



West Lothian
Council

WEST LOTHIAN COUNCIL RECORDS MANAGEMENT POLICY

Data Label: Public





RECORDS MANAGEMENT POLICY

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1. POLICY STATEMENT

The records of West Lothian Council constitute an auditable account of the authority's activities, which provides evidence of the business, actions, decisions and resulting policies formed by the council.

Records represent a vital asset, which support the daily functions of the council and protect the interests and rights of staff, and members of the public, who have dealings with the council. Effective record keeping supports efficiency, consistency and continuity of work and enables the council to deliver a wide range of sustainable services. It ensures that the correct information is: captured, stored, maintained, retrieved and destroyed or preserved in accordance with business need, statutory and legislative requirements.

Records management is an essential part of enabling the council to achieve priority outcomes that reflect what is most important to the people and communities of West Lothian as set out in the council's Corporate Plan 2013-2017. West Lothian Council will maintain records management policy, procedures and practices across all its service areas. These will be based upon the requirements of the Public Records (Scotland) Act 2011, records management best practice and the principles detailed below.

2. PRINCIPLES

The following principles will drive activities relating to records management:

- Records are a **valuable resource** and must be managed as such;
- Records are maintained in accordance with **legislation**;
- Records are stored within **record keeping systems**, rather than in personal filing;
- Records are **shared** and **not duplicated**;
- Records are stored in a **consistent** manner that reflects council functions;
- Records are appropriately **secured**;
- Records are easily **accessible** for as long as they are required;
- Records that are identified as **vital** are **protected**;
- Records that are identified as of **historical significance** are **preserved**;
- Records are **disposed of** in accordance with approved Records Retention Schedules;
- Records management procedures are understood by all staff and staff are appropriately **trained**;
- Records are created, stored and managed **electronically** within the corporate EDRMs unless specifically required in paper format;
- Records management is a **responsibility** of all staff;
- Records management practices **adhere to corporate policy, procedures and standards**;
- Records keeping systems are compliant with the requirements to **manage records throughout their lifecycle**;

- Records management practices will **support the council values** of being honest, open, and accountable and making the best use of resources.

Definitions

Record: A record is recorded information, in any form, including data in systems, created, received and maintained by the council and kept as evidence of such activity.

Format: A record can be in any format including (but not limited to): paper files, email, audio/visual, electronic documents, systems data, databases, digital images and photographs.

Records Management: The control of the council records during their lifetime, from creation to storage and retention until eventual archival or destruction.

Vital records: Records without which an organisation would be unable to function, or to prove that a key activity has taken place.

Record Keeping Systems: System or procedure by which the records of the council are created, captured, secured, maintained and disposed of.

EDRMs – The corporate Electronic Documents and Records Management System is the authority's primary record keeping system.

3. OBJECTIVES

The key objectives of this policy are to establish:

- awareness of records management principles and individual responsibilities within the council;
- a common and consistent approach to Records Management throughout all service areas;
- compliance with legislation relating to records management e.g. Public Records (Scotland) Act 2011, The Data Protection Act 1998, Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002;
- corporate and service based standards for records keeping;
- a defined and clear governance structure for monitoring and reporting on records management.

4. SCOPE

This policy applies to all aspects of Council operations including:

- All West Lothian Council staff and those performing a function on behalf of the council;
- All records of West Lothian Council created, received and maintained by Council employees, partners and third parties in the course of council business;

- Records of all types regardless of the medium;
- Business information systems used to create, store, maintain and archive or dispose of records.

5. OWNERSHIP & RESPONSIBILITIES

West Lothian Council is the only true and official owner of the records produced and/or received in the course of business. All processes and procedures relating to records must adhere to and support this policy.

Heads of Service – accepts overall responsibility for ensuring records management principles are implemented and adopted by all staff, and associated third parties, across all record keeping systems. They are also responsible for approving changes to the Records Retention Schedules relating to the business functions and activities within their service areas.

Service Managers – ensure that employees understand their responsibilities for record keeping, are appropriately trained in managing records and implement the procedures for maintaining records in accordance with this policy and associated guidance. In addition, they are also responsible for ensuring that record keeping procedures within their service areas comply with this policy and corporate records management standards and guidance.

Elected Members – acting in their capacity as members of the council, are subject to the same corporate responsibilities as employees for the management of records.

Records Manager – creating, maintaining and implementing records management standards, procedures and guidance. In addition, the Records Manager will provide support to service areas on the development of corporate and local records management practice.

Information Strategy and Security Manager – responsible for development, maintenance and communication of this policy.

Records Keeping Systems Owner (electronic and paper) – ensuring that all records keeping systems adhere to records keeping principles and are managed and maintained in accordance with this policy and associated guidance.

Systems Administrator – ensure appropriate procedures for managing records keeping systems are designed, implemented and are auditable.

Information Liaison Officers – consists of nominated representatives from each service to assist with Records Management and the Archives Services in promoting and coordinating records management practices throughout the Council. They are also responsible for developing the Records Retention Schedules relating to the business functions and activities within their service areas.

Local Records Officers – implement and manage local file plans and aid in the development of local records management guidance. Support the roll out

of records management procedures and provide local records management support to their assigned service areas.

All West Lothian Council Employees - have a responsibility to ensure they create, manage and dispose of records in accordance with relevant policies and procedures. All West Lothian Council employees must follow this policy and associated guidelines and procedures for records management.

All council staff and third parties responsible for projects must ensure records management requirements are addressed during the planning, design and implementation of records management systems and must consider this policy and associated procedures at decision making stages.

Third Parties - This policy and the associated guidance and procedures must be adhered to by all third parties, contractors, volunteers and not for profit organisations performing a function on behalf of the Council.

6. LEGISLATIVE AND STANDARDS FRAMEWORK

This policy and the associated records management guidance have been developed within the context of national legislation, professional standards and codes of practice. As far as is practical, this policy will address the records management principles defined within:

Legislation:

- Public Records (Scotland) Act 2011;
- The Data Protection Act 1998;
- Local Government (Scotland) Act 1994;
- Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002;
- Environmental Information (Scotland) Regulations 2004;
- Inspire (Scotland) Regulations 2009;
- Re-use of Public Sector information Regulations 2005.

Standards and Codes of Practice:

- BS ISO 15489 - Information and documentation. Records management. *Assures that policies and procedures are in place.*
- BIP 0025 - Effective Records Management. *For introducing best practice; quality initiatives; legal and regulatory compliance in the management of records.*
- BS 10008:2008 – Evidential weight and legal admissibility of electronic information. *Where significant amounts of an organisation's information is in electronic format this standard is relevant.*
- Code of Practice on Records Management issued under section 61 of the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002.

7. MONITORING & REPORTING

Monitoring activities will be carried out by Services on an annual basis. Compliance must be monitored as part of the statement of compliance of the Council within its Code of Corporate Governance. Where non-compliance to this policy is discovered suitable remedial and long term actions will be implemented to ensure resolution.

Significant changes to Records Management will be reported via Council programme and project management procedures. Progress and status, at an enterprise level, will be reported to the Corporate Management Team on an annual basis.

Review of operational activities and records management projects will be conducted through the Information Management Working Group and ICT Programme Board.

8. RELATED POLICIES

West Lothian Council Data Protection Policy
West Lothian Council Information Security Policy
West Lothian Council Archives and Records Management Policy
West Lothian Council Freedom of Information Guidance

9. REVIEW

Date of Last Review: May 2015
Date of Next Review: September 2016