

# Transformation Strategy 2024 - 2028

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This strategy outlines the Council's approach to identifying, managing and delivering Transformation. **Everyone will play a role** as we **Transform our Council** to continue to deliver high performing, value for money and customer focussed services.

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**TRANSFORM  
TOGETHER**  
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# Foreword

Transformation is fundamental to the future success, outputs and outcomes of South Derbyshire District Council.

The introduction of this Transformation Strategy comes after a successful four-year period resulting from the previous Transformation Plan 2020-2024.

The outputs and outcomes from that Plan will be built on over the next four years alongside the new ambitions of our Council Plan 2024-2028 which identifies four key priorities **Shape our Environment**, **Drive our Economy**, **Support our Communities**, **Transform our Council**.

Our approach is to provide the right tools, skills and empowerment culture to meet the challenges associated with managing the human side of change as well as the operational activities of running successful projects. At South Derbyshire District Council, our culture of empowerment is a workplace environment where colleagues are given the autonomy, resources, and support they need to

make decisions, solve problems, and take ownership of their work.

This is reflected in the three theme areas and associated workplan, Transformation Culture and Principles, Project Management and Continuous Improvement, Technology Innovation and Capability.

In producing this strategy, colleagues, Council Leadership and Elected Members were consulted and asked to provide feedback on common questions, one of which was the definition of transformation and what it means to individuals and South Derbyshire District Council. Through this approach we can clearly define what Transformation means to us, all of us. This is important as we move forward together because unity, clarity and communication will be at the heart of our Transformation Strategy.

We are excited to be starting on this exciting next phase in our journey!

## What does Transformation mean to South Derbyshire?

*"A major change that blends culture, process, and technology, to empower the organisation to continually improve. Transformation is ongoing and never truly finished. It's made up of many parts and will show benefits like increased capacity, more efficient processes, or financial gains."*



Robert Pearson  
Leader



Dr Justin Ives  
Chief Executive



Tracy Bingham  
Executive Director  
Resources and Transformation

# Case for Change

## Financial Resilience

From 2010 the Local Government funding system has changed dramatically, with there now being an increasing reliance on localised funding sources such as fees and charges, council tax and business rates, that is in part controlled by Central Government. In Autumn 2023, various sector bodies publicly raised concerns over funding for councils.

The Council's medium-term financial plan, aligned with the budget position for 2024/25, estimates a cumulative budget gap over the period of £14.5 million. The budgeted deficits arise and widen year on year are largely because of the assumed withdrawal of new homes bonus, the resetting of the business rates baseline and introduction of fair funding.



## Capacity and Capability

We need new skills and greater capacity to respond to changes in Local Government. There is a sector-wide drive for evidencing productivity and a continuing pressure of doing more with less.

The degree of innovation in our Council and the willingness to adapt how we deliver services will be key to future success.

Most councils face recruitment and retention problems. We need to release capacity from the organisation to enable increased focus on strategic priorities and through job enrichment and a new empowerment model, attract and retain employees.



## Modern, responsive and efficient services

Our systems and processes need to keep pace with the advance of digital technologies and the impact these are having on people's lives.

There is high demand for digital access to Council services among our residents who expect the same level of customer service they encounter in their transactions with large private sector companies.

We need to provide the customer experience residents desire in the channel they prefer and expect by joining up our data and systems, reduce response times and providing additional digital transaction opportunities.





# Methodology



This strategy wasn't created in isolation; it belongs to everyone.

The vision, themes, and commitments were developed through consultation and revisions with colleagues, Council Leadership and Elected Members to best fit the needs of our organisation. We also reviewed the Council Plan 2024-2028 and the Medium-Term Financial Strategy 2024-2029 to see how our Transformation Strategy can ensure we achieve our goals. We looked at how other local councils approach transformation to learn from their experiences. We also used the Local Government Association's transformation resources including a peer reviewer, data driven tools, maturity assessment and benchmarking.

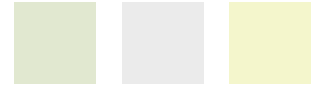
The result is a strategy which accurately reflects the needs and position of the Council.

## TRANSFORMATION VISION

TO CREATE THE RIGHT ENVIRONMENT  
AND PROVIDE THE TOOLS TO ENSURE  
OUR COLLEAGUES ARE EMPOWERED  
TO DELIVER BETTER OUTCOMES.



# Transformation Culture & Principles



Project management is logical and follows set rules, however, change management focuses on the human side of change and varies depending on the situation. Change happens at a human level, and the success of any change depends on the effectiveness of human connections.

By giving our workforce the right skills and knowledge, improvement and transformation can become a part of daily work tasks, rather than something extra. Our goal is to create a culture of improvement where everyone feels responsible and empowered to contribute.

## **Equipping our workforce with the skills needed.**

Set up a learning academy for upskilling employees, though a mixture of general project management skills and specialist change management methodologies. We will equip our workforce with the skills they need to achieve the ambitions of the Council.

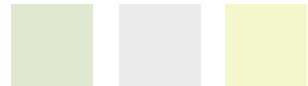
## **Enabling culture change and embracing new ways of working.**

We will promote our transformation guiding principles to all employees to assist in the shift of mindset to empowerment and enablement. We will ensure Transformation is not seen as an isolated activity but rather embedded into our daily tasks.

## **Enriching jobs and empowering all colleagues to make a difference.**

Drawing on all objectives in this strategy we will ensure through our management and leadership actions that all colleagues feel empowered. By setting out expectations then providing colleagues the right tools for their job, we will enrich their working lives.

# Project Management and Continuous Improvement



A project is a set of tasks that need to be completed within a certain timeframe to achieve specific goals. These tasks are undertaken by a project team and can happen at all levels of the organisation.

Some projects are small and handled by individual departments, while others are large and require leadership and support from the entire organisation. It's important that everyone involved in transformation, whether at the department level or strategic level, has the right skills, tools, and support.

Stakeholders want to see continuous improvement across the Council, recognising that the best ideas often come from those doing the job every day.

## **Rolling service review programme.**

We will establish internal resource for conducting service reviews, taking a deep dive into service areas and working with them to improve, including their operating model, financial position, processes and technology. Review recommendations will be presented in action plans and benefits will be tracked through efficiency registers. Any learning from the reviews will be shared through the Council to aid cross fertilisation of ideas and break down silos.

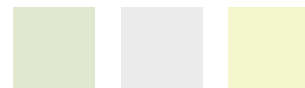
## **Call for projects and improvement.**

Through a year-round colleague suggestion scheme and a concept building scheme aligned with the budget setting process we will assist departments in building business cases for continuous improvement projects.

## **Robust management and governance.**

From daily management of tasks to programme management of key strategic objectives, we will ensure a clear and effective process for managing projects with defined escalation routes to the highest level of the organisation and political leadership.

## Technology, Innovation and Capability



The Council needs to keep evolving to meet the changing needs and expectations of our communities. We're not starting from scratch, but we're at an exciting point where we can build on what we've already done. By understanding and using our technical skills and human resources, and by exploring new technologies, we can take an innovative approach to our work.

People are our greatest asset, but information is also very important. Understanding the information we have and using it to benefit everyone will be a key part of our innovation efforts.

### **Review delivery models.**

We will review resources and delivery models of our Business Change and ICT service area to maximise our capability and capacity to support transformation work, including shared services and partnerships with other Councils to aid our central resource pool in delivering new ways of working.

### **Evaluate and implement AI and technology benefits.**

Through a cross-cutting systems working group and professional development of technology specialists we will identify, evaluate and implement the most suitable new technology.

### **Information and Data Management.**

We will share information more widely across the organisation, including review of interfaces between systems and a productivity and efficiency register. We will ensure data we hold is high quality and can inform decisions. We will close any gaps in data to assist in understanding customer needs, designing services and managing performance.



# Delivery

Our established project toolkit has been enhanced providing further templates for assisting services conducting projects. A clear structure for decision making and risk escalation is provided. Project groups meet regularly to review the status of the project against its intended aims.

Every month the status of all projects is reviewed by a Projects and Programmes Board chaired by an Executive Director. Subsequently, each quarter the Executive Director will report to Leadership Team colleagues on the status of their projects to give a holistic view on the Council's activity.

The council has an Elected Member champion who meets with officers regularly. A quarterly report will be presented to Finance and Management Committee providing a status update on both the aims and objectives of the transformation strategy and the relative status of project performance.

		Case for Change		
Commitment Matrix		Financial Resilience	Capability and Capacity	Modern, responsive and efficient services
Transformation Themes	Technology, innovation and Capability	We will continue to evaluate our technology and digital estate through collaborative and cross cutting working groups.	We will review our structures and skills, including alternative and shared service provision.	We will evaluate and implement new technologies including AI where appropriate.
	Project Management & Continuous Improvement	We will ensure robust governance and financial management of projects to ensure effective benefits management.	We will establish an internal consultancy to partner our services in reviewing their operations and continually improve.	We will engage with the workforce for suggestions and project ideas on a regular basis embedding ownership.
	Transformation Culture and Principles	Through training and engagement, we will embed an entrepreneurial spirit to help all employees assist the Council's financial position.	We will establish and champion transformation guiding principles to assist a creative mindset when considering capability and capacity to deliver.	We will embed a one Council approach to service operations through cross-cutting working and new knowledge share groups.

# Y1 Action Plan

This action plan relates to embedding the strategy, subsequent year action plans will be presented to Finance and Management Committee.

## TRANSFORMATION CULTURE AND PRINCIPLES

	Q4 24/25	Q1 25/26	Q2 25/26	Q3 25/26	Q4 25/26
Communicate Transformation Strategy and action plan, launch intranet site, conduct briefing sessions and employee roadshows.					
Agree, promote and embed Transformation guiding principles through continuing employee engagement and commitments from Leadership Team.					
Establish learning academy to train employees in project & change management, process review, entrepreneurial and financial opportunities.					
Establish cross cutting working groups with like-minded job families and skill sets to provide employees with extended knowledge of their colleagues.					

## PROJECT MANAGEMENT & CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

	Q4 24/25	Q1 25/26	Q2 25/26	Q3 25/26	Q4 25/26
Establish method for colleagues to communicate ideas and suggestions for continuous improvement.					
Implement employee suggestion scheme and review project concepts in line with budget setting process.					
Identify departments or service areas to form review programme, using internal consultancy resource.					
Establish service and corporate efficiency registers to track transformation productivity efficiencies and benefits.					
Establish a peer review cycle with other Local Authorities and business in the district to share best practice and knowledge.					

## TECHNOLOGY, INNOVATION AND CAPABILITY

	Q4 24/25	Q1 25/26	Q2 25/26	Q3 25/26	Q4 25/26
Review structure of Business Change and ICT, create an internal consultancy skillset and required Project Management support.					
Explore partnership with Local Authorities to boost our capacity to innovate and deliver change.					
Evaluate current technology across the Council and horizon scan emerging technology to ensure opportunities are available to us.					
Conduct a maturity rating on data quality and governance to take advantages of Artificial Intelligence opportunities.					



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