

Data Label: PUBLIC

# West Lothian Council

## Information

## Strategy 2013/17



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West Lothian  
Council

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# 1 Overview

## 1.1 Foreword

The West Lothian Council Information Strategy introduces a unified approach and purpose for managing information across the council over the next 4 years.

This strategy focuses on Information Management as an enabler for improving efficiency across the Council, reducing information risk, achieving greater compliance with legislation and helping service areas and delivery partners in Delivering Better Outcomes as set out in the council's Corporate Plan 2013/17.

It sets out what must be done to ensure the council can make best use of its information into the future – helping us to develop the culture, tools and capability to manage information effectively. It recognises that the information we create is an important corporate resource and also that we are entrusted with citizen data that brings with it inherent responsibilities and sets out the council's commitment in managing citizen's information.

The strategy addresses our need to share good quality information across services within the council, with partners, agencies and the wider public sector in order to deliver reliable, joined up services. However, it also recognises the need to ensure that any risks around using and sharing our information are assessed effectively and that we achieve the appropriate balance between protecting and sharing our information.

In the immediate future this activity will take place in an increasingly challenging financial environment where there will be more demands on us to achieve greater value for money from our information capability.



**Councillor  
John McGinty  
Leader of the  
Council**



**Graham Hope  
Chief Executive**

## 1.2 Context

Information comes in many forms – policy documents, case files, reports, minutes, operational data and personal data – and is held in a variety of printed and electronic formats. Across the council we use this information in our daily working lives as we work to achieve our own objectives and those of the council – be it when delivering services, formulating policy, managing budgets, holding meetings, teaching pupils or managing staff.

To maximise the potential benefit from our information we need to manage it effectively, re-use it where we can, share it appropriately and ensure that it is adequately protected.

Throughout the public sector, information sharing and cross agency working creates further opportunity to streamline services and drive operational efficiencies. Good information management practices will best place the council to engage in collaborative working and take advantage of potential efficiencies.

Developments in technology offer both opportunities and challenges for the council. For example, the growth in social media and mobile technologies present new efficient ways of interacting with customers. However, in working beyond the traditional boundaries of the council's computer network, it is vital that we understand and manage the risks to the information in our care.

In addition, there is now more external scrutiny of how councils manage their information and a move towards greater openness and transparency around the information that we hold. For example, the Data Protection Act 1998 and Public Records (Scotland) Act 2011 requires that the council has more controls in place when managing information whilst the Freedom of Information Scotland Act 2002 requires us to be more transparent and proactive in ensuring access to our information.

## 1.3 Strategy Development

This strategy has been developed in conjunction with key stakeholders including national Records of Scotland, National Archives, Scottish Information Commissioner, Office of the Scottish Information Commissioner, Corporate Managers, Heads of Service, Service Managers, Information Liaison Officers and Systems Administrators. It aligns with the council's Corporate Plan (2013-2017) and supporting strategies.

## 1.4 Ownership and Scope of the Strategy

All employees of the Council need information every day in order to do their jobs - the Council cannot function or meet its objectives without it. This strategy isn't just for those working in "information roles": it is for all Council staff – for every role, every grade, in every part of the Council. It outlines what 'we' as the Council need to do to manage our information better.

It is vital to this strategy that all service areas adopt the principles of information management in all operational activities, decision making processes and internal/external exchanges of information.

The strategy relates to all council information, in all its forms e.g. paper records, electronic mail, databases, drawings, teaching materials, IT systems, web pages, audio and video recordings, social media and archives.

Specific responsibilities are listed below:

**Information Asset Owner** - is the Head of Service who is responsible for ensuring that the Information Management principles are implemented and adopted by staff and for the assets within their service. They are also owners of the Information Management Risks and for ensuring that the risks are managed in accordance with council policy.

**System Owner** - is the service manager who is the custodian of the information asset and is responsible for ensuring staff training and awareness of this strategy and that the systems under their management adhere to the aims and objectives of the strategy.

**Project Management Staff** – are responsible for ensuring that Information Management criteria are adhered to in the specification, implementation and development of Information systems. They are also responsible for identifying and logging and managing information risks associated with projects and the systems involved.

**Information Strategy and Security Manager** – is responsible for the implementation, communication and reporting on the progress of this strategy

**Records Manager** – is responsible for creating, developing and implementing standards relating to records management

**Systems Administrators** – are responsible for ensuring that the information contained in systems adheres to council standards including the quality and the security of information.

**Information Liaison Officers** – are responsible for communicating and developing Information Management within their services and representing their service on the Information Management Working Group.

**Local Records Officers** – are responsible for developing file plans and promoting best practice in Information Management

**All Staff** – are responsible for recording information in the appropriate format; to adhere to data standards; to label and handle information appropriately and share information in accordance with agreed procedures. This includes contract and voluntary staff.

**Partner Organisations, Suppliers and other 3rd Parties** – are responsible for adhering to agreed standards when accessing, handling and processing council information.

## Governance

Governance over Information Management is built in to normal council processes e.g. line management, service management and project management. Formal governance over this strategy is set out in the table below.

Governance		
Group	Governance/Scrutiny Role	Reporting Frequency
Information Management Working Group	Developing and implementing policies and procedures relating to the strategy and monitoring/reporting progress across service areas	Quarterly
ICT Programme Board	Reviewing and implementing policies, procedures and standards. Monitoring projects relating to this strategy	Quarterly
Modernisation Board	Monitor s this strategy	Annual
Partnership and Resources Policy Development and Scrutiny Panel	Scrutinise and review strategies, policies and progress	Annual
Council Executive	Approve strategies and policies	Annual

## 2 Council Priorities

The council has set 8 priorities in the current Corporate Plan (2013/17) in consultation with the local community, partners, stakeholders and our staff. These priorities, along with the 3 enablers themes, represent all the vital activities that the council will undertake in order to achieve better outcomes for West Lothian.

The information strategy contributes to the Corporate Plan by supporting all council priorities and by directly contributing to the identified enablers of:

- Delivering corporate governance and risk strategy outcomes by “Ensuring that effective policies and procedures are implemented to secure and manage information and that compliance is monitored across the council” Corporate Plan (2013/17) p27
- Modernisation and improvement strategy outcomes by supporting “Secure and confidential sharing of information between professionals both within the council and with partner organisations”. Corporate Plan (2013/17) p28

Figure 1 illustrates where the Information Strategy will directly contribute to a council priority or enabler.

The Information Strategy provides a framework for the management and handling of information that will be created, obtained, used and shared in delivering the council’s priority outcomes. As council services are information dependant, the strategy is also a vital component of the enablers that underpin these priorities.

Council Priorities	Information Strategy
1. Improving the employment position in West Lothian	✓
2. Improving attainment and positive destinations for school children	✓
3. Delivering positive outcomes and early intervention for early years	✓
4. Improving the quality of life for older people	✓
5. Minimising poverty, the cycle of deprivation and promoting equality	✓
6. Reducing crime and improving community safety	✓
7. Protecting the built and natural environment	✓
8. Delivering positive outcomes on health	✓

Enablers	
Financial planning	✓
Corporate governance and risk	✓
Modernisation and improvement	✓

*Figure 1: Council priorities and the Information Strategy*



## 3 Strategy Outcomes

The Information Strategy supports council objectives by providing staff access to comprehensive and reliable information, at the point of need, where everyone understands the importance of handling it correctly, sharing it appropriately and protecting it from improper use.

There are a number of outcomes that benefit the council, staff and customers.

### 3.1 Benefits to the council

- Enables the council to provide a more effective service to its customers with greater transparency around the information it holds
- Preserves its public reputation and enables it to meet public expectation of how it will manage their information
- Builds trust in the quality of its information both for staff and the public
- Supports informed decision and policy making
- Ensures compliance with legal requirements
- Preserves for the public record decisions being made now which will become our history in the future
- Increases its efficiency by enabling it to get the most out of the information it holds, avoiding duplication and promoting re-use where appropriate
- Reduces levels of information-related risk and ensures that council information is protected and secure

### 3.2 Benefits for staff

Improving the way service areas manage their information brings a number of benefits both to the individual and to the council. Good information management provides staff with the following benefits:

- Finding the information when needed quickly and easily
- Better quality of information that also makes it more trustworthy
- Knowing what to keep and what to dispose of – removing duplication and the i'll keep it "just in case" approach
- Knowing where to keep it and how to save it
- Working more efficiently, making best use of resources - re-using information created and not re-inventing the wheel

- Working more collaboratively - making best use of skills and knowledge
- Knowing what to share and with whom
- Providing assurance that everyone is complying with responsibilities under legal requirements
- Knowing how to handle and protect information

### 3.3 Benefits for customers

- Information is captured once and not repeatedly
- Information is more accurate and reliable and accessible
- Assurance that information relating to them is protected and handled appropriately
- That when they give consent to share information, that consistent standards will be applied
- That the council manages information appropriately and efficiently
- Customer transactions with the council are more responsive and processed quicker.

In summary the strategy outcomes are:

- To create a culture which values information
- Improving access to information through technology, processes and tools
- Ensure best use of information by developing opportunities for sharing and re-use
- Compliance with information management legislation, policies, standards, codes of practice and other guidance

## Outcome 1: To create a culture which values information

### Purpose

The strategy aim is to create an organisational culture which values information and works to remove barriers to managing information effectively. We will communicate our vision and culture to all staff and stakeholders, resulting in a high level of awareness due to effective messages around Information Management.

Changing culture and behaviours is a long process but we will continue building a culture:

- Which values sharing information and knowledge and recognises the consequences of not sharing;
- Which values protecting information appropriately;
- Where staff have confidence and trust in the quality of the information they manage and use;
- Where good information management is everyone's responsibility and part of how people do their jobs every day;
- Where managing information is viewed positively – as an enabler to our business and not an additional responsibility;
- Where we anticipate future information management requirements, planning proactively to improve our efficiency and effectiveness and not just react when things go wrong;
- Where policies are accessible, understood and followed by staff;
- Which values collaborative working and discourages silo working;
- Which values corporate benefits over individual benefits.

### Activities

The main activities that will be undertaken in 2013/17 to achieve this priority outcome are:

- Create a clear governance structure for information management
- Develop and implement records management policies, procedures and guidance
- Implement an appropriate training and awareness programme
- Develop and implement a Customer Information Charter

### Performance

The following performance indicators will be used to monitor progress in the outcome for the life span of the strategy:

Performance				
Performance Indicator Name	2012/13 Performance	2016/17 Target	Service	Responsible Officer
% Staff Trained Information Management	95%	100%	All Service Areas	Heads of Service
% Information Management Policies, Procedures & Guidelines	100% complete, relevant and up to date	100% complete, relevant and up to date	Corporate Services	Head of Corporate Services

## Outcome 2: Improve access to information through technology, processes and tools

### Purpose

There has never been a more important time for the council to focus on how it manages information. The council now has more information and is conducting more integration between systems than ever before. The IT Capabilities that are and will be needed in the future will be driven by the need for information. The benefits of Information driven IT transformation to the staff and the Council are:

- A shared IT infrastructure will make it easier for staff to access, reuse and share information across organisational or network boundaries where there is a business need to do so;
- It will enhance security, providing increased protection for information;
- Allow for the centralisation and consolidation of systems currently used within the council;
- Facilitate collaborative working, support remote working and also provide significant cost savings.

To achieve the aims of this strategy we need to ensure our Information Management and IT requirements are aligned and that Information Management needs are a key factor in the making of IT decisions. This will cover: the planning and acquisition of new systems; the implementation and management of systems; the management of legacy systems and the secure disposal of information and IT equipment. We must focus on the availability, integrity and confidentiality of information within systems and not the systems alone.

All Information Management tools need to:

- Support effective retrieval and re-use;
- Support the needs of the business and adapt to changing requirements;
- Allow for an increase in the quality of documentation by ensuring standard templates are used across the council;
- Support flexible, remote and collaborative working;
- Protect information and provide information security;
- Support compliance with standards, policies and legislation such as the Public Records (Scotland) act 2011;
- Provide continued access to digital information;
- Provide reliable management information to inform decision making.

We will work towards a situation where our business information is held in an appropriate corporate repository - and not stored in a multitude of email inboxes, applications, filing cabinets and personal drives. We will develop existing systems to support local 'champions'

(Information Liaison Officers, Local Records Officers) capable of meeting business, user and Information Management needs.

The council has already invested in a corporate wide EDRMS (Electronic Document and Records Management System) and has a number of advantages for the individual and the Council:

- Information can be shared where appropriate and re-used;
- Scanning, reducing paper;
- Reduces the risk of duplication – a single copy of a document is held centrally, rather than multiple copies held locally;
- The latest version of a document is easily identifiable;
- Appropriate retention and disposal rules can be applied;
- Information is stored securely and protected via permissions settings;
- Information is not lost when a member of staff changes roles or leaves the council;
- Using an appropriate corporate repository means less money is spent on individual business-specific solutions.

## Activities

The main activities that will be undertaken in 2013/17 to achieve this priority outcome are:

- Linking, sharing and consolidating council IT systems and networks
- Implement a corporate document and records repository
- Implement appropriate tools to allow remote working, collaboration and sharing
- Developing paperless transactions within the council and with customers

## Performance

The following performance indicators will be used to monitor progress in the outcome for the life span of the strategy:

Performance				
Performance Indicator Name	2012/13 Performance	2016/17 Target	Service	Responsible Officer
% of Corporate Staff handling electronic records who actively use EDRMs	90%	100%	All Service Areas	Heads of Service
% Volume Paper Records sent to Archive	100%	50%	All Service Areas	Heads of Service
% Volume of Duplicate Documents	10%	1%	All Service Areas	Heads of Service

## Outcome 3: Ensure best use of information by developing opportunities for sharing and re-use

### Purpose

Information and knowledge are key corporate assets and by reusing and sharing them we release their value and maximise benefits to the business.

The council recognises the need to share information and knowledge with colleagues, business partners, stakeholders and others as appropriate – and the benefits that this brings. Sharing and protecting information are both essential to working together to serve the public.

Further, sharing information and building professional relationships with partners and agencies will aid in the development of a joined up approach to public services. Information Sharing Agreements will provide staff with the security and confidence to know that what they are doing is correct.

At a time when we are under pressure to do more with less the council cannot afford to reinvent the wheel but must make the most of the knowledge and information it already has.

In order to achieve the above, this strategy advocates:

- Development of a clear picture of where information and knowledge reside across the organisation
- Identifying who the council needs to share information with, e.g. Stakeholders and suppliers, and manage this in a responsible way
- Establish common data sharing principles and agreements, and work to embed these across the council
- A risk-based approach to sharing to ensure information and knowledge are shared responsibly
- Active sharing and re-use of information to meet the business need
- Sharing of appropriate information with the public to meet government commitments on transparency and accountability, facilitating the re-use of data to increase economic and social value

### Activities

The main activities that will be undertaken in 2013/17 to achieve this priority outcome are:

- Implementation and maintenance of a central register of information
- Development and Implementation of standard sharing protocols and agreements
- Develop opportunities for sharing between council services
- Develop opportunities for sharing with partner organisations

## Performance

The following performance indicators will be used to monitor progress in the outcome for the life span of the strategy:

Performance				
Performance Indicator Name	2012/13 Performance	2016/17 Target	Service	Responsible Officer
% Systems Risk Assessed	80%	100% complete, relevant and up to date	All Service Areas	Heads of Service
% Systems with sharing/processing agreements in place	75%	100%	All Services	Head of Service



## **Outcome 4: Compliance with information management legislation, policies, standards, codes of practice and other guidance**

### **Purpose**

There are many Information Management-related requirements; some of these are external and others are internally generated. While some are wholly focused on Information Management, others are not, for example, those on technology or security.

We are legally obliged to comply with some requirements such as the Data Protection Act (1988), Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002, Public Records (Scotland) Act 2011, Re-use of Public Sector Information Regulations 2005, INSPIRE (Scotland) Regulations 2009 and Environmental Information (Scotland) Regulations 2004.

The aim of this strategy is to:

- Bring together and maintain those Information Management requirements with which we must comply. These requirements will be prioritised according to the potential impact and associated risks;
- Rationalise the differing requirements of standards, legislation etc to better understand our obligations;
- Build these requirements into our ways of working by embedding them in our next generation IT infrastructure and developing our corporate Information Management policy framework;
- Be aware that compliance requirements will vary across the council and, through a project management framework, consider resources required to achieve compliance;
- Be aware that requirements will change over time and that our responses must change too;
- Use a measured, risk-based approach to determine the degree of compliance required.
- Report regularly on the uptake and statistics for online security training and security breaches;
- Establish internal auditing processes and align these with external audit requirements, such as Information Management Assessments by The National Archives;
- Ensure that we are clear about who is responsible and accountable for compliance, e.g. All staff are required to comply with the DPA.

The council must work to balance any “risk averse culture”, where some staff have a fear of sharing information, to a “risk aware culture” giving staff the confidence to share information. While ensuring that information is properly protected, we will appropriately and effectively share information in order to protect the public. It is essential that we communicate to staff

that protection and sharing are not opposing principles. A corporate approach to information security will:

- Ensure that everyone who handles council information receive information security training and remain aware of the standard methods of handling council information.
- Ensure that everyone is aware of the west lothian council information charter when information is being collected and processed on their behalf.
- Develop and maintain an information security management system (isms) within the council that provides a framework for managing information security, including the policies, procedures, processes, products, people and tools.
- Actively identify any shortfalls in security and manage each instance to a point where remedial actions are taken to prevent breaches in security.
- Ensure that standards of destroying information e.g. Shredding documents, is consistent across the organisation.
- Ensure that the owners and administrators apply the corporate standards to all it systems and applications managed within service areas.

## Activities

The main activities that will be undertaken in 2013/17 to achieve this priority outcome are:

- Implement an accessible central information management policy framework
- Align systems, processes and procedures with legislative requirements
- Further develop information security standards, practices and awareness
- Identify and manage information risks

## Performance

The following performance indicators will be used to monitor progress in the outcome for the life span of the strategy:

Performance				
Performance Indicator Name	2012/13 Performance	2016/17 Target	Service	Responsible Officer
% of upheld complaints to the Information Commissioner	0%	0%	Corporate Services	Heads of Corporate Services
% FOI/SAR/EIR Requests completed on time	85%	90%	All Service Areas	Heads of Service

## Appendix A

Action Plan						
Action	Description	Planned Outcome	Owner	Start	End	Status (Planned, Active, Complete)
Implementation of EDRMs	Completion of roll out of Electronic Document and Records Management System and connected technologies e.g. scanning, email management etc.	Central, compliant information repository	Roberto Riaviz	March 2013	March 2014	Active
Implementation of intranet/extranets part of new web strategy	Web interfaces connected to EDRM and other council systems	Web based collaborative web sites for staff	Karen Cawte	July 2013	July 2015	Planned
Annual review of Records Management Plans in compliance with the Public Records Scotland Act 2011	Submission and subsequent maintenance of the council's Records Management Plan in line with legislation	Complaint Records Management procedures in all service areas	Roberto Riaviz	May 2011	May 2017	Active
Annual review of the council's Publication Scheme in line with the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002	Update the publication scheme in line with latest requirements – valid until May 2017	Web based guidance to the council's published information	Roberto Riaviz	Jan 2013	May 2017	Active
Implementation of an Information Charter	An Information Charter sets out the standards applied to the handling of customer information	Customers are aware of the charter when providing information to the council	Graeme Struthers	April 2013	December 2013	Active
Roll out of email management system compliant with the Data Protection Act 1998	Implementation in all service areas of central system of managing public email addresses	Compliant management of public email addresses in all service areas	Roberto Riaviz	May 2011	May 2014	Active
Teachers Email System	Implementation of an email system compliant with Data Protection, Freedom of Information and Public Records	An email system that can be used for transmission and sharing of personal information	Elaine Cook	April 2013	August 2013	Active

Action Plan						
Action	Description	Planned Outcome	Owner	Start	End	Status (Planned, Active, Complete)
	(Scotland) Act					
Upgrade and optimisation of IT Networks at schools	Improve bandwidth and internet facilities for West Lothian schools	Improve access to information by school pupils	Jennifer Milne	April 2013	March 2017	Active
Review of the council's Data Protection Policy and procedures	Ensuring that policy and procedures are up to date with current legislation and guidelines	Robust policy and procedures	Graeme Struthers	July 2012	December 2013	Active
Implementation of on-site shredding facilities at all council sites	Installation of shredders compliant with European Standards	Secure on site destruction of confidential and sensitive paper documents	Jennifer Milne	January 2013	May 2013	Active
Electronic Mail Room/ Centralisation of Admin facilities	Central delivery, scanning and electronic distribution of mail to all services	Reduction of paper records in all service areas	Anne Jack	August 2013	September 2014	Planned
Implementation of a Corporate GIS	Consolidating Graphical Information Systems (GIS) into one central system	All service areas and clients will be able to access information from once central system	Jim Jack	April 2012	April 2015	Active
Self Directed Support in Social Policy	Self management of services by social policy clients	Improved access to information about services	Jennifer Scott	April 2014	April 2015	Planned
Children & Young Persons Bill (GIRFEC)	Shared Planning & Community Services for Children & Families across the Community & Health Partnership	Sharing of information, plans, case files and resources for CHCP clients	Jennifer Scott	April 2013	April 2014	Active
Delivery of outputs from the Council's Corporate Plan 2013/17 from the Delivering Better Outcomes consultation	Identification and planning for the outputs that relate to information management and systems	Identify a programme of work relating to information management that will underpin the delivery of the corporate plan	Graeme Struthers	April 2013	April 2014	Planned

# **West Lothian Council**

## **Information Strategy 2013/17**

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**April 2013**

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