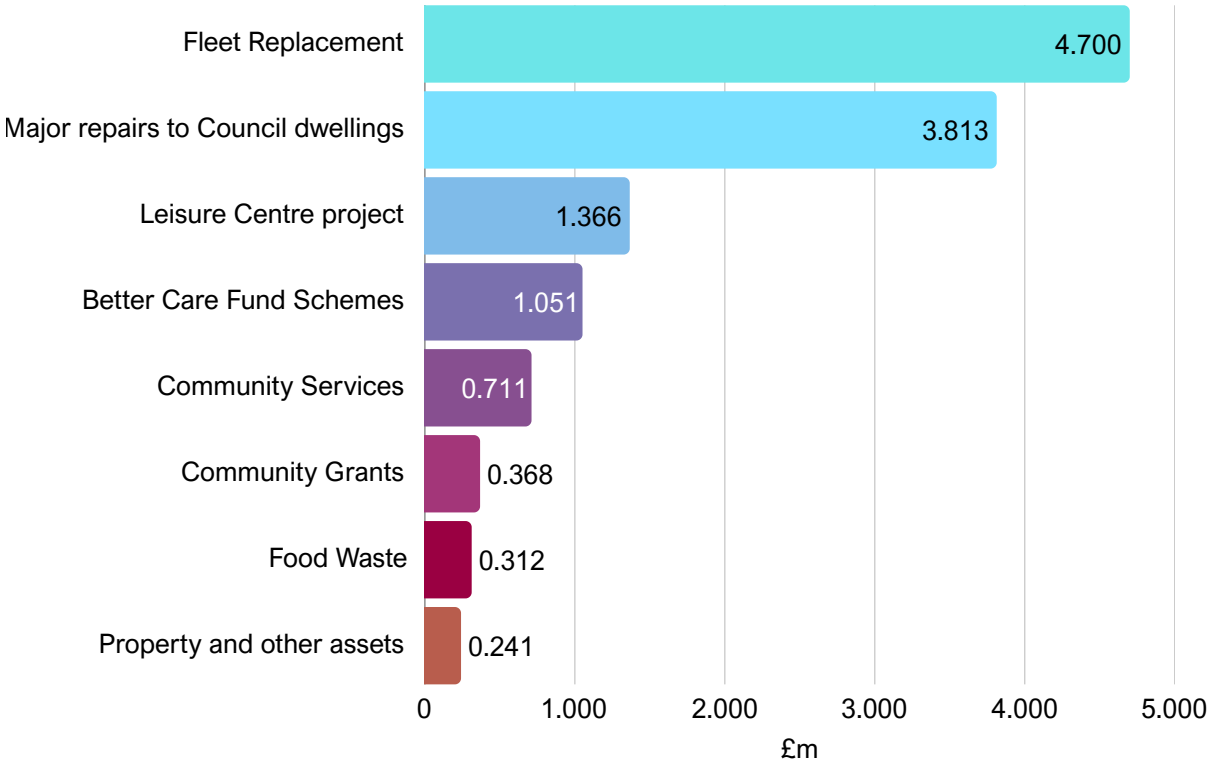
TOTAL EXPENDITURE £57.506m

Environmental and Development Services **£14.881m**
Housing and Community Services **£22.515m**
Finance and Management **£9.021m**
Housing Benefits **£8.828m**
Other Operating Expenditure **£1.211m**
Financing and Investment Expenditure **£1.050m**

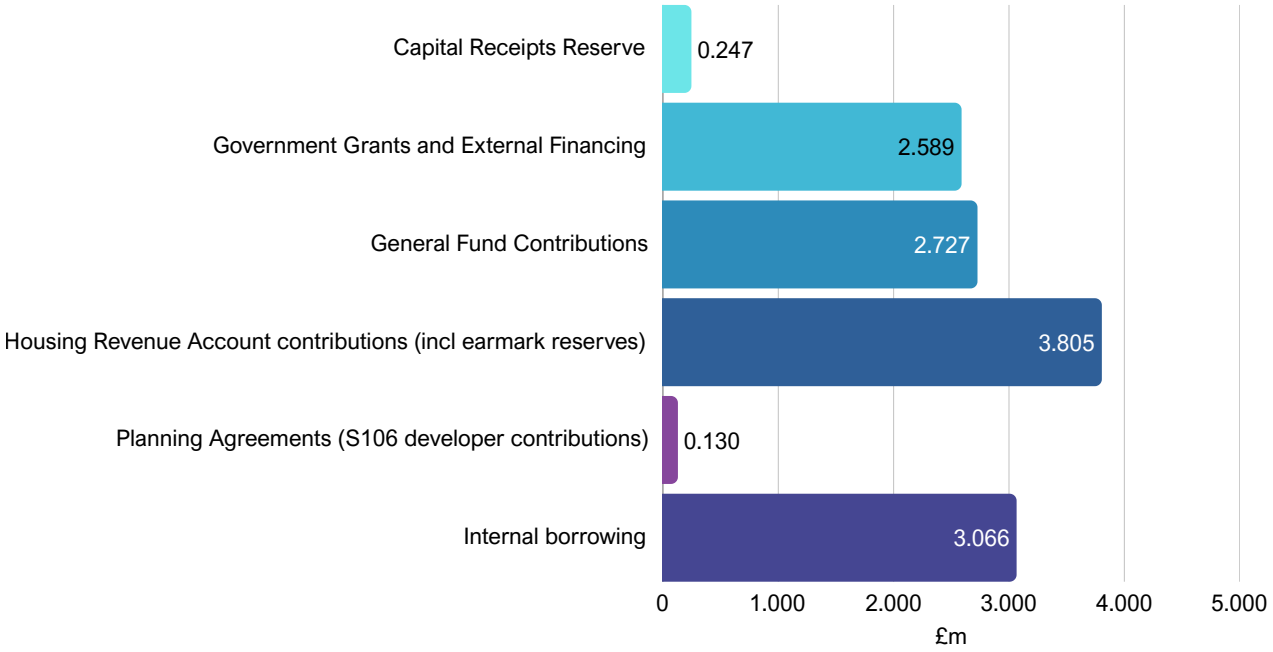


What the Council spent on Land and Property in 2025-26.

TOTAL CAPITAL SPEND £12.564m



TOTAL CAPITAL FUNDING £12.564m



Need this information in a different way?

Are we accessible to you?

We recognise that people who need or receive information from us may need it provided in a different way for a variety of reasons and;

- We want everyone to be able to understand us.
- We want everyone to be able to access our written, visual, and audio materials.
- We want to provide you with what you need to communicate effectively with us

We offer Language Line, which provides online video interpretation to give deaf customers full accessibility.

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

If you need this information in a different format, please contact us on:

Email: communications@southderbyshire.gov.uk
Telephone: 01283 595795
www.southderbyshire.gov.uk and complete our online enquiry form.

South
Derbyshire
District Council