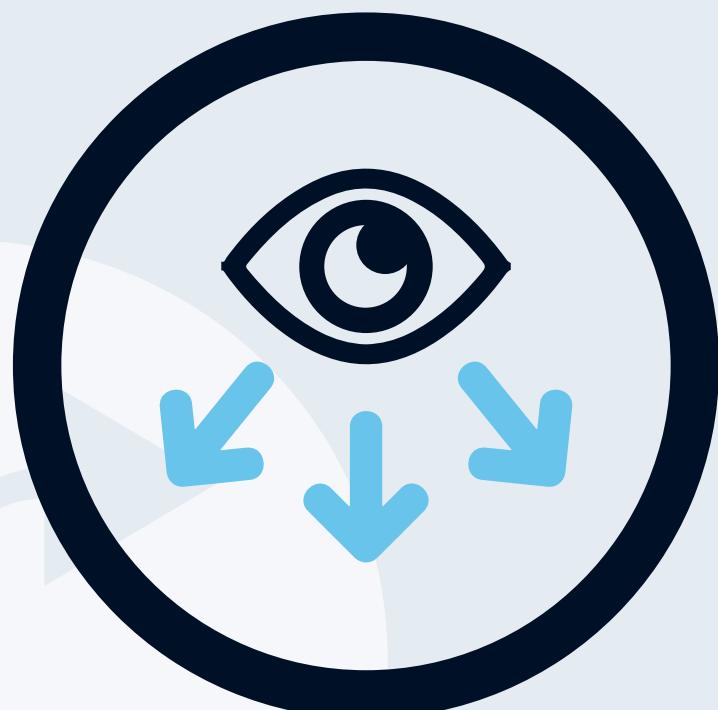




A Holistic Approach to Change with Gunn-Stewart Solutions

Whitepaper: Partner Spotlight





Introduction

Public sector organisations today are facing significant challenges: tightening budgets, rising citizen expectations, and accelerating digital transformation demands. Many seek efficiencies through technology alone, but often find themselves with systems that do not deliver the value promised.

Esther Gunn-Stewart, founder of Gunn-Stewart Solutions and long-time Engage Process partner, has developed a holistic approach to change that moves beyond “quick fixes”. Drawing on over twenty years’ experience in local government and seven years as an independent consultant, she supports councils and public bodies in creating sustainable transformation programmes grounded in evidence, and designed around people.

Her guiding principle is simple yet powerful:



“

Good services are cheaper to deliver than bad services.

”

Esther Gunn-Stewart
Director Gunn-Stewart solutions

The Holistic Approach

At the heart of Esther's methodology is the belief that transformation cannot be driven by technology alone. Change succeeds when organisations look at the bigger picture across People, Process, Technology, and Data, ensuring alignment and sharing expertise.

Key elements of her approach include:

Evidence-based change:

Using data, process mapping and service design techniques to properly define the business problems before investing in solutions.

Inclusive engagement:

Capturing perspectives from senior leadership, frontline staff, HR, finance, IT, and, where possible, customers themselves.

Value-Effort mapping:

Prioritising opportunities that balance impact with deliverability, recognising cultural readiness and resource constraints.

'Now-Next-Future' planning: Breaking large ambitions into practical steps, allowing incremental progress while building capacity for more transformative change.

This approach not only identifies savings and efficiencies, but also builds resilience and skills within organisations, helping to reduce reliance on external consultants over time.

From Discovery to Delivery

Esther's work begins with a scoping phase. Rather than assuming an organisation knows exactly what it needs, she takes time to uncover the root causes of challenges. **This involves:**



Interviews with leaders to capture vision, objectives and perceptions of past challenges.



Workshops with operational staff to surface the real picture of service delivery, often revealing gaps between strategy and frontline reality.



Cross-functional engagement involving multiple departments and even third-party contractors to understand the full system view.

By mapping existing processes in Engage Process, Esther ensures transparency, collaboration, and evidence to support decisions. Tools such as the "Stinky Fish"; the idea that, the longer you carry it around the stinkier it gets, encourages honesty and allow hidden frustrations and risks to be voiced early. This also helps to uncover potential future roadblocks, and allow you to address these fears as the project develops.

Practical, Phased Change: Now–Next–Future

One of Esther's most impactful contributions is her Now–Next–Future framework. This plays a part in the value/effort approach, allowing teams to prioritise resources and projects. Rather than overwhelming organisations with long-term transformation goals, she breaks change into manageable phases :

Now

Immediate improvements that deliver quick wins, such as streamlining customer communication or addressing failure demand . These early successes are key to winning hearts and minds and gaining buy-in for the more challenging change.

Next

Medium-term opportunities requiring additional planning, resources, or modest investment.

Future

Strategic changes aligned to long-term ambitions, often involving cultural transformation or major system procurement.

This phased approach offers both momentum and sustainability, helping organisations show early success, win stakeholder buy-in, and create space and resource for more ambitious change programmes.

People, Process, Technology, Data

Esther's recommendations are further structured into four interdependent pillars:

People

building capacity, addressing culture, and engaging staff at every level. Provide clarity on roles and responsibilities to ensure the right tasks are done by the right people at the right time.

Process

redesigning workflows, challenging whether processes are even necessary, and removing duplication.

Technology

Ensuring solutions are selected based on clearly defined business needs first, rather than trying to find problems to fit.

Data

embedding evidence-gathering into processes, ensuring decisions are grounded in facts rather than assumptions.

This model ensures that transformation programmes are comprehensive, realistic, and tailored to the organisation's maturity and readiness.

Evidence-Based Practice with Engage Process

Engage Process plays a crucial role in Esther's methodology. By enabling collaborative process mapping and capturing data behind each process step to demonstrate the impact of changes, the platform provides a clear visualisation from frontline challenges to strategic decision-making.

Furthermore, Engage Process allows organisations to:

Document continuous improvement efforts, that may otherwise be missed.

Provide quantifiable evidence of savings and benefits, and analyse the impact of changes before implementing.

Support feedback and skills transfer.

As Esther notes, this creates not just savings but confidence, clarity, and accountability within organisations.

Conclusion

In an era where public services are under immense pressure, people oftentimes by nature jump to problem-solving or quick solutions. However, in doing so they miss a critical step in fully understanding their business problems and finding solutions that adequately address them. By balancing evidence with experience, and strategy with delivery, she ensures that transformation programmes are both achievable and meaningful.

Her framework – built around People, Process, Technology and Data, phased through Now–Next–Future, and powered by Engage Process – offers organisations the tools they need to deliver better services, smarter savings, and sustainable change.



Gunn-Stewart Solutions

Gunn Stewart Solutions are a Scottish based customer service and digital transformation consultancy. They bring over 20 years' experience in leading, supporting and delivering transformation within the public and not-for-profit sectors in the UK.

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Engage Process

Engage Process offers an easy, highly effective way of mapping and analysing processes to drive improvements across your organisation. Designed to get your team involved in exploring, documenting and improving your processes, Engage Process is 100% SaaS, so you can be up and running in just one day.

Over 300 organisations globally use Engage Process on a daily basis.

These include City of Edinburgh Council, Somerset Council and the Hyde Group.

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