1.1 OVERVIEW

ITIL Service Transition provides best-practice guidance for the service transition stage of the ITIL service lifecycle. Although this publication can be
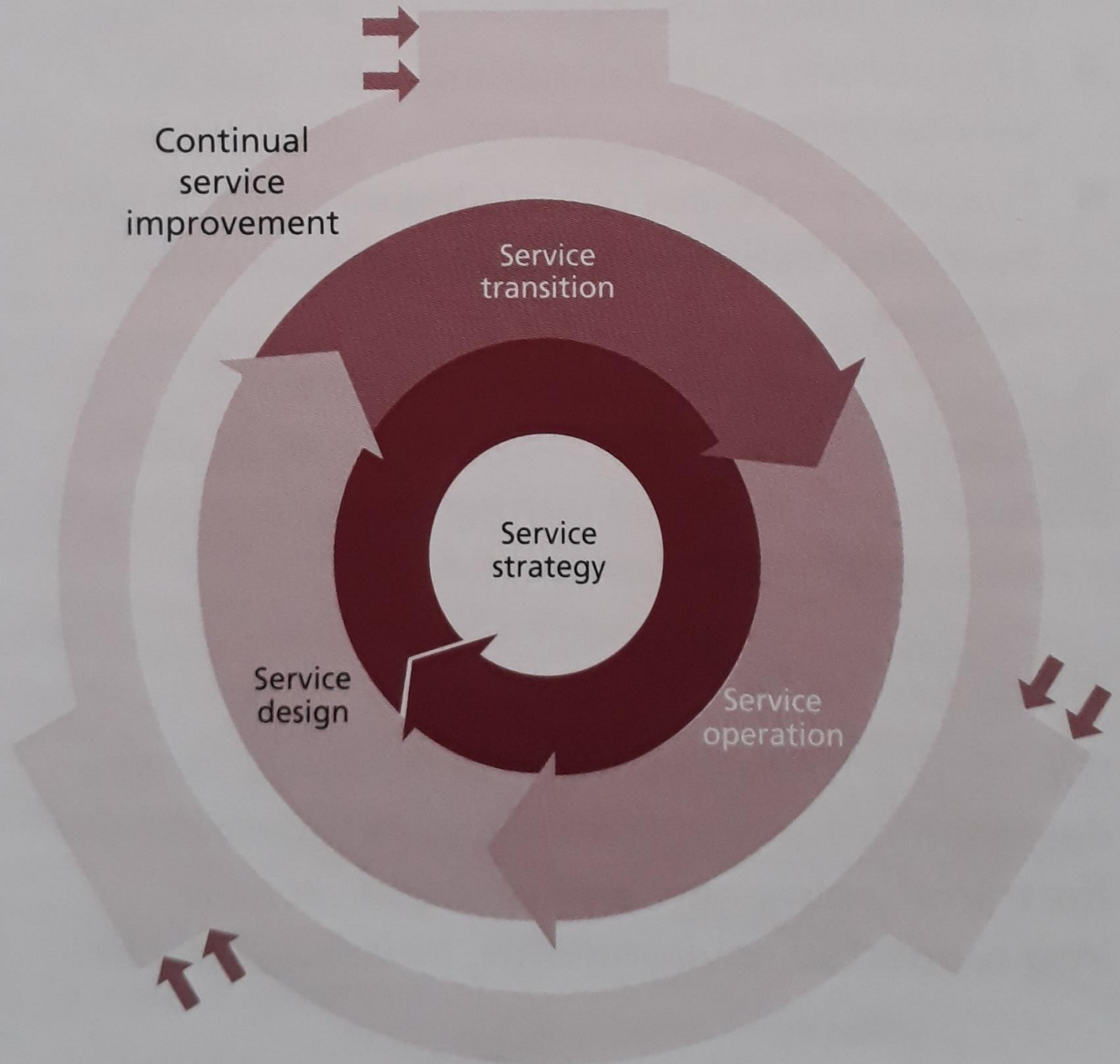

Figure 1.1 The ITIL service lifecycle

read in isolation, it is recommended that it is used in conjunction with the other core ITIL publications.

1.1.1 Purpose and objectives of service transition

The purpose of the service transition stage of the service lifecycle is to ensure that new, modified or retired services meet the expectations of the business as documented in the service strategy and service design stages of the lifecycle.

The objectives of service transition are to:

- Plan and manage service changes efficiently and effectively
- Manage risks relating to new, changed or retired services
- Successfully deploy service releases into supported environments
- Set correct expectations on the performance and use of new or changed services
- Ensure that service changes create the expected business value
- Provide good-quality knowledge and information about services and service assets.

In order to achieve these objectives, there are many things that need to happen during the service transition lifecycle stage. These include:

- Planning and managing the capacity and resources required to manage service transitions
- Implementing a rigorous framework for evaluating service capabilities and risk profiles before new or changed services are deployed
- Establishing and maintaining the integrity of service assets
- Providing efficient repeatable mechanisms for building, testing and deploying services and releases
- Ensuring that services can be managed, operated and supported in accordance with constraints specified during the service design stage of the service lifecycle.
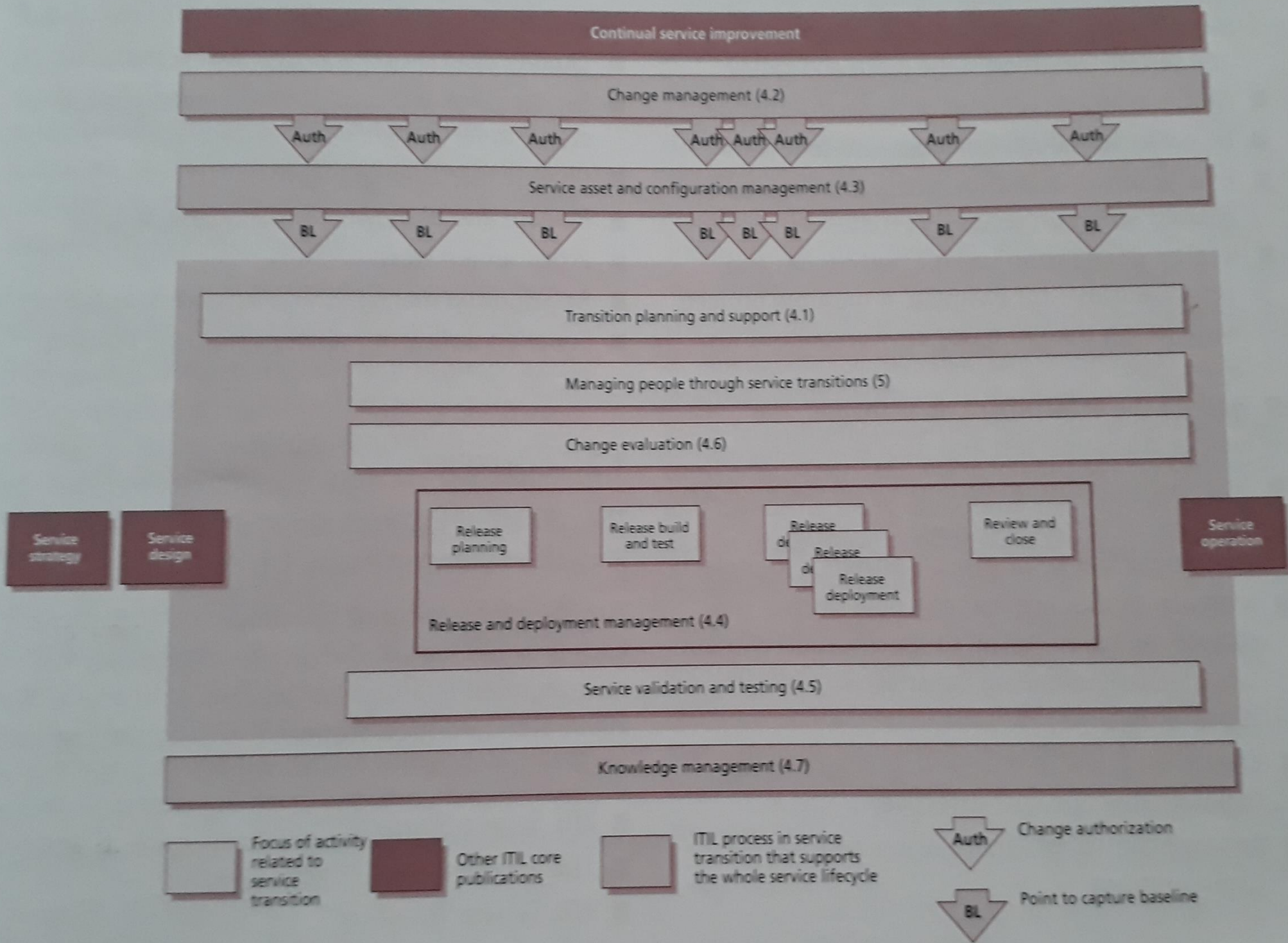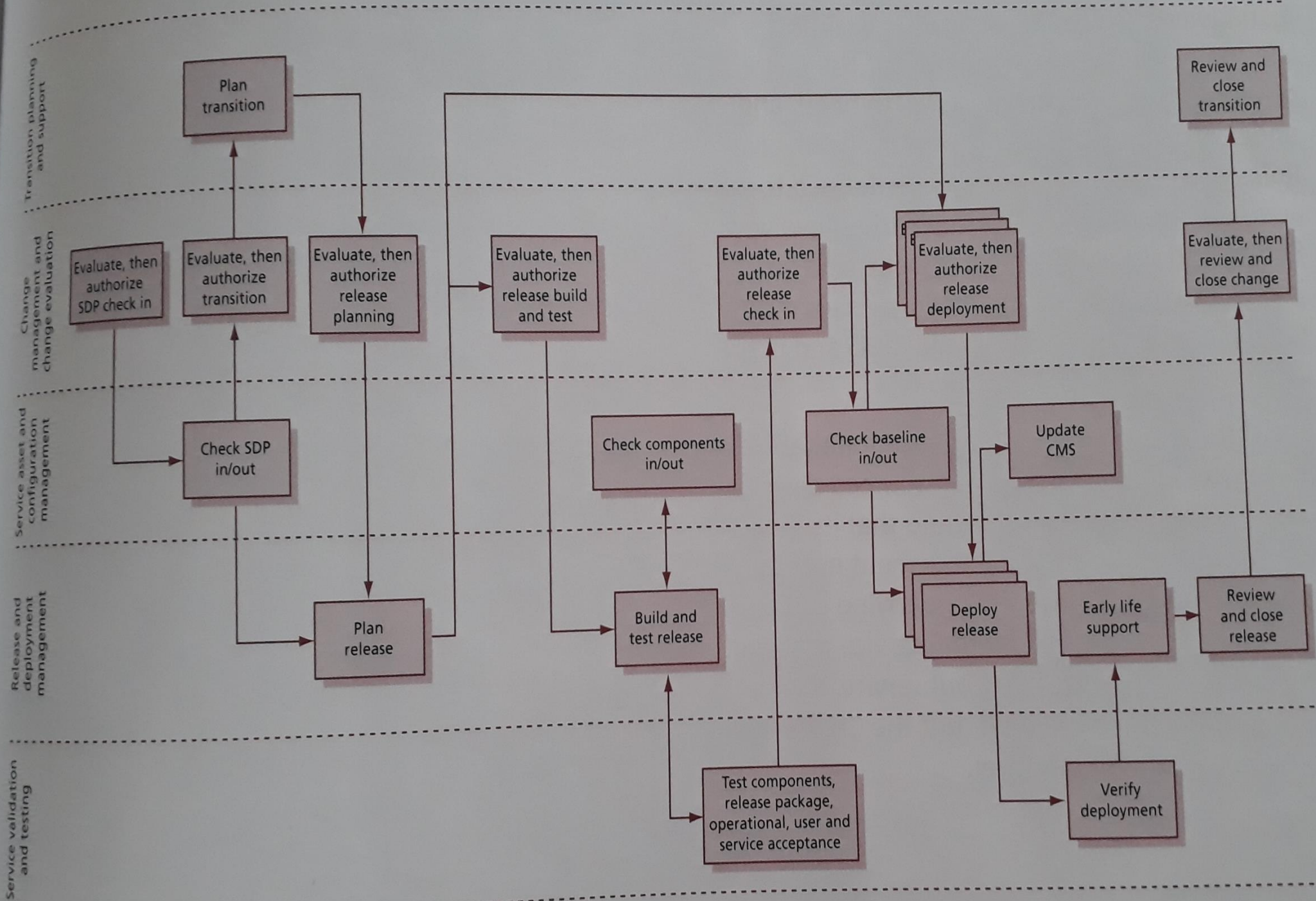
Figure 1.2 The scope of service transition

Diagram contents (top to bottom):

- Continual service improvement
- Change management (4.2)
  - Auth Auth Auth Auth Auth Auth Auth Auth
- Service asset and configuration management (4.3)
  - BL BL BL BL BL BL BL BL
- Transition planning and support (4.1)
- Managing people through service transitions (5)
- Change evaluation (4.6)
- Release and deployment management (4.4)
  - Release planning
  - Release build and test
  - Release deployment
  - Release deployment
  - Review and close
- Service validation and testing (4.5)
- Knowledge management (4.7)

Left side: Service strategy, Service design
Right side: Service operation

Legend:
- Focus of activity related to service transition
- Other ITIL core publications
- ITIL process in service transition that supports the whole service lifecycle
- Auth — Change authorization
- BL — Point to capture baseline

Figure 8.2 An example of a path through the processes that might be required for a single service transition

4 Service transition processes

This chapter sets out the processes and activities on which effective service transition depends. These comprise both lifecycle processes and those almost wholly contained within service transition. Each is described in detail, setting out the key elements of that process or activity.

The processes and activities and their relationships are set out in Figure 1.2 and the topics specifically addressed in this chapter are:

- Transition planning and support
- Change management
- Service asset and configuration management
- Release and deployment management
- Service validation and testing
- Change evaluation
- Knowledge management.

Some of these processes are used throughout the service lifecycle, but they are addressed in this publication since they are central to effective service transition.

The other processes and activities are mostly contained within the service transition stage of the lifecycle, but are also made use of in other stages; for example, change evaluation of the service design, and performance testing within service operation.

The purpose and scope of service transition as a whole are set out in section 1.1.

Figure 8.2 gives an example of how the many processes involved in service transition might interact.

Note that this chapter does not cover strategic planning for business transformation or organizational change, although the interfaces to these processes do need to be managed. Guidance on organizational change is addressed in Chapter 5. Business transformation is the subject of many publications aimed at the general business manager.

4.1 TRANSITION PLANNING AND SUPPORT

4.1.1 Purpose and objectives

The purpose of the transition planning and support process is to provide overall planning for service transitions and to coordinate the resources that they require.

The objectives of transition planning and support are to:

- Plan and coordinate the resources to ensure that the requirements of service strategy encoded in service design are effectively realized in service operation.
- Coordinate activities across projects, suppliers and service teams where required.
- Establish new or changed services into supported environments within the predicted cost, quality and time estimates.
- Establish new or modified management information systems and tools, technology and management architectures, service management processes, and measurement methods and metrics to meet requirements established during the service design stage of the lifecycle.
- Ensure that all parties adopt the common framework of standard re-usable processes and supporting systems in order to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the integrated planning and coordination activities.
- Provide clear and comprehensive plans that enable customer and business change projects to align their activities with the service transition plans.
- Identify, manage and control risks, to minimize the chance of failure and disruption across transition activities; and ensure that service transition issues, risks and deviations are reported to the appropriate stakeholders and decision makers.
- Monitor and improve the performance of the service transition lifecycle stage.

4.2 CHANGE MANAGEMENT

Changes are made for a variety of reasons and in different ways – for example:

- Proactively, e.g. when organizations are seeking business benefits such as reduction in costs, improved services or increased ease and effectiveness of support
- Reactively as a means of resolving errors and adapting to changing circumstances.

Changes should be managed in order to:

- Optimize risk exposure (supporting the risk profile required by the business)
- Minimize the severity of any impact and disruption
- Achieve success at the first attempt
- Ensure that all stakeholders receive appropriate and timely communication about the change so that they are aware and ready to adopt and support the change.

Such an approach will improve the bottom line for the business by delivering early realization of benefits (or removal of risk) while saving money and time.

An appropriate response to all requests for change entails a considered approach to assessment of risk and business continuity, change impact, resource requirements, change authorization and especially to the realizable business benefit. Risk assessment should consider the risk of not implementing the change as well as any risks that the change might introduce. This considered approach is essential to maintain the required balance between the need for change and the impact of that change.

This section provides information on the change management process and provides guidance that is scalable for:

- Different kinds and sizes of organization
- Small and large changes required at each lifecycle stage
- Changes with major or minor impact
- Changes in a required time frame
- Different levels of budget or funding available to deliver change.

4.2.1 Purpose and objectives

The purpose of the change management process is to control the lifecycle of all changes, enabling beneficial changes to be made with minimum disruption to IT services.

The objectives of change management are to:

- Respond to the customer's changing business requirements while maximizing value and reducing incidents, disruption and re-work.
- Respond to the business and IT requests for change that will align the services with the business needs.
- Ensure that changes are recorded and evaluated, and that authorized changes are prioritized, planned, tested, implemented, documented and reviewed in a controlled manner.
- Ensure that all changes to configuration items are recorded in the configuration management system.
- Optimize overall business risk – it is often correct to minimize business risk, but sometimes it is appropriate to knowingly accept a risk because of the potential benefit.

4.3 SERVICE ASSET AND CONFIGURATION MANAGEMENT

This section addresses the process of service asset and configuration management (SACM) within IT service management. No organization can be fully efficient or effective unless it manages its assets well, particularly those assets that are vital to the running of the customer's or organization's business.

4.3.1 Purpose and objectives

The purpose of the SACM process is to ensure that the assets required to deliver services are properly controlled, and that accurate and reliable information about those assets is available when and where it is needed. This information includes details of how the assets have been configured and the relationships between assets.

The objectives of SACM are to:

■ Ensure that assets under the control of the IT organization are identified, controlled and properly cared for throughout their lifecycle.

■ Identify, control, record, report, audit and verify services and other configuration items (CIs), including versions, baselines, constituent components, their attributes and relationships.

■ Account for, manage and protect the integrity of CIs through the service lifecycle by working with change management to ensure that only authorized components are used and only authorized changes are made.

■ Ensure the integrity of CIs and configurations required to control the services by establishing and maintaining an accurate and complete configuration management system (CMS).

■ Maintain accurate configuration information on the historical, planned and current state of services and other CIs.

■ Support efficient and effective service management processes by providing accurate configuration information to enable people to make decisions at the right time – for example, to authorize changes and releases, or to resolve incidents and problems.

4.4 RELEASE AND DEPLOYMENT MANAGEMENT

4.4.1 Purpose and objectives

The purpose of the release and deployment management process is to plan, schedule and control the build, test and deployment of releases, and to deliver new functionality required by the business while protecting the integrity of existing services.

The objectives of release and deployment management are to:

■ Define and agree release and deployment management plans with customers and stakeholders

■ Create and test release packages that consist of related configuration items that are compatible with each other

■ Ensure that the integrity of a release package and its constituent components is maintained throughout the transition activities, and that all release packages are stored in a DML and recorded accurately in the CMS

■ Deploy release packages from the DML to the live environment following an agreed plan and schedule

■ Ensure that all release packages can be tracked, installed, tested, verified and/or uninstalled or backed out if appropriate

■ Ensure that organization and stakeholder change is managed during release and deployment activities (see Chapter 5)

■ Ensure that a new or changed service and its enabling systems, technology and organization are capable of delivering the agreed utility and warranty

■ Record and manage deviations, risks and issues related to the new or changed service and take necessary corrective action

■ Ensure that there is knowledge transfer to enable the customers and users to optimize their use of the service to support their business activities

■ Ensure that skills and knowledge are transferred to service operation functions to enable them to effectively and efficiently deliver, support and maintain the service according to required warranties and service levels.

4.5 SERVICE VALIDATION AND TESTING

The underlying concept to which service validation and testing contributes is quality assurance – establishing that the service design and release will deliver a new or changed service or service offering that is fit for purpose and fit for use. Testing is a vital area within service management and has often been the unseen underlying cause of what was taken to be inefficient service management processes. If services are not tested sufficiently, their introduction into the live environment will bring a rise in:

- Incidents, since failures in service elements and mismatches between what was wanted and what was delivered impact on business support
- Service desk calls for clarification, since services that are not functioning as intended are inherently less intuitive, causing a higher support requirement
- Problems and errors that are harder to diagnose in the live environment
- Costs, since errors are more expensive to fix in the live environment than if found in testing
- Services that are not used effectively by the users to deliver the desired value.

4.5.1 Purpose and objectives

The purpose of the service validation and testing process is to ensure that a new or changed IT service matches its design specification and will meet the needs of the business.

The objectives of service validation and testing are to:

- Provide confidence that a release will create a new or changed service that delivers the expected outcomes and value for the customers within the projected costs, capacity and constraints
- Quality assure a release, its constituent service components, the resultant service and service capability delivered by a release
- Validate that a service is 'fit for purpose' – it will deliver the required utility
- Provide assurance that a service is 'fit for use' – it will deliver the agreed warranty
- Confirm that the customer and stakeholder requirements for the new or changed service are correctly defined and remedy any errors or variances early in the service lifecycle as this is considerably cheaper than fixing errors in the live environment
- Plan and implement a structured validation and testing process that provides objective evidence that the new or changed service will support the customer's business and stakeholder requirements, including the agreed service levels
- Identify, assess and address issues, errors and risks throughout service transition.

4.6 CHANGE EVALUATION

4.6.1 Purpose and objectives

The purpose of the change evaluation process is to provide a consistent and standardized means of determining the performance of a service change in the context of likely impacts on business outcomes, and on existing and proposed services and IT infrastructure. The actual performance of a change is assessed against its predicted performance. Risks and issues related to the change are identified and managed.

The objectives of change evaluation are to:

- Set stakeholder expectations correctly and provide effective and accurate information to change management to make sure that changes which adversely affect service capability and introduce risk are not transitioned unchecked
- Evaluate the intended effects of a service change and as much of the unintended effects as is reasonably practical given capacity, resource and organizational constraints
- Provide good-quality outputs so that change management can expedite an effective decision about whether or not a service change is to be authorized.

4.7 KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT

The ability to deliver a quality service or process rests to a significant extent on the ability of those involved to respond to circumstances – and that in turn rests heavily on their understanding of the situation, the options and the consequences and benefits, i.e. their knowledge of the situation in which they are currently, or in which they may find themselves. That knowledge within the service transition domain might include:

- Identity of stakeholders
- Acceptable risk levels and performance expectations
- Available resource and timescales.

The quality and relevance of the knowledge rests in turn on the accessibility, quality and continued relevance of the underpinning data and information available to service staff.

4.7.1 Purpose and objectives

The purpose of the knowledge management process is to share perspectives, ideas, experience and information; to ensure that these are available in the right place at the right time to enable informed decisions; and to improve efficiency by reducing the need to rediscover knowledge.

The objectives of knowledge management are to:

- Improve the quality of management decision-making by ensuring that reliable and secure knowledge, information and data is available throughout the service lifecycle
- Enable the service provider to be more efficient and improve quality of service, increase satisfaction and reduce the cost of service by reducing the need to rediscover knowledge
- Ensure that staff have a clear and common understanding of the value that their services provide to customers and the ways in which benefits are realized from the use of those services
- Maintain a service knowledge management system (SKMS) that provides controlled access to knowledge, information and data that is appropriate for each audience
- Gather, analyse, store, share, use and maintain knowledge, information and data throughout the service provider organization.

8.2 AN INTEGRATED APPROACH TO SERVICE TRANSITION PROCESSES

The processes involved in the service transition stage of the service lifecycle are not independent of each other. The relationships between them are complex and it is not possible to design and implement them separately.

Figure 8.2 shows an example of the steps that might be required for a single service transition. This is a greatly simplified flowchart, showing major steps only. Each service provider will need to plan and design service management processes based on a full understanding of how they will fit together to support the overall goals of the organization.

An integrated plan for introduction or improvement of service transition processes should be based on an understanding of how the processes fit together; the roles and responsibilities of all the people involved; and matching the inputs, outputs and triggers of each process step with the corresponding steps in other processes.

This integrated plan should result in an integrated set of processes, with:

- A clear understanding of how the processes will work together in practice for different types of transition
- Each required input being the output of another process step
- Each activity having roles that are accountable and responsible, and people that fill those roles
- An integrated set of critical success factors (CSFs), key performance indicators (KPIs) and metrics that support the objectives of the organization
- An integrated improvement plan to ensure that planned changes to each process will work correctly with planned changes to other processes.