

Service Review – a Summary

“They who ask the questions cannot avoid the answers” A Cameroon proverb

Why should we conduct service reviews?

Archive services should enhance their impact and organisational resilience, through a programme of continual improvement. Structured service review and the resulting transformational programmes underpin continual improvement.

Public sector services are increasingly required to undertake service reviews and embark on transformational change programmes, due to the nature of funding and central government expectations (in the past, services reviews have been a mandatory requirement). This is not just a requirement for public sector services. All parts of all organisations in all sectors need to develop this capability in the modern world, so that they can enhance their impact and long-term organisational resilience.

Archive services are no exception. The teams need to be able to conduct and participate in different types of service review and transformation programmes. This will enable archive leaders to respond well to immediate and longer-term challenges and opportunities, so that the services can continue to have an increasingly positive impact on people and communities.

Many heritage sector leaders often say that reviews are simply an opportunity to **demonstrate what they can do for the parent organisation**. Whilst this is true, advocacy is not the only reason: it is an opportunity to **develop the service offer and improve the way in which the organisation operates, to meet the changing needs and expectations of communities and to make the service more resilient in the future**.

Scope of Service Reviews

The scope of a service review can vary:

- **Organisational** level
- **Department** level
- **Service** level (e.g. archives or heritage)
- **Thematic** (e.g. all of the services which contribute to education or health)
- **Processes** (e.g. the end-to-end sequence of steps involved in developing and delivering the service)
- **Team level** (e.g. a unit within a service)

Archive services need to develop a positive approach to all of the above and be able to lead or participate in the review effectively.

Types of Service Review

Essentially, there are six types of service review:



These should not be one-off reviews, triggered by a crisis! They should be review and change cycles.

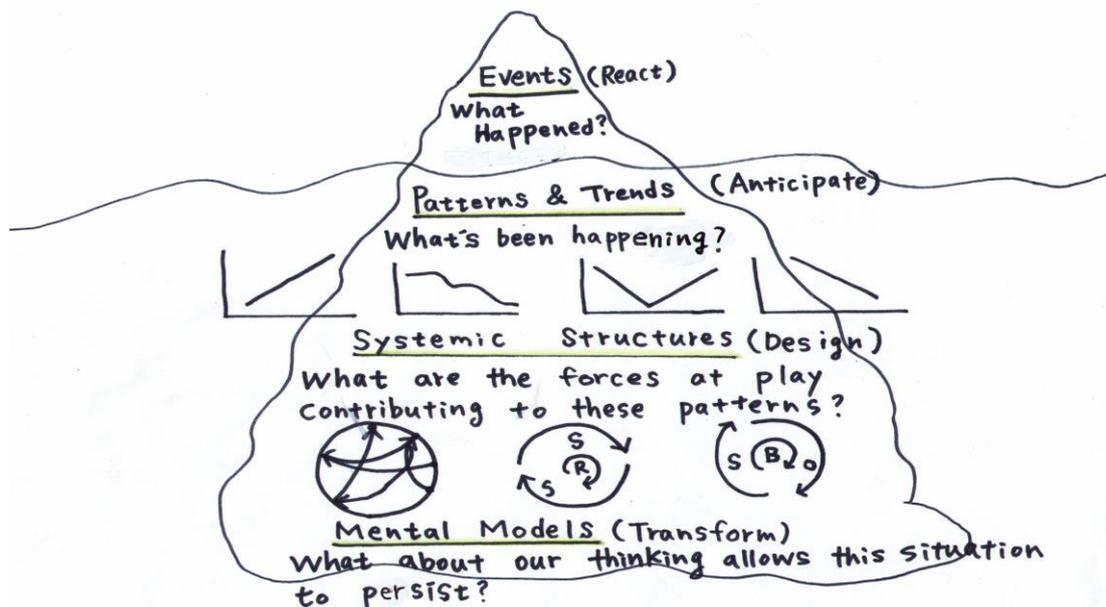
In general, the cycle times decrease as the list descends:

- Organisational reviews and change – often every 3 to 5 years
- Strategy review and development – these days, every year
- Service / product and marketing review and service development – often every 6 months
- Process review and improvement – best practice is for each core process to be reviewed twice a year
- Personal review and development – normally every 3 months
- Kaizen – normally every month, although in some organisations it is every week!

The first four reviews have the potential to lead to transformational change; these are described in detail on the following pages. Often these are incorporated into the same service review. The bottom two focus on continuous, incremental improvement. Although not used directly to trigger transformational change, they can both be used to implement such change; so we have included further guidance relating to them on this web page.

a. Organisational Review, Change and Improvement

This involves reviewing all aspects of the way in which the organisation and, in some cases, the wider system works (not the end service, but everything which goes on behind the scenes) and the organisation's results (as shown by data trends).



Essentially, there are two types of organisational review within the heritage sector:

Fundamental service review

What are these reviews?

These reviews are normally (although not always) driven by economic needs (i.e. the need to reduce expenditure significantly) and are particularly common with local authority.

NOTE: Often the term efficiency is used in connection with these reviews (e.g. "the review will help us to improve efficiency"). This is almost always an incorrect use of the term.

The reviews lead to major changes in structure and the 'business model', which could include:

- Contracting the operation of the service, or part of the service, to an independent body
- Setting up a non-profit distributing organisation (e.g. trust, IPS, CIC) and transferring the service to this body

Within the heritage sector, these two approaches are sometimes known as 'spinning out' the service.

- Transferring the service – or part of it – to the local community
- Combining with another local authority to create a 'shared service'
- Restructuring, so that the service becomes part of a different department
- Physically moving the service to co-locate it with another
- Removing layers of management
- Removing parts of the service

What is the scope of the review?

These reviews are often organisational-wide. They are also carried out at a department or service level (where senior leaders are confident that the department should be retained).

Who conducts the review?

The reviews are normally conducted by senior managers, elected members / board members, change / performance teams or specialist consultants. The level of involvement amongst managers and other team members often depends on the likely outcomes; e.g. the departmental director might lead such a review, unless more senior leaders want to challenge this role.

How is the review conducted?

The methodology used varies. However, it is often quite simple: a review team or nominated person is given a target to reduce costs; they research and present the various options, along with the pros and cons and budgetary implications of each option. In some cases, senior leaders are asked to come up with scenarios relating to different financial scenarios; e.g. "what would / could you do if your budget was reduced by 10% / 20% / 30%?".

Organisational excellence

What are these reviews?

These reviews are based on a model of organisational excellence / resilience, especially the EFQM Excellence Model (available via the British Quality Foundation www.bqf.org.uk). The cultural sector (which includes the archive sector) has spent a lot of time and money creating a bespoke organisational review toolkit which links directly to the Excellence Model, known as the **Culture and Sport Improvement Toolkit** (CSIT). In 2012, the London Museum Development Team developed and launched an organisational review and improvement initiative for museums and heritage services based on CSIT, known as **Survive and Thrive**.

We have developed a version of CSIT especially for archive services (this can be found in the 'Organisational Review, Change and Improvement' section of this web page). This comprises all of the characteristics of a resilient archive service, along with a way of assessing progress.

Unlike the *fundamental change* reviews described above, these reviews are usually perceived to be positive and valuable. Some organisations establish a policy stating there will be no workforce reductions or changes to terms and conditions as a result of these reviews. This creates a positive and cooperative feeling amongst the team.

The reviews lead to fundamental improvements in key organisational elements such as:

- leadership
- developing and using strategy and forward plans
- community engagement
- workforce development, engagement and resilience
- management of financial resources and physical assets
- collaborative working
- service development and delivery
- performance measurement, review and improvement

Some organisations conduct these reviews annually, although it is more common within the public sector to conduct them every three years.

The reviews can be complex to deliver; however, the resulting changes can be significant.

What is the scope of the review?

The reviews are normally conducted for the whole organisation, although in some cases individual departments, services or teams choose to adopt a proactive approach and conduct their own review. The scope of these reviews needs to involve support functions and senior leadership within the wider organisation. They can also involve key partners.

Who conducts the review?

Best practice is to set up a *Self-Assessment team* to conduct the review, comprising leaders and representatives from the various functions affected by the review. Sometimes, the team also includes key partners.

Some organisations invite people from other departments or peers to challenge people's perceptions, either during the Self-Assessment team's discussions ('critical friend'), or once they have been completed ('peer-led challenge').

These reviews can also be conducted by Peer Review teams, comprising trained peers from similar organisations (sometimes led by specialist consultants); for example, the *Survive and Thrive* initiative for museum and heritage services comprises Self-Assessment and Peer Review.

How is the review conducted?

The main techniques used during these reviews are Self-Assessment and improvement planning. Guidance on these techniques is available in the 'Organisational Review, Change and Improvement' section of this web page.

Peer-Led Challenge and Peer Review are also commonly used. Further information on these methods and opportunities to become a trained peer are available via the Sector Development Team.

b. Strategy Review and Development

What are these reviews?

These reviews involve challenging and/or developing high level strategy to ensure that....

- a. It is relevant and useful (in terms of service development, resource planning and advocacy)
- b. It reflects current best practice (e.g. the use of *outcome frameworks*)
- c. It is aligned with parent body, partner, funder and national policy and strategy

This review activity provides a valuable 'building block' for the other types of service review. Strategic alignment can also play a key role in creating resilience in the face of economic challenges.

These days, strategy reviews are often conducted annually.

Guidance relating to this type of review is available in the 'Strategy Review, Development and Alignment' section of this web page.

What is the scope of the review?

By definition, strategy reviews should be conducted for the whole organisation. However, in some cases individual departments, services or teams choose to adopt a proactive approach and conduct their own review.

Strategy reviews are also applied to formal collaborations. They underpin many aspects of collaborative working, including collective service innovation, joint improvement and sharing of resources.

Who conducts the review?

The reviews are normally conducted by the leadership team, including senior leaders of the parent body (where the review relates to the service or department). Strategic stakeholders are often invited to participate in the discussions. Peers or consultants are often used as 'challenge agents'.

How is the review conducted?

The leadership team meets, usually a number of times over a period of one to two months, to discuss key strategic questions often posed by an external facilitator (see Section Four). The discussions are often informed by research and stakeholder consultation (sometimes carried out by consultants).

The discussions continue until the leadership team reaches a consensus on the new / revised strategy. This is a critical part of the process.

The draft strategy is usually circulated to strategic stakeholders for their input and challenge, before it is finalised.

c. **Service/Product and Marketing Review and Service Development**

What are these reviews?

These reviews are designed to ensure that the service offer, pricing structure and the way the services are marketed continue to develop and change, so that....

- a. strategic outcomes are pursued (including new outcomes)**
- b. income generation is maximised (this is becoming an increasingly important goal for many)**
- c. the changing needs and wants of the community are met**

For the archive sector, the reviews could lead to the following types of change:

- launching a new outreach and education programme
- digitisation
- changing the hours that the archive service is available to the public
- introducing a family history service
- a community engagement initiative
- introducing an oral history initiative

This requires innovation, collaboration and a knowledge of the very best practice within the sector (all attributes that modern archive service leaders often possess!).

Often this type of change is introduced without a formal review. However, this can be risky. It is also common for these reviews to be initiated when a need or opportunity presents itself. We recommend a more structured and systematic review cycle, built into the organisation's forward planning process.

What is the scope of the review?

By definition, the scope of the review is the services offered to the customers. The review could simply relate to the individual service area (e.g. archives), a whole department (e.g. heritage services), or to a theme (e.g. all of the services which contribute to education or health, including external partners). When the review has a broader scope, this creates more opportunity for collaborative working on designing, developing and delivering new services.

Who conducts the review?

These reviews and the service development process are led by leaders of the service(s) involved. Ideally all members of the team have the opportunity to input ideas. Given that innovative services are often designed, developed and delivered in collaboration with other departments and external partners, this could involve a wide range of people.

How is the review conducted?

The following '5 x I' process reflects best practice for this type of review:



Phase 1: Identify

- Refresh and re-commit to the desired strategic outcomes (see Section Four of this pack)
- Collate and analyse relevant performance data trends (see Section Five of this Pack)

Phase 2: Ideas

- Use creative thinking techniques to come up with new ideas
- Investigate and learn from what other organisations have done

Phase 3: Identify

- Analyse and enhance these ideas and identify the best options
- Produce an implementation plan

Phase 4: Implement

- Implement the new service for a trial period

Phase 5: Improve

- Learn the lessons from this period and adjust the service accordingly

Return to Phase 4 – implement the new service

Return to Phase 5 – continue to review and refine the service

Return to Phase 4, etc.

Further guidance on this service innovation process is available on this web page.

The review team uses a range of techniques (often known as **Lean** techniques) to identify the following:

- *Value-adding activity*
- *Non value-adding activity* (work which is planned, but which does not add anything to the customers' experience – this could be essential or non-essential work)
- *Waste*, including *failure demand* (i.e. work caused by things going wrong or by the customer not receiving the service they expect or require)
- Activity which does not meet or exceed customer expectations and requirements

This leads to changes to the planned process and actions to embed the planned process into people's habitual working behaviours. It could involve complete re-design of the process, or re-design of the organisational; structure and system to make process improvement easier to achieve.

In leading organisations, each key service process (i.e. the processes involved in developing and delivering the end service) is often reviewed every six months, or when the need arises (e.g. when there have been customer complaints). Support / management processes tend to be reviewed once a year. The starting point is to identify your framework of processes, including *key processes*, *management processes* and *support processes*. A schedule is then put together, which identifies which process will be reviewed, when.

What is the scope of the review?

Normally, each review relates to one end-to-end process. In some cases, organisations conduct a review of all key processes in one go.

Who conducts the review?

Each process review is owned and conducted by a review team, comprising:

- A team leader – this should be the person who is responsible for the process (in matrix organisations this is the *process owner*)
- A process improvement expert(s) (for example, a Lean / Six Sigma Black Belt)
- Team members – this should be people who are involved in the process being reviewed, including representatives from support departments and external partners
- A skilled facilitator

How is the review conducted?

There are various models, although they are all based on the following principles:

Step 1:

Define and scope the process being reviewed

Step 2:

Collect performance data relating to the process and investigate what is currently happening

Step 3:

- **Analyse and understand the current process ‘through the eyes of the customer’, using the data and information gained in step 2. Identify the value adding activity, non-value-adding activity, waste (including failure demand) and the activity which does not meet or exceed customer expectations and requirements (e.g. using process mapping)**
- **Analyse the root cause of the areas for improvement**

Step 4:

Agree changes and how these will be monitored.

Step 5:

Implement and monitor the changes

Further guidance on process review and improvement is available on this web page.