

SOUTH AYRSHIRE COUNCIL SERVICE REVIEW FRAMEWORK

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 As part of the Council's improvement agenda there is a requirement for service reviews to be conducted in order to maximise efficiencies, to streamline systems and procedures and to improve outcomes for service users. The purpose of this Framework is to assist Elected Members and Officers through the process and to deliver consistency in our approach to service review activity.
- 1.2 The Framework draws on good practice from across the public sector and reflects the Best Value requirements to: consult, compare, challenge, compete; and the Best Value duty to secure continuous performance improvements whilst maintaining an appropriate balance between quality and cost and with regard to economy, efficiency and effectiveness. It reflects lessons learned from previous service review approaches adopted by the Council and supersedes all previous guidance.
- 1.3 The Framework sets out the expectations on the techniques, process, roles and responsibilities that together will deliver effective service reviews.
- 1.4 It describes the ways services will be identified and put forward for review by the Corporate Management Team (CMT) through the Council's service planning or budget development processes, or by Elected Members through the Council's scrutiny process; the decision making process for consideration and approval of service review proposals by Leadership Panel and Full Council.
- 1.5 The Framework outlines the important roles of elected members in determining the scope and outcomes required from reviews; and their consideration and approval of the recommendations arising from the reviews. It also outlines the importance of ensuring that each service review is conducted by relevant personnel with appropriate support from trade unions, human resources and finance with the ability to draw on other support from other services e.g. legal, ICT, property and so on to ensure decisions are fully informed by legislative requirements and Council strategy.
- 1.6 It is intended that all service reviews will complete the stages identified in this Framework. Each review however, will have unique elements that will require to be taken into account, for example, whether there is a private sector market for the service; whether there is external inspection evidence of the service and so on. These, and other factors, mean that resources required and timescales for completion will vary significantly reflecting the context of the service and the complexity of the review.
- 1.7 The Framework will be complemented by a supporting toolkit for Officers to provide help and guidance in relation to each stage of the service review process, including templates for recording and reporting to ensure each service review is planned, reported and monitored consistently across the Council.

2. Service Review - Outline

- 2.1 A service review is a review which is designed to look fundamentally at a service and what it is achieving. It considers questions such as: do we need to provide this service?; are there other ways of achieving the desired outcomes?; are there options for different levels of delivery?; how can the service be more economical or efficient?; how can the service deliver better for customers?
- 2.2 Reviewing services allows us to achieve savings; redesign the mix and range of services delivered; streamline management processes; develop and improve; generate additional income and assure effective customer service.
- 2.3 A service under review can be an individual service (for example building standards) or related functional elements within a Directorate (for example planning and building standards) or a support function providing services across the Council (for example Human Resources). It may also relate to a group of related services as part of a theme, such as support services for young people.

2.4 The Service Review Approach

The service review approach set out within this Framework includes:

Phase 0 – Selecting a Service for Review

- Member approval of services for review through budget development, service and improvement planning and scrutiny processes;
- Identification of initial objectives by Members including the level of anticipated savings, where appropriate.

Phase 1 – Determining the Scope of a Service Review:

- Service profiling by the Service Review Lead focussed on key questions;
- Identification of required objectives; timescales and resources;
- Development and approval by Leadership Panel of a service review scope report

Phase 2 – Undertaking the Service Review:

- Consultation and engagement with stakeholders, staff and service users;
- Comparing and benchmarking;
- Review and evaluation of information gathered;
- Identification and appraisal of options in line with scope report;
- Agree recommendations and actions and draft report for Challenge Team.

Phase 3 – Consideration of Findings and Approval:

- Presentation of findings, proposed recommendations and actions to Challenge Panel and CMT for consideration;
- Review of findings, recommendations and actions where required;
- Presentation of findings, proposed recommendations and actions to relevant scrutiny panel for consideration; and then to Leadership Panel for approval.

Phase 4 – Implementation and delivery:

- Integration of approved actions into service and improvement plans;
- Delivery of approved actions;

- Report on progress to relevant scrutiny panel through 6 monthly service plan update reports.

The service review approach is set out in summary at Figure 1 below.

Figure 1: Service Review Framework - South Ayrshire Council



3. Service Reviews - Roles and Responsibilities

3.1 The table below describes the accountability of and participation by various roles within the Council, in completing tasks or deliverables in relation to service reviews:

Full Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agree Service Review Framework. • Agree specific areas for review through budget decisions. • Comment via member briefings on specific reviews at Stage 6,
Leadership Panel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agree specific areas for review through approval of Service and Improvement Plans. • Agree specific areas for review following consideration of concerns raised by scrutiny processes of Service and Improvement Plans and/or performance information.
Portfolio Holder	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss draft scope for service reviews relevant to their area of responsibility. • Discuss findings and recommendations arising from service reviews relevant to their area of responsibility. • Provide political leadership on implementation of recommendations relevant to their area of responsibility.
Scrutiny Processes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider Service and Improvement Plans and performance information and, if appropriate, propose service reviews to Leadership Panel. • Consider the findings and recommendations arising from service reviews, prior to them going to Leadership Panel for approval. • Monitor the progress and delivery of recommendations resulting from the service review process, including financial savings.
Corporate Management Team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide corporate leadership and direction on service reviews. • Promote a performance management culture across services driving continuous improvement. • Ownership of Service Review Framework and supporting Toolkit and their on-going review. • Consider scope of service reviews and identify synergies and links between service reviews. • Consider service review reports and action plans.
Lead Executive Director/ Director	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appoint the Service Review Lead in conjunction with CMT - agree the level of input required from all contributors and ensure sufficient time is allocated to complete the work required. • Appoint the Challenge Team in conjunction with CMT. • Member of relevant Challenge Teams. • Responsible for ensuring the action plan is implemented.
Head of Service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Propose specific areas for review through budget development and service and improvement planning processes, prior to submission to Members for approval.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure the release of appropriate staff. • Member of relevant Challenge Teams. • Ensure appropriate communication takes place on service reviews. • Lead/support delivery of actions from service reviews. • Report to scrutiny processes on 6 monthly basis updating on implementation of action plan via SIP updates.
Service Review Lead	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lead the service review in accordance with the Service Review Framework and supporting Toolkit. • Prepare the Service Review Definition Document (i.e. the scope), and ensure the supporting documentation is created and effectively managed. • Deliver the service review according to the agreed Scope. • Manage project risk, quality assurance and initiate corrective action where necessary. • Ensure that the review delivers on the required objectives, to the required quality and within the specified constraints of time, resources and cost. • Ensure that a full Equality Impact Assessment is undertaken for any service review which is proposing changes which may impact on protected characteristics. • Co-ordinate day-to-day review activities, supported by the Service Review Team. • Ensure the availability of information. • Responsible for ensuring effective engagement and communication with staff, trade unions and other stakeholders affected by a service review. • Prepare the review findings and present to Challenge Teams. <p>The Service Review Lead is likely to be either a Head of Service, Manager or Coordinator depending on the scale and scope of the service review.</p>
Service Review Team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scoping of review including outcomes, planning, timelines and resources. • Day to day charge of delivering specific aspects of the review, under the guidance and support of the Service Review Lead. • Participate and assist in the overall delivery of the review. • Plan, manage and deliver the tasks allocated to them by the Lead Officer. • Analyse information and prepare findings and recommendations for Challenge Team and for CMT. <p>The Service Review Team will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Head of Service/ Manager or Coordinator (as Service Review Lead) • Staff from the relevant service/s • If appropriate, external independent support <p>The team will also involve support from Finance, HR and a trade union representative and will be able to access support from other services, eg Legal, ICT, Estates, Sustainability and so on.</p> <p>Representation and time commitments of the people involved vary depending on the scale and scope of the review.</p>
Challenge Team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Act as a 'critical friend' to the Service Review Team. • Appraise and approve Service Review Team findings and recommendations.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determine whether the service review has considered all stages of the review process and that they have been carried out effectively. • Identify any issues that require further development and/or research. • Ensure the review has fully met the objectives and scope. <p>The Challenge Team could include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • an Executive Director/ Director and/or Heads of Service; • an independent person who is a subject specialist; • a staff side representative; • a senior manager who does not work in the service but has some understanding of the service(s) under review.
All Service Staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participate in review and provide any information requested. • Contribute knowledge and understanding of service detail. • Assist the Service Review Team in undertaking the review.
Internal and External customers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide feedback on service received – the impact of the service on them and the outcomes the service should be delivering for them. • Comment as required on possible options relating to future service delivery.
Trade Unions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comment on specific areas for review identified through budget development and service and improvement planning processes, prior to submission to Members for approval. • Comment on draft scope of review at Stage 4 • Involvement with the Service Review Team as the work progresses during Stage 5. • Comment on the proposed recommendations at Stage 6 as part of the Challenge Team. • Respond to proposals affecting employees arising from the review at Stage 7..
External Advisors/ Subject Specialists Peer Review	<p>Where appropriate, a service review will include input from an External Advisor and/or Peer Reviewer with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A background in the service area; • Strategic/national understanding of the service area; • Ideally, experience of delivering the service in another local authority and/or the private or third sector. <p>The particular input the External Advisor/Subject Specialist is expected to provide includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sharing knowledge of how service is delivered elsewhere; • Support identification of alternative methods of delivery; • Comparing costs/ outputs; • Critical friend role.

4. Phase 0: Selecting a Service for Review

4.1 Stage One – Determining a Service Review through Budget Development, Service Planning or Standing Scrutiny Panel Processes

4.1.1 The purpose of this stage is to secure Elected Member agreement on services which require to be reviewed in line with the Council's Service Review Framework and supporting Toolkit.

4.1.2 It covers the three different routes that a service can be proposed for review, specifically:

- Budget development processes – future efficiency savings identified through budgeting processes and approved at Full Council;
- Service and improvement planning processes – developed by services and approved at Leadership Panel;
- Scrutiny processes – areas for review are identified through scrutiny of SIP or performance information and are proposed to and approved by Leadership Panel.

4.1.3 This stage will be completed by Heads of Service, Executive Directors/ Directors and, in some instances Elected Members, who will be responsible for identifying and making recommendations for service reviews and their related objectives, to Leadership Panel or Full Council. Elected Members will be responsible for approving or rejecting these recommendations at Leadership Panel or Full Council.

4.1.4 The conclusion of this stage is the approval by Elected Members at Full Council or at Leadership Panel, on services which require to be reviewed.

5. Phase 1: Determining the Scope of a Service Review

5.1 Stage Two: Preparing a Service Profile

5.1.1 The purpose of this stage is to develop a profile for the service under review which details facts about the service identified through consideration of an agreed set of questions (outlined below). It will include the start of an on-going [Equalities Impact Assessment](#) which should be referred to and updated as the review progresses.

5.1.2 It will cover the appointment of a Service Review Lead by the Executive Director(s)/ Director of the services affected, and a desktop review of an agreed set of questions (below) which the Service Review Lead will use to develop a service profile and to inform the review scope. The desktop review will use information from a variety of sources including How Good Is Our Council information, PIs, benchmarking data, and so on.

- Why are we doing this?
Why do we provide this service? What elements are statutory? What outcomes is it achieving? How does this service(s) contribute to the Council's agreed Priorities?
- Can we run the service smarter/better?
How effective are we and can we be more effective? Are there different ways for the outcomes it is achieving to be delivered? What are their costs and risks? Are we using the most cost-effective ways to achieve our outcomes? How could the service be provided in a different way?
- How efficient and economical are we and could we improve it?
Can we streamline our processes? Can we use less resource and/or reduce the cost of resource? Is the staffing structure right - grade levels, working patterns, balance between permanent and temporary staff? Do we have the right equipment and materials? Are we paying the right amount for them? How can we reduce materials? How can we reduce wastage/increase re-use? What services do we need to be located next to, to deliver a joined up service for the customer?
- Are we getting as much income as we should?
Can/should we introduce charges where there are none currently? Are eligibility criteria up to date and implemented? Are we pulling in as many grants/external funding as we can?
- Can we reduce the level of service?
Can we reduce entire service across the board? What is the minimum entitlement provision? Can we target services geographically or by customer group? Are there equalities implications associated with reduction in service?
- Can we stop the service entirely?
What would happen without Council provision? What impact would there be on outcomes? Would there be cost implications for other areas of the Council or others by withdrawing the service? What are the potential unintended consequences? Can they be mitigated?
- Would there be a benefit in others delivering the service – either solely or jointly?
Is there a private market? Is there an opportunity to work with partner community or voluntary organisations?
- Would there be benefit in sharing this service or undertaking it via joint venture with other local authorities?
Can we deliver the service in partnership with another local authority?

This stage will be completed by the Service Review Lead, who will be either a Head of Service, Manager, or Coordinator of the service(s) affected, supported by staff across the service(s) involved and with input as required from trade unions, finance, HR and legal and other services.

5.1.3 The conclusion of this stage will see the production of a service profile which will detail facts about the service under review identified through consideration of an agreed set of questions. This service profile will inform the development of a draft scoping paper at stage 3 and evaluations and options appraisals at stage 5 of the service review process.

5.2 Stage Three: Preparing a Draft Scope for the Service Review

- 5.2.1 The purpose of this stage is to prepare a draft scoping report for the service review which proposes objectives, timescales, and option appraisal and resource requirements.
- 5.2.2 It will require consideration of the service profile information prepared at stage 2, in order to identify specific objectives, resource requirements and membership of the Service Review Team and Challenge Team and timescales.
- 5.2.3 The scope will also identify where options need to be considered in the service review at a policy level, e.g. options related to the level and type of service to be provided based on budgetary and strategic plans, and at a market level, e.g. options related to the delivery of services either directly, procured, or jointly/ shared. It will also require development of an initial Equality Impact Assessment to ensure that the impact of the desired outcomes on protected characteristics is fully considered. This assessment should be further refined throughout the service review process.
- 5.2.4 Proposed objectives for the service review within the draft scoping report may include for example:
- improved delivery against the Council's Priorities;
 - increased targets for recurring budget savings;
 - an effective and fit for purpose structure that encourages and supports delegation and decision making at the right level;
 - improved business processes which removes unnecessary activity and duplication and delivers efficiencies.
- 5.2.5 This stage will be undertaken by the Service Review Lead.
- 5.2.6 The conclusion of this stage will see the production of a draft scoping report, using the agreed template within the Service Review Toolkit, and an updated Equalities Impact Assessment with intended objectives of the review and an impacts forecast.

5.3 Stage Four: Approval of Scope for the Service Review

- 5.3.1 The purpose of this stage is to consult on, and to secure approval of the draft scoping report for the service review and the objectives, timescales and resource requirements proposed therein.
- 5.3.2 It will require discussion with relevant portfolio holder/s; consultation with unions, consideration of the draft scoping report at CMT and then submission to Elected Members at Leadership Panel for review and approval.
- 5.3.3 This stage will be undertaken by the Service Review Lead.. Once CMT have had the opportunity to consider the draft scoping report, it will then be presented to Elected Members at Leadership Panel by the Executive Director(s)/ Director of the services affected, for their review and approval.
- 5.3.4 The conclusion of this stage will be the approval by Elected Members of the service review scoping report and the objectives, outcomes, timescales and resource requirements proposed therein at Leadership Panel.

6. Phase 2: Undertaking the Service Review

6.1 Stage Five – Evaluation and Options Appraisal

6.1.1 The purpose of this stage is to undertake the review, taking the service profile developed at stage two and the review scope approved at Stage 4 as starting points.

6.1.2 This stage will range from a short sharp piece of work for small, tightly focussed reviews, or a longer, more in depth piece of work for major reviews. This stage will consider further the set of questions outlined in 5.1.2 above and recommendations will arise from that evaluation work. The stage will also include options appraisal work, as appropriate, and again recommendations will arise from that work.

6.1.3 Option appraisal is a technique for creating and reviewing options and analysing their relative costs and benefits. While an option appraisal should always take place where there are feasible alternatives, the scale and depth of appraisal undertaken will be proportionate to the decision being taken. As outlined in 5.2.2 above, the agreed scope for the service review should detail where options should be considered, eg from consideration of policy development requirements or market conditions. For smaller and lower risk options, simplified appraisals will be undertaken to ensure that resources are effectively used. For more complex or higher risk service reviews, fuller options appraisals will be undertaken.

6.1.4 Work in this stage may include a wide range of aspects: consultation and engagement with stakeholders and service users where appropriate; benchmarking of the service's performance, cost and quality with services internally and externally; consultation with staff and unions; review of processes and so on.

6.1.5 Options and emerging recommendations will be assessed against criteria which could include:

- Achievability – can the option actually be achieved, and if so, how easy or difficult would it be to change?
- Acceptability – is the option legally and socially acceptable?
- Adequacy – does the option provide a reasonable solution, e.g. will it meet the identified need?
- Responsiveness – is the option flexible enough, e.g. will it always be accessible and responsive to the needs of service users, the Council and its partners?
- Sustainability – would the option meet the current need, without compromising the future needs, or placing added burdens on the Council?
- Cost-effectiveness – does the option represent value for money?
- Appropriateness – is the option a proper and ethical thing for the Council to do?
- Equalities – would the option provide equal opportunity for all our customers to access the service?
- Community impact – how would the option impact on individual communities or future opportunities?
- Risk – what are the risks associated with the option both doing it and not doing it?

6.1.6 This stage will be undertaken by the Service Review Team, in consultation with stakeholders, staff, unions, service users and representative groups and communities identified in the draft Equalities Impact Assessment, where appropriate.

6.1.7 The conclusion of this stage will see the Service Review Team conclude appraisal of available options and development of recommendations in line with the Service Review Framework and Toolkit; and agree on recommendations meet the objectives for the service review as agreed in the service review scoping report at stage 4.

7. Phase 3: Consideration and Approval of Findings

7.1 Stage Six – Consideration of Draft Findings

7.1.1 The purpose of this stage is for the Service Review Team to seek feedback from the Challenge Panel, in relation to their findings and recommendations. Portfolio holder discussion will also be sought at this stage. Depending on the review, it may also be appropriate for there to be opportunities for all elected members, and for stakeholders to comment at this stage.

7.1.2 This stage covers consideration by the Challenge Team on:

- Whether the Service Review Team has considered and completed all the stages of the service review process effectively;
- Any issues in the service review findings and proposed recommendations that will require further development or research;
- Any suggestions for service improvement not considered already by the Service Review Team;
- Whether the findings and recommendations arising from the service review fully meet the objectives, outcomes and scope agreed.
- The results of the equalities impact assessment exercise.

7.1.3 It will be undertaken by the Challenge Team, who will consider the information presented to them by the Service Review Team in relation to the processes undertaken in completing their service review, their findings and recommendations. Where required, the Challenge Team can refer the Service Review Team back to Stage 5 of the Service Review Framework for further consideration of any issues raised or suggestions made.

7.1.4 This stage may also include briefing and consultation sessions with all elected Members. For some reviews, sessions with stakeholders will also be helpful at this stage, eg for housing tenants for housing related reviews.

7.1.5 The conclusion of this stage will be the Challenge Team's approval of the work undertaken by the Service Review Team and their findings and recommendations.

7.2 Stage Seven – Prepare a Draft Report and Action Plan

7.2.1 The purpose of this stage is to prepare and present a draft report and action plan for discussion with relevant portfolio holder/s, consideration by CMT and consultation with unions. This will incorporate feedback from the Challenge Panel and others involved in Stage 6 and propose recommendations arising from the service review and the actions required to deliver these.

7.2.2 This stage covers the requirement for the draft report and action plan to:

- Demonstrate the link between the draft recommendations the Council's priorities and the agreed service review objectives;
- base conclusions or recommendations on the relevant financial and non-financial quantitative and qualitative analysis;
- Show how all the relevant costs and benefits have been taken into account;
- Give information on options considered
- Show any underlying assumptions that have been made;
- Use a style of reporting that is appropriate to both the audience and the scale/complexity of the review.

7.2.3 This stage will be undertaken by the Service Review Team.

7.2.4 Where required, the CMT can refer the Service Review Team back to Stage 5 of the Service Review Framework, for further consideration of any issues raised or suggestions made.

7.2.5 The conclusion of this stage will see the preparation and presentation of a draft report and action plan, using the agreed template within the Service Review Toolkit, with the finalised Equalities Impact Assessment attached as an appendix.

7.3 Stage Eight – Approval of Recommendations

7.3.1 The purpose of this stage is to seek Elected Member consideration and approval of the findings and recommendations arising from the service review and the actions required to deliver the findings.

7.3.2 It covers the presentation of the draft report, action plan and Equalities Impact Assessment to the relevant scrutiny panel for consideration and then to Leadership Panel for approval.

7.3.3 This stage will be undertaken by the Executive Director(s)/ Director/Head of Service of the affected service(s) in conjunction with the Service Review Lead.

7.3.4 The conclusion of this stage will be the Elected Members' approval of the work undertaken by the Service Review Team as outlined in their draft report and action plan including their findings and recommendations, and the actions required to deliver the findings, at the relevant scrutiny panel and at Leadership Panel.

8. Phase 4: Implementation and Delivery

8.1 Stage Nine – Delivery of Identified Actions

8.1.1 The purpose of this stage is to ensure effective delivery and monitoring of the approved actions arising from the service review.

8.1.2 It covers the requirement for Heads of Service to integrate approved actions arising from service reviews into their service and improvement plans; and for delivery of outcomes to be led by the Executive Director/ Director and Head of Service.

8.1.3 This stage will be undertaken by the relevant Head of Service and by the Executive Director/ Director.

8.1.4 The conclusion of this stage will be the start of implementation work and integration of approved actions into service and improvement plans and.

8.2 Stage Ten – Reporting on Progress

8.2.1 The purpose of this stage is to ensure that the performance of the service in delivering agreed actions and outcomes arising from a service review is subject to regular scrutiny by Elected Members.

8.2.2 It covers the process by which the relevant scrutiny panel will receive 6 monthly reports on the progress of delivering actions and outcomes arising from a service review through established performance reporting processes for service and improvement plans. It will allow the relevant scrutiny panel to effectively monitor delivery of outcomes arising from service reviews. The relevant scrutiny panel will be able to seek further information on progress at any point if they have concerns and to report such concerns to Leadership Panel if required.

8.2.3 This stage will be undertaken by Heads of Service and Executive Director(s)/ Director of the relevant service(s).

8.2.4 The conclusion of this stage will see effective scrutiny on the delivery of actions arising from a service review through established performance reporting processes for reporting on service and improvement plans.