

DATA LABEL: PUBLIC



## **COUNCIL EXECUTIVE**

### **MUSEUMS ACCESS POLICY REPORT**

#### **REPORT BY INTERIM HEAD OF HOUSING, CUSTOMER AND BUILDING SERVICES**

##### **A. PURPOSE OF REPORT**

The purpose of this report is to request that the Council Executive approve the draft Museums Access Policy, 2022-2027.

##### **B. RECOMMENDATION**

It is recommended that the Council Executive approve the draft Museums Access Policy, 2022-2027.

##### **C. SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS**

<b>I Council Values</b>	Focusing on our customers' needs; being honest, open and accountable; providing equality of opportunities; making best use of our resources; working in partnership
<b>II Policy and Legal (including Strategic Environmental Assessment, Equality Issues, Health or Risk Assessment)</b>	The measures outlined will support the council's commitment to the Equality Act 2010, General Duties. A draft Integrated Impact Assessment has been developed.
<b>III Implications for Scheme of Delegations to Officers</b>	None
<b>IV Impact on performance and performance Indicators</b>	The adoption of this policy will enable the Museums Service to retain Fully Accredited Status under the UK National Accreditation Standard for Museums and Galleries. This qualifies WLC for external funding and helps to ensure high quality service provision.
<b>V Relevance to Single Outcome Agreement</b>	The council is committed to tackling discrimination, advancing equality of opportunity and promoting good relation within our workforce and the wider community.
<b>VI Resources - (Financial, Staffing and Property)</b>	The policy will be delivered within existing revenue budgets and grant aid for which

accredited museums are eligible.

**VII Consideration at PDSP**

Corporate Policy and Resources Policy Development and Scrutiny Panel on 12 December 2022.

**VIII Other consultations**

This policy has been informed by consultation with Museums Service users and stakeholders.

**D. Terms of Report**

**D.1 Background**

It is a core requirement of the UK Accreditation Scheme for Museums and Galleries that museums have an Access Policy which has been approved by their governing body. This was identified as an action following the council's last accreditation assessment. The council will be invited to re-apply for accreditation in 2025. As part of that application, an Access Policy, updated where relevant, must be adopted by the council and submitted to the accreditation panel.

**D.2 Museums Access Policy**

The mission of the council's Museums Service is to enhance quality of life by providing a museums service that serves the educational, cultural and leisure needs of the community now and in the future. The draft Access Policy seeks to ensure equity of service delivery by maximising access to our museums, and to identify ways in which this can be achieved.

The Access Policy relates to all collections held by West Lothian Council as well our community museums, programmes and interpretation both onsite and online. It covers how people can see, use, and reference the collection, gain access to museum buildings and sites, and how the Museums Service shares information about the collection with others.

Areas of access covered in the policy include:

- Physical access: we aim to ensure that our community museums are as physically accessible as possible.
- Intellectual access: we aim to provide information in a range of formats appropriate to the needs of a wide range of visitors.
- Emotional access: we aim to provide a good standard of customer care to ensure that all visitors feel welcome and comfortable in our venues.
- Financial access: we aim to make collections, services, and engagement activities freely available to maximise equal access to West Lothian's heritage.

**D.3 Consideration at PDSP**

The draft Policy was considered at Corporate Policy and resources PDSP on 12 December 2022 and no changes were proposed.

## **E. Conclusion**

The draft Museums Access Policy, 2022-2027 will support the maximisation of access to community museums, interpretation and programmes. This will assist the Museums Service to achieve the UK accreditation standard, to remain eligible for grant aid in the museums sector and to continue high-quality community engagement and collections management work.

## **F. Background References**

None.

Appendices/Attachments: One  
Appendix 1 Museum Access Policy, 2022-2027

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17 January 2023

## West Lothian Council Museums Service



## ACCESS POLICY 2022-2027

**Date on which this policy was approved by Council Executive:**

**Policy review procedure:**

The access policy will be published and reviewed from time to time, at least once every five years.

**Date at which the policy is due for review:** TBC

## **1. Purpose**

The purpose of the policy is to set out our commitment to maximising access to the Museums Service, and to identify ways in which this can be achieved.

An approved Access Policy is a central requirement of the UK Accreditation Scheme for Museums and Galleries. Museums who are part of the scheme are required to have an access policy or statement approved by its governing bodies.

## **2. Scope**

The Access Policy relates to all collections held by West Lothian Council as well as our community museums, programmes and interpretation both onsite and online. It covers how people can see, use, and reference the collection, gain access to museum buildings and sites, and how the Museums Service shares information about the collection with others.

## **3. Responsibilities**

The council is responsible for ensuring that the Museums Service fulfils its obligations under the Equality Act 2010 and the Museums Association's "Code of Ethics" by doing everything reasonably possible to make our collections, content and sites accessible to the widest range of people. The Museums Officer is responsible for ensuring that the work of both staff and volunteers reflects the need to maximise access.

## **4. Access Assessment**

Access Audits have regularly been undertaken since the establishment of the Museums Service in the 1990s. These are currently undertaken with reference to sector best practice guidelines on access. An access action plan is undertaken after each audit setting out work required to remove barriers identified by the audit.

## **5. Our commitment to access**

This Policy supports our mission statement by providing a framework that strives to include all our visitors, potential visitors, volunteers and staff. We will make our collections and buildings accessible, by removing as many physical, intellectual or cultural barriers to access as practicable, within the limits of legal, budgetary, and planning considerations. We are committed to developing a programme of activities that are designed to involve, educate and engage

groups from a wide range of backgrounds and all sectors of West Lothian's community. Areas of access covered in this policy include:

- Physical access: we aim to ensure that our community museums are as physically accessible as possible.
- Intellectual access: we aim to provide information in a range of formats appropriate to the needs of a wide range of visitors.
- Emotional access: we aim to provide a good standard of customer care to ensure that all visitors feel welcome and comfortable in our venues.
- Financial access: we aim to make collections, services, and engagement activities freely available to maximise equal access to West Lothian's heritage.

### **5.1 Consultation and audiences**

- The Museums Service is committed to understanding who its visitors/users and non-visitors/users are, so that we meet their needs and provide access to collections and services.
- The Museum is committed to developing and diversifying its audiences.
- We will regularly consult and evaluate our services with users and use this information to ensure our services meet their needs.
- We will consult with non-users/less-engaged users to identify barriers to participation.

### **5.2 Community links and outreach**

- The Museum Service is committed to actively engaging with local communities. We aim to develop links with the community, especially through partnership and co-production.
- The Museums Service will offer outreach to parts of the community who may not be able to engage with our museum spaces; this will include the provision of reminiscence loan boxes for care homes and community groups and loan boxes and object-based learning sessions for schools.
- The Museum is committed to providing volunteer opportunities and seeks to explore the recruitment of volunteers from a range of backgrounds, including those with protected characteristics.

### **5.3 Premises**

- The Museum Service operates from six sites:
  - Collections store at Kirkton Service Centre
  - Whitburn Community Museum at Whitburn Partnership Centre
  - Broxburn Community Museum at Strathbrock Partnership Centre
  - Armadale Community Museum at Armadale Partnership Centre
  - Blackridge Community Museum at the Craig Inn Centre
  - Wee Museum of Memory, Livingston Centre (a partnership with the Living Memory Association)
- The Museum Service is committed to providing full access to all of its facilities although there are some restrictions due to the constraints of both our stores and the buildings that house our community museums/
- Information for potential visitors explaining our opening times, services and access to the collections is available on our website, leaflets, and by telephone and e-mail.

### **5.4 Collections**

- The Museums Service is committed to increasing public access to the collections and information, and to increasing knowledge and understanding of the collections and heritage sites.
- We will provide varied means of access and interpretation to the collections including permanent displays, temporary exhibitions, loans, object handling and activities.
- The provision of access will be balanced against the appropriate care and management of the collection in question.
- We will promote public awareness of the full extent of the collections through displays on digital kiosks (where resources allow), on-line (website and social media) and through other means (e.g. talks by staff).
- Stored collections are available to view by appointment with the Museums Officer and a research space can be provided at Kirkton Service Centre.
- Collections are continually being updated and developed to better reflect the diversity of the local area.



## **5.5 Information**

- The needs of visitors are considered when preparing and presenting collections information and interpretation
- The Museums Service will ensure that all information and communications follow good practice and sectorial guidelines for text and style.
- Where resources allow, video-based interpretation will incorporate subtitles. The Museums Service aims to keep the public informed of its collections, temporary displays and events through appropriate publicity including social media.
- The Museums Service will seek to display exhibits which reflect the range and diversity of the Museum's collections, and engage with the diversity of our users and their needs.
- We will provide levels of information and interpretation to suit a range of audiences and abilities.
- Information and interpretation will be provided in a range of formats, for example labels, film, interactives and audio, as resources allow.
- The Museums Service will provide and improve internal signage and information to enable all visitors to explore the Museum and locate facilities easily.
- The Museums Service will explore the provision of targeted translation of core information into other key languages on the website or in the museum galleries.
- We will provide information about access provision on our website.

## **5.6 Learning and programming**

- The Museum will provide a range of suitable handling materials drawn from the collections for different audiences and levels of ability.
- Outreach based delivery will be used to maximise access to collections and learning experiences.
- Educational materials will be made available for different audiences and abilities, as required and as resources allow.

- Temporary exhibitions and activities will be programmed throughout the year.

### **5.7 Customer care**

- All staff members and volunteers are involved in implementing this policy, assisting and welcoming our customers.
- The Museum will work within the framework of West Lothian Council's customer service commitments and standards.
- All users of the Museum will be treated with equal respect within an inclusive atmosphere and welcomed according to their individual needs.
- Where possible, community museums will be located in buildings that provide baby changing facilities, access and parking for pushchairs and seating for the comfort and ease of visitors.
- The Museums Service will respond to requests made by the public regarding information required in alternative formats, as resources allow.