

## South Tyneside Council: Improving Efficiency and Service Delivery through 'Avoidable Contact' and 'Channel Shift'

### Key benefits of iShare

- Substantial savings and efficiencies through 'Channel Shift' and 'Avoidable Contact'
- Email alerts keep citizens informed
- Improved service delivery at lower cost
- Integrated with do it online, self-serve, opportunities
- Links to virtually any back office system
- Use of 'Open Source' technologies provides an excellent ROI

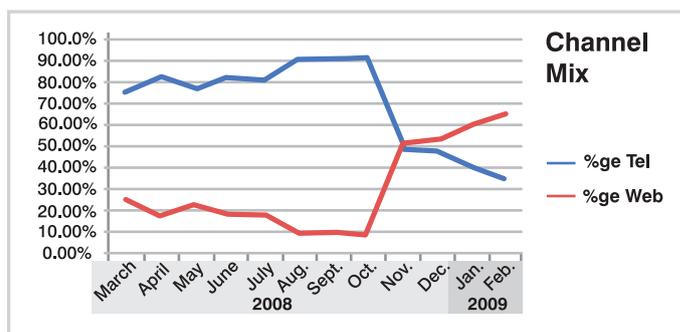
### Channel Shift and Avoidable Contact

Making the most of Council held information to transform service delivery has been a central aim of South Tyneside Council since 2004. This is demonstrated particularly well through the continued evolution of its website. The Varney report on 'Service Transformation' recommended that 50% of activity should be moved from the phone to the web. This is borne out by the latest published figures for typical transaction costs with £0.17p for a web transaction, £4.00 for a phone transaction and £7.81 for a face-to-face transaction (Source: NWEFG).

The NI14 'Avoidable Contact' indicator proved controversial but SOCITM says that all enquiries coming into a council through non-web channels for information and transactions that are available on the web should be regarded as 'avoidable contacts'. For this reason one of the Council's main objectives continues to focus on improving the provision of citizen focused information and transactional opportunities, through automation, improved web access and a personalised alert service. Much of this has been enabled through the adoption of Astun Technology's iShare data integration and publishing platform.

In 2009 there were 38,295 unique visits to South Tyneside's online mapping facility. Using the NWEFG's estimated costs for web transactions as opposed to phone transactions this would represent an estimated saving of £146,669 in the calendar year. These savings have been realised in areas such as planning where customers are now able to self-serve rather than use valuable planning officer time. More recent stats recorded for Waste and Recycling between March 2008 and April 2009 provide more compelling reasons to believe. At their peak telephone interactions accounted for 91% of all interactions but major changes to South Tyneside Council's web site resulted in a significant channel shift and now 61% of interactions are via the web. At the same time the total number of interactions increased by 57%.

The cost per transaction has also changed significantly as the popularity of the web channel increased. The average cost per interaction fell from a peak of £2.97 to £1.25 a fall of 58%. Levels of customer satisfaction have also increased as people shifted over to the web. This has resulted in additional savings up to £5,745 per month.

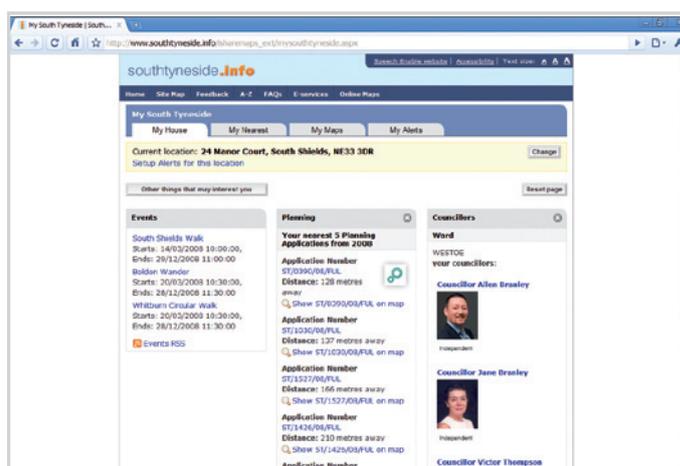


Channel shift as it happened

### Ongoing Evolution

Maps are very helpful in locating everything from a Doctor's surgery to a Recycling point. Web mapping was implemented in a simple way in 2004 using iShare to start the process of meeting the then ODPM priority outcomes for 2005. This was then developed to give visitors to the site simple location maps for finding schools, libraries and other local facilities.

In 2005 South Tyneside Council looked to meet the Pendleton criteria for planning through iShare integration with the planning system. It then became a simple process for citizens to locate details of planning applications within the vicinity of their homes.

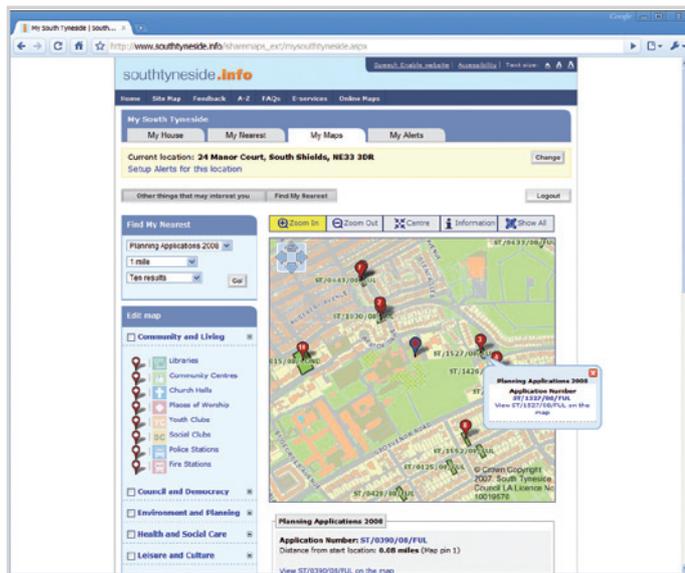


The 'My House' tab provides a host of useful information

## Astun case study: South Tyneside Council

In 2006 the site was refined considerably. The main feature, accessible from the home page, is called 'My South Tyneside' It is quick and easy to use; a person visiting the site simply types in their postcode and then chooses their property from the resulting list, all sourced from the LLPG. The next big step came in 2007/8 when 'My Nearest' and 'My Alerts' were added. Typing in any part of an address takes the visitor to a new screen with details of the property. The tabbed view then makes it really easy to find the information a citizen might be looking for.

The 'My Maps' tab reveals a mapping interface with the map centred on the property. This can use base maps or aerial photography with full pan, zoom and 'map tip' information. There are many different information layers, covering everything from schools to dentists.



It is easy to search for planning applications within the vicinity

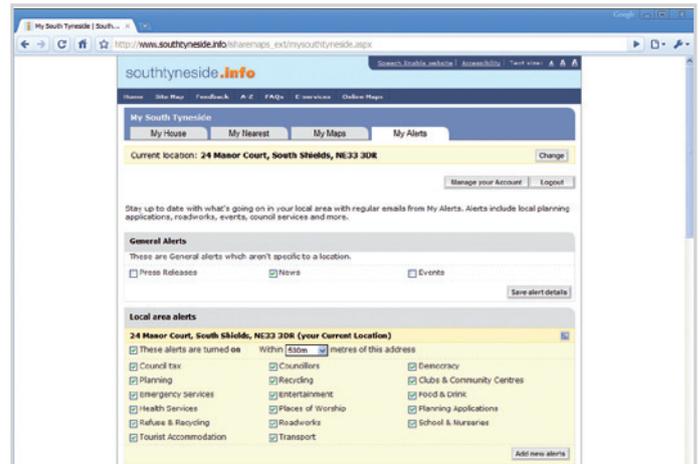
### Automatic for the People

'My Alerts', another iShare module was added in 2008. It enables citizens to receive regular email alerts, which let them know about, local events, new or changed planning applications, new road works, changed refuse collection times and much more. My Alerts subscribers no longer need to access the website for information, they just need to check their email. There are now over 500 people registered to the My Alerts service.

### iShare Platform

The information and opportunities to self-serve offered through the South Tyneside Council web site are largely enabled by the LLPG with the UPRN often referred to internally as the 'magic number'. The system performs lightning fast intelligent address searches on the LLPG, simplifying the complex BS7666 address schema to a single address input. The citizen's location then provides the basis for linkage with other systems.

iShare is underpinned by PostGIS/PostgreSQL and MapServer, which are all 'Open Source' delivering a spectacular return on investment. The system is separate from and independent of all the main council systems but 'interrogates' them on a regular basis, caching data for use by the website. This ensures that the website remains online even if one of the key systems goes down or is undergoing maintenance.



The 'My Alerts' service could not be easier to set up

iShare including the 'My Alerts' services is entirely automated, logging any issues as they occur and sending email notifications to system administrators. This means that none of the Council's internal staff have to be employed in system or data maintenance freeing up resources for frontline service provision.

iShare has truly joined up services for delivery internally through desktop GIS systems and to members of public via the website. iShare initiates regular updates from the planning system, road works, LLPG for address verification and feedback, the facilities gazetteer (GIS overlays derived via the LLPG), Council Tax, news and events, with more systems due to come online in the future.

### Key systems integrated

- Council Tax from a Unix based system
- Northgate Planning from Oracle
- Road works from MapInfo Confirm
- 30 GIS data layers automatically created from SQL Server data warehouse
- News and Events from Website CMS

### Access and Innovation

Web accessibility expert, Grant Broome, hailed 'My South Tyneside' as a rare example of an accessible GIS solution. Grant used South Tyneside's online maps as an example of good practice during his presentations at web accessibility conferences around the UK.

The British Standards Institute publication 'Web Accessibility - Making PAS 78 Work', cites the South Tyneside Council web site as one "... that provides data in text format as well as graphically. This approach provides greater access to information to those who cannot easily use graphical systems."

"There has been considerable technical innovation, mostly through the integration with other systems and we are particularly proud of the integration with the Northgate planning system, the LLPG and the website," said Roger Abbott, Web and Publishing Team Leader, Communications at South Tyneside Council. "iShare enables us to control the look and feel so that it matches the rest of the site and the 'Studio' module enables us to control content. The 'My Alerts' service in this iteration is unique," continued Abbott.