

# West Lothian Civic Centre

## Shared Open Plan Working Protocol

### Introduction

The Civic Centre accommodates in excess of 1,000 people from seven public service organisations. Opened in 2009, the new state-of-the-art building is the new headquarters for West Lothian Council and divisional headquarters for Lothian & Borders Police. It is also the new home for Livingston Police Station and West Lothian's Sheriff Court, Justice of the Peace Court and High Court and accommodates: the district Procurator Fiscal; the regional Children's Reporter; some NHS Practitioners; and Lothian & Borders Fire and Rescue Management Team.

### Our Joint Vision

The Civic Centre is however an enabler – allowing the Partners to develop what are already excellent public services in West Lothian. The fundamental objective of the Partnership is to focus on integrated service outcomes and join-up public services by working together and sharing information at the Civic Centre.

### Purpose of this Protocol

**For many of you, the Civic Centre will provide your first experience of partnership working. Whether it is other colleagues or Partners joining you at the Civic Centre, the purpose of this protocol is to:**

- Provide a sensible framework to allow colleagues and Partners to work together in the Civic Centre;
- Raise awareness and promote best practice where working in secure and open plan environments; and
- Set pragmatic standards for everyone working in the Civic Centre.

It is not however, the purpose of this protocol to replace any existing policy which your organisation may already have which governs open plan working.

### Layout & Appearance

The design of the Civic Centre provides for the easy re-allocation of workspaces to other teams and colleagues as needed. In the interests of health & safety and to maintain a 'corporate look', furniture should not be moved without prior agreement with your line manager.

To preserve the appearance of the building, the placing of artwork and posters on walls will be co-ordinated through line management and the Civic Centre facility management team.

**Good practice: Consult before moving furniture within the Civic Centre.**

### Energy Efficiency

The Civic Centre has been designed to make maximum use of natural ventilation and thereby minimise energy consumption and CO2 emissions. This means colleagues will encounter air movement and temperature variations between floors and across floors which is part of the natural ventilation process.

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## Security Arrangements

While working at the Civic Centre, it is important that you are vigilant at all times. You have a responsibility to familiarise yourself with the security protocol and all security systems operating within the Civic Centre. Security procedures must be followed closely, with concerns reported to your line manager or security manager as a matter of priority.

**Good practice:** You must wear your Identity card at all times when in the building and it should be clearly visible. When you are out of the building you should take steps to conceal your ID card and keep it secure at all times. Make arrangements for your visitor(s) to be collected from reception and escorted back there following meetings. Visitors should not be left unattended.

If you require to work at the Civic Centre (Non L&BP Areas) after 9.30pm, before 7.00am or at weekends (or public holidays) then normal access routes are not available and your team leader should make contact with the Building Manager to ensure alternative arrangements can be put in place.

## Privacy & Confidentiality

When you are away from your desk, it is important that you ensure any confidential information is protected and where appropriate, locked away. You must always 'log out' of your computer before leaving your desk, this is particularly important where working with confidential material.

It is important that you respect the privacy of colleagues working within the Civic Centre. Televisions, radios or any audio equipment are not permitted to be used within the open plan offices. Music and other recorded sound should not be played on computers. Where sound is required for a specific work task or training headphones should be used.

**Good practice:** While we encourage people to meet and share information, please respect the privacy of others and avoid having noisy conversations within the open plan offices. Whenever possible, please use the break-out areas and meeting rooms for prolonged discussions. This will help to avoid interrupting colleagues and ensure that confidentiality is maintained.

## Meeting Rooms

Meeting rooms are available within the Civic Centre and a booking system is in place to ensure rooms are allocated effectively.

**Good practice:** As suggested above, please use the break-out areas and meeting rooms for prolonged informal discussions. If you order food or drink for a meeting, it is important that you clear up any crockery and food waste immediately following the meeting, and where appropriate put the trolley outside the room so it can be easily and quickly removed by catering staff. Meetings rooms should always be left in a tidy condition.

## Tidy Desk Policy

Whether you are working in the open plan offices or secure area, you will appreciate our collective responsibility to maintain a tidy working environment. With our added responsibility to maintain the appropriate levels of security and minimise the opportunity for fire, the Civic Centre operates a tidy desk policy.

**Good practice:** At the end of each working day, all files and correspondence should be filed / stored in lockable cabinets. Depending upon the level of security afforded to the file(s) in question, this may be filed in the lockable boxes at your workstation or designated storage facilities. This is particularly important if you are sharing a desk. Files and boxes should not be left on the floor or on top of filing cabinets. In the interests of cleaning, all floors should be kept free from obstruction. Other than desktop computers, items left at workstations should be kept to an absolute minimum.

## Use of Telephones

Noisy telephone conversations can be very distracting for colleagues working nearby and should be avoided. Ring tones on landlines and mobiles should be kept as low as possible. If you use the telephone frequently, you may want to consider using a headset to avoid interrupting others. If you use a mobile telephone while walking around the office, please respect the privacy of others working nearby.

**Good practice:** When not at your desk, staff should divert telephone calls to your voicemail, mobile telephone or colleague who has agreed to answer your calls. Those who share a desk should routinely 'log-on' to their telephone and computer at the same time.

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## Catering Arrangements

Vending machines are available at designated areas within the Civic Centre for your use throughout the working day. Food preparation facilities are also available. Take a break from your desk, heat your food within the preparation facilities and meet with colleagues in the break-out areas.

From time to time, it may be necessary for you to eat at your desk. If you do, we ask that you respect those working within your surrounds and avoid eating food having strong smells. Any food waste must be disposed of in the appropriate waste bins immediately after eating.

Good practice: Use the food preparation and break-out areas as much as possible. Fridges are available for the storage of your food and milk. These should be kept clean and tidy and cleared out on a regular basis.

Since these facilities are shared between users from different service areas, in order to ensure they are used with consideration for all the following good practice must be observed.

### Microwave use

- Please ensure foods are covered with appropriate 'splash protection' lid or alternatively cover with paper towel.
- If foods do splash or spill ensure you thoroughly clean the surfaces including the base and under plate section. (The microwave will be adversely affected unless maintained in a clean condition).

### Fridge

- Spillages must be cleaned up immediately; this will prevent growth of bacteria and unpleasant smells.
- Check for out of date foods and ensure you dispose of them as appropriate.
- As space is limited do not store bags of groceries on the shelves.

### Sinks and Drainer area

- Wipe down surfaces after use to remove drips and spillages.
- Ensure this is no food debris in sink drainer outlet
- Wash all crockery/cutlery as soon as possible and remove to your storage cupboard. Note: Items left lying in sinks / drainer or worktop for lengthy periods of time are liable to be disposed off.

### Floor

All spillages must be cleaned up immediately, use paper towels for liquids. If the surface is contaminated and you cannot clean it up and, it is likely to present a slip hazard then you must inform the caretaker who will arrange for the floor to be cleaned.

### Appliances

If you are concerned as to the safety of any of the appliances or other perceived 'hazards' or defects then you must report these using your Move Champion and he or she will record the fault using the following enquiry form <http://webwest1.app.westlothian.gov.uk/PropertyServices/enquiryForm/inputHD.asp> on the intranet or contact your line manager.

## Dress Code

While working within the Civic Centre you should continue to apply the standards of dress code as stipulated by your employer. However, please be aware that within the open plan offices you are visible to colleagues and visitors and therefore are encouraged to dress smartly.

## Review of This Protocol

Nothing in the Protocol will prohibit the regular review of its content or actions required to be taken by the Partners.

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