

7. CONSULTATION ON PROPOSED SUPPLEMENTARY GUIDANCE ON ARCHIVING PUBLIC RECORDS

The Council Executive considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Head of Area Services advising of consultation on the proposed supplementary guidance under the Public Records Act 2011 on the arrangements for archiving public records and to seek approval for a council response for submission to the Scottish Government.

The Head of Area Services explained that the Public Records (Scotland) Act 2011 was introduced by the Scottish Government on 20 April 2011 and the Act strengthened governance and accountability for public records across the whole of the public sector and had close links to the Freedom of Information (Scotland) 2002 and Data Protection Act 1998.

Under the legislation public authorities were required to prepare appropriate records management plans, outlining the proper arrangements in place to ensure the identification, management and preservation of vital records. West Lothian Council had therefore produced and implemented a Records Management Plan that was approved by the National Records of Scotland until July 2017.

The National Records of Scotland had now produced supplementary guidance that would allow public authorities to understand better their responsibility for ensuring that they had in place proper arrangements for preserving and archiving their public records.

The proposed supplementary guidance had a focus on five broad arrangements that public authorities would need to consider when managing this archive function and included :-

- The constitution, finance and staffing of an archive;
- Security arrangements;
- Storage arrangements;
- Arrangements for collection care; and
- Public access arrangements

A copy of the consultation was attached to the report at Appendix 1 with a response required by 14 March 2016.

The council's response represented feedback from across the council and included the following points :-

- ❖ There was support for a standard set of archiving arrangements across the public sector. This included the standardisation of metadata (data which describes other data) across the public sector;
- ❖ West Lothian Council had no reservations regarding the

implementation of standards in the archive services; and

- ❖ West Lothian Council would suggest the creation of a framework for the archiving of electronic records along with a suggested storage mechanism.

The report concluded that the draft response had been considered by the Culture and Leisure Policy Development and Scrutiny Panel on 4 February 2016 and agreed that the item be forwarded to the Council Executive for approval and onward submission to the Scottish Government.

It was recommended that the Council Executive note the consultation and agree the proposed response prepared by the Head of Area Services in relation to the proposed supplementary guidance on proper arrangements for archiving public records issued by the Keeper of the Records of Scotland (Head of the National Records of Scotland)

Decision

To approve the terms of the report