



*Newsletter - Summer 2017*



## Here's what's been going on with the team this summer

The summer is now in full swing (even though the sun seems to have disappeared for a while!). We have been busy completing some of our projects and beginning work on new projects.

Jane worked on the exciting redesign of **Tandridge's website** that launched on 3rd July. Dom has been busy at Swale working on the **Sheppey Gateway Transformation** and in Cambridge undertaking **User testing & citizen portal account research**. We also held our first **Really Useful morning workshop** for partners and have 3 more lined up.

The team were invited to attend the LGA Annual Conference to give a presentation in the **Innovation Zone** about the services we offer to local authorities.

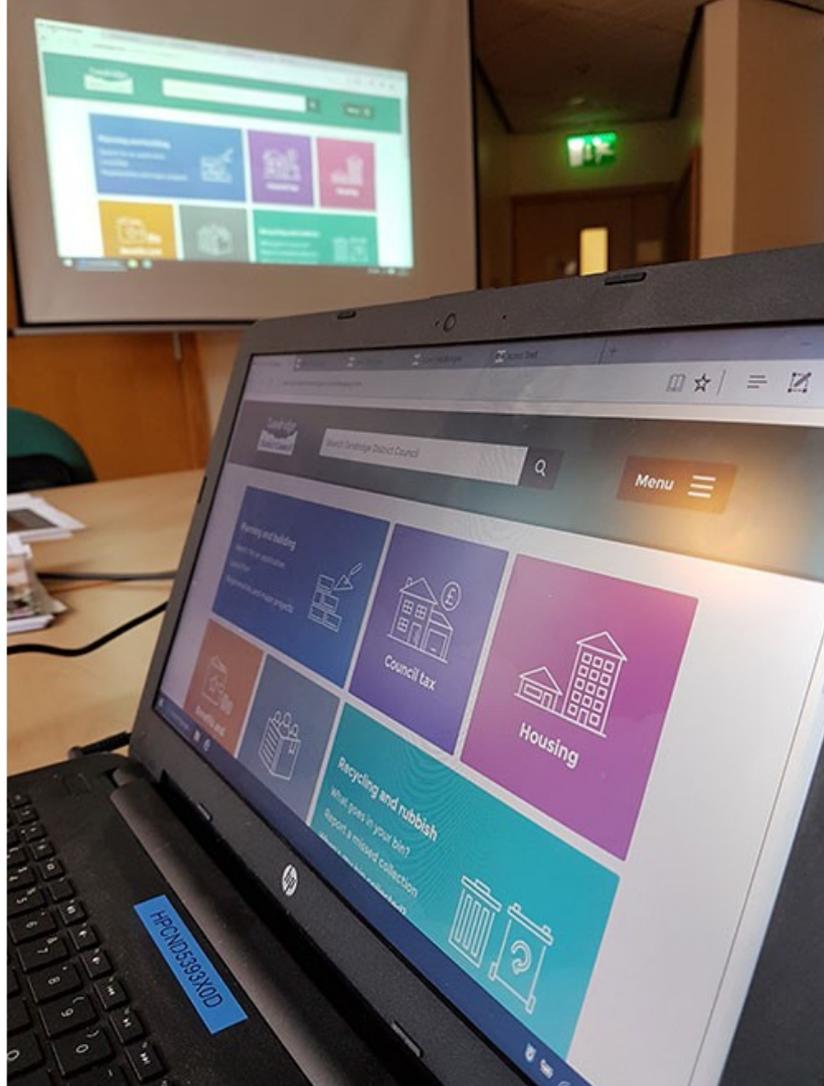
Our **workplan** features the projects we are currently working on and of course we will share any findings with partners across Kent, Surrey and Cambridge.

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## Tandridge District Council website redesign

**We are very pleased to announce the launch of the Tandridge District Council website on 3rd July after only 3 months in the making!**

In March, we were commissioned by Tandridge to assist in scoping out their new [website redesign](#).



The aim was to reduce the 1,000 content pages down to under 500 whilst giving the website a modern visual style that meets with today's responsive web standards.

We started by facilitating a workshop with staff where to review the navigation structure which went on to inform the framework of the website. Additional user research with members of the public cemented the framework.

SDS also undertook best practice research on design and web trends for 2017 along with analysis of other local authority websites. This research was fed back to the developers, [Purple Creative Studio](#) who took it through to their design team and after a few iterations, we were user testing the prototype with members of the public. Meanwhile Tandridge DC staff were undertaking their own content review, streamlining the user flow and cutting back on unnecessary content.

All in all, the whole team worked extremely well together, working in an agile manner pushing through iterations at a breakneck speed to produce an excellent result for Tandridge District Council which has met customers expectations from day one of it's launch.

## Sheppey Gateway Transformation

Swale Borough Council contacted SDS to assist in the discovery phase of the Council's efforts to redesign the existing Sheppey Gateway.



Currently the citizens of SBC enjoy a face-to-face service if they wish and they utilise this fully. However, SBC are looking to drive a self-serve approach which will empower citizens to do more for themselves as well as freeing up key resource within the Gateway to assist those with priority needs.

SDS are in the process of carrying out effective research and will offer informed recommendations as to the best practice approaches to driving up digital first self-service for citizens within the Gateway.

As well as this, SBC will have a greater understanding of the behavioural change requirements and facilities necessary to support this change in strategy and make the transition a success.

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## Cambridge City Council - User testing & citizen portal account research

**Cambridge contacted SDS to use the team's expertise to conduct a series of user tests on a selection of their online citizen self-service web forms.**

Cambridge wanted to explore the customer experience of transacting with the council via the self-service web forms to gain feedback as to how users feel when carrying out a specific task or transaction.



The user testing captured and highlighted:

- The user journey from the start of the transaction on the council website, the transition to external web forms from the council website through to completion of the transaction
- How users felt while carrying out the transaction and on conclusion
- How satisfied the user was with the experience and outcome
- How a user completes a specific transaction or request
- Whether the specific transaction is completed successfully
- How long it takes for the user to complete the transaction
- Identify any changes or improvements that can be made from the users perspective

**Additionally, CCC were interested in reviewing the merits of using a Citizen Portal Account.**

SDS carried out interviews both within and outside of the partnership as well as conducted considerable research to get a broad scope of knowledge on the advantages and disadvantages of the use of a Citizen Portal Account.

The positive and the negative experiences of introducing a Citizen Portal Account at various Local Authorities around the country were presented back to CCC via a report.

If any of our partners are interested in this research, please let us know and we can provide information from the report.

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## Really Useful Workshop - User Research at the Discovery Phase

In July we held the first of our Really Useful



Workshops at Swale House which was attended by colleagues from several of our partners. This first session - **User Research at the Discovery Phase** - demonstrated how important it is to speak to your users/customers at the beginning of the project, so that the service you are redesigning or creating meets customers' needs and expectations.

Colleagues were given helpful tools, templates and tips and then during a practical session, they interviewed each other, fed back their research to the rest of their 'table team' and prioritised user needs before setting out the common user journeys they had discovered.

The session was well received by participants and we are looking forward to the next workshop which will cover process mapping, end to end service design and lean methodologies. Please let us know if you are interested in coming. Invitations will be sent out to all our partners nearer the dates.

- **Process mapping, end to end service design, lean methodologies (Sevenoaks - 2 Nov 2017)**
- **User testing and tips for usability, accessibility, good content (Ashford - 17 Jan 2018)**
- **Agile ways of working - (TBC April 2018)**

*"The advice, techniques and methods of analysing the information were so helpful. I feel much more empowered to carry out user research in the future."*

## LGA Annual Conference - Innovation Zone



**We attended the LGA Annual Conference in Birmingham and gave a presentation in the Innovation Zone about the services we offer to local authorities.**

With the conference theme of 'disruption', we were able to demonstrate how projects we have undertaken across the partnership have been able to challenge the norm, opening up opportunities to explore new ways of working discovered through thought provoking research.

We showcased several new innovative tools that have been implemented across various partners in Kent, including the new online homelessness triage tool and the housing register pre-assessment form.

We have received interest in the work being done across Kent by local authorities in other counties so we may be able to widen our reach and learn more from their ways of working which we can then share with our partners.

# Projects and Research

Below are some of the new projects we have started this month. Our full project programme is available to [download here](#).

If you have any upcoming projects you would like help with, we would be happy to discuss them.

**SDS Smarter Digital SERVICES Work Programme 2017/18**

Project Title	Project Description	Partner(s)	SDS Lead	May-17	Jun-17	Jul-17	Aug-17	Sep-17
1. Test Learning	Assist with the creation of an electronic Knowledge Test and deliver training on the new software and assist with implementation where required.	Sevenoaks, Tunbridge Wells, Maidstone	Jane Haselden					
2. Website Redesign	Define overall strategy, develop content framework and advise on the structure of pages for a new responsive website. Assist with formatting and uploading content, capture user feedback on the design mock up and user test prototype.	Tunbridge	Jane Haselden					
3. Homelessness Triage Tool	Develop, implement and monitor an online triage tool that can direct people to other services for assistance if not eligible for help from the council.	Gravesham, Canterbury, Swale, Maidstone, Tonbridge and Malling, Tunbridge Wells, Sevenoaks, Dartford	Jane Haselden					
4. Housing/Customer Services Process Reviews	Review Contact Centre and Housing Team processes for housing customers, identifying areas for automation and recommended process redesigns.	Ashford	Dominic Taylor-Langley					
5. Reducing Customer Service Contact	Research and evaluate potential solutions to assist Gravesham in reducing the levels of non-critical contact. Exploring IVR, call back systems, text messaging and delivering a workshop to help improve outbound communications.	Gravesham (Shepway and Maidstone)	Dominic Taylor-Langley					
6. Google Analytics Training	Training in setting-up and monitoring website analytics, producing user dashboards, event tags and reports for various services.	Sevenoaks	Jane Haselden					
7. Kent Homechoice Online Forms	Development of a new Housing Pre-Assessment and Full Application online form. SDS to assist with user testing and requirements gathering.	Kent Homechoice	Jane Haselden					
8. User testing six transactional processes	Exploring the customer experience of six key transactions capturing and analysing the user journey from the start the transaction on the council website, the transition to other systems and completing the transaction.	Cambridge City Council	Dominic Taylor-Langley					
9. New ways of working in the gateway	Exploring new ways of working within the gateway and with all partners to increase self service and raise the digital skills of staff and residents.	Swale	Dominic Taylor-Langley					
10. Website Redesign	Support developing new website - engagement with staff to review content, understanding customer experience and user testing.	Maidstone	Jane Haselden					
11. Digital Project Support	Working away for the jobs that make up the front wide breadth and infrastructure framework (BIF) to meet needs, accessible, robust and attractive at the local level.	Kent County Council	Dominic Taylor-Langley Jane Haselden					

## KCSG meeting Monday 11th September

Looking forward to seeing you all at the next Kent Customer Service Group on 11th September 10.00 – 12.00 in the HR Training Room, Maidstone Borough Council Offices, Maidstone House, King Street, Maidstone ME15 6JQ.

At this meeting we are hoping to have external speakers on:

- **Artificial Intelligence and Robotic Process Automation**

Please let [Catherine](#) know if there is anything else you would like to see on the agenda for this meeting. Also please let any colleagues know who may wish to join us.

If you need to contact us, details are below:

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